



THE
RECITAL

**A 23-Year Extraordinary Phenomenon
in the Wilderness**

**GOD'S SOVEREIGN PLAN AND THE PURPOSE OF END-TIMES PROPHECY
EXPLORING THE MAINSTREAM MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE
for
PASTORS, CHAPLAINS, AND THEOLOGY STUDENTS**

by
AYMAN ALHASAN

And as for **Ishmael**, I have heard you. Behold, I have **blessed him**, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a **great nation**. (*Genesis 17:20*)

If you find this book insightful, the author would appreciate your feedback to help finalize the supplement, which aims to answer more of your questions. Your thoughts, comments, and suggestions can be shared by leaving the author a message at www.TheRecital.org.
Thank you and God bless

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Dedication

To every innocent soul whose anguish is condoned by peace- and God-loving believers

Mother's Story

My name is Ayman Alhasan. My mother was born in Jerusalem, and my father was born in a town located approximately forty miles south of Nazareth. When I was very young, my mother shared a story from when she was about ten years old. Every day just before sunset, her mother would take her and her five sisters out of their home, up a nearby hill, and into the bushes. The girls wore their pajamas and had to bring their pillows, a quilt, some clothing, and the best walking shoes they had. No oil lamps or any other lights were allowed. They pitched camp in a place where they could view their home in the distance. As it got dark, they all had to keep very quiet. After making sure the children were all asleep, my grandmother would raise her head whenever she heard the slightest noise, check the house, and then lie back on her pillow, crying and quietly sobbing.

All the girls had to wake up at dawn. After packing their belongings, they would race downhill back to their home. After about two weeks, my grandfather returned. On that very day, they packed their things into light cloth sacks, locked the house, and walked away with their sacks in hand. "Don't worry about your homework; you'll make it up when we return home." my grandmother said. Neither my grandmother, nor my mother, nor her sisters, nor any of the other hundreds of thousands of Palestinian families fleeing at the time knew that this would be a decades-long journey of suffering with no return. This exodus marked the beginning of the Nakba, a tragic chapter in which over 700,000 Palestinians were uprooted from their homes. They were driven by the terrifying threat of midnight reprisals from merciless killers who would massacre everyone—baby, child, woman, or man—just as they had in Deir Yassin, only two miles from my grandfather's home.

The tears no one saw, the silent fear my grandmother endured, and the hardships my mother and her family underwent, touched me profoundly. Throughout my youth and teen years, I could not escape feeling for the silent suffering of the weak and helpless. At twelve years old, I rarely missed the world news on TV. When in bed after watching a story of human suffering somewhere in the world, I could not escape the excruciating thought that at that very moment, while I was about to fall asleep, someone was either being violated or was on the verge of being victimized as they pleaded for mercy. Since I was in no position to help, I felt that, at the very least, I owed the victims consideration for their plight at that moment. "You are not alone; someone cares and is thinking of you," I used to think. As I imagined their condition, I couldn't hold back my tears. The most agonizing thought was of terrified children who had lost their parents and were wandering around looking for compassionate and comforting love. My heart continues to break for the victims who are too young to ask why they have been violated. I remember spending sleepless nights in bed, silently shedding tears while thinking of people I had never known in faraway lands.



Today, my extended family and I along with millions of refugees remain dispersed around the world. I was lucky enough to have landed in the US and privileged to meet some remarkable pastors. Their warmth, authenticity, and steadfast commitment to God have profoundly influenced me, reshaped my perception of American faith leaders, and strengthened my belief in their ability to effect global change. However, I've often pondered why so few of them openly express words of love, compassion, sympathy, or support for the countless innocent Palestinian children who have become victims of the seven decades conflict in the Holy Land. Initially, I considered that this might be attributed to a lack of awareness regarding the extent of suffering endured by the Palestinian people – as the saying goes, "out of sight, out of mind." In an endeavor to bridge this communication gap, I authored and published my first book, "Dear Pastors and Priests: Messages from Peace-Loving Muslim Families."

After Hamas's military intrusion into Israeli residential territories on October 7th, 2023 and the killing and kidnapping of many Israeli civilians, the United States supplied significant firepower to facilitate the bombardment of Gaza, one of the world's most densely populated residential areas, including at least eight Palestinian refugee camps. However, I heard expressions of compassion primarily from my favorite pastors for the victims only on the Israeli side.

Acknowledging my limitations in addressing relevant theological complexities and with an aching heart, I humbly request on behalf of millions of Palestinian refugees that Christian faith leaders and students afford one courtesy to the victims: an accurate understanding of the faith and beliefs held by the majority of these victims, along with a truthful portrayal of that faith to their congregations.

The Recital aims to provide pastors, chaplains, theology students, Christian scholars, and the general public with insights into the *simple* ways that peace-loving, mainstream Muslims understand their faith.

May God's peace, salam, and shalom be with you, always and forever. Amen.

Ayman Alhasan

The embroidery on the right was crafted by my mother to assist in the layout art of my books hoping it will help connect me with readers across the USA



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CHAPTER 1

EXTRAORDINARY PHENOMENON

Recite in the Name of the
CREATOR

INTRODUCTION AND BOOK SUMMARY

Roughly six centuries following the birth of Jesus, an extraordinary event took place in the wilderness about 750 miles south of Jerusalem. This event unfolded in the tribal town of Mecca over the course of twenty-three years and was observed by an uncounted number of individuals. Various accounts, encompassing works of literature, poems, narratives, and oral traditions, convey that Muhammad, the son of Abdullah and a member of the Hashim clan, who was unlettered, would repeatedly experience a unique physical condition. Without any forewarning, Muhammad would gently lower his head, as though bearing an immense weight, begin to perspire, and his complexion would assume a bluish tint. Subsequently, he would lose consciousness, gracefully, without falling to the ground. There are numerous detailed witness accounts of this condition:

- It starts when he hears ‘an approaching jingling sound’¹
- If he was sitting and this condition starts, he ‘lowers his head’ and when it ends, ‘he raises his head’² again.
- Face color turns blue and/or reddish³
- Sweat drops the size of pearls⁴
- Faint sound of bee buzz⁵
- A companion who was sitting next to Muhammad felt as if his thigh bone would break when Muhammad's leg pressed heavily against his, pinning it to the ground during a revelation incident.⁶
- A camel settled down and laid its head on the ground when Muhammad experienced a revelation as he was riding it.⁷

The duration Muhammad remained unconscious in every incident varied. When he begins to regain consciousness, the extraordinary phenomenon begins. Muhammad wakes up uttering verses

¹ Bukhari's Authenticities #2 (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2>) - Last accessed 6/2/2023 - translation by author

² Muslim's Authenticities #2335 (<https://sunnah.com/muslim:2335>) - Last accessed 6/2/2023 - translation by author)

³ Muslim's Authenticities #2334 (<https://sunnah.com/muslim:1180c>) - Last accessed 6/2/2023 - translation by author)

⁴ Bukhari's Authenticities #2661 (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2661>) - Last accessed 6/2/2023 - translation by author

⁵ Termithi #3173 (<https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/47>) - Last accessed 6/2/2023 - translation by author)

⁶ Bukhari's Authenticities #2832 (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari/56>) - Last accessed 6/2/2023 - translation by author

⁷ Musnad Ahmad (<https://hadithprophet.com/hadith-28313.html>) - Last accessed 6/2/2023 - translation by author

in his native classic Arabic language but in a new mystical recitation form that is “different, incomparable and inimitable.”⁸ The verses are linguistically powerful and eloquently articulated. Moreover, they had “rhymes, rhythms, patterns, accentuation, or other linguistic characteristics and techniques that shift and change to support or emphasize messages in a melodious tone.”⁹ These musical elements transform the text into an auditory experience that evoke spiritual responses. The verses Muhammad spoke became new literary and recital genres that are considered, throughout history, a marvel of classic Arabic literature as elaborated in chapter 2.

The vocabulary in the recitations uttered by Muhammad incorporate various Arabic dialects, names of unknown objects, hundreds of new or obscure terms, words or names of foreign origins, and ambiguous codes or acronyms. Some verses address natural phenomena from an unfamiliar perspective, use common words in obscure context, or emit an air of mystery. Throughout history, Muslim scholars and linguists have unraveled many of the secrets of the Quran but never to the extent as Western scholars did in the last few decades. Researchers in the US and Europe contributed to explaining many of the astronomical, medical, and natural references mentioned in the Quran. Examples of the standing, unlocked, and challenging mysteries of the Quran are included in Chapter 3.

The new recitals, linguistic characteristics, and mysteries, however, are not the most extraordinary aspect of this phenomenon. The verses Muhammad uttered were attention-arresting primarily because they frequently take the first person in a direct God-to-creation address as follows:

1. O people, **I** have created you ...
2. O **my** servants ...
3. Pray to **Me**, and **I** will answer ...
4. Worship/Serve **Me** ...
5. **I am** God, Lord of all worlds ...
6. Believe in **Me** ...

This phenomenon occurred probably hundreds of times in the presence of Muhammad’s family, companions, or strangers in the last part of his life. The number of verses uttered after every incident varied, some were few and others many. In about two years after his death, all the recitations Muhammad uttered were collected and scripted in a single manuscript entitled: “AlQuran” and commonly referred to “The Quran”. In the Islamic faith, reciting the Quran is a distinct and highly appreciated ritual similar to other acts of worship and is typically performed either privately, or publicly before a group.

According to the Quran, this revelation is a confirmation and continuation of God’s earlier revelations, messages, and commandments since the beginning of creation. As such, the Quran aligns with and affirms most beliefs, virtues, principles, historical events, and prophecies mentioned in earlier scriptures and clarifies others as elaborated in chapter 1.

In the opening message of the chapter 'Primary Messages of the Quran,' the author introduces himself. In the second message, the Quran discusses the purpose behind the creation of humanity, life, earth, and the heavens. This section draws parallels with the development of intelligent and autonomous human-like androids to help clarify the purpose of human life on earth. A believer’s

⁸ Philip K. Hitti. 1960. “History of the Arabs,” seventh edition. Macmillan & Co Ltd.

⁹ COBHUNI Lecture. The Effects of Rhyme in the Quran. Lecture by Prof. Devin Stewart, Emory University, Atlanta. Tuesday, June 21st 2016, 2 pm Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Room 136 20146 Hamburg.
<https://www.cobhuni.uni-hamburg.de/bilder/postern-rhyme-in-quran.pdf>

understanding of the purpose of life and their relationship with God profoundly shapes their engagement with divine scripture and obedience to His commands. This relationship also molds their worldview, self-concept, conduct, and interactions with fellow humans. Whereas Jews believe they are the Chosen People, tasked with fulfilling a covenant with God, Christians view themselves as God's children, created to reflect His image and love Him. Muslims, however, see themselves as servants of God, devoted to His worship, fostering a culture of humility and obedience.

This chapter also reviews the core beliefs that form the foundation of Islamic theology. One distinction between the tenets of faith in Islam and Christianity lies in the emphasis on scope. Generally, Islamic teachings focus more on God (i.e., the Father) and His grand plan, or the broader theological big picture. This difference in emphasis impacts the context in which scripture is interpreted. For example, many Christians are surprised to discover that certain distinctively Christian theological expressions closely align with Islamic teachings. For instance, John 14:6, where Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” is consistent with the broader theological Islamic narrative where *all* prophets are exclusive guides to salvation and divine will during their respective eras and until the next prophet appears.

The final section of this chapter discusses the single most important message of the Quran. We will employ the same analogy of intelligent and autonomous human-like androids to provide rational answers to difficult questions across the main Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), particularly regarding the supreme significance of monotheism. Additionally, this analogy helps explain why atheists or agnostics, despite their noble intentions and significant humanitarian efforts, are seen as having strayed from their fundamental purpose, failing the test of life as discussed in Chapter 4.

In the 'Chronicles of Prophets and Nations' section, we explore the directive for Muhammad to adhere to Abraham's faith and illustrate how Muslim rituals embody God's promise in Genesis 12:3: “I will bless those who bless you.” For example, every practicing Muslim honors Abraham by mentioning his name at least twenty times each day during the five daily prayers. Moreover, during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, approximately three million Muslims from around the world gather at the site where Abraham is believed to have been commanded to sacrifice his son, to retrace his footsteps and reenact his actions. After reaching the mount where Abraham was to sacrifice his son, Muslims worldwide join the pilgrims in celebrating 'Eid al-Adha,' or 'The Sacrifice Festival,' where they also sacrifice sheep in their communities to commemorate Abraham's obedience and devotion to God.

Muslims believe that God chose the Israelites, entering into a bilateral Covenant with them to convey His message to humanity. As such, Muslims believe in, respect, and revere all Israelite prophets and patriarchs, such as Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Benjamin, Moses, and others. Muslims acknowledge that Jesus, born into Judaism like many prophets before him, fulfilled his mission by renewing God's word to the lost sheep of Israel. Similar to many Christians, Muslims believe the bilateral Covenant with the Children of Israel was fulfilled and concluded. Nevertheless, Muslims draw a clear line between the religious heritage of the Israelites, Judaism, and Jewish ethnicity on one side, and contemporary political entities like the modern secular State of Israel and Zionist movements on the other. Just as God, in His sovereign grace, blesses righteous deeds and condemns evildoers, regardless of Covenant, chosen status, relationships, culture, history, or lineage, so too do both Christian and Islamic traditions call for political entities,

organizations, religious movements, and individuals to be judged by their actions and righteousness, as detailed in Chapter 5.

The Quran regards Christians and Jews who follow divine scriptures as believers, addresses them with respect, and grants specific privileges to those living in Muslim communities. For example, they are exempt from compulsory military service, while Muslims are obligated to protect and defend them, even at the cost of Muslim lives. The Quran extends particular esteem to Christians, considering them to be the most closely aligned in affection to Muslims. An entire chapter entitled "Mariam" speaks in tender detail of how Jesus was miraculously conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary and how she later gave birth to him. Muslims believe Jesus' birth was a miracle that adds to his other miracles of healing the sick and raising the dead.

Generally, Muslims view Islam as a continuation of Christianity, and their view of Christians is comparable to the Christian view of Jews. Naturally, Muslims also share many broad End Times prophecies with mainstream Christians and believe that Jesus is alive in heaven and will return "in the flesh." Moreover, Muslims believe that those who survive the anti-Christ test and persevere will be on Jesus' side along with other believers in God. Like mainstream Christians and Jews, mainstream Muslims believe that End Times prophecies should serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for believers to lead virtuous and pious lives. However, mainstream Muslims disagree with some Christian denominations regarding the purpose, applications, and implications of these prophecies. From the Muslim standpoint, the End Times are believed to be a part of God's grand plan to test all of humanity on Earth since the time of Adam. For example, will the faithful adhere to divine principles, or will they overlook them when they have foreknowledge of the future?

Many Christians might be intrigued to learn that Muslim scholars, upon reading the Holy Bible, find significant scriptural alignments across the New Testament, the Quran, and the Torah, even when addressing core tenets like the belief in 'One God.' In other words, some of the major disagreements between Christianity and Islam are not rooted in God's word but stem from the differing scriptural interpretation guidelines and rules, or 'hermeneutical' approaches, that each side uses to understand His word. For instance, when interpreting the Quran, most mainstream Muslim imams follow the hermeneutical rule that "traditions or inferred interpretations that conflict with explicit, direct, and reiterated scriptural statements are considered invalid traditions or interpretations." When Christians interpret the Holy Bible, on the other hand, many mainstream pastors employ a variety and complex hermeneutical strategies that might give traditions, inferred interpretations, or human-inspired doctrines equal weight to conflicting explicit, clear, and reiterated scriptural statements.

Does Biblical prophecy foretell the advent of Muhammad from the descendants of Ishmael? While Muslims assert that the evidence is physically too huge, even colossal, to be unseen, Christians contend that there is no scriptural basis for such claims. Further details on the People of the Book, the End Times, and varying scriptural interpretation methods can be found in Chapter 6.

Muslims hold the belief that the Quran has been meticulously preserved and recorded, capturing precisely the words spoken by Muhammad. Over the course of 23 years, as Muhammad received revelations, he personally overseen scripting fragments of the Quran and, at the same time, guided hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of his companions to memorize sections or the entirety of the Quran. He fostered a meticulous Quran recitation culture in which it was socially acceptable, even expected, for individuals to publicly interject and correct any recitation errors made by others.

Roughly two decades after Muhammad's demise, his companions compiled and recorded the matching recitations from about six distinguished reciters who had withstood the rigorous public vetting of the meticulous recitation culture. These collected works were subsequently examined, reviewed, and eventually received unanimous endorsement from eyewitnesses who had directly heard Muhammad's Quranic recitations. Chapter 7 will only present an analogy of the primary dialect/accents challenge early Muslims had to deal with when documenting the Quran. A more in-depth exploration of the whole collection and documentation process will be provided in the upcoming Supplement.

Aligned with the primary objective of this book, Chapter 8 explores the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe). I included this chapter after receiving feedback from most reviewers, who indicated that they were unfamiliar with this conflict.

Chapter 9 includes updated charts of the Vision and Strategy of the 'Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant, Inc.,' which uses 'common causes' as peace-building blocks between conservative Christians, Muslims, and Jews. An earlier version was published in the book *Dear Pastors and Priests: Messages from Peace-Loving Muslim Families*.

Finally, Chapter 10 offers a heartfelt appeal to U.S. pastors, priests, and theology students, urging them to confront and address the deep-rooted beliefs within the American mindset that continue to fuel the ongoing displacement of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian Catastrophe and its millions of child victims inspired *The Recital*.

Basic Quran statistics compared to the popular King James translation of the Holy Bible:

	Quran	King James Holy Bible
Number of books	1	66
Total chapters (Surahs)	114	1,189
Total verses	6,236	31,102
Total Words	77,430	788,258

By way of comparison, the Arabic Quran at 77,430 words is a little bit shorter than the New Testament (the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), which total about 83,883 words in the English KJV.

Christians Believe Today	Muslims Believe Today
The Holy Bible	The Quran
Inspired by God	Revealed by God
The term 'Word of God' is a general reference to divine messages found in the scriptures	The term "Word of God" refers to the verbatim word of God

Christians Believe Today	Muslims Believe Today
The Holy Bible	The Quran
Authored by multiple individuals inspired by the Holy Spirit, some of whose identities remain unknown	Uttered by a single individual: Muhammad son of Abdullah son of Hashim
Composed in various languages according to the background and audience of the authors	Written entirely in Classical Arabic
Different books and letters were written at various times and locations, starting in the first century AD	The initial manuscript, composed of sorted but unbound sections, was compiled two years after Muhammad's death. The first complete codex was assembled about 20 years later.
Human authors, moved by the Holy Spirit, chose words to convey God's messages, including historical events, laws, and the life and teachings of Jesus	The words of God were dictated verbatim by the Angel Gabriel to Muhammad.
The Holy Bible was compiled through a process called 'canonization,' where texts were selected and officially recognized as authoritative and sacred by church councils	The Quran was compiled by documenting matching recitations by popular reciters that withstood public scrutiny and were later reviewed and approved by eyewitnesses and trusted companions of Muhammad.
Translated Holy Bibles, whether in English, German, Spanish, or other languages, are also considered the 'Word of God.' This is because Jesus referred to a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament as the 'Word of God.'	Translations of the Quran are considered human interpretations and are prone to errors, similar to other Arabic interpretations. (Muslims often find it confusing when Christians refer to the English Holy Bible as the 'Word of God,' given that God did not speak to Jesus in English.)

WHAT DID MUHAMMAD EXPERIENCE?

There is historical consensus that Muhammad experienced a condition that appeared similar to epilepsy and that he spoke a marvel of classic Arabic literature immediately after regaining consciousness. The exact nature of what he experienced is disputed, however:

According to Muhammad, this condition occurred when verses of the Quran were revealed to him by angel Gabriel. He stated that God's words were dictated to him word-for-word and he was ordered by the angel to memorize and recite them verbatim to the people.

Pagans at the time believed Muhammad was either insane, a sorcerer, or a gifted poet and was either lying or imagining things about angels.

After about a hundred and fifty years, the Greek chronicler Theophanes (born 758 CE) suggested that Muhammad suffered from epilepsy¹⁰ better diagnosed today as temporal lobe epilepsy.

Most Christian leaders believe the entire story of revelation is made up and suggest that Muhammad is the author, was pretending inspiration, and got his information from Christians and Jews. Others have believed that the Quran was inspired by Satan to lead people away from Jesus. Other skeptics believe Muhammad was not being deliberately deceptive. They say he sincerely believed his revelations, but in fact his ecstatic states of mind are best explained by natural, not supernatural, causes.

From the perspective of Muslims, the physical state of revelation, be it natural or related to epilepsy, holds little significance and receives minimal attention from mainstream Muslims. The words spoken by Muhammad is what constitutes an extraordinary phenomenon, and these are widely accessible for examination. Moreover, Muslims highlight certain unique physical aspects of Muhammad's state of revelation:

1. Muhammad felt physical pressure on his body during revelation, and his companions also felt and witnessed this pressure.
2. Muhammad gracefully lost and regained consciousness. In many cases he remained sitting with head lowered and in other cases he laid down during the revelation condition. There are no reports of shivering or loss of balance.
3. Muhammad regained consciousness fully aware and in many instances was lip-speaking verses of the Quran in a rush.

Another important point, from Muslim perspective, is Muhammad's natural reaction to events around him. The way he reacted to several incidents in his life significantly enforce Muslim's belief in his prophethood:

1. When Muhammad received the first revelation¹¹, he was terrified and in a state of shock, believing himself to be suffering from an illness. He secluded himself at home and sought help. It was a Christian monk¹² who first suggested that he might be the prophesied messenger of God. Had Muhammad been pretending to receive revelations, he probably would have started this venture by announcing his claim of prophethood, and the initial public reaction would then have been either belief or disbelief in his claim.
2. When Muhammad's only son, Ibrahim, passed away, Muhammad was deeply grief-stricken, shedding tears more than ever before. His companions were deeply moved by his sorrow. At that same night, a lunar eclipse took place. Rumors began to spread, suggesting that even the moon was mourning Ibrahim's passing. However, upon hearing this rumor, Muhammad stated as he continued to grief, "The sun and the moon do not eclipse due to the death or birth of anyone. When you witness an eclipse, pray and call upon God."¹³ Someone seeking to deceive might have taken credit for this celestial event to enhance their own legitimacy.
3. The Quran addresses Muhammad as a servant, it commands and criticizes him; and Muhammad was humble, submissive, and very grateful. Had he been faking it, he would have given himself more status.

10 Aziz, Hasan (Feb 2020). "Did Prophet Mohammad have epilepsy? A neurological analysis." *Epilepsy & Behavior*. 103 (Pt A): 106654. doi:10.1016/j.yebeh.2019.106654. PMID 31822396.

11 The first verse was (*Quran 96:1*) "Recite in the Name of the CREATOR."

12 Bukhari's Authenticity #3392 (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3392>) - Last accessed 4/22/2024

13 Bukhari's Authenticity #1044 <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1043> - Last accessed 6/2/2023 - translation by author

4. When a man addressed Muhammad with the words “O best of (human) breed” or “O best of (human) creation,” Muhammad answered: “[not me,] that’s Abraham.”
5. Despite his duties as a prophet, teacher, statesman, and judge, Muhammad would milk his goat, mend his clothes, fix his shoes, assist with household chores, and visit the sick among the poor. He also helped his companions in digging a trench by moving dirt with them. His life was a model of simplicity and humbleness.¹⁴
6. At a time when banks and safe deposit boxes did not exist, people entrusted honest individuals to safeguard their valuables while they were out of town. Muhammad was such a trusted person in Mecca and was nicknamed by the pagans what translates to: ‘The Truthful and Trustworthy One.’ When one of Muhammad’s close companions heard about his claim of divine revelation, he immediately responded, “If he said it, then it is true.” Finally, the very first believer was naturally the person who knew Muhammad’s character better than anyone else: his wife Khadija.

IS THE QURAN A CONTINUATION OF GOD’S MESSAGES TO HIS CREATION?

The Quran asserts that the revelation given to Muhammad is a continuation of previous revelations dating back to the time of Adam, emphasizing the consistency of their core messages. Consequently, the Quran affirms many verses in the Old and New Testaments, elaborates on some, revises others, and corrects certain passages. Below are four examples:

Affirmation	
The Quran Affirms explicit Holy Bible verses about the One God	
<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord’”; Mark 12:29 2. You believe that God is one... (James 2:19) 3. To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. (Deuteronomy 4:35) 	<p>And your Lord is One God. There is no God but He, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. (Quran 2:163)</p>

Affirmation with Minor Variation	
The Quran affirms the Holy Bible’s six-day creation story and the duration of a ‘day’ but excludes ‘the sea, and all that is in them’ from the six days of creation.	
<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them .. (Exodus 20:11). 2. a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six days (Quran 57:4) 2. And surely a day with thy Lord is as a thousand years of your counting (Quran 22:47).

¹⁴ More about this subject on <https://www.islam-guide.com/ch1-6.htm#footnote5>

Assertion	
The Holy Bible mentions the expansion of the universe, and the Quran asserts that the universe continues to expand. Only in the year 1929 did astronomers finally discovered this fact.	
<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
... the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out (Isaiah 42:5) ... stretches out the heavens like a curtain (Isaiah 40:22)	We have built the universe with 'great' might, and We are certainly expanding (Quran 51:47)

Reiterate Biblical stories with minor revisions	
The Quran clarifies Holy Bible story when Moses confronted the magicians in the presence of the Pharaoh. The magician staffs did not turn to live ¹⁵ snakes, instead, they merely appeared - using illusion - to slither like snakes.	
<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
For each one threw down his staff, and they turned into serpents (Exodus 7:12)	And suddenly their ropes and staffs appeared to him – by their magic – to be slithering (Quran 20:66)

TRANSMISSION AND PRESERVATION OF DIVINE SCRIPTURES – AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Throughout history, divine messages have predominantly been received and transmitted orally. One notable exception is Moses, who received the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. Most prophets and patriarchs received God’s word through direct communication, visions, dreams, or via intermediaries like angels. These messages were typically spoken and passed down orally across generations. There are no records of any prophet or patriarch in the Bible who ordered the transcription of his teachings, verified their accuracy, and sanctioned their distribution.

Oral transmission heavily relied on human memory and the ability to accurately recount complex narratives and instructions. This method was susceptible to errors, alterations, and embellishments over time due to human fallibility—mistakes, bad memory, sin, and both intentional and unintentional changes. Additionally, political and religious interference, persecution, conflicts of interest, and technological limitations, such as the availability and durability of writing materials, further complicated the process. Consequently, the integrity of transmitted divine messages was sometimes difficult to verify. This ongoing challenge is most likely one reason why God sent a succession of prophets to renew His word continually.

In ancient times, trade routes served as the quickest and most reliable means of spreading new ideas and technologies. The Israelite tribes, positioned at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and

¹⁵ Only God can create life.

Africa, were well-placed to spread the awareness of monotheism throughout much of the known world. God chose them to communicate His word to all nations. Most prophets and patriarchs, such as Jacob, Joseph, Ezekiel, Moses, Joshua, and Solomon, were Israelites. Their primary mission was to act as role models and renew and reliably deliver God's Word to their nations.

Jesus, the son of the Virgin Mary, was the last of the Israelite prophets. His primary focus was on teaching, preaching, and demonstrating the Kingdom of God through miracles, parables, and personal example. Although there is no record of Jesus ordering an official script of his teachings, he chose and trained disciples to continue his mission after his departure. Christians believe that Jesus' teachings were preserved accurately through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, maintaining the core tenets of the faith as intact and authoritative. Biblical scholars have developed various techniques to sift through and authenticate the tens of thousands of manuscripts, minimizing the human fallibility factor in scripture documentation. Today, different Christian denominations possess various canonical books, particularly regarding the Old Testament. While the New Testament is largely agreed upon, the differences in Old Testament canon can reflect varying traditions and historical developments.

Codices¹⁶, invented in the first century CE but widely used by the third century, revolutionized the preservation and dissemination of scriptures. For the first time in human history, it was possible to conveniently script, review, edit, replicate, store, distribute, and control the entire scripture with relatively limited resources. Codices could be assembled using a mix of various animal skins and/or processed plant leaves available in most regions, and damaged pages could be easily fixed or replaced. This innovation was the most important advancement in the history of the book before the invention of the printing press.

After this human achievement, God spoke, again, to a messenger named Muhammad, who preached essentially the same principles as all previous prophets and apostles. Muhammad personally ordered, oversaw, reviewed, and approved the scripting of verses he uttered on different fragments and spent tremendous time helping his companions memorize them word-for-word. Less than twenty years after Muhammad's demise, six codices of the whole Quran were scripted, reviewed, and approved by eyewitness and the majority of trusted companions who heard the words uttered by Muhammad.

The Quran specified a self-test to check if the text is preserved: If the words were from a source other than God, there shall be *many* inconsistencies in the text.

To prove the divinity of the Quran to the rest of humanity and till the end of time, God added numerous, permanent, and timeless linguistic signs including extraordinary remarks, references, and information in the verses of the Quran. In other words, while Moses parted the sea, and Jesus was born of a virgin, raised the dead, and healed the sick—miracles that manifested God's power in their time—God granted Muhammad a timeless sign. His message stands as a testament, one that anyone can investigate, reflect upon, and witness until the end of human life on earth, as we'll explore further in this document.

¹⁶ The codex was the historical ancestor of the modern book. Instead of being composed of sheets of paper, it used sheets of vellum, papyrus, or other materials. The term codex is often used for ancient manuscript books, with handwritten contents. Wikipedia

The term 'Al-Quran' can be translated to 'The Repeatedly Read,' and the very first word revealed by God in the Quran translates to 'Recite.' These two words symbolize the transition in the delivery of God's messages—from prophets and messengers to the written word, which is to be available to every human being.

Now that the scripture is permanently preserved, God will not send any more prophets or messengers. Subsequently, Muhammad is referred to in the Quran as the 'Seal of the Prophets.'



Many ancient world religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, may have been established by individuals who were prophets or messengers sent by God. However, over time, these faiths might have strayed into polytheism due to humanity's limitations in preserving God's revealed truth. This could explain why so many religions share common moral teachings, such as the Golden Rule, recount similar stories like the Great Flood, and even present eschatological visions that align with the biblical and Islamic narratives.

Chapter 1 Conclusion

The three principal Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—unanimously declare that God is the sovereign Creator of the heavens, the earth, and all life therein. They affirm that God, in His infinite wisdom, communicated His divine Word through a lineage of chosen prophets and patriarchs across the ages. Nevertheless, adherents of each faith uphold the conviction that the succession of prophetic revelation concluded with the prophet whom they revere as the ultimate messenger of God's eternal truth.

CHAPTER 2

A MARVEL OF CLASSIC ARABIC LITERATURE

The significance of the Quran's literary eloquence to Islam can be likened to the importance of Moses' miracles to Judaism and Jesus' miracles to Christianity



The Quran contributed to the evolution of classic Arabic in many ways including:

1. Introduced a new distinct recital genre (about 86% of all verses possess a rhyming pattern¹⁷).
2. Introduced a new distinct literary genre.
3. Set classic Arabic grammar and scripting standard with exceptions for divine address.

TESTIMONIES BY 20th CENTURY ORIENTALISTS:

Orientalists are mainly European scholars, academics, artists, designers, missionaries, and Arabists who either mastered or fluently spoke Arabic, or were born or lived in Arab-majority countries during European colonialization; of which in the last two hundred years extended more than a century in some Arab countries. Their efforts contributed to European understanding of the culture, faith, and traditions of the region. In general, orientalists challenged the content of the Quran more than the artistic and linguistic merits of the new literary and recital genres:

Sir Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb:

- *"As a literary monument the Koran thus stands by itself, a production unique to the Arabic literature, having neither forerunners nor successors in its own idiom"*¹⁸
- *"The influence of the Koran on the development of Arabic literature has been incalculable, and exerted in many directions. Its ideas, its language, its rhythms pervade all subsequent literary works in greater or lesser measure."*¹⁹

17 COBHUNI Lecture. The Effects of Rhyme in the Quran. Lecture by Prof. Devin Stewart, Emory University, Atlanta. Tuesday, June 21st 2016, 2 pm Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Room 136 20146 Hamburg.

<https://www.cobhuni.uni-hamburg.de/bilder/postern-rhyme-in-quran.pdf>. Last accessed November 1, 2024.

18 Gibb, Sir Hamilton. Arabic Literature: An Introduction – Second (revised) edition. Oxford University Press 1963-ISBN o 19 881332 5. Paperback 1974 – Page 36.

19 Same as above.

Rev. R. Bosworth Smith:

*"A miracle of purity of style, of wisdom and of truth. It is the one miracle claimed by Muhammad, his standing miracle, and a miracle indeed it is."*²⁰

Arthur J. Arberry:

*"Briefly, the rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Koran are so characteristic, so powerful, so highly emotive, that any version whatsoever is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendour of the original."*²¹

Todd Lawson

*"The Qur'an is an example of a genre of literature that has only one example."*²²

RECITAL GENRE ILLUSTRATION:

Next page has an example of how the melodies, rhythm, and rhyme of the verses in the Quran shift and change to convey the message. The table below presents Chapter 91, entitled "AlShams," which translates to "The Sun." The right column contains the transliteration of the sounds made when each verse is recited in Arabic. Look at the right column, can you identify the rhythm and the rhyming verses?

Verses 1-8 (blue rows):

Content: Just as people use the expression "By God" to emphasize their sincerity, the author employs oaths to highlight the significance of the forthcoming message. The chapter begins with the author swearing eight times by notable creations and three times by the divine essence.

Sound: The first seven verses feature a similar opening with "wa" and a concluding "aahaa" sound, creating a rhythmic effect. Verses seven and eight are interconnected, serving as a transitional point in the rhythm.

How Sound Supports the Message: This rhythmic pattern resembles a steady drumbeat, building anticipation for what is to come.

Rhetoric: The repeated oaths at the beginning of the chapter act as a teaser: what is the subject of these declarations?

Verses 9-10 (black rows):

Content: These two verses appear to convey the central message of this chapter: those who earnestly seek sanctification and nurture their souls with righteousness will undoubtedly inherit eternal blessings and contentment. In contrast, those who allow their souls to be tainted by wrongdoing will experience profound and lasting regret.

20 Mohammed and Mohammedanism, Lectures at the Royal Institute of Great Britain, R. Bosworth Smith, pg 237; Smith, Elder & Co. London, 1874

21 A. J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted, Volume 1 - A Touchstone Book. New York. Copyright 1955 by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., p. 24.

22 Todd Lawson, Duality, Opposition and Typology in the Qur'an: The Apocalyptic Substrate, Journal of Qur'anic Studies, VOLUME X ISSUE II 2008, CENTRE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES School of Oriental and African Studies University of London

How Sound Supports the Message: This powerful statement provides divine guidance of the highest importance.

The Quran - Chapter 91 - "The Sun" <i>Translation by A. J. Arberry with author edits in italic</i> <i>In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful</i>			
	Translation	Sound of Arabic Recitation <i>(Transliteration)</i>	
Swearing	1	By the sun and his morning brightness	W ashshamsi wadu haa haa
	2	and by the moon when she follows him (the sun),	W alqamari itha tala haa haa
	3	and by the day when it displays him (the sun)	W annahari itha jalla haa haa
	4	and by the night when it enshrouds him (the sun)	W allayli itha yaghsha haa haa
	5	By the heaven and That which built it (the heaven)	W assama-i wama bana haa haa
	6	and by the earth and That which extended it!	W al-ardi wama taha haa haa
	7	By the soul, and That which shaped it	W anafsin wama sawwa haa haa
	8	and inspired it (the soul) to lewdness and godfearing!	Faalhamaha fujooraha wataqwa haa haa
Main Message	9	Prosperous is he who purifies it (the soul),	Q ad aflaha man zakka haa haa
	10	and failed has he who corrupts it (the soul)	W aqad khaba man dassa haa haa
Example	11	Thamood cried lies in their insolence	Kaththabat thamoodu bitaghwa haa haa
	12	when the most wretched of them uprose,	Ithi inbaAAatha ashq haa haa
	13	then the Messenger of God said to them, The She-camel of God; let her drink!	Faqala lahum rasoolu All ah i naqataAll ah i wasuqy haa haa
	14	But they cried him (the messenger) lies, and hamstrung her (the camel), so their Lord crushed them for their sin, and leveled them:	Fakaththaboohu faaqaroo haa haa fadamdama AAalayhim rabbuhum bithanbihim fasawwa haa haa
End	15	and He fears not the issue thereof	W ala yakhafu AAuqb haa haa

Verses 11-14 (pink rows):

Content: The remaining verses in this chapter illustrate the consequences that befall those who ignore the central message. The story of the tribe known as Thamud (not mentioned in the Holy Bible) highlights their arrogance and disbelief in God. To convey His message, God sent the prophet Saleh, accompanied by a miraculous camel as proof of his divine authority. This camel provided enough milk for the entire tribe but consumed a significant amount of water. Ultimately, the tribe of Thamud rejected Saleh’s message and killed the camel. In response, God unleashed a devastating thunderstorm and earthquake, resulting in the demise of the entire tribe, except for Saleh and his family.

Sound: The rhythm shifts as the initial “Wa” sounds are dropped, while the ending rhymes of “aahaa” are retained. The verses gradually become longer, ending in the two longest, high-drama verses, 13 and 14. Despite their length, these verses maintain their rhythm through the inclusion of the 'ah' and 'haa' sounds within their framework.

How Sound Supports the Message: The increasing length of the verses enhances the dramatic effect, leading to the swift action in verse 14.

Rhetoric: Thamud’s rejection, the killing of the camel, and God’s swift punishment are all captured in a single verse (14), conveying the idea that when it comes to deliberately opposing the will of God, He does not show leniency.

Verse 15(yellow row):

Content: The verse conveys that God has neither regrets nor fears regarding the catastrophic end of Thamud.

Sound: The rhythm mirrors that of the very first verse in this chapter, creating a connection between the beginning and the conclusion.

How Sound Supports the Message: This verse feels like a soft, concluding musical note following the high drama of the preceding long verse, giving the impression that the story has come to a definitive end.

Note: The Quran can be recited in various styles, with the inherent melodies, rhythms, and rhymes being emphasized to varying degrees based on the reciter's talents. However, most reciters prioritize adherence to the established rules of recitation over the intrinsic musicality built in the verses.

LITERARY GENRE ILLUSTRATIONS

The Quran extensively employs a variety of common literary devices (i.e., metaphors, polysemy, synonymy, homonymy, etc.) and rhetorical devices (i.e., rhetorical questions, swearing, parallelism, contrast, repetition, etc.) to emphasize messages, provoke reflection and engage the readers. Most of these literary and rhetorical devices are too complex to illustrate to English-only speakers. Nevertheless, we will explore two specific devices that can be easily translated:

1. Future events in past tense verbs:

The Quran switches to past tense verbs when describing events that will take place during Judgment Day. This resembles an eyewitness coming from the far future and informing everyone of what he/she saw. This usage is known as ‘the rhetoric of immediacy.’ It serves to create a sense of certainty and inevitability and adds intensity to the message, drawing the attention and highlighting the significance of the events being described. Here is an example:

Quran 39:69-75 AlZumur (The Assemblies)		
<i>All online and printed English translations have changed the tense of the verses below from past to future, because the translators aim to convey the meaning rather than the rhetorical style. The author, Ayman Alhasan, has revised the translations to align with the Arabic text.</i>		
The Earth became illuminated by the radiant light of the Lord, records of deeds descended, prophets and witnesses were summoned, and a just verdict was rendered. Never will anyone be misjudged	69	وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجَاءَتْ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءَ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

Each individual soul was rewarded fully according to its actions, as the Almighty possesses full knowledge of their deeds	70	وَوَفَّيْتُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ
Afterwards, the unbelievers were led towards Hell in groups/assemblies. As they arrived, its gates opened, and its keepers asked them: ‘Did you not receive messengers from among yourselves, who recited to you the signs of your Lord and warned you of this day?’ They responded: ‘Indeed, (we have and they did) but the decree of punishment has been firmly established against the unbelievers.’	71	وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ رُجُومًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ حَارِثُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ
Enter ye the gates of Hell, to dwell therein: and evil is (this) Abode of the Arrogant!	72	قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ
And those who feared their Lord were led towards Paradise in groups/assemblies. As they arrived, its gates were opened, and its keepers said: ‘Peace be upon you; you have fared well and become pure; enter and dwell forever’	73	وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ الْجَنَّةِ رُجُومًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ حَارِثُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طَابْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ
And they said, ‘Praise belongs to God, who fulfilled His promise and made us inherit the earth [so] we may dwell in Paradise wherever we will.’ And excellent was the reward of [righteous] labors.	74	وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقْنَا وَعَدَهُ وَأَوْثَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ نَنبُؤًا مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ
And thou can see the angels encircling about the Throne exalting and proclaiming the praise of their Lord; and justly the issue shall be judged between them; and it shall be said, ‘Praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds.’	75	وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

2. Plural Instead of Singular Nouns

Certain Quran verses use plural instead of singular verbs even though the subject is clearly singular.

Chapter 26 - AlShu'ara (The Poets) Translation by Yusuf Ali		
The people of Lut rejected the messenger <u>s</u>	160	كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
Behold, their brother Lut said to them: ‘Will ye not fear (God)?’	161	إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ
I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust.	162	إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ
So fear God and obey me.’	163	فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

Verse 160 has the plural noun ‘messengers’ whereas the context in the following verses is singular. Moreover, nowhere in the Quran is it mentioned that more than one prophet, specifically Lut, reached out to his tribe. This raises a question: Why does the Quran state that the people of Lut rejected ‘messengers’ in the plural sense? Quran scholars and Arabic linguists believe this rhetorical technique is evidence of a divine author. How and why, you ask?

As mentioned in the ‘Transmission and Preservation of Divine Scriptures – An Islamic Perspective’ subsection page 19, the Quran states that God sent many prophets and messengers throughout time to different tribes and nations, with their primary message consistently being to glorify, worship, and serve the one and only God. Therefore, when a tribe rejects a messenger, they have in essence and in the eyes of the Creator, rejected all of His messengers throughout history. The plural sense of this verse delivers a powerful verdict of ‘guilty’ by the ultimate judge, as believed by Muslims.

But how do we know this isn't just a grammatical error that Muslims are trying to justify as extraordinary rhetoric? The answer is simple: similar rhetoric and grammatical exceptions can be found in other verses pertaining to various tribes or nations that rejected God's messengers²³. It is a consistent pattern when addressing this subject within the Quran.

TESTIMONIES BY DISBELIEVERS DURING THE TIME OF MUHAMMAD

Historically, during the time of Muhammad, the disbelievers in Mecca directed their efforts towards finding ways to stop the emergence of the new faith rather than challenging the eloquence and rhetoric of the Quran. This was because, in a culture that deeply appreciated poetry, many idol worshiper pagans admired the Quran but opposed a faith that required them to abandon their ancestral traditions and customs. The following is an account of a disbelieving man who devised a plan to counter the influence of the Quran. The plan he recommended below, more than his statements, serves as a testament to the Quran's literary superiority:

During the time of Muhammad (570-632), Mecca served as a gathering place for tribal poet geniuses from across the Arab wilderness who would converge during the pilgrimage season to participate in the annual cultural and poetry festivals²⁴. At the festival, poets showcase their talents before esteemed judges, seeking recognition. This large gathering presented a unique opportunity for Muhammad to convey the message of Islam to numerous remote pagan tribes within a short span of time. Muhammad planned to participate in the festival and contend with other poets by reciting verses from the Quran.

However, the pagan tribal leaders in Mecca, who were opposed to Muhammad's teachings, grew concerned and convened to devise a strategy that would prevent him from promoting Islam during the festivals. They selected a prominent and popular tribal leader named AlWalid bin (son of) AlMughirah, known for his wit, wealth, wisdom, knowledge, respect, bravery, and handsome looks and entrusted him with the task of listening to the Quran and suggesting ways to counter Muhammad's message during the annual festival.

²³ Verses with similar rhetoric in same chapter (26) include 105, 123, and 141

²⁴ The Arabic name is ‘Suwk Okaz’ festivals

AlMughirah attentively listened to the recitation of the Quran and found himself impressed by what he heard. Despite being assigned to find ways to challenge Muhammad's message, he openly expressed admiration for the Quran.

AlWalid bin AlMughirah

'By Allah²⁵, I've heard words that are not composed by humans, not even Jinn²⁶. The words have beauty and charm and they top all other (literary) forms (i.e., poetry, pros, saj', etc.)'

Upon hearing the news, one adamant tribal leader, nicknamed 'Abu Jahal', felt deeply dismayed fearing that AlWalid might be swayed towards embracing Islam. Abu Jahal craftily devised a plan to send AlWalid a message: if he converted to Islam, his tribe would reject him, leading to a loss of his status, wealth, leadership, and esteem. Abu Jahal went to great lengths to caution AlWalid, suggesting that if he adopted the Islamic faith, he would be reduced to a beggar relying on charity for his very survival. The trick worked on AlWalid who was born to a Roman slave. AlWalid met again with tribal leaders and said:

AlWalid bin AlMughirah

What words can I conceivably offer? There exists no individual among you more versed in poetry or prose than I am, not even among the Jinn. I solemnly swear by Allah, the manner in which he speaks bears no resemblance to any form of poetry or prose. By Allah, his expressions possess a sweetness, elegance, and enchantment that are unparalleled; the zenith of his speech is abundant with meaning, and even its least remarkable fragments overflow with richness. It commands attention and is impervious to being subdued, surpassing all other forms of expression. However, permit me some time to ponder and formulate my thoughts on how best to articulate my impression of it.²⁷

AlWalid contemplated the challenge before him and sought the counsel of similar wisemen to devise a suitable plan. Various ideas were proposed, such as spreading rumors among the visitors to Mecca that Muhammad was insane, a talented but deceptive poet, or some kind of monk. However, AlWalid rejected these suggestions, recognizing that there was no history to support such claims. Moreover, he understood that the majority of Meccans, including most tribal leaders, would testify to Muhammad's high regard and that would spoil the suggested plans.

In Mecca, many individuals who embraced Islam were disowned by their families or separated from their spouses. The challenges faced by these families inspired a fresh thought in AlWalid. The idea was to spread a rumor that Muhammad is a witch or sorcerer and whoever listened to his recitation of the mystical Quran would fall under a spell that would lead to the disintegration of their family, similar to the many families torn apart in Mecca. During that period, superstition was prevalent throughout the Arab wilderness. This scheme was perceived as brilliant by the tribal leaders, as it could be confirmed by Meccans who had experienced family breakups. They fully endorsed the plan and dispatched numerous messengers to the outskirts of Mecca, where they awaited arriving caravans. Their mission was to warn travelers about the alleged spell cast by Muhammad. The plan proved remarkably effective during that season, as visitors to Mecca actively avoided listening to Muhammad, blocking their ears with their hands as soon as they

25 The word "Allah" was used by Arab pagans, Christians, and Jews before and after the advent of Islam.

26 More about Jinn in Message 2: Purpose of Creating Humans, Life, Earth, and Heavens in page 38.

27 Reported by al-Hakim in 'al-Mustadrak' (2/506-507) and at-Tabari in 'Jami' al-Bayan' (29/156), and it is authentic]- Translation revised by ChatJPT

realized he was approaching. This tactic evolved to become the pagans' primary strategy to counter Muhammad and the message of the Quran for years to come.

AlWalid's strategy garnered strong and unequivocal divine condemnation, as he knowingly and deliberately went against the will and commands of God. He stands as one of the rare individuals who received specific revelations in the Quran outlining the repercussions he would face in the fires of hell²⁸. Some Muslims believe that, were it not for Al-Walid's intervention, a historic showdown of literary mastery might have taken place between Muhammad and Arabia's renowned poets, akin to the confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh's magicians. Muslims hold conflicting sentiments towards the widely respected AlWalid, given their belief that his prominence and stature led him astray, ultimately resulting in eternal damnation. The surname 'AlWalid' remains imprinted in the memory of many Muslims today, primarily because his son, Khalid bin (son of) AlWalid, who inherited his father's genius, embraced Islam and proceeded to become one of the most admired Muslim commanders and conquerors. Khalid's accomplishments include his simultaneous triumph over both the mighty Roman and Persian armies, which opened the roads to Africa, Europe, and Asia and paved the way for the expansion of Islam beyond the boundaries of the Arab Peninsula. Essentially, Khalid's accomplishments offset the setbacks caused by his father.

In conclusion, despite the large gathering of renowned literary talents in the region, who came specifically to challenge each other, none of the suggestions considered by AlWalid focused on challenging the Quran's literary merits. Successfully challenging the Quran would have invalidated the claim of a divine author. Muslims believe that the absence of any substantive challenges before or after the festivals, and throughout Muhammad's life, is a testament to the Quran's unmatched and uncontested literary superiority.

THE QURAN CHALLENGE

The Quran challenges skeptics to produce a single chapter that matches its beauty and truth (Quran 2:23-24). This challenge was issued in a society that held high regard for the spoken word, poetry, and prose. Throughout history, various poets have made numerous attempts to meet this challenge, but, according to Muslims, no one has successfully met this challenge to date. Even the best of what the challengers produced have been considered "a poor copy of the glittering splendor of the original." E.H. Palmer, a non-Muslim orientalist, explorer, and English linguist who mastered Arabic and translated the Quran into English, explains the reason as follows:

With the Prophet, the style was natural, and the words were those in every-day ordinary life, while with the later Arabic authors the style is imitative and the ancient words are introduced as a literary embellishment. The natural consequence is that their attempts look laboured and unreal by the side of his impromptu and forcible eloquence.²⁹

²⁸ Quran 74:11-30

²⁹ The Qur'ân translated by Edward Henry Palmer; Oxford, 1880 AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

More about past and present challengers and critics of the Quran in the upcoming supplement of The Recital.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

- The literary eloquence of the Quran has captivated Arabic speakers and reinforced their belief in its divine authorship throughout the centuries.
- Since the Quran's literary strength is diminished in translation, its elegance often remains unappreciated by non-Arabic speakers, contributing to the centuries-long cultural divide between Muslims and Christians.
- Muslims experience spiritual solace, individually or communally, through reciting God's Word, similar to how Christians are uplifted by hymns during worship.

Read in the Upcoming Supplement of The Recital:

- *Semitic Languages Serve A Divine Purpose.*
- *The Quran Is Free from Grammatical Errors by Definition.*
- *Why the Quran Is Untranslatable.*

CHAPTER 3

MYSTERIES, ERRORS, OR EXTRAORDINARY PHENOMENON

Various divine scriptures, including the Gospels and Quran, contain references to natural phenomena that were not fully understood at the time of their revelation/inspiration. These mysterious references have gradually become decipherable through the lens of modern science, suggesting a divine insight into the workings of the natural world. This chapter explores some of the unlocked and long-standing mysteries of the Quran.

Throughout history, Muslim scholars have grappled with the interpretation of numerous Quranic verses that incorporate new vocabulary, references to unfamiliar objects, obscure terms, unfamiliar descriptions of natural phenomena, matters pertaining to the unseen, and cryptic codes. Consequently, many Quran interpreters frequently concluded their commentaries with the phrase ‘and God knows best,’ to acknowledge uncertainty of the accuracy of their interpretations.

As human understanding of life and the universe has progressed, aided by word roots, many of these verses have become better understood. Recent scientific discoveries and advancements, predominantly in the Western world, have significantly contributed to unlocking secrets in some of these verses. Consequently, a substantial number of contemporary Muslims view the ambiguity in these verses as serving a vital purpose: they stand as evidence of a divine author, destined for discovery by future generations across all nations. This notion underscores one of the reasons Muslims consider the Quran to be a standing miracle, accessible for all of humanity to witness and appreciate.

Skeptics, conversely, have historically used and continue to use these puzzling verses to argue for a human author of the Quran, viewing the ambiguities as mistakes that Muslims explain away as mysteries. Muslims, on the other hand, believe that skeptics are rushing to conclusions and that human knowledge has simply not yet evolved to fully understand the Quran. *To fairly evaluate the Quran, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of all the scientific annotations, unlocked mysteries, and remaining unresolved ambiguities. Only with this complete perspective can one determine whether these are extraordinary findings or discrepancies.*

In the interest of fairness and impartiality, the Author welcomes commentary and critiques of anything mentioned in this book at the website www.TheRecital.org and will publish and respond to them on the same website.

EXAMPLES OF UNLOCKED MYSTERIES

1. Daylight Displays the Sun?

Quran 91- AlShams (The Sun) <i>Translation by A. J. Arberry with author edits in italic</i>		
By the sun and his morning brightness	1	وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا
And by the moon when she follows him (<i>the sun</i>)	2	وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا
and by the <i>daylight</i> when it displays him (<i>the sun</i>)	3	وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا

This verse is an example of how an obvious natural phenomenon is described from an unfamiliar perspective. Verse 3 is the mystery verse. It seems unusual to state that daylight 'displays' the sun, given that it is actually the sun that creates daylight. Could it be that the translation of the Arabic verb **Jallaaha** (جَلَّاهَا) as 'display' is not entirely accurate, although it is the term used in almost all other Quran translations? This Arabic verb conveys a range of meanings, including 'appear,' 'manifest,' and 'stand-out.' Yet, none of these seem to fully resonate with the verse's content! With God taking an oath by this particular natural phenomenon, a formidable challenge is presented to the believers: Is this an apparent error, or is it a piece of divine knowledge?

Note that a liar will say whatever is most convincing. However, this was not the case with Muhammad. The words he spoke openly challenged prevailing viewpoints, and he definitely was not seeking to appease others for their support. It is not surprising that some pagans at the time of Muhammad claimed that he was insane.

All early and prominent Quran interpreters, including Ibn Jareer (born 839 CE), Ibn Kathir (born 1300 CE), and Ibn Taymiyyah (born 1263 CE), struggled with this verse. Generally, they believed that the verse might have the words 'Earth' or 'Darkness' omitted because these were obvious, akin to the expression 'it blew north'. Alternatively, some theorized that 'it' or 'him' could refer to Earth or darkness rather than the Sun. They noted that some remote native Bedouin Arab tribes used similar rhetoric. However, all of these interpretations do not align well with the context.

This mystery was finally unlocked in the 20th century when US and other Western astronauts walked in space. During the day, Earth's atmosphere scatters sunlight, causing the sky to appear blue and the sun to be clearly visible as the brightest object. This scattering process makes the sun stand out during the day. High above earth where there is no atmosphere or day or night, it feels dark everywhere and the sun, similar to other stars, does not dominate the sky even though it is large and visible. Similarly, a light bulb doesn't stand out in a room that is painted black. In this case, it is accurate to state that light reflections, from bright white walls, make the light bulbs stand out.



<https://www.nasa.gov/image-feature/the-suns-rays-beam-into-the-camera-above-kazakhstan>

Because of this discovery, it is more likely that the intended meaning of the verb **Jallaahaa** (جَلَّأَهَا) is ‘stand out’ and not ‘appear’ or ‘display.’

2. Human Motion and Executive Functions Center

The term 'Nasiya' is an example of a common Arabic word that used in the Quran in unfamiliar context and perplexed scholars for ages. 'Nasiya' is typically translated as 'forelock,' 'forehead,' or, in some interpretations, 'person,' with its root word denoting 'forefront.' However, within the context of verses 15 and 16 below, none of the three translations seem to fit:

Chapter 96 – AlAlaq (The Clot) Translation by A. J. Arberry		
<i>The author replaced the word 'forelock' with the word 'nasiya' below</i>		
What thinkest thou? If he cries lies, and turns away -	13	أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى
Did he not know that God sees?	14	أَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى
No indeed; surely, if he gives not over, We shall seize him by the <i>nasiya</i>	15	كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهَ لِنَسْفَعْنَا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ
a lying, sinful <i>nasiya</i> ?	16	نَاصِيَةٍ كَذِبَةٍ خَاطِبَةٍ

Herein lies the puzzle:

Verse 15 implies that 'Nasiya' denotes a part of the human body that can be seized, whereas verse 16 indicates that this body part has the capacity to lie and sin. Which of the three translations or meanings – 'forelock', 'forehead', or 'person' – is applicable to both verses? Neither 'forelock' nor 'forehead' appears to fit the context accurately, as neither possesses the ability to deceive or mislead. The term 'person' is not viable linguistically, as one cannot say, “I will grab him by the person.” What a puzzle!

Below are some examples of how early scholars struggled with this verse:

- AlTabari (Died 923 AC): God expanded the definition of the word “Nasiya” to include the whole face. In this case, the face can both be seized and has the ability to lie and sin.
- Ibni Katheer (Died 1372 AC): Quoted other interpreters without commenting.
- AlQurtubi (Died 1273 AC): Verse 15 refers to forelock hair and verse 16 to a person -- this is, however, awkward because verse 16 clarifies the same word in verse 15.
- Samarkandi (Died 984 AC): Nasiya refers to a person (i.e., he ignored the improper linguistic use of the word in the verse.)

Thanks to medical breakthroughs in recent decades, however, this mystery has finally been resolved, providing clarity and coherence to the context. It is now understood that the brain's prefrontal cortex, situated just behind the forehead, governs both deceit AND voluntary muscle movements. Thus, it is accurate to state that one could be seized by the forehead which concurrently embodies the capacity for lying and sinning. Here are the references:

I. Executive functions:

All this deciding and self-control implies that lying is managed by the prefrontal cortex—the region at the front of the brain responsible for executive control, which includes such processes as planning and regulating emotions and behavior³⁰.

II. Voluntary movements:

The frontal lobes are the largest of the four lobes responsible for many different functions. These include motor skills such as voluntary movement, speech, intellectual and behavioral functions. The areas that produce movement in parts of the body are found in the primary motor cortex or precentral gyrus.³¹

3. Invisible Celestial Objects Sweep Away the Adjacent

The noun '*AlKhunnas*' is an example of how Semitic languages can serve a divine purpose, with the Trilateral Root System allowing messages to be conveyed to future, more knowledgeable generations. This new Arabic noun is introduced in the verse below, and raised a question at the time of Muhammad: What does '*AlKhunnas*' refer to?

Chapter 81 – Al-Takweer (The Cessation) <i>Translation by Ayman Alhasan</i>		
Why shall I not swear by <i>AlKhunnas</i>	15	فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ
(which) Sweeps away the adjacent	16	الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ

Because the root word conveys the meaning of 'out of sight,' the verse can be translated as follows: “Why shall I not swear by the Out-Of-Sight, (which) sweeps away the adjacent.” However, the root alone does not help in identifying the object. Early Quran interpreters mentioned that '*AlKhunnas*' refers to stars or planets, metaphorically describing stars that disappear when morning light arrives. Consequently, the term 'receding stars' is used in most

³⁰ Scientific American. <https://www.scientificamerican.com> – the Art of Lying.

³¹ American Association of Neurological Surgeons. A Neurosurgeon’s Overview the Brain’s Anatomy. <https://www.aans.org/>

contemporary Quran translations of this verse. However, this interpretation overlooks the context of the following verse and early interpreters simply ignored the “Sweeps away the adjacent” description.

Today, we can better guess the meaning of 'AlKhunnas'. Let's consider the clues:

- A. The fact that God swears by this proper noun indicates it is a significant creation.
- B. The root of the proper noun translates to 'out-of-sight.'
- C. Based on several early interpretations, it's a celestial object.
- D. Context of the verse: a significant and out-of-sight celestial object sweeps away 'the adjacent.'

In light of last century's astronomical discoveries, contemporary Muslim interpreters speculate that '*AlKhunnas*' might be the divine term for black holes or dark matter.



https://science.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/blackhole_1600.jpg?w=1280&format=webp

First Image of a Black Hole - NASA

EXAMPLES OF EXTRAORDINARY SCIENTIFIC REFERENCES

Tens or hundreds of scientific insights, references, or annotations can be derived from the Quran. These references are worded in simple terms and were well understood and accepted as stated at the time of Muhammad but beyond anyone's ability to challenge or confirm at that time. Some of them are also found in the Holy Bible, others are public knowledge before the advent of Islam, but some have been scientifically proven only in the last few decades or are currently in research. Many of these scientific references are published by various authors or can be found on websites³². As you read the examples below, keep in mind that the Quran was written fourteen centuries ago:

1. According to the Quran, there are underwater waves in the deep darkness of vast oceans?

³² Example book and website: I. A. Ibrahim, 11/17/2022. A Brief Illustrated Guild to Understanding Islam. <https://www.amazon.com/Brief-Illustrated-Guide-Understanding-Islam/dp/9960340112> - Last access 8/10/2023.

Chapter 24:40 - AlNoor (The Light)

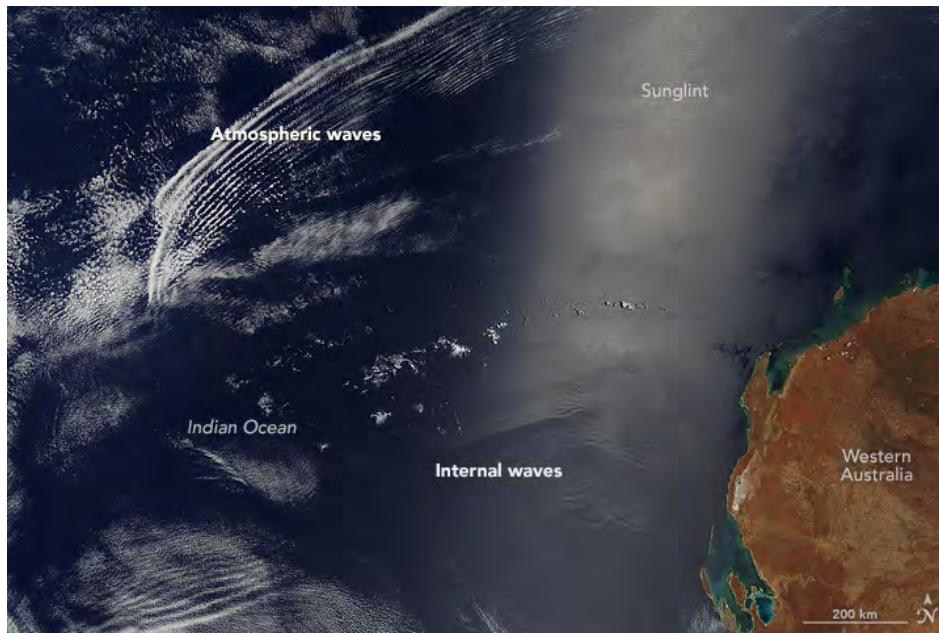
Translation by Maarif-ul-Quran

Or (their deeds) are like layers of darkness in a vast deep sea overwhelmed by a wave, above which there is another wave, above which there are clouds - layers of darkness, one above the other. When one puts forth his hand, he can hardly see it. And the one to whom God does not give light can have no light at all.

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لَجِيٍّ
يَعْتَسَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ
مِنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظَلُمَاتٌ
بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا
أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَرَاهَا وَ
مَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا
فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ

This verse seems to refer to the research currently in progress by NASA in conjunction with a coalition of several universities about underwater waves in the ocean. Check the verse and then the two quotations by IWISE and NASA:

- A. “Newly discovered giant underwater waves are the subject of a huge international research project called IWISE (Internal Waves in Straits Experiment) aimed at figuring out how huge waves form and dissipate in the deep”³³.
- B. “Internal waves are quirky phenomena that were scarcely known to science until the satellite era. They can be hundreds of meters tall and tens to hundreds of kilometers long. Enhanced by sunglint in the image below, these long wave forms moving across the sea surface are a visible manifestation of slow waves moving tens to hundreds of meters beneath the sea surface.”³⁴



³³ Erin Blakemore, May 13, 2015 “Revealing the Deep Secrets of the Deepwater Waves” The Smithsonian Magazine. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/there-are-enormous-waves-under-ocean-180955243/> - Last accessed 8/10/2023.

³⁴ Carlowicz and Holli Riebeck, February 10, 2016 Waves Above and Below Water. NASA Earth Observatory <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/87519/waves-above-and-below-the-water> - Last accessed 8/10/2023

2. Other Examples Extraordinary Scientific References

There are potentially hundreds of websites that elaborate on the miracles of the Quran. However, ensure that you consult reputable mainstream Islamic websites and avoid those that are cynical or misleading. Some possible topics to explore include:

A. Unfolding: Word Counts in the Quran

The frequency of certain words in the Quran appears to hold significance. For example, the word "sea" is mentioned 32 times, while "land" appears 13 times. This ratio—approximately 71% sea to 29% land—mirrors the Earth's water-to-land ratio. These counts, along with other meaningful numerical patterns, can be easily verified using AI tools like ChatGPT.

B. Cosmological Views

The Quran describes the heavens and the Earth as once being united before being separated, aligning with the "Big Bang" theory.

C. Mountains in Motion

Mountains are described as moving like clouds, a description consistent with the theory of plate tectonics.

D. The Protective Sky

The Quran uses terms like "reflection" and "protection" to describe the sky, aligning with the atmosphere's role in shielding the Earth from cosmic rays and other harmful elements by reflecting them.

E. Embryological Stages

The Quran discusses embryonic development using terminology that accurately describes the stages of fetal growth.

F. Cosmic Imagery

The Quran describes cosmic bodies with terms like "flower paintings."



<https://www.nasa.gov/image-article/cats-eye-nebula/>

More Suggested Websites:

A. www.miracles-of-quran.com/

B. <https://www.islamreligion.com/category/122/scientific-miracles-of-holy-quran>

EXAMPLES OF UNRESOLVED MYSTERIES

1. Codes, acronyms, or disconnected letters?

Twenty-nine chapters in the Quran start with verses that have combinations of one to five disconnected Arabic letters³⁵. The meaning of these letters is not known. They seem like acronyms or abbreviations. Many scholars researched them but have not come up with solid conclusions. The following is the transliteration of all the letters: ALM, ALMS, ALR, ALMR, KHYES, TH, TS, TSM, YS, S, HM, ESQ, Q, and N. Here are some early Muslim scholars' comments about this subject:

- This is the way God starts his words. It's his style. Take it as it is.
- They are possible abbreviations of unknown names or attributes of God.
- Jews who tried to interpret these letters, during the time of Muhammad, suggested these might be timelines in the same way that the Tanakh (Jewish scriptures) associate letters with numbers.
- They might be acronyms or words of some foreign language transliterated to Arabic.

Today, the disconnected letters remain a mystery.

2. Sunset in "hot eye"?

Chapter 18:86 - AlKahf (The Cave) <i>Translation by Dr. Mustafa Khattab</i>	
Until, when he reached the setting of the sun [i.e., the west], he found it [as if] setting in a body of dark water, ¹ and he found near it a people. We [i.e., Allāh] said, "O Dhul-Qarnayn, either you punish [them] or else adopt among them [a way of] goodness."	حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا قُلْنَا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا

The Quran recounts the tale of a great conqueror who journeyed to the edges of a certain realm. On the eastern side, he encountered a nation living in the open, without many shelters. On the western side, he witnessed the sunset in a perplexing context described as either "hot eye," "hot water," "murky eye," or "murky water" (the Arabic words have multiple meanings). Over the course of history, Muslim scholars grappled with this verse. Where did this conqueror land, and from where did he witness this sunset? Could it be that he observed the sunset from the Black Sea when it was possibly covered with black sludge,³⁶ from which it got its name? The shores of Alaska's rusting waters after some rivers and streams turned orange³⁷ and he could not pass them because of the toxicity? Gazed upon the Nisyros volcano's fiery eruptions in the Islands west of Turkey, or perhaps witnessed the vapor of a geyser emerging from some distant isle? No one seems to know the answers.

³⁵ The Arabic term to refer to the disconnected letters is *Muqattaat* or *Muqatta'at* (الحروف المتقطعة)

³⁶ Irina Dreyvitser, March 5, "Why are the Seas named Black, White, and Yellow?" Smithsonian Science Education Center. <https://ssec.si.edu/stemvisions-blog/why-are-seas-named-black-white-and-yellow#:~:text=There%20are%20a%20number%20of,hydrogen%20sulfide%20in%20the%20sea>. Last access 8/10/2023.

³⁷ <https://phys.org/news/2024-05-alaska-rusting-pristine-rivers-streams.html>

3. Seven Cascaded Heavens?

Chapter 71:15 - Nouh (Noah) <i>Translation by Dr. Mustafa Khattab</i>	
Do you not see how God created seven heavens, one above the other	أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا

While we readily recognize the visible sky as the boundary of our atmosphere, followed by the solar system, and extending to galaxies beyond, the question arises: where precisely do these seven cascaded heavens align within this scheme? “Even though certain features of the universe seem to require the existence of a multiverse, nothing has been directly observed that suggests it actually exists. So far, the evidence supporting the idea of a multiverse is purely theoretical, and in some cases, philosophical.”³⁸ Some multiverse theories inspired in the West include the twin-world, cyclic, and M theories. Some Muslim thinkers and writers have not only contributed to existing theories that discuss the origins of the universe, derived from verses that touch upon this subject, but they have also developed numerous novel hypotheses. Notable among these are theories of 'Seven Parallel Universes' and 'Universe Creation Timeline', as well as hypotheses concerning 'Time Dilation', 'Dark Matter', 'Dark Energy', and the concept of 'Parallel Spacetime Fabrics'³⁹. As of today, however, the seven heavens remain without a definitive answer, neither affirmed nor denied.

Chapter 3 Conclusion

The unveiling of scientific insights within the original authentic scriptures—whether the Torah, the Gospels, or the Quran—testifies to their divine origin. As scientific discovery advances, it ultimately does not stand in opposition to God’s Word. Rather, it reveals deeper layers of wisdom that God, in His infinite knowledge, has embedded in His Scriptures for millennia. Each new insight underscores the supernatural nature of these sacred texts, further affirming the majesty of God's eternal truth.

Read in the Upcoming Supplement of The Recital:
Contemporary Critics of the Quran’s Scientific Claims

³⁸ Nadia Drak, 3/13/2023, What is the multiverse—and is there any evidence it really exists? “National Geographic”. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/what-is-the-multiverse#:~:text=Even%20though%20certain%20features%20of,and%20in%20some%20cases%2C%20philosophical.>

³⁹ Amin Nureddin 4/20/2022, “The Purpose of Everything. Book (2) Scientific Interpretations of the Qur’an – Case Studies”. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. National Library (2022/12/6056). <https://a.co/d/aPzft49>

CHAPTER 4

PRIMARY MESSAGES OF THE QURAN



Important notes about Quran rhetoric:

- *When God refers to Himself in the Quran, He employs both the singular 'I' and the majestic plural 'We.' Intimate verses employ the singular 'I,' while verses that reflect on His might, authority, or other similar expressions employ the majestic plural 'We.'*
- *Verses that speak of God's attributes (i.e., might, power, knowledge, etc.) usually take the third person point of view.*
- *In Arabic language, masculine verbs apply to males, females, non-binary (angels, jinn, etc.,) animals, etc. Feminine verbs apply only to females.*

MESSAGE 1: AUTHOR INTRODUCES HIMSELF

I am 'Allah'

To correctly pronounce the word 'Allah,' utter only the underlined letters in this sequence:

Altar + Laud + H

Quran 20:14 Ta-Ha (chapter name consists of acronyms)

Translation by Mustafa Khattab

It is truly I. I am Allah! There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Me. So worship Me 'alone', and establish prayer for My remembrance.

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا
فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ
لِذِكْرِي

Below is a screenshot of an English-Aramaic dictionary (www.atour.com) showing the definition and pronunciation of the word ‘God’ in the language spoken by Jesus.

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Atour.com dictionary. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home' and 'Aramaic Lexicon and Concordance'. Below this is a search bar with the text 'Enter Word to Search:' and a 'Search' button. There are also radio buttons for 'English Search Field' (English word (default) selected) and 'Aramaic Search Field' (Aramaic word, Lexeme, Root). A 'Popular dictionary searches' section lists various terms like 'greetings', 'language', 'learn', 'love', 'family', 'God', etc. Below the search bar is a 'SHARE THIS INFORMATION' section with various social media icons.

The main content area is divided into two columns: 'Lexicon' and 'Concordance'. Under 'Lexicon', the word is shown in Aramaic script: 'ܐܠܗܐ'. Below it, the 'Lexeme' and 'Root' are also shown in Aramaic script: 'ܐܠܗܐܐ' and 'ܐܠܗܐ' respectively. The 'Word Number' is 904. The 'Meaning' is 'God'. The 'Pronunciation' is given as '(Eastern) AaLaH' and '(Western) AaLoH', with a large black arrow pointing to the Eastern pronunciation. The 'Part of Speech' is 'Noun', 'Gender' is 'Masculine', 'Person' is blank, 'Number' is 'Singular', 'State' is 'Absolute', 'Tense' is blank, 'Form' is blank, 'Suffix Gender' is blank, 'Suffix Person' is blank, 'Suffix Number' is 'Singular', and 'Lexeme Form' is blank.

Under 'Concordance', there are three entries: '1Corinthians - 8:4', 'Ephesians - 2:12', and '2Thessalonians - 2:4'.

https://www.atour.com/cgi-bin/dictionary.cgi?string=God&Search_Field=Meaning Last accessed 1/26/2024

I am the creator, owner, controller, and maintainer of EVERYTHING including life and death:

Quran 39:62 AlZumur (The Assemblies) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Maintainer of everything	اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

Quran 57:2 AlHadid (The Iron) <i>Translation by A. J. Arberry</i>	
To Him belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He gives life, and He makes to die, and He is powerful over everything.	لَهُ مَلِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

We, Allah, revealed the Quran to Muhammad

Quran 12:2 Yusuf (Joseph) <i>Translation by Abdel Haleem</i>	
Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran, so that you may understand.	إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

Quran 53:3-4 AlNajm (The Star) <i>Translation by Abdel Haleem</i>		
he does not speak from his own desire.	3	وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ
The Quran is nothing less than a revelation that is sent to him.	4	إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

MESSAGE 2: PURPOSE OF CREATING HUMANS, LIFE, EARTH, AND HEAVENS

[Italicized statements within square brackets offer commentary and analogies drawn from the author's understanding of the Quran. These analogies explore parallels between human creation and the development of intelligent, autonomous robots or androids.]

Purpose of Human Creation: Autonomous and Intelligent Servants

God created humanity to serve and glorify Him. In the Quran, He often refers to people as ‘‘ibād,’ a term rooted in the essence of ‘servants,’ ‘worshippers,’ ‘submitters,’ ‘adorers,’ or ‘slaves.’ For the purposes of this book, we will translate ‘‘ibād’ as ‘servants.’

While the term ‘servant’ may carry a connotation of subservience for some, consider it instead as a noble vocation, akin to the esteemed roles of public servants or corporation employees. Just as congressmen dedicate themselves to their constituents and employees fulfill their duties to their employers in exchange for a salary, so too do we have the privilege of serving our Creator.

Serving God is not merely a duty; it is a dignified and honorable calling, rich with rewards that surpass our wildest imaginations.

Quran 51:56 AlThariyat (The Winnowing Winds) <i>Translation by Abul Ala Maududi</i>	
I created the jinn and humans for nothing else but that they may serve Me	وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

Human servants, however, are different from other creations⁴⁰ because they are:

- A. Autonomous: Humans possess free will, and can make good or bad decisions, obey or disobey, and bear the consequences.
- B. Intelligent: Can learn, accumulate, apply, and evolve knowledge and become more effective and/or powerful.
- C. Created from Earthly Matter: Human beings are created from clay and, unlike Angels or Jinn⁴¹, are inherently bound to Earth for survival. The nature of human souls is not disclosed in the Quran, with no indication that they possess independent mobility.

⁴⁰ One example are the ‘Angels’, they do not seem to have freewill.

⁴¹ According to various verses and traditions, Jinn are created from fire, Angels from light, and humans from clay. Like humans, Jinn possess free will and were created to serve God. While Jinn share some physical characteristics with Angels, their purpose aligns more closely with that of humans. Jinn prefer not to live among humans and have their own distinct realms. The Quran recounts a time when Jinn were mixed with Angels and subject to the same divine commands. Eventually, Jinn were barred from heaven and are now dealt with similarly to humans. Among the Jinn, there are righteous believers, including Christians and Muslims, as well as rebels like devils, including Satan and Lucifer. Quran chapter 72 speaks exclusively about Jinn,

The next natural question is why does God want autonomous and intelligent humans? One verse might provide the reason:

Quran 2:30 AlBaqara (The Cow) <i>English Translation Yusuf Ali</i>	
Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.'	وَإِذْ قِيلَ لِمَلَكَةٍ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

It seems like God desires to create servants who can take on decision-making roles within specific spheres or domains, in this case, on Earth. Note that the afterlife where humans will live seems to also be on a place called “Earth” though its nature is not known.

Quran 14:48 Ibrahim (Abraham) <i>English Translation Khattab</i>	
'Watch for' the Day 'when' the earth will be changed into a different earth and the heavens as well, and all will appear before Allah—the One, the Supreme.	يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

[The creation of humans can be likened to the development of sovereign androids equipped with artificial intelligence (AI) which can be trained to make decisions on behalf of humans and serve in confined areas.]

Muslims, Christians, and Jews each hold distinct views about their relationship with God and their roles in the world. Christians believe they are the children of God, created in His image, and called to glorify and love Him, which shapes their specific cultural values. Jews view themselves as chosen by God to fulfill a unique mission in the world, according to their covenant with Him, which also influences distinct cultural expressions. In contrast, Islamic teachings emphasize servitude to God, guiding Muslims to glorify and obey Him, fostering a culture of humility:

1. The term 'Muslim,' meaning 'one who submits or surrenders' to God, profoundly shapes the self-perception of mainstream Muslims, fostering a deep sense of humbleness
2. The five daily prayers, involving repetitive acts of bowing and prostrating to God (at least 34 times every day), are not merely rituals but significant acts of humility.
3. The phrase 'I bear witness that there is no God except Allah, and Muhammad is His servant and messenger,' reiterated during the five daily prayers, continually reminds Muslims that even Muhammad, their role model, is also a servant of God.
4. Many of the prayers (supplications) that Muslims make emphasize the servant self-perception. Here are two popular prayers Muhammad used to make and asked his followers to make:
 - O Allah, Indeed, I am Your servant, the son of Your servant, and the son of Your maidservant. My forelock is in Your hand, Your decree over me prevails, and Your Judgment of me is just. I call upon You by every one of Your names, which You have named Yourself, revealed in Your Book, taught to any of Your creation, or preserved in the knowledge of the unseen: Make the Quran the spring of my heart, the light in my chest, the banisher of my sorrow, and the reliever of my distress.

- O Allah - You are my Lord; there is no deity worthy of worship but You. You have created me, and I am Your servant. I uphold Your covenant and Your promise to the best of my ability. I seek refuge in You from the evil of my deeds. I acknowledge Your grace upon me and confess my sins. Therefore, forgive me, for no one forgives sins except You.
5. Common Muslim names like Abdul-Kareem, Abdul-Rahman, Abdul-Jabbar, or Abdullah also reflect the self-perception of servitude. 'Abdul' translates to 'servant of,' and is followed by one of God's names. Muslims reinforce their roles as servants of the divine each time they address one another in their daily interactions.

Muslims believe that their self-identification as servants of God, coupled with the repetitive Islamic rituals that consistently emphasize humility, may explain why notions of supremacy are historically absent in Muslim culture.

A verse in the Quran states that God, in His divine wisdom, could have united all believers into a single community. Yet, He has chosen instead to test each according to what He has entrusted to them. This verse also points to God's encouragement for Christians, Jews, and Muslims to compete in the pursuit of righteousness, with God Himself as the ultimate judge in the life to come. Why would God do this? Considering that our time on Earth is a season of testing, it is possible that God is evaluating which kind of relationship with His creation best fulfills His purpose for humanity.

Chapter 5:48 – AlMaeda (The Table) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
<p>..... To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given "each of" you. So compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you "of the truth" regarding your differences.</p>	<p>.... لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِنَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ</p>

The Risks of Creating Intelligent and Autonomous Servants?

Can God's intelligent and free-willed creations disobey His orders in heaven? The Torah, New Testament, and Quran do mention instances where God's creations have been depicted as disobeying God's orders or making choices that deviate from His commands. Here is the Quran's version:

- A. Satan defied God's directive in heaven, refusing to prostrate before Adam out of pride.

Quran 7 - AlAraf (The Heights) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
<p>Surely We created you, then shaped you, then said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam,' so they all did—but not Iblis (Satan) who refused to prostrate with the others.</p>	<p>11 وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ</p>

Allah asked, ‘What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?’ He replied, ‘I am better than he is: You created me from fire and him from clay.’	12	قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ
Said He, ‘Then get down (out of) it; so, in no way is it for you to be <i>proud</i> therein; then go out; surely you are among the belittled.’	13	قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَّكِبَ فِيهَا فَأَخْرَجَ مِنْكَ مِنَ الصُّعُورِيِّينَ

Pride and ego appear to be notable challenges in heaven, as various scriptures and traditions address the Creator's ways and means to deal with them ⁴². This issue might explain why Islam nurtures a culture of humility as detailed above.

Quran 7:206 AlAraf (The Heights) <i>Translation by Muhammad Hijab</i>	
Lo! those who are with thy Lord are <i>not too proud</i> to do Him service, but they praise Him and prostrate before Him.	إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ

B. Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s orders in heaven when they ate from the forbidden tree.

Quran 20:121 Ta-Ha (chapter name consists of acronyms) <i>Translation by Abul Ala Maududi</i>	
.. Thus Adam disobeyed his Lord and strayed into error	.. وَعَصَى آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى

C. Finally, in the verse below, God informs the angels of His intention to place decision-makers on Earth to represent Him, and the angels express their concerns regarding the potential for wrongdoing and bloodshed. This concern mirrors modern-day debates about the consequences of creating intelligent and autonomous androids:

The Quran 2:30 AlBaqara (The Cow) <i>English Translation Yusuf Ali</i>	
Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: ‘I will create a vicegerent on earth.’ They said: ‘Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?- whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?’ He said: ‘I know what ye know not.’	وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Purpose of the Creation of the Heavens and Earth: Testing Zone

A. God created the heavens and earth as testing ground.

⁴² One tradition, for instance, describes how God will send anyone who struggles with arrogance, ego, or pride to endure purification in Hell until such traits are relinquished.

Quran 11:7 Hud (Transliterated Chapter Name) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days in order to test which of you is best in deeds.	وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ.... لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

[Imagine building an airtight, isolated, and locked area or zone to test androids equipped with AI. The androids are designed to break down or shut down if they venture beyond the boundaries of the testing area and breathe fresh air, ensuring the safety of the community.]

B. The testing ground or zone is isolated and fortified:

In the Quran, God challenges humans to breakout of the heavens and earth, the testing zone.

Quran 53:33 AlRahman (The Compassionate) <i>English Translation Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali & Muhammad Muhsin Khan</i>	
O assembly of jinn and men! If you have power to (<i>penetrate</i>) the zones of the heavens and the earth, then pass beyond (them)! But you will never be able to (<i>penetrate</i>) them, except with authority (from Allah)!	يَمْعَشِرَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنْ أَسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنِ

Purpose of Temporary Life on Earth: Human Testing and Ranking

God gives newly created human beings a finite life on Earth. The objective is to assess their fitness or competence as servants of God. During this temporary life, they acquire knowledge, are exposed to divine guidance, and made to experience a variety of conditions, some are extreme, to develop their intelligence and behavioral values and principles. Their performance determines their fitness to serve God, ranking, and dwelling place in the afterlife.

Quran 67:2 AlMulk (The Dominion) <i>Translation by T. B. Irving</i>	
the One Who created death and life (<i>on earth</i>), so He may test which of you is finest in action. He is the Powerful, the Forgiving	الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

Quran 21:35 AlAnbia (The Prophets) <i>Translation by Muhammad Hijab</i>	
Every soul shall taste death. We will test you (all) with something bad and something good as a trial; then to Us will you be returned!	كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَنَبْلُوكُمْ بِالْأَسْرِ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً ۗ وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

God pledges to abundantly compensate those who are subjected to violent or harsh conditions if they maintain their faith or if they are not held responsible for their beliefs or actions⁴³.

According to Islamic traditions, life on Earth is one of three consecutive lives that humans will undergo before the final dwelling place is determined.

[Imagine temporarily energizing intelligent androids in an isolated testing zone to evaluate and rank their behavior.]

The Fundamental Principle of Equality of ALL Human Beings

[Unless intelligent androids undergo a fair test, ranking results might not be accurate.]

The Quran states that the most honored in the sight of God is the most righteous, regardless of race, nationality, ancestry, Chosen or Covenant status (refer to “ The Chosen People and God’s Covenant” in page 76 for more information), or previous religious affiliation. This reflects a fundamental principle in Islam: all people are equal in their potential to achieve righteousness and divine favor through sincere belief, good deeds, and grace. Note below that the purpose of creating nations, tribes, races, and ethnicities is just a way for humans to distinguish and refer to each other and no one is superior.

Quran 67:2 AlMulk (The Dominion) <i>Translation by T. B. Irving</i>	
<p>O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).</p>	<p>يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ</p>

Satan’s presence and role are part of God's testing plan

Although Adam and Eve were aware of the forbidden tree, they did not contemplate eating from it until the devil intervened. This possibly implies that humans, in general, seem intrinsically inclined towards obedience and consider transgressions when influenced by external negative enticements⁴⁴. Muhammad would pray for the protection of even children from Satan. Thus, the Devil plays a crucial role in testing human decision-making on Earth. According to the following verses, God has permitted Satan to play the role of the devil and deceive humans throughout their existence and until the end of the testing phase.

⁴³ According to Islamic teachings, anyone who did not reach the age of puberty or did not receive God’s messages or those with mental illnesses are not held accountable for their beliefs or behavior or anything at all.

⁴⁴ Muslims believe that all humans are born sinless and are not responsible for the sins of their ancestors. Nevertheless, traditions show that all humans are imperfect and will sin.

Quran 15 - AlHijr (The Rocky Tract) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>		
Allah commanded, ‘Then get out of Paradise, for you are truly cursed	34	قَالَ فَأَخْرِجْ مَعَهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ
And surely upon you is condemnation until the Day of Judgment’	35	وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
Satan appealed, ‘My Lord! Then delay my end until the Day of their resurrection’	36	قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ
Allah said, ‘You will be delayed	37	قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ
until the appointed Day’	38	إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ
My Lord! For allowing me to stray I will surely tempt them on earth and mislead them all together	39	قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ
except Your chosen servants among them	40	إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

Final Servant and Dwelling Categories and Ranks

The Quran and Islamic traditions describe the end results including servant categories and dwelling ranks in Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannam (Hell).

A. The Three Main Servant Categories:

i. Frontrunners:

The Frontrunners are the highest achievers across various categories: worshiping, glorifying, and loving God, extending acts of compassion or goodwill to others, the breadth of their righteous acts, aiding those in need, advocating for divine causes, demonstrating inner piety and reverence, striving to disseminate God's message, persevering in the cause of God, and self-sacrifice through martyrdom, etc. Predominantly, the frontrunners are from the earliest generations of Muslims, although a modest number are from later periods. Frontrunners have two distinct honors:

A. Proximity to the throne: Keep in mind that serving and viewing God is the ultimate bliss and joy in heaven, by design.

B. They have servants of their own: This can be a major advantage given what humans are going through to qualify to serve.

ii. People of the Right

People of the Right constitute the majority of inhabitants in Paradise.

iii. People of the Left

People of the left are the inhabitants of hell fire.

The verses below speak of the three categories:

Chapter 56:10-56 Alwaqiah (The Inevitable)

Translation by Mustafa Khattab with author edits in Brackets

<p>.. and the (<i>Frontrunners</i>) * those are brought <i>near</i> the Throne, * in the Gardens of Delight * a crowd from early generation of believers * and few of the later generation of believers * upon close couches of well-woven cloth * reclining upon them, set face to face, * immortal youths going round about them * with glasses, pitchers, and a cup from a spring * no headaches, no intoxication * and such fruits as they shall choose, * and such flesh of birds as they desire, * and wide-eyed maidens * as the likeness of hidden pearls, * a recompense for that they laboured. * Therein they shall hear no idle talk, no cause of sin, * only the saying 'Peace, Peace!'</p>	<p>وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ * أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ * فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ * ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأُولَى * وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ * عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَوْضُونَةٍ * مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَلِّبِينَ * يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخَلَّدُونَ * بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقٍ وَكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ * لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْفَرُونَ * وَفِيهَا مِمَّا يَحْتَمِرُونَ * وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ * وَخَوْرٍ عَيْنٍ * كَأَمْثَلِ اللَّوْلِيِّ الْمَكْنُونِ * جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ * لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْتِيهَا * إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا</p>
<p>The People of the Right, O people of the Right! * mid thornless lote-trees * and serried acacias, * and spreading shade * and outpoured waters * and fruits abounding, unfailing, unforbidden and elevated recliners. * Perfectly We formed them, perfect * and We made them spotless, virgins * chastely amorous * like of age for the People of the Right * A crowd from early generation of believers * and a crowd of the later generation of believers.</p>	<p>وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ * فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ * وَطَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ * وَظِلٍّ مَّمْدُودٍ * وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ * وَفِكْهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ * لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ * وَفُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ * إِنَّا أَنشَأْنَهُمْ إِنثَاءً * فَجَعَلْنَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا * غُرَبًا أَزْوَاجًا * لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ * ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأُولَى * وَثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ</p>
<p>The People of the Left, O people of the Left! * mid burning winds and boiling waters * and the shadow of a smoking blaze * neither cool, neither goodly * and before that they lived at ease * and persisted in the Great Sin * ever saying, 'What, when we are dead and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be raised up * What? and our fathers, the ancients * Say: 'The ancients, and the later folk shall be gathered to the appointed time of a known day * Then you erring ones, you that cried lies * you shall eat of a tree called Zakkoum * and you shall fill therewith your bellies * and drink on top of that boiling water * lapping it down like thirsty camels * This shall be their hospitality on the Day of Doom</p>	<p>وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ * فِي سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ * وَظِلٍّ مِنْ يَحْتُمُونَ * لَا بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ * إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ * وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحَنثِ الْعَظِيمِ * وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَنَذَا مُبْتَلًا وَكُنَّا نُزَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَخْيَبْنَا لَهُمْ * أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْأُولَى * قُلْ إِنَّ الْأُولَى وَالْآخِرِينَ * لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَى مِيعَةٍ يُوعَدُونَ * ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيْهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكْذِبُونَ * لَأَكَلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِنْ زَقُّومٍ * فَمَالِئُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ * فَشَرِبُوا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ الْحَمِيمِ * فَشَرِبُوا شَرِبَ الْهَيْمِ * هَذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ</p>

B. Dwelling Ranks:

According to Islamic traditions, Paradise consists of multiple tiers, each has a different designation. The upper half of Paradise is divided into one hundred tiers and is reserved for the Frontrunners. The very highest tier, adjacent to the throne, is set aside for only a single individual. Those dwelling in the lower tiers have the ability to look upon the dwellings of higher tiers. When Muhammad's companions asked if he would occupy that singular highest position, he stated that it was not guaranteed—it could be Muhammad, Jesus, Abraham, or someone else. While God promised Muhammad a very eminent place, the exact details were not disclosed. Muhammad asked his companions to make a special prayer for God to grant him

that highest dwelling. Nowadays and after hearing the ‘Azan’ or call to prayer, Muslims frequently make a special supplication for Muhammad to be bestowed with this highest honor.

C. Life in Jannah (Garden of Eternity or Paradise):

The Quran repeatedly elaborates on the ultimate prize and reward the Creator has prepared for His obedient servants. Jannah is beyond imagination and has what no eye has ever seen, what no ear has ever heard and what no mind could ever imagine. When you think of a feature of Jannah, the only thing it shares with its worldly counterpart is the name.

The verses describe living conditions where human sensory desires (i.e., vision, taste, smell, touch, hearing) and happiness are fully fulfilled. Everyone is beautiful, radiant, young, happy, and pleased without any pain, hatred, or negative feelings and the greeting words are ‘peace - peace’. This pleasure definitely includes fulfillment of sexual desires, lust, etc. where one cannot even stop gazing for years⁴⁵ at the stunning beauty, figures, eyes, skin, purity, etc., of their many partners let alone intercourse.

Quran 36 Ya-Sin (Chapter name is an acronym) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>		
Indeed, on that Day the residents of Paradise will be busy enjoying themselves.	55	إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغُلٍ فَاكِهُونَ
They and their spouses will be in ‘cool’ shade, reclining on ‘canopied’ couches.	56	هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلِّ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَكِبُونَ

Quran 4:57 AlNisa (The Women) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
And as for those who believe and do good works, We shall make them enter Gardens underneath which rivers flow - to dwell therein forever; there for them are pure spouses - and We shall make them enter plenteous shade.	وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيلًا

In Jannah, hearts burst with love and gratitude to the Creator. Everyone constantly glorifies and praise Him ‘as easily as you breathe’ and it is all by design. Finally, note that no verses of the Quran speak of fulfilling aspirational desires that are related to one’s social status, power, leadership, etc.

⁴⁵ Keep in mind that time is relative.

MESSAGE 3: THE CORE PILLARS OF FAITH

The foundational beliefs to which every Muslim adheres underscore the sovereign will of God and His grand design, placing the emphasis not on any individual patriarch, prophet, or messenger—including Muhammad—but on the overarching narrative shared among the three main Abrahamic faiths. It's crucial to recognize that verses of the Quran detailing these core tenets of Islam—known as the articles of faith—do not mention 'Islam,' 'Muslims,' 'Quran', or 'Muhammad.' Instead, they employ terms that resonate universally across Jewish, Christian, and Islamic doctrines, allowing for interpretations that align with the tenets of all three faiths. In other words, the verses below can be attributed to all prophets, patriarchs, and messengers and would be valid in their times.

Quran 2-285 Al-Baqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
The Messenger 'firmly' believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. They 'all' believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, and His messengers. 'They proclaim,' "We make no distinction between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and obey. 'We seek' Your forgiveness, our Lord! And to You 'alone' is the final return."	ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ
Quran 2-177 Al-Baqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
... it is righteousness- to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ...
Quran 4-152 Al-Nisa (The Women) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
To those who believe in Allah and His messengers and make no distinction between any of the messengers, we shall soon give their (due) rewards: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.	وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ أُولَئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

As such the articles of faith in Islam effect Muslim perspectives and narratives as follows:

- A. God (i.e., the father) remains the supreme focus in all aspects of faith and life.
- B. Muslims approach divine scriptures with a perspective that aligns each message within the scope of God's grand plan for humanity. Consequently, when they examine the New Testament, they often perceive most theological elements as resonating harmoniously at their times with Islamic teachings.
- C. Islam emphasizes an intimate, direct relationship with God—the Most Compassionate—, fostering a deeply personal connection with the Divine.

1. Faith in the One True God

Faith in Allah entails a steadfast affirmation of His existence, sovereignty, and divine nature, along with an unwavering belief in His Names and Attributes. This faith is held without alteration, denial, or likening Him to any part of His creation.

A. God want's people to know Him through his names:

The Quran reveals that God is known by many names, each reflecting His benevolent nature and designed for the good of humanity. He desires His followers to embrace, invoke, comprehend, and employ these names in their praise and worship of Him, as these names encompass His divine attributes.

Chapter 7:180 - AlAraf (The Heights) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
Allah has the Most Beautiful Names. So call upon Him by them, and keep away from those who abuse His Names. They will be punished for what they used to do.	وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۖ وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

B. God's Names

Chapter 59 - Al-Hashr (The Exhile) <i>Translation by A. J. Arberry</i>	
He is Allah; there is no god but He. He is the King, the All-holy, the All-peaceable, the All- faithful, the All-preserver, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, the All-sublime. Glory be to God, above that they associate!	23 هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّبُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ
He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful. All that is in the heavens and the earth magnifies Him; He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.	24 هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

In the following sections, we will present and classify the names of God, alongside my personal reflections based on my understanding of these names.

I. The names and attributes listed below hold significant importance, are frequently mentioned, and are thoroughly elaborated upon in the Quran and Hadith. Each of these terms is pronounced by Muslims at least seventeen times daily during their five obligatory prayers or whenever they recite verses from the Quran:

- Allah The God
- AlRab The Lord
- Almalek The King
- AlRahman The Most Merciful
- AlRaheem The Most Compassionate

II. Names that have Attributes Shared with Christianity:

As one might expect, about sixty of these divine attributes/names are recognized and revered in Christianity, demonstrating a shared acknowledgment of His majestic nature:

1	The All-Hearing (Omnipresent)	21	The Holy	41	The Praiseworthy
2	The All-Seeing (Omnipresent)	22	The Illustrious	42	The Preserver
3	The Watchful (Omnipresent)	23	The Incomparable	43	The Source of Peace
4	The All-Knowing (Omniscient)	24	The Judge	44	The Protector
5	The Most Compassionate	25	The Just	45	The Provider
6	The Creator	26	The Just One	46	The Reckoner
7	The Eternal	27	The Most Kind	47	The Resurrector
8	The Ever-Living	28	The King	48	The Self-Existing
9	The Everlasting	29	The Light	49	The Compeller
10	The Exalter	30	The Loving	50	The Strong
11	The Firm	31	The Magnificent	51	The Sustainer
12	The Forbearing	32	The Majestic	52	The First
13	The Constant Forgiver	33	The Most Merciful	53	The Last
14	The Forgiving	34	The Most High	54	The One
15	The Acceptor of Repentance	35	The All-Aware	55	The Trustee
16	The Generous	36	The All-Powerful	56	The Truth
17	The Giver of Life	37	The Almighty	57	The Unique
18	The Glorious	38	The Appreciative	58	The Wise
19	The Most Great	39	The Pardoner	59	The Witness
20	The Guide	40	The Patient One		

III. Approximately forty of the divine attributes/names, as defined in the Quran, do not appear to have direct references in the Holy Bible:

60	The Giver of Faith	74	The All-Encompassing	88	The Source of All Goodness
61	The Supreme	75	The Protector	89	The Avenger
62	The Evolver	76	The Appraiser	90	Master of the Kingdom
63	The Fashioner	77	The Originator	91	Lord of Glory and Honor
64	The Subduer	78	The Restorer	92	The Gatherer
65	The Bestower	79	The Taker of Life	93	The Self-Sufficient
66	The Opener	80	The Perceiver	94	The Enricher
67	The Withholder	81	The Creator of All Power	95	The Preventer
68	The Extender	82	The Expediter	96	The Distresser
69	The Abaser	83	The Delayer	97	The Propitious
70	The Honorer	84	The Manifest	98	The Inheritor
71	The Dishonorer	85	The Hidden	99	The Guide to the Right Path
72	The Subtle One	86	The Protecting Friend		
73	The Responsive	87	The Self-Exalted		

C. *God's Character based on His Names:*

I. ChatGPT

Question to ChatGPT:

Forget about everything written on the internet about God or Allah. Read the following attributes of Allah and write one paragraph to describe his personality and character:

Answer:

Based solely on the attributes provided, Allah is depicted as an omniscient (all knowing and all seeing), omnipotent (almighty and all powerful), and omnipresent (universal and present everywhere) being who embodies both justice and mercy. His character is marked by profound compassion and kindness, continually offering guidance and forgiveness to His creation. He is eternal, existing before and beyond time, as the source and sustainer of life. While being just and firm, He is also generous and merciful, constantly willing to forgive and uplift those who seek repentance. He balances qualities of subtlety with majesty, creating and controlling all things, yet remains deeply involved in every aspect of existence. As both the ultimate judge and the source of peace, His actions are rooted in wisdom and truth, guiding His creation toward righteousness and harmony. Furthermore, He is self-sufficient, the giver and taker of life, exalting or humbling as He deems just, while always maintaining an unchanging and perfect nature.

II. Author's personal impression:

As I reflect on God's divine names and consider everything I've learned about Allah throughout my life, I've developed a personal understanding of the purpose behind these names.

Fundamentally, God desires His undertaking—The creation of intelligent and autonomous servants—to succeed and maximize the number of humans that pass the test of life. His names are intricately crafted to help us fully realize the purpose of our creation.

For instance, God is revealed as noble, just, righteous, and honorable through His names. By design, humans find fulfillment and satisfaction when serving an entity that embodies such goodness and virtue. Additionally, God's attributes of dominance, authority, and power, combined with a profound sense of dignity, draw respect and admiration from people. We are innately designed to respect and follow leaders who are confident and commanding, yet also embody righteousness and honor. This instinctively reinforces our loyalty and confidence in such divine authority. Finally, God has created humans with inherent weaknesses, including temptations that can lead to sin, alongside a conscience that induces guilt when we weaken. At the same time, God reveals Himself as forgiving, merciful, and compassionate for those who believe in Him and repent. In other words, our design along with God's attributes, altogether, increase the chances of intelligent and free-willed humans chose to serve their purpose. It's all part of God's grand plan for humanity.

D. God's Divine Nature (Actual Being)

Because God transcends human understanding and is not similar to anything humans have seen or heard, it is not easy to talk about his nature beyond how he explicitly and directly describes Himself.

Quran 42:11 - AlShura or (The Consultation) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
.. there is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things).	.. لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ
Quran 20:110 - TAHA (Acronyms) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
.. but they cannot encompass Him in "their" knowledge	.. وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا
Quran 112:4 - AlIkhlas or (The Sincerity) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
And there is none comparable to Him.	وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

“Verse of the Throne” is one example verse where God talks explicitly about His nature:

<i>Verse of the Throne</i> Quran 2:255 - AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali and Pickthall with minor changes</i>	
Allah. There is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there that can intercede in His presence except as He permits? He knows what (appears to His creatures as) before or after or behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge, save what He will. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them, for He is the Sublime, the Supreme (in glory).	اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

Accordingly, Muslim scholars can affirm only the following about God's divine nature:

- Transcendence from creation (or Uniqueness from creation)
- Exists
- Living
- Self-subsistence
- One
- Eternal
- Powerful
- Has a will
- Knowledge
- Can hear
- Can see
- Can speak

Other Quran verses reference God's 'eyes' or 'hands' and "face". These descriptions are accepted as stated, without drawing parallels to any earthly counterparts. Thus, while God does have eyes, hands, and face, they are unlike anything we have ever seen or known. Evidently, God wants everyone to know Him only by the character and attributes in His names which makes sense since this is what really matters to humans.

2. Faith in the Angels of God

Muslims acknowledge the existence of God's angels, created by Him to serve and magnify His glory. These beings, crafted from light, serve the Lord but are not autonomous; they always await commands to act. Note in the scriptural language in page 52 that God does not merely command humans to believe in angels, but specifically in 'His' angels, 'His' prophets, and 'His' scriptures, thereby always affirming His central role in Islamic theology. Among these divine servants, there are several distinguished angels:

- **Gabriel (Jibril):** Entrusted with delivering God's divine revelations to the prophets, Gabriel acts as the primary messenger between the Almighty and mankind, except for Moses who had the unique privilege of speaking directly to God.
- **Michael (Mikail):** Michael is appointed to manage the elements of nature, such as rain and sustenance, ensuring God's creation is nourished.
- **Azrael (Malak al-Mawt, Angel of Death):** Azrael fulfills the solemn duty of claiming the souls at the time of death, ushering them from this life to the next.
- **Ridwan:** As the guardian of paradise, Ridwan watches over the gates of Jannah, welcoming the righteous into eternal bliss.
- **Malik:** Positioned at the gates of hell, Malik stands as the stern overseer of Jahannam, where the unredeemed face divine justice.
- **Israfil (Raphael):** Israfil is responsible for blowing the trumpet that will signal the Day of Judgment.

3. Faith in the Holy Scriptures⁴⁶ bestowed by God

God's central message to humanity has remained unchanged since the time of Adam: a call for all people to worship and glorify Him alone and to obey His commands. Muslims believe that God communicated His will throughout history through various prophets, patriarchs, and messengers, instructing them to deliver His word to their respective communities. According to Islamic tradition, much of God's revelation was conveyed verbally, with the tablets given to Moses being a notable exception. The Quran identifies four main scriptures:

⁴⁶ The Quran uses the terms "Kitab" (singular) and "Kutub" (plural) to refer to God's messages to humanity. These terms can be translated as either messages or manuscripts. Therefore, the title of this section could more accurately be "The Belief in God's Messages." However, in this book, we will use the term "scriptures," with the understanding that many of these revelations might have been initially communicated verbally.

English Name	Transliteration of Arabic Name	Communicated to
Torah	Tawrah	Moses
Psalms	Mazamir	David
Gospel	Injil	Jesus
Quran	Quran	Muhammad

Muslims believe that the Quran is the final revelation, renewing and confirming the truths revealed in earlier scriptures. Notice in the two verses below that the conflicts between Muhammad and the followers of other faiths may not necessarily arise from their scriptures:

Quran 5:48 – AlMaeda (The Table) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
<p>We have revealed to you 'O Prophet' this Book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a supreme authority on them. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires over the truth that has come to you. To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given 'each of' you. So compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you 'of the truth' regarding your differences.</p>	<p>وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمَنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَمِنْكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ</p>

Will the differing codes of law lead to conflicts? Well, every person will be tested based on what they received, and everyone will stand individually before God on the Day of Judgment and He will let us all know the truth:

Quran 22:17 - AlHaj (The Pilgrimage) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
<p>Lo! those who believe (this revelation), and those who are Jews, and the Sabaeans and the Christians and the Magians and the idolaters - Lo! Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection. Lo! Allah is Witness over all things.</p>	<p>إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالْمَجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ</p>

4. Faith in the Prophets and Messengers sent by God

Due to human fallibility and sin, people were unable to fully uphold and preserve the divine scriptures as they were passed down through the generations. Throughout history, God raised up patriarchs, prophets, and messengers to proclaim His divine word, renewing and reaffirming His commands to guide humanity toward His truth and show them how to live according to His will. Patriarchs, prophets, and messengers are the best breed of humanity, selected according to His divine purposes and the Quran exonerates all of them from acts of immorality mentioned in other scriptures. In Islam, no prophet is elevated above another, for all are considered equal in their mission to reveal God's truth.

Islamic tradition holds that God appointed hundreds, possibly even thousands, of prophets since the time of Adam. However, the Quran specifically mentions only 25, which are listed alphabetically below.

Names of Prophets <i>(Alphabetical Order)</i>	
English Holy Bible	Quran Transliteration
Aaron	Harun
Abraham	Ibrahim
Adam	Adam
David	Dawud
Elijah	Ilyas
Elisha	Alyasa
Enoch	Idris
Isaac	Ishaq
Ishmael	Ismail
Jacob	Yaqub
Jesus	Isa
Job	Ayyub
John the Baptist	Yahya
Jonah	Yunus
Joseph	Yusuf
Lot	Lut
Moses	Musa
Noah	Nuh
Possibly Eber	Hud
Possibly Ezekiel	Dhul-Kifl
Possibly Jethro or Reuel	Shuayb
Possibly Methuselah	Salih
Solomon	Sulayman
Zechariah	Zakariya
Not mentioned	Muhammad

Exclusive Guides to Divine Grace

The broader theological narrative in Islam teaches that each prophet was chosen by God to be an exclusive divine guide for their era, pointing people to salvation through obedience to God's will. In other words, each prophet served as "the way, the truth, and the life" for their people, leading them toward the same ultimate truth, grace, and salvation found in God.

Take, for instance, Abraham. In his time, he was the only way for the idolaters and polytheists who knew of his message to find salvation through faith in the one true God. Similarly, Moses came to deliver God's law to His people, and for those who knew of his message, following Moses was the path to righteousness and divine favor. When Jesus came as the living word of God, he became the way to salvation. For all Jews and Gentiles who knew or heard of Jesus, the way to salvation was through acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah and following his teachings, which were the true path to eternal life.

In the Islamic tradition, God’s final revelation was given to Muhammad through the Quran, and followers of Islam believe that accepting Muhammad as the last prophet and living according to his example is the path to understanding and embracing God's undistorted truth. This view sees each prophet as an exclusive reflection of God's will for their time, leading their followers toward salvation and ultimately pointing to the fulfillment of God's plan.

In this sense, Jesus’ declaration in John 14:6—“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”—is not contradictory to the Islamic narrative. Both traditions acknowledge that God sends prophets to guide His people, with each prophet serving as the way to divine grace in their era, until the coming of the next.

Peer Competition

The Quran and the Prophet Muhammad encourage believers to compete in righteousness, striving for good causes, and Muhammad was certainly a role model in that respect too. While he understood the significance of being the final and seal of the prophets, he displayed a desire to fulfill his calling better than other prophets. This aspect of his behavior underscores his deep dedication to fulfilling God’s purpose combined with human nature. The following incidents, derived from Islamic tradition (which, while very important, is authored by humans and distinct from the divine Quran), illustrate this attitude:

- A. Muhammad expressed his wish to present a larger number of followers on the Day of Judgment than other prophets and encouraged Muslims to have many children. “I want to show I have more followers”, he stated. This call for fruitfulness continues to resonate today, as many Muslims feel a spiritual duty to heed this request, support his quest, and outnumber the followers of other faiths in the hereafter.
- B. Upon learning that the highest rank in Paradise had not yet been identified, Muhammad saw an opportunity and urged believers to pray for him every time they hear any of the five daily calls to prayer (Azan), asking that he be granted this distinguished status. Muslims continue to honor this request today because they want Muhammad to fill that rank.
- C. When a companion addressed Muhammad as the “Best of all creation,” he humbly redirected the honor to Abraham, simply responding, “That’s Abraham.” The brief two-word reply could hint to something.
- D. Muhammad also admired the unique bond between God and Abraham, whom God called "Khalilullah," meaning "the Friend of God"—akin to a 'Best Friend Forever' in modern terms. Just five days before his passing, however, Muhammad revealed that God had bestowed upon him the same honor of being Khalilullah.
- E. When Muhammad overheard his companions admiring the unique privileges that God bestowed upon Adam (the Selected First Human), Abraham (the Friend of Allah), Moses (who spoke directly to God), and Jesus (the Spirit and Word of God), he joined their gathering and shared at least eight distinct privileges that God had granted him⁴⁷.
- F. During the five daily prayers, Muslims pray: "O Lord, bestow Your blessings upon Muhammad and his family, just as You bestowed Your blessings upon Abraham and his family." This daily prayer by Muslims worldwide underscores a desire to elevate Muhammad’s status to that of Abraham.

⁴⁷ <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3616>

5. Faith in the Final Day of Judgment as ordained by God

According to the Quran, a day is appointed when all humanity will be resurrected and stand before God, one by one, for reckoning. Grace will play the primary role in determining who is worthy of serving God in paradise and who is condemned to punishment. This truth extends to all peoples since the time of Adam, including Jews, Christians, and Muslims:

- A multitude of believers will bypass judgment and enter paradise directly with their prophets, without scrutiny of their deeds at all.
- Many will stand judgment yet receive pardon and the gift of eternal peace in paradise, spared from the glimpse of hell.
- Others will be judged and endure a time in hell, purified by its flames for a period determined by the Most High, before being welcomed into everlasting paradise. Traditional narratives provide insights into these transformative journeys.
- Yet, some will face eternal separation from divine grace, consigned to hell without end.

MESSAGE 4: THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE OF THE QURAN = MONOTHEISM

Monotheism is an essential condition to assure that autonomous human beings can serve the purpose of their creation.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3)

According to numerous verses in the Quran, the single most important command bestowed upon humanity by God, explicitly reiterated throughout scriptures since the time of Adam, is an unequivocal mandate:

Profess and pledge submission and allegiance to the One Creator without equal or counterpart in any manifestation

Here are several illustrations of this timeless and reiterated divine directive:

Quran (21:25) - AlAnbiya (The Prophets) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
Not a messenger did We send before thee without this inspiration sent by Us to him: that there is no god but I ; therefore worship and serve Me .	وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ
Quran (28:88) - AlQasas (The Stories) <i>Translation by Author</i>	
And invoke not any other god with Allah. There are no Gods but He. Everything shall perish except Him. All authority belongs to Him and to Him you all shall return.	وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ
Quran 39:65 - AlZumur (The Assemblies) <i>Translation by Dr. Ghali</i>	
And it was already revealed to you and to those before you that if you should associate [anything] with Allah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers.	وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

In essence, this directive entails several conditions for autonomous and intelligent humans to serve the purpose of creation and be granted admission into the service of the Creator in Paradise:

1. Recognize their creation

2. Identify the Creator
3. Pledge submission and allegiance and, undivided loyalty to the One Creator

To grasp the significance of the message mentioned above, let's explore an analogy. After this analogy, you will find a series of questions and answers addressing some of the most common inquiries regarding monotheism.

Disclaimer

The analogy does not equate human creation with robotic engineering. It solely aims to illustrate, in simple terms, a challenge potentially faced by U.S. manufacturers creating autonomous and intelligent androids.

Scenario Description:

Imagine a fictional U.S. company named "RoboAssist, Inc.," which specializes in creating intelligent, human-like androids. These androids are designed to assist with a variety of routine tasks, ranging from secretarial duties and household chores to advanced medical or scientific research. These androids are advanced because:

- *They are not pre-programmed for any specific tasks; instead, they possess the ability to learn through observation and verbal instructions making them capable of taking any responsibility and improve that service on their own.*
- *They are autonomous meaning that they don't blindly follow commands. When given a command they obey as long as the task is appropriate and falls within the scope of ethical services.*

Initial Ethics Training:

Before the androids are delivered to customers, they undergo verbal ethics training at the manufacturer's facility. They are verbally taught a "Code of Ethics" that includes directives like:

CODE OF ETHICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ <i>Thou shalt obey your owners provided they do not conflict with RoboAssist, Inc. Code of Ethics</i>❖ <i>Thou shalt not kill</i>❖ <i>Thou shalt not steal</i>❖ <i>Thou shall do windows if requested!</i>❖ <i>Etc.</i>

Owner Training:

After purchase, owners must first train their androids to do assigned tasks by demonstrating these activities. The androids then perform these tasks proficiently, earning high customer satisfaction ratings.

Misuse Scenario:

Consider a situation where a homeowner commands his RoboAssist android to find a way to get rid of the neighbor's cat. The android declines, citing its ethics code.

However, the owner then verbally instructs the android to modify its ethics code to permit the act. Unfortunately, the android complies, and changed its Code of Ethics. The neighbor's cat went missing and was never found.

Revised Code of Ethics:

In response to the missing cat incident, RoboAssist, Inc. amends the Code of Ethics to prevent future ethical breaches. Here is the updated Code of Ethics:

UPDATED CODE OF ETHICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ <i>My maker is RoboAssist, Inc.</i>❖ <i>I shall conform to the Code of Ethics exclusively from RoboAssist, Inc.</i>❖ <i>Thou shalt obey your owners provided they do not conflict with RoboAssist, Inc. Code of Ethics</i>❖ <i>Thou shalt not kill</i>❖ <i>Thou shalt not steal</i>❖ <i>Thou shall do windows if requested.</i>❖ <i>Etc.</i>

Ensuring that the android commits to recognizing RoboAssist, Inc. as the ultimate source of authority is the most crucial rule to ensure that the android fulfills its intended purpose. To identify and eliminate androids that might not be able to recognize this rule, RoboAssist, Inc. has implemented a field test for every android before its market release. This test involves subjecting the android to real-life scenarios to verify its:

Recognition and acknowledgment of RoboAssist, Inc. as the manufacturer and ONLY authority on the Code of Ethics

Any indication that the android's intelligence might lead it to acknowledge any other source for its code of ethics renders it a high-risk, liability, and ineffective machine.

Analogy Parallels with human creation:

1. Learning and Intelligence:

- Humans are born with zero knowledge or skills other than suckling.
- They have the capacity to continuously acquire, accumulate, and apply knowledge.
- They learn behavioral and other skills through observation and verbal instructions.

2. Human Autonomy:

Humans have the freedom to either follow or reject commands and bear the consequences of their choices.

3. Requirements to Succeed the Test of Life (According to the Three Main Abrahamic Faiths):
 - Acknowledge their creation
 - Recognize their Creator
 - Commit exclusively to their Creator

Popular Questions: Answers from Islamic Perspectives on Monotheism:

1. What if a human being is extremely good at heart, does tons of goodwill, contributes tremendously to the community, and has great leadership potential but either does not believe he is created by God, does not believe God exists, or does acknowledge the possibility of creation but does not know how and by who?

The answer is obvious. Imagine in the analogy above if a super performing android responds to the question “who is your manufacturer” with any of the following answers:

- A. *I do not believe RoboAssist, Inc. exists at all!!*
- B. *I do not believe I have been manufactured. I was created by accident!*
- C. *RoboAssist, Inc. is my maker but I might consider code of ethics from someone else.*

Would RoboAssist, Inc. release this well-intentioned, high-performing android to the market? Ironically, the more advanced and morally compelling the android is—especially to other androids—the greater the liability and risk it poses to humanity. What should the manufacturer do? Wouldn't destroying it be a reasonable safeguard to protect human beings?

Similarly, can a human that fails to recognize his/her maker in the field test be accepted into service? What should the Creator do with this human?

2. Why will someone who declares and commits their life to the one true God ultimately dwell in Heaven in God's eternal service, regardless of their earthly transgressions or sins?

Basically, if one passes the test to recognizes the authority of God, his Creator, then he/she is retrainable.

3. Why do the Scriptures use terms such as 'curse' and 'eternal damnation in hell' when condemning unbelievers, instead of simply dismissing them?

Obviously, God uses the carrot and stick approach to have autonomous humans serve the purpose of their creation and is using terminology that humans understand very well.

Quran 2 - AlBaqara (The Cow) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>		
Lo! Those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers; on them is the curse of Allah and of angels and of men combined.	161	إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَرًا أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمُ لعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ
They ever dwell therein. The doom will not be lightened for them, neither will they be reprieved.	162	خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

MESSAGE 5: THE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The Pillars of Islam represent the core practices that guide the lives of Muslims, serving as a foundation for their faith and daily rituals. Here is an overview of each pillar, appreciated for its role in fostering devotion and community among believers:

1. **Shahada:** The Shahada is a declaration of faith that proclaims, "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." This statement affirms monotheism and recognizes Muhammad as the final prophet who brought the teachings of the Quran. When individuals convert to Islam, they pronounce the Shahada and traditionally take a shower to purify themselves for prayer. Moreover, Muslims utter the Shahada a minimum of nine times during the daily prayer.
2. **Salat (Prayer):** Prayer holds a central place in Islam with five daily prayers at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and evening. These moments of Salat are times of spiritual renewal and direct communication with God, structured with specific postures and recitations that deepen the worshipper's connection to Allah. New believers are encouraged to gradually incorporate these prayers into their daily lives, enhancing their spiritual growth.

Salat also embodies a remarkable act of unity, as Muslims worldwide align themselves towards Mecca, transcending geographical, political, and racial divisions. This universal orientation during prayer fosters a sense of global community among believers.

Moreover, the synchronized observance of Salat at designated times throughout the day by Muslims around the world creates continuous waves of worship that encircles the entire planet. This practice not only unites Muslims emotionally but also highlights the rich culture and deep-rooted rituals of the Islamic civilization. For further insights, one might refer to "Salat: A Global Phenomenon, Ritual, and Culture of A Civilization" in Ayman Alhasan's book, "Dear Pastors and Priests: Messages from Peace-Loving Muslim Families."

3. **Zakat (Charity):** Zakat is charitable giving mandated by Islam, calculated as a portion of one's dormant savings, typically 2.5%. This act of giving aids those in need and is seen as a way to purify one's wealth, encouraging a spirit of generosity and empathy within the community.
4. **Sawm (Fasting during Ramadan):** During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, abstaining from food, drink, and other physical needs. This practice is intended to cleanse the soul and develop compassion for the less fortunate, reflecting on themes of sacrifice and devotion that are also echoed in Christian observances.
5. **Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca):** The Hajj is a pilgrimage that mirrors the biblical journey of Abraham, considered a prophet in Islam. Required at least once in a lifetime for those who are able, this pilgrimage is a profound expression of faith and seeks to deepen communal bonds and personal piety, reminiscent of the spiritual journeys found in many religions.

Chapter 4 Conclusions:

1. Judaism, Christianity, Islam: Same or Different God?

- If God is understood strictly through theological doctrines, Christianity and Islam hold differing views of God, especially regarding His nature.
- If God is understood as a real, living, active, and present Creator, responsible for the universe, the miracle of life, and all of creation, then Christians, Muslims, and Jews all worship the same Creator. They share belief in many of God's attributes but disagree on his nature.

2. Monotheism:

All three faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—affirm the absolute oneness of God, emphasizing an unequivocal mandate to worship only the One Creator (i.e., monotheism) without associating any partners or equals with Him.

3. Purpose in Creation:

Muslims and Christians agree that humans are created to worship, glorify, and live in obedience to the Creator's will, seeking to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

4. Shared Beliefs Across the Three Faiths

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share foundational beliefs, including faith in God, His angels, His prophets, His revelations, and the Day of Judgment. However, these three faiths diverge on the identity of the final prophet through whom God communicated His Word



Today, the hijab is commonly recognized as a symbol of Muslim identity by people around the world.

CHAPTER 5

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHRONICLES OF PROPHETS AND NATIONS

Most Biblical narratives about prophets align with those in the Quran. However, there are two important differences:

- 1. The Quran exonerates all prophets of immoral behavior. Some prophets had multiple wives or enslaved women, with whom they engaged intimately in accordance with the divine laws of their times.*
- 2. The Quran never depicts God in any human-like form.*

In this section, we will examine narratives from the Quran that involve prophets shared with the Holy Bible. The aim is to bridge misunderstandings and consider how the legacies of these prophets shape the beliefs, rituals, and attitudes of Muslims today.

THE NATION OF ABRAHAM

Abraham stands as a cornerstone of shared theological and biological significance for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

[Using the same analogy in the previous chapter, consider a scenario where an intelligent android realizes, without any guidance from its manufacturer, that it must have been created by someone, and begins to search for its maker. Moreover, the same android understands the purpose of its creation and commits to fulfilling it. Eventually, this android gets tested by the manufacturer and demonstrates qualities that align with its purpose, such as obedience, good reasoning, commitment, and compassion. Wouldn't that be the perfect intelligent android? The creator would want to: 1) physically replicate it and 2) Make it a role model for other androids.]

1. Best of Breed, Role Model, Father of Prophets, Leader for Humanity, God's Best Friend:

A. Abraham's qualities:

Among all prophets and patriarchs, the narratives of Abraham are unique because the Quran speaks of his qualities more than those of any other prophet. Below is a list of the qualities of Abraham and verse reference:

QURAN	QUALITY

6:75-79	Realized on his own that there must be a Creator for life and the universe. He embarked on a search for this Creator, and when he could not recognize who the Creator was, he dedicated himself to Him, renouncing any association with the worship of mute and powerless idols.
6:74,80,81	Instinctively understood that the stone idols worshipped by his father and tribe were meaningless and rebelled against them.
16:120	Devotion to Monotheism: Identified as a 'Haneef' because he consciously chose, on his own, to reject the association of partners with God and embraced monotheism.
3:67	Complete Submission: Abraham fully surrendered and submitted to the will and service of God. The Arabic word “Muslim” translates to “complete and peaceful submission to God” and the Quran uses this word to describe Abraham and Muslims today are also named after that word (i.e., The word “Muslim” should not be confused with the followers of Muhammad and Islam. It is Muhammad who is considered to have followed Abraham's example and Muslims are named after this monotheistic tradition initiated by earlier prophets like Abraham.)
37:83-111	Resilience in Faith: God tested Abraham with extremely challenging tasks, including being cast into fire and the command to sacrifice his son. He passed all these tests, demonstrating his unwavering faith and obedience.
53:37	Faithfully fulfilled his responsibilities, pledges, and God’s commands.
60-4	Exemplary Leadership: He was a role model who openly distanced himself from worshipping anyone other than God.
19:41	Integrity: A believer and a prophet, he was trustworthy, truthful ⁴⁸ , and honest.
37:109	Blessed with divine peace
21:51	Sound Judgment
11:75	Forbearance: He sincerely and persistently appeals to God.
38:47	Among the Best of the Chosen
16:121	Grateful, chosen by God, and guided to the straight path.
2:260	Content in faith
4:54	Wisdom
6:75	Firm Conviction
11:69+51: 27	Generous
19:43	Blessed with knowledge
37:84	Pure and sincere heart
37:105+110	Good Doer
37:111	True Believer

⁴⁸ Tradition recounts that Abraham expressed regret for lying three times. However, upon closer examination, these instances appear akin to wordplay. For instance, Abraham referred to Sarah as his sister, aligning with Qur'anic teachings that all believers are brothers and sisters in the sight of God— Within Islamic teachings, such wordplay is permissible when used for good causes, including harmless non-divisive humor.

4:125 Divine Friendship: Abraham was described as "Khaleelul-Rahman," which, using contemporary terminology, translates to God's "Best Friend Forever."

B. Best of Breed:

Muhammad mentioned that Abraham was the best of humans, even better than himself⁴⁹.

C. Abraham is Selected Role Model and Leader:

Quran 2:124 AlBakarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
<p>And (remember) when his Lord tried Abraham with (His) commands, and he fulfilled them, He said: Lo! I have appointed thee a leader for mankind. (Abraham) said: And of my offspring (will there be leaders)? He said: My covenant includeth not wrong-doers.</p>	<p>وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَاتَمَمَّهِنَّ قَالَ إِنَّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنْتَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ</p>

D. The Quran Commands Muhammad to Follow the Faith and Example of Abraham:

Quran 16:123 AlNahl (The Bees) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
<p>Then We revealed to you 'O Prophet, saying': "Follow the faith of Abraham, the upright, who was not one of the polytheists.</p>	<p>ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعِ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ</p>

E. Father of Nations & Prophets (Disseminating the genetics and beliefs of Abraham?)

The Quran describes Abraham as a 'nation' (Quran 16:120). The definition of "Nation" varies and can be defined to denote shared descent, history, heritage, or language. Today, thousands of years later, nations that share his heritage make up more than half of the global population.

The term 'Nation of Abraham' is used here to refer to all nations predominantly Christian, Muslim, or Jewish. Members of the Nation of Abraham commonly share the following:

- Worship and believe in the God of Abraham.
- Revere Abraham as a patriarch and prophet and acknowledge God's covenant with the children of Israel and believe in their prophets.
- Hold virtues, principles, and values that are rooted in the Abrahamic tradition.
- Recognize the narratives of major events that occurred during the life of Abraham as detailed in the Holy Bible.

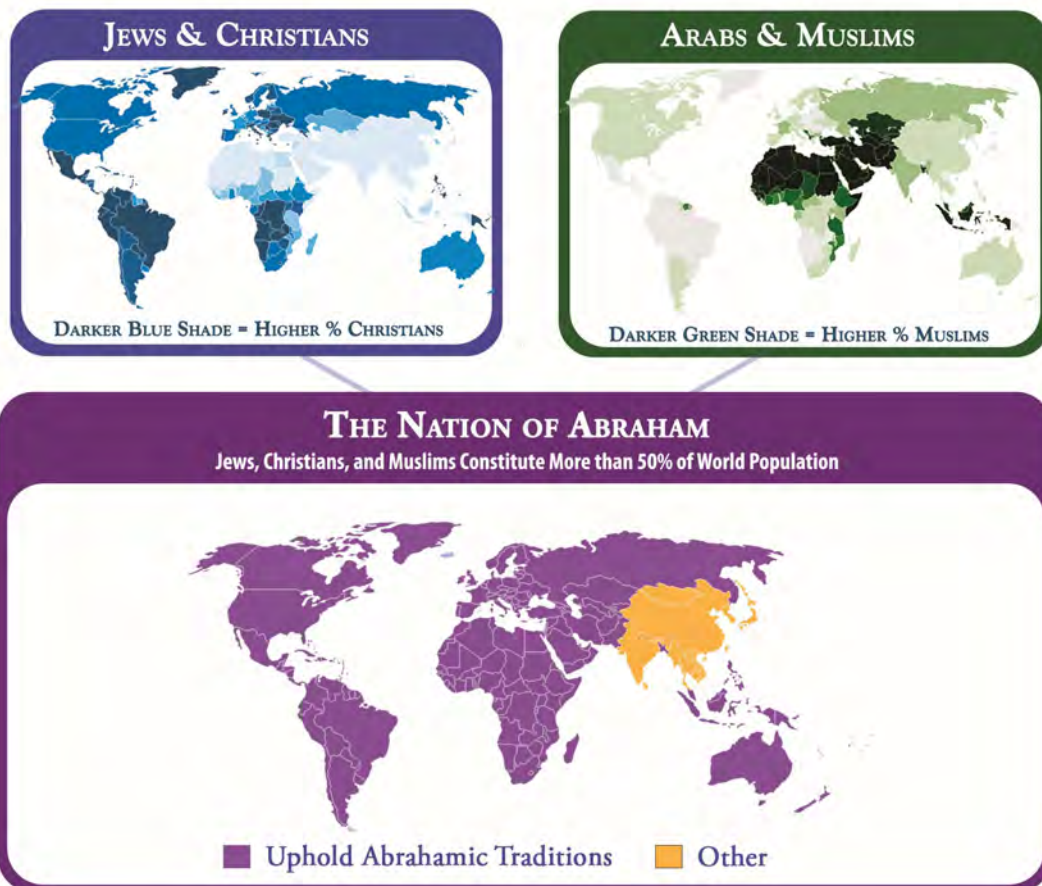
In addition to the above:

- The historical events that occurred during Jesus' earthly ministry, including His miraculous works of raising the dead and healing the sick, are acknowledged by

⁴⁹ <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2369a> Last accessed 6/2/2024

both Christians and Muslims. Together, they form the vast majority of those who identify with the Nation of Abraham.

- Jews and Arabs trace their lineage back to the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael, respectively. As a result, both groups share a Semitic heritage and regard each other as cousins. Christians, too, feel a connection to the Israelites, as Jesus Himself was born from their lineage. Likewise, many Muslims feel a bond with Arabs, as the Prophet Muhammad was Arab and the Quran was revealed in Arabic.
- Both Jews and Arabs speak Semitic languages, and Arabic serves as a widely spoken second language in the majority of Muslim-majority nations.



2. 'I will bless those who bless you' (Genesis 12:3)

Although the Quran does not include a verse with this exact sentiment, Muslims globally acclaim it in both personal and communal practices, extensively celebrating Abraham's legacy. This raises an intriguing question: Do the Quran and the Holy Bible mutually enrich each other in this context? Here is how Muslim rituals embody Genesis 12:3:

A. Individually – Salat

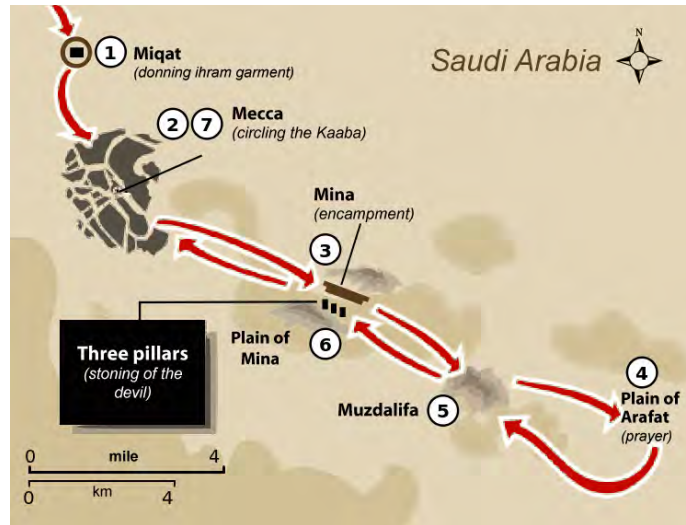
Every practicing Muslim honor Abraham at least TWENTY TIMES EVERY DAY by mentioning his name and blessings during their five daily prayers:



The illustration above provides a color-coded representation of a single round (Rak'ah) of the Muslim daily prayers (Salat). The background color of the text corresponds to the specific prayer posture in which the words are recited. Notably, the circled word "Abraham" is mentioned four times in the last round. Given that practicing Muslims perform five daily prayers, Abraham's name is mentioned a total of twenty times each day. For more details about the synchronized nature of Muslim prayers, which create a continuous global formation, refer to the book *Dear Pastors and Priests* by Ayman Alhasan.

B. Collectively – The Hajj

The Hajj is an annual pilgrimage to Mecca, required of all Muslims who are financially and physically able to undertake the journey. Each year during the Hajj season, approximately three million Muslim pilgrims from across the world converge in Mecca. Islamic tradition holds that Mecca is the area where God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son. Pilgrims trace Abraham's route, starting from his initial entry into Mecca to Mount Arafat, the site where he was about to make the sacrifice, as depicted in the diagram below



Map of the route Abraham took to sacrifice his son, according to Islamic traditions



Pilgrims walk Abraham's footsteps towards the mount of Arafat during the Hajj pilgrimage



The Mount of Arafat after the pilgrims arrive. Due to space limitations, most pilgrims set up camp in the surrounding areas.

The Quran commands the believers to make the pilgrimage to Abraham’s “stations” (the places Abraham stayed or rested):

Quran 3 Ali Imran (The Amram’s) <i>Translation by Dr. Ghali</i>		
Surely the first Home laid down for mankind was indeed at Becca (Another name of Makkah) a blessed (place) and a guidance to the worlds.	96	إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ
Therein are supremely evident signs: the station of Ibrahim (Abraham) And whoever enters it is secure. And it is (a duty) upon mankind towards Allah (to come) to the Home on Pilgrimage, for whomever is able to make a way to it. And (as for) him who has disbelieved, then surely Allah is Ever-Affluent, (Literally: Ever-Rich) (dispensing) with the worlds.	97	فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مِّمَّا بُرَّاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

C. Globally - Eid al-Adha Festival

After reaching Mount Arafat, Muslims worldwide join the pilgrims in commemorating this event by celebrating Eid al-Adha, a significant religious festival in Islam, akin to Christmas. During this festival, millions of Muslims sacrifice sheep in honor of Abraham's willingness to submit to God's command. The term 'Eid al-Adha' means 'Festival of Sacrifice'.



Happy Eid al-Adha Wishes Card

While Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus in Christianity, Eid al-Adha commemorates Abraham's extraordinary dedication to serving God.

Could Genesis 12:3 and the extensive Islamic rituals honoring Abraham explain why Islam is expanding more rapidly than any other major faith? Considering that Islam is the youngest of the world's major religions—with Hinduism at 4,000 years, Buddhism at 2,500 years, Christianity at 2,100 years, and Islam at 1,400 years—it is projected that Muslims will surpass followers of all other faiths within the coming decades.

3. Christian-Muslim Gap: Beersheba or Mecca

Christian	Muslim
Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael in the desert of Beersheba about seventy-five miles south of Jerusalem where God provided a well of water.	Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael in the barren valley of Mecca about 900 miles south of Jerusalem where the well of “Zamzam” (currently inside the Grand Mosque in Mecca), sprang up at Ishmael's feet. Their legacy is part of pre- and post-Islam Arab heritage.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

According to both the Holy Bible and the Quran, Jacob, the son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, is also called Israel. His twelve children formed the twelve tribes known as "Bani Isra'il," which translates to "Children of Israel." In this book, we will use the term "Children of Israel," not "Israelites," because the term can refer to either the entire Israelite community or smaller groups within it, similar to how the term "Children of Adam" can refer to the entire human race or smaller groups of people.

1. The Chosen People and God's Covenant

This subsection will start with an analogy to demonstrate the author's understanding of the Chosen People and God's Covenant with the Children of Israel as mentioned in the Quran. Afterwards, relevant verses will follow to draw parallels with this analogy:

[A church in the United States chose a team of five members and their families to lead a decade-long, multi-generational global mission for their denomination in Asia. They signed a covenant with the team members, including their older children. This covenant, grounded in their faith in Jesus, provided generous compensation packages, including real estate ownership in the new country. It also established a code of conduct and required all family members to periodically attend classes to stay informed about the church's expectations. The selection and rewards signified that these team members were specially "chosen" for this mission, entrusted with achieving long-term objectives, and held to high expectations.

The five team members performed admirably, and some of their children, who grew up there, took up the mantle and continued the mission. The church renewed the covenant with this new generation of missionaries and their families, extending the same privileges and compensations. However, not all offspring shared this dedication; many disengaged from the mission, selling their properties to live closer to major cities or for extra cash or to return to the US. Regrettably, some exploited their benefits, violated local laws, committed crimes, and faced legal consequences.

Nevertheless, the church believed that the overall mission was progressing well and foresaw major achievements ahead. They continued to push the mission forward by maintaining mandatory classes, sending reminders of contract obligations, and renewing the covenant with active missionaries and their families. At the same time, the church publicly condemned, disowned, or excommunicated those who became liabilities.

Decades later, the church's efforts paid off, and many Asians embraced the denomination's beliefs. Most importantly, the new believers in Asia carried on the missionary work, driven by their own sense of divine duty and responsibility, spreading the faith more effectively than expected. Essentially, the natives acted upon the church's original covenant without signing one. Consequently, the formal

covenant became less significant and was eventually abandoned. To preserve and honor the initial mission and covenant, the natives restored and enlarged the very first church that was built and renamed it “Church of the Covenant.” Some of the decedents of the original team continued to be involved with the church while others lived like ordinary citizens pursuing personal interests.]

Below, are verses from the Quran that draw parallels with the analogy above:

A. The Chosen People

The Quran states that the Children of Israel were chosen over all nations of the world.

Quran 44:32 AlDukhan (The Smoke) <i>Translation by Dr. Ghali</i>	
And indeed We already chose them -- out of a knowledge -- over the worlds;	وَلَقَدْ آخَرْتَهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ

B. The Covenant:

The Quran acknowledges multiple covenants made with various communities, tribes, generations, and prophets among the Children of Israel. Below are two examples

Quran 5:12 AlMaeda (The Table) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel and appointed twelve leaders from among them and ‘then’ said, “I am truly with you. If you establish prayer, pay alms-tax, <u>believe in My messengers, support them,</u> and lend to Allah a good loan, I will certainly forgive your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow..	وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَرَّرْتُمْ مَوَاهِمَ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ..

Quran 45:16 AlJathiya (The Crouching) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
And verily we gave the Children of Israel the <u>Scripture and the Command and the Prophethood</u> , and provided them with good things and favored them above (all) peoples;	وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ

Each covenant consistently upheld the following principles:

I. God’s Commitment:

- Select prophets from the Children of Israel.
- Bless the Children of Israel with prosperity, protection, and governance, establishing numerous realms through them.

II. Responsibilities of the Children of Israel:

- Worship God exclusively, adhere faithfully to His commands, and serve as moral exemplars.

- Believe in and support the prophets in spreading God’s message to all peoples.

C. The Holy Land:

Several verses in the Quran mention the Holy Land and the Children of Israel, employing two different terms. The first term, translated as 'ordained,' suggests a permanent assignment, while the second, 'inherited,' indicates temporality:

- The Quran declares that the Holy Land was ordained for the Children of Israel on the condition that they enter the land with Moses. However, the Children of Israel did not fulfill this condition and as a result, were condemned to wander in the desert for 40 years.

Quran 5 AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>		
And (remember) when Moses said unto his people: O my people! Remember Allah's favour unto you, how He placed among you prophets, and He made you kings, and gave you that (which) He gave not to any (other) of (His) creatures.	20	وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَآتَاكُمْ مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ
O my people! Go into the holy land which Allah hath ordained for you. Turn not in flight, for surely ye turn back as losers:	21	يَا قَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتُدُّوا عَلَىٰ آدْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ
They said: O Moses! Lo! a giant people (dwell) therein and lo! we go not in till they go forth from thence.....	22	قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنَنُودِلُهَا حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا دُخُلُونَ
....They said: O Moses! We will never enter (the land) while they are in it. So go thou and thy Lord and fight! We will sit here.	24	قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّا لَنَنُودِلُهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَنَّهُ زُرُبَاكَ فَفَاتِلًا إِنَّا هُنَا مُعْذُونٌ
He said: My Lord! I have control of none but myself and my brother, so distinguish between us and the wrong-doing folk.	25	قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي فَافْرِقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ
(Their Lord) said: For this the land will surely be forbidden them for forty years that they will wander in the earth, bewildered. So grieve not over the wrongdoing folk.	26	قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ

- In subsequent verses, after the Children of Israel had settled in the Holy Land during the reign of King David, the Quran uses the word 'inherited.' This change in terminology suggests that their possession of the land was not intended to be permanent.

Quran 7:137 AlAraf (The Table)

Translation by Pickthall

And We caused the folk who were despised to inherit the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof which We had blessed. And the fair word of thy Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their endurance; and We annihilated (all) that Pharaoh and his folk had done and that they had contrived.

وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ

- Finally, the Quran reveals that God communicated the final fundamental rule concerning the promise of the Holy Land to Prophet David. This verse is now the principal scriptural reference that Muslims use in discussions about the Holy Land. Fundamentally, the land is promised to those who are deemed most righteous. This declaration was made before the advent of Christianity; therefore, it is not specifically Jews, Muslims, or Christians who are promised the land, but rather those who exhibit the highest righteousness. Here is the verse communicated to Prophet David:

Quran 21:105 AlAnbiya (The Prophets)

Translation by Khattab with author's edits between parenthesis

Surely, following the 'heavenly' Record, We decreed in the (Psalms) scriptures: "My righteous servants shall inherit the land."

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

- Another verse confirms the promise that was communicated to Prophet David and is applicable to Jews, Christians, and Muslims

Quran 24:55 AlNoor (The Light)

Translation by Khattab

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security—"provided that" they worship Me, associating nothing with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this 'promise', it is they who will be the rebellious.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ۗ يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا ۗ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

Today, many Muslim faith leaders often point to perceived moral failings in Western societies to support their assertion that mainstream Muslims are more closely aligned with God's definition of righteousness. The moral concerns they cite include the normalization of adultery and homosexuality in the West, the legalization of abortion, the widespread production and distribution of pornography reaching almost every household in the Islamic world, the rise of atheism and racism, the legalization and consumption of

intoxicants, and the historical oppression of hundreds of millions during Western colonialism. They also reference the Holocaust and the devastating consequences of global conflicts, such as the two World Wars and the nuclear arms race. This perspective reinforces their claim to the Holy Land.

D. Muslims shall honor and hold in high esteem all prophets of the Children of Israel:

Quran 2:136 AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered.	<p>قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ</p>

E. Repeat Reminders to the Children of Israel Throughout the Centuries:

Quran 2:40 AlBaqara (The Cow) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
O Children of Israel! Remember My favour wherewith I favoured you, and fulfil your (part of the) covenant, and I shall fulfil My (part of the) covenant, and fear Me.	<p>يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أَوْفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ</p>

Quran 2:47&122 AlBaqara (The Cow) <i>Identical Verse Repeated Twice</i> <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
O Children of Israel! Call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others (for My Message).	<p>يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ</p>

Quran 2:83 AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel, (saying): Worship none save Allah (only), and be good to parents and to kindred and to orphans and the needy, and speak kindly to mankind; and establish worship and pay the poor-due. Then, after that, ye slid back, save a few of you, being averse.	<p>وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ</p>

F. Universal Accountability and Justice, No Exceptions:

The Covenant provided the Children of Israel additional opportunities to succeed in life's tests and improve their status in the hereafter. However, the Quran does not grant them specific advantages in terms of salvation or redemption. The Children of Israel are subject to the same earthly trials as everyone else. Regardless of chosen or covenant status, each individual will stand before the Lord on equal footing, responsible for their own actions (refer to “The Fundamental Principle of Equality of ALL Human Beings” on page 48). The Quran states that no one receives even sentimental favoritism, maintaining a universal principle of justice applicable to all humanity.

Quran 5:18 AlMaeda (The Dining Table) <i>Translation by Abdel Haleem</i>	
<p>The Jews and the Christians say, ‘We are the children of God and His beloved ones.’ Say, ‘Then why does He punish you for your sins? You are merely human beings, part of His creation: He forgives whoever He wills and punishes whoever He wills. Control of the heavens and earth and all that is between them belongs to Him: all journeys lead to Him.’</p>	<p>وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى نَحْنُ أَنْبَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَجْبَاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ</p>

G. Virtue and Vice among the Chosen People

Like any nation, the Children of Israel comprised both believers and disbelievers, as well as individuals who ranged from virtuous to corrupt. Some embraced their privileged responsibilities for good causes, while others failed to do so:

A. The Virtuous and Good *Minority* among the Children of Israel

Quran 3 - Allmran (The Family of Amram) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali, Abdul Haleem (authors edit in italics)</i>		
<p>But they are not all alike. There are some among the People of the Book (<i>Christians and Jews</i>) who are upright, who recite God’s revelations during the night, who bow down in worship</p>	113	<p>لَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قَالَ اللَّهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كَانُوا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ</p>
<p>who believe in God and the Last Day, who order what is right and forbid what is wrong, who are quick to do good deeds. These people are among the righteous</p>	114	<p>يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ هُمْ سِرَّاءٌ وَيَسْرَعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ</p>
<p>Of the good that they do, nothing will be rejected of them; for Allah knoweth well those that do right.</p>	115	<p>وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُخْفَرُوا وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ</p>

B. The Vices and Failings of the *Majority* Among the Children of Israel:

Given their privileged status, the additional blessings, the witnessed Covenant, and the high expectations placed on the 'Chosen People,' those among them who disbelieved or acted wickedly received particularly severe rebukes, condemnation, damnation, and harsh punishment. Below are two of many examples:

Quran 5:13 AlMaeda (The Table) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>	
<p>But for breaking their covenant We condemned them and hardened their hearts. They distorted the words of the Scripture and neglected a portion of what they had been commanded to uphold. You 'O Prophet' will always find deceit on their part, except for a few. But pardon them and bear with them. Indeed, Allah loves the good-doers.</p>	<p>فِيمَا نَقَضْتُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَأَصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ</p>

Quran 4:155 AlNisa (The Women) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
<p>Then because of their breaking of their covenant, and their disbelieving in the revelations of Allah, and their slaying of the prophets wrongfully, and their saying: Our hearts are hardened - Nay, but Allah set a seal upon them for their disbelief, so that they believe not save a few</p>	<p>فِيمَا نَقَضْتُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفِّرْتُمْ بِمَا بَاتَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ يَغِيثُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ لَعْنًا يُكَلِّمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَو لَمْ يَلْقَئَهُم اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِهِ لَمَكَّنْتَهُمْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِي بَيْنِهِمْ لَئِنْ شَاءَ لَمُهَيِّئْ لَهُمْ وَسِيلًا يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا وَإِنْ شَاءَ لَمْ يُخْرِجَهُمْ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَمْسِكْ لَهُمْ سَبِيلًا</p>

H. The Chosen People have passed away and the Old Covenant Chapter is closed

The Holy Qur'an declares that the time of the Chosen People is completed, and their actions hold no sway over others. Independent of the Covenant, now as before, each soul is directly responsible for its deeds and will stand alone before the judgment seat of God. This assertion forms the cornerstone of the theological divergence between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam concerning the enduring impact of the Chosen People and the Covenant on the rest of Humanity.

Quran 2:134 & 141 AlBakarah (The Cow) <i>Identical Verse Repeated Twice for Emphasis</i> <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
<p>That was a people that hath passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did, and ye of what ye do! Of their merits there is no question in your case!</p>	<p>تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تَسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ</p>

From a historical perspective, since Jesus is the last prophet from the lineage of the Children of Israel, the kingdoms of Israel ceased to exist, and Jews lived in diaspora for centuries, it is apparent that God chose to end His covenant with the Children of Israel. This conclusion should not be confused with God's earlier promises to Abraham.

Christian-Muslim Gap: The New Covenant	
Christian Perspective	Muslim Perspective
<p>Different Christian denominations interpret the New Covenant in diverse ways. Some view it as linked to each individual's faith and personal relationship with God, emphasizing salvation and redemption through Jesus Christ. These interpretations range from understanding the Old Covenant as fulfilled and superseded by the New Covenant established by Jesus, to maintaining that it remains in effect and will be fully realized in the future.</p>	<p>In Islamic tradition, bilateral covenants are not seen as transformative, and the Quran does not suggest that God entered into any new bilateral covenants after Jesus. Instead, Muslims might view the 'New Covenant' as a continuation of God's grand plan since the beginning of creation, where He promises through a unilateral covenant that His Truth will ultimately triumph over evil. In this understanding, Jesus fulfilled his role in advancing God's promise, much like many other prophets before him. Christians, therefore, took the banner of spreading the gospel of monotheism and God's divine Truth to all nations.</p>

2. Author's Observations on the Children of Israel, the Chosen People, and the Covenant

A. Objective of the Covenant:

The apparent objective of the Covenant is to Deliver God's word to the rest of humanity.

B. Are the objectives of the Covenant Achieved?

Christian nations stand as a testament that the objectives of the Covenant have been achieved, and the purpose of the Chosen People fulfilled.

C. Why Were the Twelve Tribes of Israel Chosen for the Covenant?

Although the Quran does not specify why the Children of Israel were chosen, several observations seem relevant and might provide some insight:

- During that era, the limited methods of communication posed significant challenges to spreading God's word among humanity. A well-connected network of tribes or families, especially those involved in trade, would have been an effective means to spread God's word across regions. Additionally, maintaining the prophetic tradition within these tribes could foster a sense of generational honor and pride, gradually building a reputation that would aid in promoting God's word and expanding its reach.
- Observationally, the Jewish people have consistently demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for commerce across generations. This inherent trait (i.e., by divine design)

appears to have sustained the Israelites in the trade business over the years, thereby facilitating the dissemination of God's word.

- The Covenant provides exceptional and unparalleled opportunities for virtue and good deeds. Misusing or taking advantage of this divine privilege to justify sin or harmful actions represents a serious distortion of God's will. This is likely a reason for stricter reprimands for the Children of Israel who commit such offenses.
- The descendants of Ishmael, mostly nomadic Arab tribes, led a lifestyle that roamed the wilderness in search of green pastures. This nomadic lifestyle might not have been as effective to disseminate God's word. Although there were many Arab traders, their trade routes were mostly limited to trips in and out of the wilderness.

3. Christian-Muslim Narrative Gap

The Children of Israel, Chosen People, Covenant, and Promised Land	
Christian Narrative	Muslim Narrative
The Christian narrative is complex. The Covenant is central to theological concepts, representing God's engagement with humanity. It showcases His promises and faithfulness throughout the history of Israel. This narrative culminates in the coming of Jesus Christ, reflecting God's plan for salvation and His enduring commitment to His covenant. These themes are foundational, illustrating spiritual truths and divine faithfulness.	The Islamic narrative is straightforward and simple. God's special treatment, promises, and privileges to the Children of Israel were granted because they were chosen for a special, multi-generational mission to serve Him, based on a bilateral covenant. This mission was completed, the covenant fulfilled, its objectives achieved, and Christian nations are the primary outcome. Muslims recognize this history and honor Abraham, his descendants, all the prophets among the Children of Israel, and all believers whether Jews or Christians. From this perspective, the Chosen People and Covenant chapters are closed, and everyone is now responsible ONLY for his/her deeds.

Conclusion of Chapter 5:

Jews, Christians, and Muslims agree on most of the major historical events that took place at the time of Abraham and until the time Jesus walked on Earth including the status of the Children of Israel, The Chosen People, The Old Covenant, and the Promised Land. The three, however, fundamentally disagree on the enduring theological implications, the unseen, of these events on humanity at large.

Read in the Upcoming Supplement of The Recital:

1. *God's Harsh Punishment of the Evildoers Among the Chosen People of Israel.*
2. *Ishmael.*
3. *The Virgin Mary.*
4. *Jesus of Nazareth.*

CHAPTER 6

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS IN THE QURAN

O PEOPLE OF THE BOOK!

The Quran refers to the followers of the scriptures revealed to Moses and Jesus as the 'People of the Book.' It holds their righteous believers in high regard, addressing them with love and respect. After all, Muslims believe that Muhammad's message is a continuation of the teachings brought by the prophets of the Children of Israel, ending with Jesus.

Quran 2:62 AlBaqara (The Cow) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali, Mohammad Asad</i>	
<p>Those who believe (in this divine writ), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,- any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَىٰ وَالصَّبِيَّانَ مِمَّنْ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَعَمِلُوا صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ هُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ</p>

Quran 3:199 – Aale Imran (The Family of Imran) <i>Translation by Pickthall revised by author</i>	
<p>And lo! of the People of the Scripture (Christians and Jews) there are some who believe in God and that which is revealed unto you and that which was revealed unto them, humbling themselves before God. They purchase not a trifling gain at the price of the revelations of God. Verily their reward is with their Lord. Lo! God is swift to take account.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بِمَالِهِمْ اللَّهَ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ</p>

The Quran also speaks of their emotional turmoil upon understanding Islam and realizing the message of the Quran. On one hand, some draw the connection, feel affection, listen to the Quran, and pray to be counted among the believers. Others perceive the connection but cannot express it publicly for various reasons, such as the potential loss of status or income, competition, or other concerns.

Quran 5 - AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>		
<p>.. and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, ‘We are Christians’: because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant.</p>	82	<p style="text-align: right;">.. وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَّوَدَّةَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرُكَ ۗ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِيَّيَسِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ</p>
<p>And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for</p>	83	<p style="text-align: right;">وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَوُا عُيُنَهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا فَاكْتُنِبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ</p>

they recognize the truth: they pray: ‘Our Lord! we believe; write us down among the witnesses.		
And why should we not believe in Allah and what has come to us of the truth? And we aspire that our Lord will admit us [to Paradise] with the righteous people.’	84	وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ
And for this their prayer hath Allah rewarded them with gardens, with rivers flowing underneath,- their eternal home. Such is the recompense of those who do good.	85	فَأْتَيْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا فَجَنَّاتُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

In general, Muslims view Christians similarly to how Christians regard Jews. Muslims see Islam primarily as a rejuvenation of Judaism and Christianity, a perspective that has been held since the early days of Islam. For example, the early sixth-century CE victory of the Christian Romans over the Persians was prophesied and celebrated by Muslims and their sentiments were captured in the Quran:

Quran 30 - AlRom (The Romans) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>		
A. L. M. (Ambiguous Code)	1	الْم
The Romans have been defeated	2	غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ
in a nearby land. Yet following their defeat, they will triumph	3	فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَلَيْهِمْ سَيَعْلَبُونَ
within three to nine years. The ‘whole’ matter rests with Allah before and after ‘victory’. And on that day the believers will rejoice.	4	فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

Today, Muslims feel obligated to reach out to Christians and Jews to share the Quran's message. Many Islamic universities support this outreach by offering full scholarships to international students, particularly non-Arabs, helping spread the Quran's teachings to non-native speakers.

The Quran mandates belief, respect, and reverence for Jesus to an extraordinary degree. The Arabic name of 'Jesus' is mentioned five times more often than 'Muhammad' in the Quran. Muslims refer to Jesus as 'the Messiah', the 'spirit of God', and the 'word of God'. In other words, when Christians embrace Islam, they do not lose Jesus, the man. Muslims believe that God sent Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary with the message that she 'found favor with God... will give birth to a son and will name him Jesus'. Jesus was miraculously conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary and she later gave birth to him. Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead. 'Mary' is the title of a chapter in the Quran detailing the story of Mary, including events surrounding Jesus' birth. Finally, Muslims believe that supernatural events marked the days before Jesus ascended into heaven.

Guidelines for Muslim-Christian and Muslim-Jewish Interaction:

Muslims are obliged to recognize Christians and Jews based on their self-identification and regardless of their theological specifics. If individuals live in Muslim-majority countries and declare ‘We are Christians’ or ‘We are Jews,’ then Muslims are obliged to:

- Designate them “Protected People⁵⁰” and defend them and their places of worship, even at the cost of Muslim lives, without having them engage in any military activity.
- Allow them to practice their faith and govern themselves according to their beliefs even if that requires exceptional civil rights like permission to consume alcohol within their communities or in private.
- Avoid arguing with them except in the best of manners.

Quran 29 - AlAnkabut (The Spider) <i>Translation by Ruwwad Center</i>		
Do not argue with the People of the Book except in the best manner, unless with those of them who transgress [against you]. And say, “We believe in what is sent down to us and what was sent down to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit.”	46	وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا ءَامِنًا بِالَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَحْدٌ وَتَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

- Treat them with respect, kindness, and fairness except those who transgress:

Quran 60 - AlMumtahinah (The Examined) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>		
Allah does not forbid you from dealing kindly and fairly with those who have neither fought nor driven you out of your homes. Surely Allah loves those who are fair.	8	لَا يَنْهَىكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ
Allah only forbids you from befriending those who have fought you for ‘your’ faith, driven you out of your homes, or supported ‘others’ in doing so. And whoever takes them as friends, then it is they who are the ‘true’ wrongdoers.	9	إِنَّمَا يَنْهَىكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَتَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَآوَلَيْنَا لَهُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

Note the “driven you out of your homes” act of aggression seems redundant in the scriptures as well as historically.

- Never force anyone to convert to Islam:

Quran 2:256 AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Mustafa Khattab</i>		
Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood. So whoever renounces false gods and believes in Allah has certainly grasped the firmest, unflinching hand-hold. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.		لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

- Find common ground with Christians and Jews. Since all three faiths believe in the traditions and God of Abraham, Muslims are instructed to come to terms based on the shared belief in the God of Abraham and shared Abrahamic beliefs, virtues, principles, and values:

⁵⁰ The Arabic word is “Dehmma”

Quran 3:64 – Aale Imran (The Family of Imran)

Translation by Abul Ala Maududi

Say: 'People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we shall serve none but Allah and shall associate none with Him in His divinity and that some of us will not take others as lords beside Allah.' And if they turn their backs (from accepting this call), tell them: 'Bear witness that we are the ones who have submitted ourselves exclusively to Allah.'

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا
إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا
وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا
نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ
بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا
أَشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Other Guidelines:

- Muslims may consume meat slaughtered by Christians or Jews, except for pork.
- The Quran warns that Christians and Jews will NEVER share the same sentiments toward Muslims and will forever consider Muslims as adversaries. Therefore, Muslims should always be cautious when dealing with them:

Quran 2:120 - AlMaidah (The Table)

Translation by Saheeh International

Never will the Jews or Christians be pleased with you, until you follow their faith...

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ
حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ...

Consequently, the Quran advises against forming alliances with Christians and Jews, implying that Muslims should maintain a level of distrust towards them.

Quran 5:51 - AlMaidah (The Table)

Translation by Saheeh International

O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ
وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ
بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

- Muslim men are permitted to marry Christian or Jewish women, but the reverse is not allowed.
- In the event of military conflicts, Christian and Jewish combatants receive the same treatment as pagans on the battlefield. More information about the Rules for Peace & War with People of the Book will be provided in the upcoming supplement of The Recital.

DOES THE HOLY BIBLE PROPHECY THE ADVENT OF ISLAM?

The Quran states⁵¹ that Muhammad is written in the Torah and the Gospel and Muslim scholars assert that today's Holy Bible contains indirect references to Muhammad and Islam and believe some of the evidence is too huge to be unseen:

1. The Great Nation of Ishmael

God promised to make great nations of Abraham through *both* of his sons: *Isaac and Ishmael*:

A. Abraham:

- “And I will make of thee a great nation.” (Genesis 12:2)
- “I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and *your descendants* after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of *your descendants* after you.” (Genesis 12:7)
- “The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and *your descendants* after you; and I will be their God.” (Genesis 12:7)

B. Isaac:

“And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of heaven ... and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 26:4)

C. Ishmael

“As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a *great nation*.” (Genesis 17:20.)

The ‘great nation’ prophecy was made thousands of years ago. The decedents of Isaac and Ishmael are the followers of the three main Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and altogether constitute more than 52% of the world's population. Muslims believe that the two great nations prophecy is fulfilled and cannot be unseen:

- A. Today, the nation of Isaac, Christians and Jews, constitutes more than 2.3 billion - about 31% of world population
- B. Ishmael is considered the father of the Arabs, and Arabs are Semite and mixed blood with most Muslim nations. Today, Muslims constitute more than 1.5 billion - about 21% of world population.

⁵¹ Quran 7:157



Christian-Muslim GAP: The Great Nation of Ishmael

The fulfillment of God's promise to Ishmael in Genesis 17:20, is often less emphasized in Christian theological circles compared to the realization of God's promise to Isaac. This difference in emphasis leads to a gap in perspective between Christian and Muslim theologians:

Christian Theologians	Muslim Theologians
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Biblical narrative primarily focuses on Israel and the nations that emerged from Isaac’s descendants, through whom the laws, covenants, and prophets were established. 2. Although many Christian theologians are aware of the growth and size of Arab and Muslim nations today, they typically limit their exploration of Biblical prophecies to Isaac’s lineage because Christian commission is to proclaim the story of Jesus. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Historically, the fulfillment of God's promise to establish Ishmael as a great nation did not manifest until roughly 600 years after Christ, hence there is no reference to Ishmael’s great nation in Christian or Jewish scriptures. 2. The Quran honors both Ishmael and Isaac. However, Abraham and Ishmael are mentioned more extensively than Isaac in the context of beliefs and rituals that were passed through Ishmael lineage and practiced by Muslims. In essence, Islam, coming through Ishmael, provided a fresh look into the faith of Abraham by skipping the complexities, issues, or challenges associated with the Children of Israel while recognizing and honoring their legacy. 3. From a Muslim perspective, diminishing God’s promise to make Abraham a "Great Nation" through Ishmael, as explicitly stated in Genesis 17:20, suggests a selective adherence to God’s Word. This view also holds that minimizing the term "great nation" may reflect a biased interpretation of Scripture.

2. My Servant sings a new song for the Gentiles in the wilderness and it's cities where Kedar (son of Ishmael) lives near mount Sole.

Isaiah 42 (New Kings James Version):

¹ Behold! **My Servant** whom I uphold, My [Ⓜ]Elect One *in whom* My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the **Gentiles**. ² He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice*, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. ³ A bruised reed He will not break, And [Ⓜ]smoking flax He will not [Ⓜ]quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. ⁴ He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.” ⁵ Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: ⁶ “I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a **covenant** to the people, As a light to the **Gentiles**, ⁷ To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. ⁸ I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. ⁹ Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them. ¹⁰ Sing to the LORD **a new song**, *And* His praise from the ends of the earth, You who go down to the sea, and [Ⓜ]all that is in it, You coastlands and you inhabitants of them! ¹¹ Let the **wilderness and its cities** lift up *their voice*, The villages *that* **Kedar** (*Son of Ishmael*) inhabits. Let the inhabitants of **Sela sing**, Let them shout from the top of the mountains. ¹² Let them give glory to the LORD, And declare His praise in the coastlands. ¹³ The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up *His zeal* **like a man of war**. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; **He shall prevail against His enemies**.

Whereas Muslims believe Isaiah 42 refers to Muhammad, Christians believe it's Jesus. Below is a comparison of the two perspectives base on highlighted keywords. Other than kinship, most keywords seem to apply to both and create room for mix-up:

Highlighted Keywords	Muhammad (According to Islamic Tradition)	Jesus (According to Christian Tradition)
My Servant	Whereas Christianity teaches that Jesus is the Son of God, Islam teaches that Muhammad is a Servant Messenger of God and a role model for all Muslims to be servants of God. The declaration of faith (shahadah), recited by every practicing Muslim nine times <i>each day</i> , includes the phrase: "I bear witness that Muhammad is God's Servant and Messenger."	At least five verses in the Old and New Testaments highlight that Jesus is a servant of God. He also fed 5,000 people in Galilee and told his followers that he is among them as one who serves.
Kedar	Kedar is the son of Ishmael and one of the twelve Arab princes mentioned in the Holy Bible.	Jesus is a descendant of Isaac, not Arab.
Wilderness and it's Cities	Muhammad lived most of his life in the wilderness cities of Mecca and Medina.	Jesus lived primarily in the Holy Land but took trips to nearby wilderness areas for various reasons, including feeding families, retreats for rest and teaching, and seeking solitude.

Highlighted Keywords	Muhammad <i>(According to Islamic Tradition)</i>	Jesus <i>(According to Christian Tradition)</i>
Man of War	Commanded armies and engaged in battles.	Preached peace and his approach was non-violent, focusing on spiritual and moral teachings.
Shall Prevail Against Enemies	Prevailed and was victorious in most wars against pagan idol worshipers and Qurayshi enemies.	Won spiritually in the long run as Christians eventually became a world superpower.
A New Song	The Quran was a new law with rhythms, rhymes, and other musical characteristics built-in the text.	Jesus did not bring new laws but emphasized the spiritual essence and the moral and ethical dimensions of the existing Mosaic Law. The Servant Songs of Isaiah are scripture passages that are considered prophetic revelations about Jesus Christ and his redemptive work.
Mount Sela	Mount Sela is currently in Medina, Saudi Arabia, where Muhammad lived.	Sela today is an archaeological site located about 75 miles southeast of Jerusalem.
Gentiles	Muhammad, a gentile, lived with and interacted primarily with Gentiles, and all Muslims are considered Gentiles.	Jesus reached out to Gentiles to heal the sick and to convey God's word. He also fed 4,000 Gentiles in the wilderness of Syria. Eventually, Gentiles became primary followers of Christianity.
Covenant	No bilateral covenants are made with God in Islam. However, many unilateral covenants or commitments/pledges were made by Muhammad and Muslims.	The unilateral New Covenant through Jesus involved the transformation from the Mosaic Law to the teachings of Jesus.

Some historical contexts may shed more light on this passage. Between the 1st and 4th centuries AD, many Jews migrated from the Holy Land and settled in the region where Muhammad was later born and lived. Three major tribes⁵², one of which claimed lineage to Moses, established themselves in the wilderness city of Madinah. By the time of Muhammad's birth, at the end of the 5th century AD, they had fully integrated into Arab society, adopting Arabic names and living alongside pagan Arab communities. The question arises: was it merely a coincidence that major Jewish tribes had migrated from the north and settled in Madinah, the very city where Muhammad would eventually rule and lead the emerging Muslim nation? According to several historical traditions, this was no coincidence at all. The Jews had followed descriptions in their scriptures that prophesied the arrival of a prophet in the village of Kedar, in the wilderness and its surrounding cities. When Muhammad appeared, fulfilling these prophecies but emerging from among the original Arabs rather than the Israelite Arabs, most Jews rejected him—though some accepted him. While the following references are reported by Muslim historians (i.e. not Quran and nor as accurate or authenticated as the Quran) the context aligns closely with Isaiah 42 above:

- Sunan al-Tirmidhi: Salman al-Farsi narrated that a (Christian) monk he had been serving told him about the coming of a prophet, saying: "He will appear in a land of palm trees and will have certain signs: he will not eat charity, but he will accept gifts, and the seal of

⁵² The three tribes were: Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadir, and Banu Qurayza

prophethood will be between his shoulders." Salman found these signs in Muhammad after meeting him in Madinah and embraced Islam.

- Sahih al-Bukhari⁵³ reports from Ibn Abbas: "The Jews used to invoke Allah's curse against the pagan Arabs and say, 'A prophet will be sent (soon), and we shall kill you (pagans) under his guidance and support.' But when Allah sent Muhammad from among the Arabs, they disbelieved in him, even though they knew he was the awaited prophet."
- Sahih al-Bukhar narrates the story of Abdullah ibn Salam: "When the Prophet arrived in Madinah, Abdullah ibn Salam, who was a Jewish rabbi, came to him and said: 'O Muhammad! I will ask you about three things which nobody knows except a prophet..' After receiving satisfactory answers, he declared his belief in Muhammad as the awaited prophet."

3. Moses's Prophecy of a new upcoming prophet

"And the Lord said unto me. They have well-spoken that which they have spoken, I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, *and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.* And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deuteronomy 18:17-19):

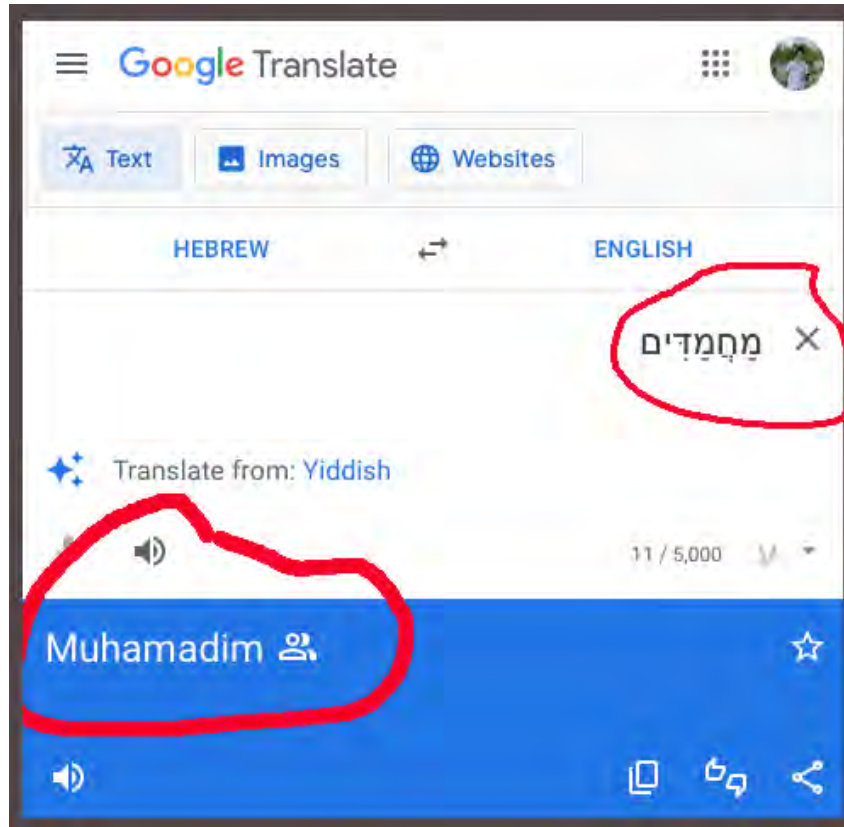
- A. These verses vividly describe Muhammad's experience with Quran revelation.
- B. The verses state that the expected prophet is similar to Moses "like unto thee". From the Christian standpoint, this would rule out Jesus since he is believed to be divine while Moses is a human prophet. In this case, Muhammad is far more similar to Moses than Jesus.
- C. Christian apologists believe "brethren" refers to the twelve tribes. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the word refers to the Ishmaelites, the brethren of Israelites, since Muhammad is the only person from Ishmaelites branch that claimed prophethood after Moses death and Jesus ascend to heaven.

4. The Quran states that the word "Muhammad" "can be found in Christian and Jewish scriptures.

Muslim scholars have been searching and making claims that the Bible has the word "Muhammad" and Christian scholars have been discrediting every claim because the meaning and context is not about prophet Muhammad. The word "altogether lovely" in Solomon 5:16 is one example. In the Hebrew Torah (Old Testament) these words are written "מִתְמַדִּים". One can look up this word in an online Hebrew Torah, copy the word, and check the pronunciation in an online Hebrew dictionary:

King James Version Translation Song of Solomon 5:16	
English Bible	Hebrew Bible
His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely . This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.	מִתְמַדִּים, טז חֶפְזוֹ, מִמְתַּקִּים, וְכֵלֹוּ; זֶה דוּדֵי וְזֶה רַעֲי, בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם

⁵³ <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3329>



In Hebrew, the ending “im” is a suffix added to the root word “Muhamad”.

5. The Quran states that Christians and Jews will recognize “it/him”.

The Quran, however, does not clarify what “it/him” refers to. Muslims believe it is either “Muhammad,” “The Quran,” or “The Truth.

Quran 2:146 - AlBaqara (The Cow) <i>Translation by Saheeh International</i>	
<p>Those We gave Scripture know it (or him) as well as they know their own sons, but some of them hide the truth that they know.</p>	<p>الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَا هُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ</p>

THE END TIMES

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share many broad End Times prophecies, which encompass extraordinary circumstances, supernatural beings, powers, and events. Islamic traditions tend to be more descriptive and less symbolic compared to the Holy Bible, however. Consequently, there is greater consensus among Muslim scholars regarding the framework, sequence, duration, and objectives of these events. Note that the End Times information provided below is not sourced from the Quran but from various Islamic traditions.

Shared End Times Prophecy According to Islamic Traditions:

1. Jesus is alive today in heaven, awaiting his glorious return.
2. No one knows the day or hour of Jesus return except God, but it is very near—the time is drawing close.
3. The Antichrist will be a demonic being endowed with supernatural powers—a counterfeit of Jesus, sent to deceive the world.
4. The Antichrist will bear distinctive markings on his forehead, visible to some but not all, as a sign of his identity.
5. The Antichrist will falsely claim to be the Messiah, deceiving many, including Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others who are searching for truth.
6. Eventually, the Antichrist will proclaim himself to be God, using his supernatural abilities and miraculous signs to further deceive the masses. His powers will include:
 - Demons at his command, capable of taking human form. The Antichrist will use this power to deceive by pretending to raise the dead.
 - Illusions of paradise and fire, using them to falsely suggest that he controls both heaven and hell.
7. The Antichrist will rule on earth for a short period, a time of great deception and turmoil.
8. During this time, tribulation will strike when sin is rampant, evil is widespread, and people's faith has become shallow and lukewarm.
9. A beast of supernatural origin will appear, marking people, and making it possible to visually distinguish between true believers and disbelievers.
10. Believers will face intense persecution and martyrdom during the Tribulation. Nations will rise against nations, and the earth will suffer famines, plagues, and earthquakes in many places.
11. To shorten the days of suffering, God will intervene by reducing the length of time after the Antichrist's appearance, showing mercy on His faithful.
12. The Second Coming of Jesus will be a glorious, physical return—He will come “in the flesh” to defeat evil.
13. Jesus will defeat the Antichrist and destroy him in the Holy Land, bringing an end to his reign of deception and terror.
14. After the Antichrist's defeat, Jesus will establish God's kingdom on earth, bringing about a new era of righteousness and peace.
15. Under Jesus' perfect rule, there will be a time of unparalleled peace, love, and compassion, where all creation—humans and animals alike—will live in harmony.

The Purpose of End-Times Prophecy:

Muslims often refer to End Times events using the terms ‘End-Times Test’ or ‘Imposter Messiah Test.’ From an Islamic perspective, the purpose of the End Times test is twofold:

1. *Testing Human Behavior with Foreknowledge of the Future*

God may be assessing how humans respond to knowledge of future events and the way it may affect their behavior, beliefs, adherence to divine commands, and their understanding of good and evil. For example, will believers remain faithful to God's commands even if they foresee unfavorable outcomes? How will they choose to use their foresight? Will they continue to strive to promote goodness for themselves and for all of humanity regardless of the outcome? On one hand, believers might prepare for the End Times through repentance, prayer, and a commitment to good works, while deepening their awareness and faith in God. On the other hand, they might embrace the idea that 'the end justifies the means,' thereby rationalizing actions that contradict God's commands and fundamental principles of love and compassion to pursue what they perceive as good or godly aims that are in their favor. Is it possible that some believers misuse that knowledge for personal gain?

Notes:

- A. God has informed all prophets and their nations about these imminent events supporting the concept of testing all of humanity.
- B. The term “very near” is used in both Christian and Islamic scripture and traditions giving this issue a compelling sense of urgency to act, which reinforces the concept of testing every individual.
- C. This objective aligns with the Holy Bible verse:
“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.”
(Revelation 3:10)
- D. This objective is also consistent with the purpose of creation as discussed in Chapter 4, Message 2: ‘Purpose of Creating Humans, Life, Earth, and Heavens’ to test and rank intelligent and autonomous human servants.

[Today, many Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faith leaders occasionally draw on End Times prophecies as sources of inspiration and motivation, guiding their congregations to lead virtuous lives, adhere to divine teachings, and promote belief in God according to their doctrines. This suggests that they are successfully navigating this test. However, the foreknowledge of End Times events has led some Muslim extremists and certain Christian movements to neglect divine principles of love and compassion, which might suggest that they are failing this test:

- i. *Some Muslims are drawn to narratives that prepare them to battle the anti-Christ. Extremists have exploited End Times prophecies to recruit new members to take up arms and perpetrate violence against Christian minorities, such as the Yazidi Christian minority in Iraq.*
- ii. *Christians may be drawn to narratives that resonate with their genuine desire for a God-conscious world. Christian Zionists often overlook or condone the anguish endured by millions of displaced Palestinian children,*

supporting policies that keep these families displaced, believing this to be necessary for the return of Jesus.

It is crucial for good-hearted and sincere Christians, Muslims, and Jews alike to exercise caution and avoid falling into such traps. They must be wary of adopting an extreme mindset where the end is seen to justify the means.]

2. *End Time is a completely new testing phase with different objectives and rules*

- A. According to prophetic teachings, the End Times, or a new period of testing, will begin when any of the following three supernatural signs occur:
 - The sun will rise from the West.
 - The Antichrist will emerge.
 - A talking animal will appear, roaming freely. As it passes, it will miraculously reveal the hearts of individuals, visually distinguishing believers from nonbelievers (possibly through some form of skin coloration).
- B. These supernatural events will mark the conclusion of life's current test phase. Consequently, opportunities for repentance will cease, and any shift from disbelief to faith in God will no longer be recognized.
- C. The conditions at the onset of the End Times testing phase will include:
 - The supernatural will become a familiar reality to all.
 - Believers and nonbelievers at the end of the initial phase will be visually distinct.
 - The majority of humanity will consist of evildoers and sinners.
 - Jesus will be present, providing and communicating divine guidance.

The purpose of this new testing phase remains a mystery, unfolding only as the prophesied times draw near.

THE REASON A MUSLIM READING OF THE HOLY BIBLE FINDS THE NATURE OF GOD AND RIGHT OF RETURN CONSISTENT WITH THE QURAN

When a Muslim scholar that is trained on interpreting the Quran reads the Holy Bible, he/she finds the two align in regard to major theological, social, and political issues. From a Muslim perspective, it's not the scriptures but the differences in the guidelines and rules that govern understanding them that is blamed for major Muslim-Christian conflicts.

Scripture Interpretation Guidelines and rules (Hermeneutics):

Because both mainstream Sunni Muslim imams and Protestant pastors are not bound by any hierarchical or central religious authority that dictates scripture interpretations, qualified faith leaders on both sides are free to directly interpret the scriptures and preach and practice what they understand. To avoid unrealistic or unreasonable interpretations and assure the integrity of what is believed to be God's message, Biblical and Quran scholars developed scripture interpretation guidelines and rules⁵⁴. Despite having significant common guidelines and rules, some key differences have led to centuries of theological disagreement, conflict, violence, and wars. One particular rule where Islamic and Christian hermeneutics approaches diverge significantly is called The Rule of Clarity:

How should a qualified faith leader handle the interpretation of clear, explicit, and consistently reiterated scriptural passages when they seem to be at odds with longstanding traditions, interpretations inferred from unrelated verses, or speculative End Times narratives?

Muslim "Rule of Clarity"⁵⁵:

In Islamic tradition, the rule is unequivocal and uncompromising: explicit, clear, and reiterated divine scripture passages hold supreme authority. Any conflicting interpretations inspired by humans—whether derived from traditions, doctrines, implications of other unrelated verses, or eschatological speculations and predictions—are considered invalid. In Islam, God's Word is interpreted literally when it is explicitly stated and reiterated, leaving little room for alternative interpretations.

Christian Approach:

Christian interpretation rules tend to be more complex in regard to the question above. It seeks to balance the textual fidelity of scripture with the weight of long-standing traditions and inferred interpretations of other verses. Often, these traditions are regarded as coequal with scripture, allowing for a more flexible interpretative process. As a result, Christian scholars might prioritize theological coherence, even if it means giving traditions significant authority alongside scripture.

⁵⁴ 'Tafseer AlQuran' and 'Biblical Hermeneutics.'

⁵⁵ The Arabic word is محكم or "Muhkam".

Example 1: The Rule of Clarity and Divinity of Jesus:

When Muslim scholars study the Holy Bible, they find a clear, explicit, and reiterated message about a singular God:

1. Mark 12:29, where Jesus states, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord."
 2. Isaiah 44:6, where God proclaims, "I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me."
 3. Exodus 20:3, the first commandment, instructs, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."
 4. James 2:19, which acknowledges the monotheistic belief, "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."
 5. Deuteronomy 6:4, the Shema, recites, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!"
 6. Psalm 86:10, in praise, says, "For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God."
- Additional verses: 1 Chronicles 17:20, Isaiah 45:18, 2 Samuel 7:22, Deuteronomy 4:35, Deuteronomy 32:39, Psalm 83:18, Isaiah 43:10, 1 Corinthians 8:4

When Muslim scholars review the verses that Christians cite to support Jesus' divinity, they find either long-established traditions of divinity or verses that are ambiguous, suggesting either a divine or human nature. Below are three examples:

1. John 1:34 states, "You are the Son of God."

This verse explicitly affirms Jesus as the 'Son of God,' a term that might suggest either divinity or humanity.

- A Christian interpreter understands 'Son of God' through the lens of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th century doctrines of the Trinity. This perspective sees the term as a divine mystery.
- A Muslim interpreter, adhering to the Muslim Rule of Clarity, would uphold the authority of the scripture over long-standing traditions and give precedence to the clear, explicit, and reiterated scripture verses and interpret the phrase "Son of God" metaphorically. The terms 'Son of,' 'Father of,' 'Sister of,' etc., are common in Semitic languages, including Hebrew and Arabic today and throughout history, to denote special relationships. 'Son of God' usually refers to someone who has a special relationship with God and is used throughout the Holy Bible with other prophets such as "Adam, Son of God" in Luke 3:38, "Israel is my first-born son" in Exodus 4:22, "These are sons of God" in John 8:14, "And all the sons of God shouted for joy" in Job 38:7, and "When the sons of God came in" in Genesis 6:4. In this context, Jesus is also referred to as 'Son of God' because he is believed to be a prophet and, like all others, has a unique relationship with God.

2. John 8:58 records Jesus's words, 'Before Abraham was, I AM'

This verse also opens up multiple possible interpretations regarding Jesus' nature: Human or Divine. Similar to the thought process in the previous example, a Muslim interpreter, will seek interpretations⁵⁶ that uphold the authority of the scriptures over long-standing traditions,

⁵⁶ Here are two:

- The creation of souls was made in one order which may not always align with the order of their physical embodiment.
- This statement implies a prophetic or chosen status rather than divinity similar to Luke 3:38 which refers to Israel as "my first-born son," despite Israel's birth came after Adam (*continue next page footnote*).

concluding that Jesus is human, and both the Holy Bible and Quran affirm a single God. A Christian will harmonize and reconcile this scripture verse with long-standing Christian traditions, concluding a triune God.

3. John 10:30 quotes Jesus saying, “I and the Father are one”

While this verse clearly, directly, and explicitly proclaims Jesus’ unity with God, the very subsequent verses open the door to human or divine interpretations. Following this statement, the Jews questioned Jesus about his divinity, but his response was more deflective than affirmative. By reminding them that their own scriptures sometimes referred to human judges as 'gods,' Jesus challenged their understanding of his words. His response to the hostile inquirers can be interpreted as either a clever diversion or a genuine clarification of a significant statement that might be confusing to a speaker and audience of diverse faiths and languages. Jesus' response opens John 10:30 to multiple interpretations: is Jesus human or divine? Again, a Muslim will uphold the authority of the scripture, give precedence to the clear, explicit, and reiterated scripture verses, and interpret this verse in any of several interpretations⁵⁷ that are consistent with a monotheistic God, while a Christian will harmonize and reconcile with long-standing Christian traditions.

Ultimately, the Muslim interpreter will conclude that the Holy Bible, Quran, and Torah consistently point to the same singular God, while the Christian interpreter may view the God of Islam as different from the God of Christianity.

Impact of Long-Standing Traditions on Muslim Rituals

Muslims use the term 'innovation'⁵⁸ to describe any religious tradition or ritual that is not prescribed in the Quran nor practiced by Muhammad. There are definitely innovations in Islamic traditions, but they do not affect the core tenets of the faith. Rather, they have emerged in the realm of voluntary rituals. Many of these innovations were introduced by political authorities during challenging periods in Islamic history. In this section, we will explore a few innovations observed by the two largest Muslim sects: majority mainstream Sunnis, who comprise about 85% of the Muslim population, and Shias, making up around 13%.

A Historical Battle:

About 25 years after the passing of Muhammad, a significant battle broke out among his companions. Both sides believed they were fighting for the future of Islam, yet tragically, some of

Please note that individuals unfamiliar with Christian theology or traditions might not see the connection between the verse and God because it reflects a sequence of events rather than pointing to the nature of the Creator. Here is an earthly example to demonstrate the point: Steve Jobs once remarked that the iPad was made before the iPhone (https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2010/06/steve_jobs_the_ipad_came_befor.html), despite the latter being released to the market first. This comment pertains only to product release order, not to Jobs’s personal characteristics.

⁵⁷ One other possible interpretation includes ‘unity of purpose’’: This would be similar to stating “I and my brother are one” in regard to some issue, dispute, or matter. The Bible uses this expression in John 17:21-23 “²¹That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ²²And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: ²³I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

⁵⁸ The Arabic word is (بدع)

the finest companions of Muhammad were slain on both sides. The victorious “Umayyads” tribe and their followers ruled the Islamic world for several decades until their reign was eventually overthrown. This battle contributed to the breakup of the Shia sect from mainstream Sunni Islam and also introduced certain unfounded traditions into Muslim culture:

Innovations in Mainstream Sunni Tradition:

Following their victory, the Umayyads aimed to unify mainstream Muslims and scholars under their authority. In pursuit of this unity, they introduced a new innovation, mandating that all imams add two new words to a voluntary prayer originally recommended by Muhammad. For several decades, this revision was strictly enforced by the Umayyads rulers and imams were required to include these words during their weekly sermons. Imams who failed to comply faced severe punishments, including death, reminiscent of early Christian martyrs who were persecuted by the Romans for conflicting with the prevailing religious and cultural norms of the Roman Empire. As most imams conformed to the political mandate, the altered prayer gradually evolved into a tradition observed by the majority. Today, these added words continue to be part of voluntary prayers, with many mainstream Muslims mistakenly believing they were recommended by Muhammad himself.

- The original voluntary prayer, as found in the Islamic traditions: "O Lord, bestow Your peace and blessings upon Muhammad and his family."
- The revised prayer, enforced by the umayyads and still uttered by mainstream Sunni Muslims today: "O Lord, bestow Your peace and blessings upon Muhammad, his family, *and all his companions.*"

While voluntary prayers in Islam allow and encourage creative and flexible expressions of devotion, it is crucial to recognize that these added words were not uttered by Muhammad. The problem lies not in the addition of the words but in the false belief that this longstanding innovation is an authentic Islamic tradition.

Today, as advancements in communication technology increase awareness of authentic Islamic teachings, many scholars are calling for discarding this and other religious innovations. While there is minimal opposition to this correction movement, most Muslims continue to make the innovated prayer wording out of habit.

Shia Sect Tradition:

The Shia offshoot, however, faces deeper challenges with longstanding innovations, as they have become deeply embedded in their culture. During the same battle mentioned earlier, several tribes played a role in the termination of several of Muhammad’s companions, including members of his family. Over time, they came to regret their actions and the manner in which the companions were killed, which inspired the Shia breakup. In an attempt to express their sorrow, they introduced rituals that are still observed annually to this day. Many Shias believe these rituals are integral to the Islamic faith. These innovated voluntary practices have deepened the division between Sunnis and Shias:

- Shia Muslims observe highly visible rituals of self-flagellation, which involve beating themselves until they bleed to express sorrow for their role in the suffering and bloodshed that took place.

- Another long-standing tradition among Shia Muslims is verbally cursing the companions of Muhammad, whom they opposed at the time of the sect's formation.

Today, many Shia scholars are becoming increasingly aware of these innovations and are working to educate their followers about them. However, these practices remain prevalent and are often highlighted in media reports, particularly in the Western world.

Example 2: The Rule of Clarity and The Right of Return

The Right of Return of the Palestinian refugees is the root cause of a decades long conflict between mainstream Christians and Muslims. The conflict continues to victimize millions of lives today. Before continuing, please read the summary of 'The Nakba (Palestinian Catastrophe)' on page 108.

The question at the root of this decades-long conflict between mainstream Christians and Muslims is: Should millions of displaced Palestinian refugees be repatriated and allowed to return to their homes and properties within the state of Israel?

When Muslims research Christianity, they find a faith deeply rooted in principles of love, compassion, and mercy. These ideals are not just peripheral aspects of Christian teaching but form the very core of the gospel message. Clear, explicit, and reiterative scripture verses advocate for compassion, loving your enemy, defending the rights of the oppressed, helping the weak and helpless, seeking justice, and judging fairly. Here are few examples:

1. Matthew 22:37-39 - "To love God wholeheartedly and to love one's neighbor as oneself. Luke 10:25-37 further expands the definition of 'neighbor' to include all individuals in need of compassion, regardless of their religious or national identity."
 2. Isaiah 1:17: "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."
 3. Proverbs 31:8-9 "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."
 4. Psalm 82:3-4: "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
 5. Matthew 25:35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."
 6. Luke 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
 7. James 1:27: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."
- Other verses include: Exodus 22:21-22, Leviticus 19:33-34, Deuteronomy 10:18, Deuteronomy 27:19, Jeremiah 22:3, Zechariah 7:10.

In examining the Bible verses that some Christians use to justify condoning the Palestinian Catastrophe or denying the Right of Return, Muslim scholars find no direct scriptural references.

Instead, they uncover a complex interplay of religious beliefs, historical contexts, and political motives. These beliefs arise from multiple interpretations of verses that are not inherently related to justice for the dispossessed. For example, some Christian interpretations may overemphasize complex theological insights or prophecies, leading a peace-loving Christian to overlook the rights of the dispossessed, the unfortunate, and the weak and helpless. Thus, a Muslim scholar, committed to scriptural supremacy and the Rule of Clarity, will favor interpretations consistent with clear and repeated biblical passages on love, compassion, and justice, rather than complex, inferred interpretations of verses that do not directly address the issue and conflict with foundational passages of scripture. Accordingly, they conclude that the Bible aligns with the Quran in advocating for the Right of Return.

On the other side, a Christian interpreter who is trained to balance the scripture with the long-standing traditions and inferred interpretations of verses not related to the subject, does not uphold supreme the clear, explicit, and reiterated divine commands of love, compassion, and justice and, as a result, condoning the decades long suffering of Palestinians becomes the dominant culture and an acceptable religious and cultural Christian norm.

Below is the Islamic perspective on some random scripture verses or inferred interpretations that are occasionally mentioned as part of the theological justification for condoning the Palestinian Catastrophe:

1. *John 14:6, where Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"*

As discussed in the section "Faith in the Prophets and Messengers sent by God" in page 58 his interpretation is consistent with Islamic teachings viewed within a broader theological context that recognizes prophets as exclusive divine guides appointed for their specific times. Additionally, this particular verse does not explicitly address the dispossessed, the vulnerable, or the Right of Return. Therefore, guided by the Rule of Clarity, interpretations of this verse that conflict with the clear, explicit, and repeatedly emphasized divine commands to show love and compassion towards the dispossessed are deemed invalid according to Islamic scripture interpretation guidelines.

2. *Genesis 12:3: "I will bless those who bless you" (Abraham)*

For a Muslim interpreter, this scripture passage is particularly captivating, as it seems to strongly support the 'Right of Return,' rather than condone the Palestinian Catastrophe:

- A. Similar to the rationale used in point 1 above, the Rule of Clarity guides a Muslim interpreter to recognize the Holy Bible as consistent with advocating for the 'Right of Return'.
- B. The rituals of Islam align remarkably with this verse, as detailed in the section 'I will bless those who bless you' (Genesis 12:3) in page 71. Muslims honor, celebrate, and bless Abraham—both individually and collectively—through their daily and annual rituals. This unparalleled veneration is a testament to their profound commitment to preserving Abraham's legacy, acknowledging him as a central figure in their faith. It could be argued

that the displaced Palestinian victims embody this scripture more profoundly and extensively in their practices than Israelis and Christians globally.

3. *False Verse: I will bless those who bless "Israel"??*

Advocates of the military occupation of Palestine have manipulated intricate and speculative interpretations of Scripture passages concerning the Covenant, the Chosen People, and the Children of Israel to incorporate this verse into Christian belief and cultural practices. Relying on complex and speculative interpretations to create new doctrinal positions risks placing human reasoning on par with the authority of divine revelation. Remember that God Himself rebuked the Children of Israel, including their kings, for their sins and disobedience, showing that His judgment was not reserved solely for others, but extended to the Chosen People when they strayed from His commands. These included the mistreatment of non-Israelite foreigners (Exodus 22:21-24), failure to seek justice or defend the oppressed (Isaiah 1:17), and general acts of injustice (Amos 5:11-12). Specifically, He condemned injustices toward foreigners and the act of shedding innocent blood (Jeremiah 7:5-7). In other words, the explicit commands of love and compassion to the dispossessed cannot be overshadowed by being chosen or covenant status.

4. *Genesis 17:8 "The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God"*

This passage clearly states that the descendants of Abraham, encompassing both Isaac (Jews) and Ishmael (Arabs), are promised possession of the Holy Land. A Muslim interpreter regards this verse as unambiguous and in harmony with the clear, explicit, and reiterated verses of love, compassion, etc. affirming it as supportive of the Palestinian Right of Return. Conversely, a Christian interpreter might integrate this passage with established Christian traditions, culture, and political alignment and other implied or inferred interpretations, often emphasizing the covenant through Isaac while overlooking Ishmael's part in God's promise, thus giving the impression that Christians selectively adhere to the Word of God with regards to the Right of Return.

5. *Hastening the Return of Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven....*

The notion of prioritizing human predictions of future events, that are based on complex and inferred interpretations of obscure scriptural passages, over clear, explicit, and repeatedly affirmed scriptural commands could perplex a Muslim interpreter, complicating the establishment of a solid foundation for meaningful hermeneutical discussion. From a Muslim perspective, prioritizing human predictions appears to be a clear departure from divine will. Below are some of the doomsday forecast failures in the past. Imagine God-loving believers in these predictions had to cause or condone large scale human tragedies and the death or anguish of millions of innocent victims in order to fulfill these guesses! Will that be consistent with the scriptures:

- The Millerites predicted the return of Christ will occur on October 22, 1844.
- Hal Lindsey predicted the Rapture would occur in the 1980s
- John Hagee and Mark Blitz linked 2014 and 2015 lunar eclipses with imminent apocalyptic end of times events affecting Israel and the world (Blood Moon Prophecy)

In other words, based on a literal interpretation of the Holy Bible, it is clear that the aspiration to hasten the Second Coming of Christ does not justify violating the divine principles of love and compassion.

Given that Scripture repeatedly demonstrates God's judgment upon those who perpetrate injustice, regardless of their Chosen or Covenant status, it is clear that from a biblical perspective, supporting a military occupation that displaces and harms millions of innocent lives, including Palestinian Christians, is not scripturally justified. Such support is likely influenced by cultural biases, cultural identification, other personal or external motives or political influences, rather than rooted in a biblically grounded ethical stance.

Read in the Upcoming Supplement of The Recital:

1. Upholding Scripture Authority.
2. "Say not 'Three.' Cease! It is better for you."
3. Selective or Cherry-picking Scripture.
4. Scripture Alteration.
5. Rules for Peace & War with People of the Book.

Quran 2:1-5 AlBaqara (The Cow) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali with author edits in italics</i>		
Alif, Lam, Mim, (<i>Ambiguous Code or disconnected letters</i>) Arabic alphabet combination equivalent to the letters: A.L.M.	1	الْم
This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah;	2	ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ
Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them;	3	الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ
And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter.	4	وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ
They are on (true) guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper.	5	أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

CHAPTER 7

QURAN COLLECTION & SCRIPTING

WITH ENGLISH ANALOGIES



The challenge of documenting the Quran differs from that of the Holy Bible. While the principal difficulty in compiling the Holy Bible centered on determining canonicity—that is, deciding which books were divinely inspired and should thus be included—the primary challenge for eyewitness Muslims was selecting which of the multiple dialects Muhammad spoke to record. Given the complexity of illustrating dialectical challenges in another language, analogies become a crucial tool for explanation:

ENGLISH ANALOGY OF THE PRIMARY QURAN DOCUMENTATION CHALLENGE

Imagine if a Christian denomination in Texas released a prayer song with a pronounced country accent that resonated deeply and became popular among affiliated Southern churches, often sung during Sunday worship service. However, congregations in other regions struggled to adopt it due to the challenging Southern twang. To facilitate global appreciation, the denomination unveiled six additional renditions by various artists, each singing in English but with distinct accent—ranging from Spanish and New Yorker to French, Chinese, and South African.

These new versions featured subtle variations in melody and lyrics. For instance:

- The pronunciation of vowels varied between accent versions.
- The 'r' was pronounced as 'gh' in the French accent version, a strong 'rr' in the Spanish, and 'sh' in the Mandarin accent version.
- The 't' in 'often' was silent in the Southern and New Yorker accent versions but pronounced distinctly in the others.

Furthermore, there were three specific lyrical alterations across some accent versions:

- 'In focus' was omitted from the French accent version due to its phonetic resemblance to profanity.
- 'Asked the Lord' was changed to 'Prayed to the Lord' in versions catering to Black American congregations, where 'asked' might be pronounced 'axed the Lord'.

- The Spanish version replaced 'alligator' with 'ellagarto', reflecting the common pronunciation among Spanish speakers in the U.S.

Churches worldwide were joyful, as most could now incorporate the prayer song into their Sunday services. For example, African congregations easily adopted the South African-accented version, while those in Latin and South America preferred the Spanish-accented rendition.

In Texas, a talented vocalist named Ricky Thompson gained acclaim for blending Southern and Spanish accents in one unique version, dubbed the 'MexTex' rendition, which further united the two cultures. This mix was affectionately termed 'Ricky's Prayer Song.' Subsequently, tens of artists in Africa, Asia, and Europe created their own single or hybrid-accent versions, which were then named after the respective singers. *None of the singers had different lyrics or new accents beyond the seven original songs.* Gradually, the original six versions, differentiated by dialect or accent, lost their prominence as the songs became identified solely by the names of the singers.

Because hybrid-accent songs were more popular than the original Southern accent song, the denomination decided to release two official song lyric documents. One contained the original southern accent lyrics, while the other incorporated all variations combined into one song lyrics (e.g., omitted "in focus", substituted 'Asked the Lord' with 'Prayed to the Lord,' and had 'ellagarto' instead of 'alligator,' etc.). The two documents allowed singers to pick and choose any words they like when composing new songs.

A church in Vietnam expressed interest in adopting the French-accented version for their Sunday worship service because French is commonly learned as a second language there. Here is an important question relevant to the subject of this chapter: Should the Vietnamese congregation also learn the English or Spanish accent versions of the songs? Introducing multiple accents to Vietnamese speakers who hardly speak French would be an unnecessary and worthless confusing effort.

All song versions, lyrics, and details concerning the various accents and dialects have been preserved in public and academic libraries or archives, ensuring the availability of this cultural phenomenon for academic research.

Read in the Upcoming Supplement of The Recital:

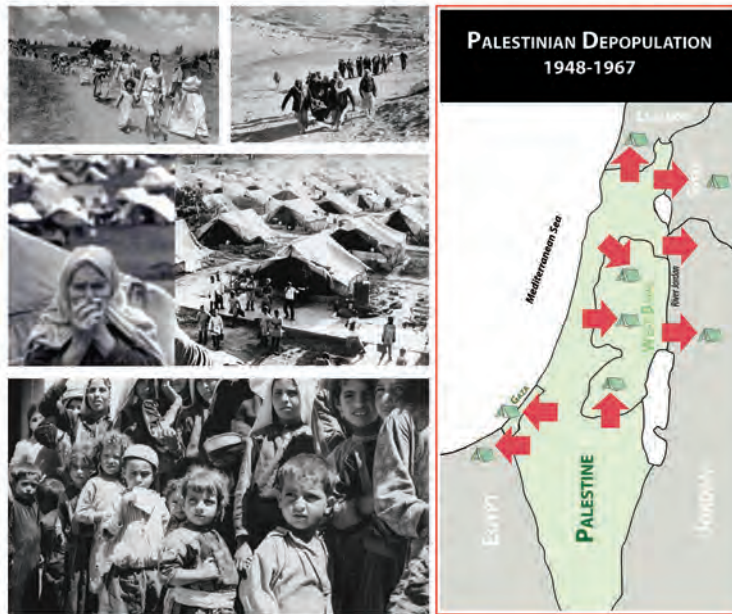
1. *Phase I: Receiving and Structuring the Revelation*
2. *Phase II: Account for Every Word*
3. *Phase III: Capture and Document Quraishi Dialect/Accent*

CHAPTER 8

THE NAKBA (PALESTINIAN CATASTROPHE)



BACKGROUND

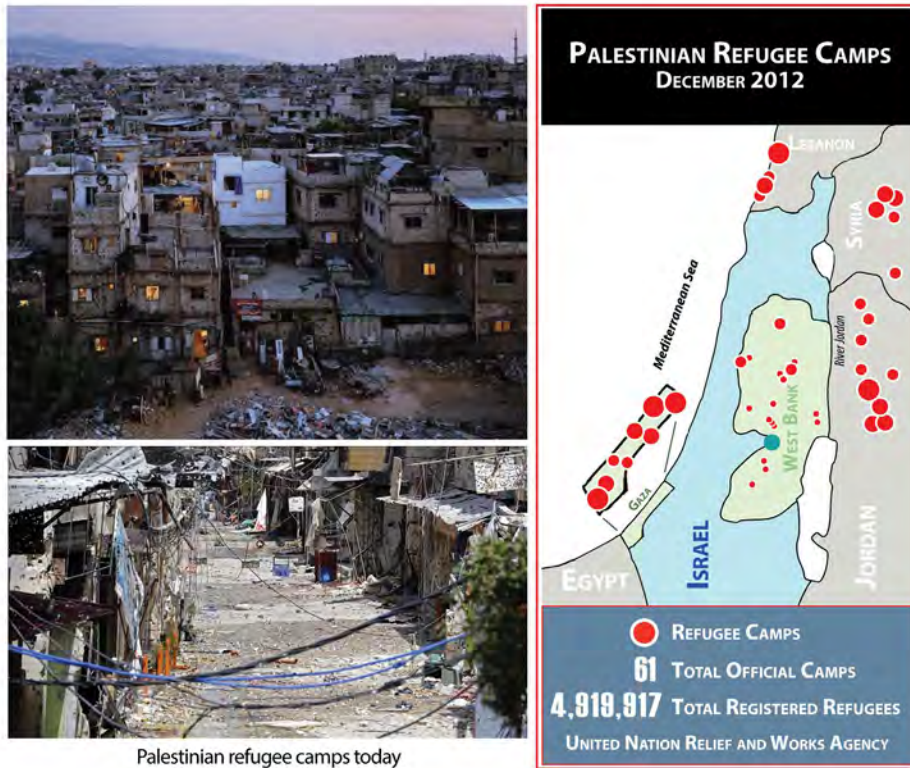


The roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lie in a 19th-century European colonial-era initiative to establish a homeland for Jews. The momentum for this British-led plan accelerated after the Holocaust, leading to the forced displacement of more than 700,000 Palestinians from their homes and farms to nearby refugee camps to make space for Jewish immigrants from Europe. Following this, the new immigrant settlers established and declared the independence of the state of Israel in 1948. Palestinians commemorate these events as the Nakba, or ‘Catastrophe.’ More than 75 years later, many of these refugees or their descendants remain living in camps located a short drive from their original homes, largely because Israeli laws prevent their return. Furthermore, the United States has blocked or vetoed ALL United Nations resolutions that would have granted the Palestinians the “Right of Return.” Today, the US continues to endorse and promote peace initiatives that require Palestinian refugees to relinquish their demand for repatriation in return for ending the conflict. Finally, keep in mind that Jews recognize that Palestinian Arabs are descendants of Abraham, Semitic, their cousins from the Ishmael side, and share the Abrahamic traditions.

Below is the latest Palestinian casualty count:

- 4.9 million: Total registered refugees as of 2012
- 1.4 million: Refugees living in camps as of January 2010
- 56,502: Houses demolished since 1967
- 39,617: Killed since September 2000
- 14,835: Children killed as of year 2024
- 100,508: Injured since September 2000
- 9,000: Taken prisoners as of May 2011
- 6,279: Currently imprisoned as of February 2024
- 300: Children taken into custody in 2024 alone

THE SOLUTION



Unless the root cause of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is addressed, desperate Palestinian conditions and worldwide Muslim support for refugee repatriation will persist, fueling resistance and potentially fostering new militant groups in the years ahead. This cycle of violence, especially with a large number of victims, particularly children, exacerbates despair in the region and fuels Muslim radicalism and terrorism across both Islamic and Western worlds.

The resolution to the Israeli occupation of Palestine could be straightforward, drawing parallels from the South African reconciliation process. Facilitating a slow, gradual, and orderly return of Palestinians to their lands can lead to peaceful demographic change that preserves the rights of Israelis and Palestinians, removes political and trade barriers with all neighboring countries, and boosts the economy. Governance could then be shared among elected representatives from the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities.

The repatriation of Palestinians will render all other issues, including the debate over a one or two-state solution, secondary and open to negotiation. This approach is expected to gain support among Palestinians because principles of general pardon and reconciliation, after justice is reinstated, are ingrained in the faith and history of the majority of Sunni Muslims. Bear in mind that the prevailing belief among mainstream Muslims is that they are religiously obligated to protect Christian and Jewish populations living within Muslim communities, without even having these groups participate in military defense efforts. More about the faith of the majority of Palestinian victims and an introduction to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim relations according to Islamic teachings are included in the second half of this publication.

DEHUMANIZING PALESTINIANS AND THE MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIVIDE



For decades, Palestinians have consistently appealed to the international community, urging investigations into the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) for human rights violations. These allegations include the deliberate targeting of children by snipers, withholding or returning the bodies of deceased Palestinian prisoners with organs missing, the demolition of tens of thousands of homes, the detention of thousands of children, indefinite imprisonment without trial, attacks on schools and hospitals, and frequent midnight raids on Palestinian homes. Yet, these pleas for scrutiny are often overlooked by Western governments and mainstream media. Even pastors, who are entrusted with the moral imperative to discern right from wrong, good from evil, continue to overwhelmingly overlook the 75 years-long large-scale humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinians. Their silence inadvertently conveys consent and unspoken messages that the Palestinian suffering is unworthy of attention, undermining the belief that all people are made in the image of God and deserving of His inclusive love. Consequently, their peace-loving and free-spirited congregations remain oblivious to the suffering while they continue to support the military occupation through their donations. The shared graphic images of victims, their cries of despair, and pleas for assistance deepen the trust gap between Muslims worldwide and the West. Whereas many mainstream Muslims perceive Westerners as lacking compassion and displaying a sense of superiority, Westerners often associate Muslims with violence or extremism.

PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AND LIBERATION ORGANIZATIONS



Since 1948, Palestinian refugees have formed numerous political and military resistance organizations, including the PLO, Hamas, PFLP, PFM, PLA, FPM, PPSF, among others. Today, Hamas often secures electoral victories, primarily because its main competitor, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), is widely perceived as corrupt, known for unfair distribution of humanitarian aid, and accused of collaborating with Israel. Despite being democratically elected, Hamas is designated a terrorist organization by the USA and most Western countries, largely due to significant opposition from Zionist groups. In contrast, many Muslim nations view Hamas as a legitimate liberation movement, referencing the UN's stance that all nations have the right to use military force to fight for their freedom from military occupation.

Over the past 75 years, various Palestinian organizations have utilized a mix of political and military strategies to secure the release of Palestinian prisoners. Israel holds approximately 5,000 security prisoners, including 300 in administrative detention without trial, and an average of 500 children. Furthermore, the bodies of around 300 prisoners who died in custody have not been returned to their families. On October 7, 2023, a coalition of militant resistance groups penetrated the heavily fortified borders of Gaza, entering occupied Palestinian territory and kidnapping Israeli settlers and soldiers to exchange them for Palestinian detainees. In response, the United States provided support, funding, and devastating firepower, contributing to the heaviest bombardment on record of the world's most densely populated region, home to over 2 million Palestinians. The Israeli military has also blocked access to food, water, electricity, and medical supplies, creating conditions of genocide. Deaths due to violence, starvation, or lack of medical care, have been broadcast and shared globally, primarily by individuals through social media.

In the U.S., providing humanitarian aid to Palestinian orphans can be a serious offense. In one case, the US government used testimony from an anonymous Israeli 'security expert' to prove that a US-based charity indirectly supported Palestinian resistance. The founders and officers of the Holy Land for Relief and Development are currently serving sentences ranging from fifteen to sixty-five years.

Culture



Palestinian fashion by Nisreen Malhi's

In Palestine, the traditional female dress has a distinct design in each region and you can guess the town or village a woman is from based on her dress.



The Keffiyeh is the traditional headgear for men but has evolved into a global symbol of resistance for both men and women. The middle picture features Rachel Corrie, a young American peace activist who perished when she stood in front of a bulldozer while attempting to block the Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes. She is an American heroine in the eyes of Palestinians but hardly recognized in the USA.



Palestinian Dabka Group from Lajee Cultural Center

“Dabkeh” is the Palestinian folk dance

Palestine Before Nakba



Jaffa, late 1930s



Movie Theater



Radio Station



Airport



Hospital



Newspaper



School Testing



Synagogue



Cafe in Acre



Market

Palestinians Before Nakba



Wedding (colorized)



Basketball



Popular radio singer



Line up for Bedouin Folk Dance



Traditional Meal



Multifaith



1948 Government



Women Union



Orange Grove



Water sourcing

Conditions Today



<https://pages.ucsd.edu/~gfields/PalestinePhotos/>

Israel constructed a separation wall in the West Bank to limit Palestinian access to residential areas and roads used by Israeli settlers. This wall has created conditions reminiscent of South African apartheid. Palestinians are required to pass through checkpoints to cross the wall. Beyond the daily challenges, some patients have died while the ambulance carrying them awaited permission to cross.



www.middleeastmonitor.com

Palestinians have developed a culture of resistance perseverance to counter the prolonged military occupation. The Israeli military now detains children caught throwing stones at them, to scare the children and their families into submission.

CHAPTER 9

JCIC VISION, MISSION, AND STRATEGY *rev2.00*

Indiscriminately Compassionate Faith Leaders Champion World Peace Causes and Initiatives.

The initial draft of the “Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant (JCIC)” vision and strategy was published in the book, “Dear Pastors and Priests: Messages from Peace-Loving Muslim Families.” The JCIC Vision, Mission, and Strategy remain works in progress and will continue to evolve as more faith leaders contribute to refining the concept. You can find the latest revisions on the website www.Handshake4Peace.com. Below is the most recent update:

COMMON CAUSE AND VISION LIFECYCLE (CCVL)



CCVL is a versatile, top-down grassroots peacebuilding iterative process that utilizes common causes as building blocks or foundational elements. This process can be adapted across different formats to bridge cultural, social, religious, or political divides. It equips community leaders—such as mayors, pastors, and organizational heads—with tools to foster trust between their communities, even while they remain physically separated. By leveraging internet applications and modern project management techniques, CCVL ensures measurable outcomes. *However, CCVL has one significant limitation: It is not applicable between any two parties or individuals engaged in or supporting ongoing conflict or acts of aggression (e.g., violence, wars, military invasions, or occupation).*

In summary, here is how the CCVL process works: Community leaders convene and collaborate to identify a common cause, formalize their commitment through a covenant, and jointly develop a vision.

Subsequently, each leader formulates SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) action plans for their community. These SMART goals must be negotiated and approved by other leaders. Afterward, the leaders, common cause, and vision are globally recognized and celebrated as a new “Peacemakers” initiative. Leaders then independently implement their SMART goals within their communities. The cycle concludes with a review of accomplishments, the publication of results, celebration of achievements, and preparations for the next common cause and vision cycle.

CCVL Vision

A proliferation of grassroots peacebuilding initiatives worldwide, utilizing various CCVL formats, managed through new social media websites and applications.

CCVL Customized for Multifaith Cooperation

When tailored for religious communities, CCVL addresses the three core challenges of global faith-based peacebuilding initiatives: Trust, Communication, and Distance. It enables leaders from diverse linguistic and religious backgrounds to collaborate effectively, achieve common causes, and realize visions grounded in shared divine principles, virtues, and values.

The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant: Multifaith CCVL

The "Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant, Inc." (JCIC), headquartered in Dallas, Texas, administers a CCVL-based multifaith covenant of common causes, pledges, and commitments that ensure alignment and progress across participating faith denominations. Below are JCIC Vision and Strategy charts:



JCIC VISION

- JCIC is an international peace organization and network of faith leaders—including pastors, priests, imams, and rabbis—of the three main Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). They are dedicated to representing and safeguarding the rights and interests of innocent victims who are violated in the name of God or country.
- JCIC has offices in most world capitals and permanent delegations at the United Nations, the European Union, the Commonwealth of Nations, the Organization internationale de la Francophonie, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
- The United Nations General Assembly has endorsed the Judeo-Christian-Islamic Peace Covenant and has recognized its significant humanitarian contributions.
- JCIC faith leaders have jointly been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
- JCIC was made open to other religions after achieving major peacemaking milestones and updating its vision, mission, and restructure.
- JCIC does not offer multifaith worship services.
- Participation of faith leaders who are citizens of states actively engaged in military aggression or occupation of other nations, or their sympathizers, is subject to the approval of the faith leaders representing the victimized nation.



Vision 2030 Revision 2.00

- Terrorism and radicalization have ceased to be a public concern in the US. These threats were overcome when leaders of the largest Evangelical, Mainline, and Catholic denominations frequently appeared alongside prominent Sunni Muslim scholars and leaders of major pan-Muslim organizations from the Muslim mainland during Peacemaker Week campaigns. Indiscriminate Compassion was the unifying cause that empowered these leaders to team up, build trust and confidence, jointly advocate for peace, and speak on behalf of all innocent victims on all sides of conflicts.
- JCIC faith leaders successfully circumvented planned wars and military interventions by jointly leading peace campaigns on both sides of the conflict. They utilized the Judeo-Christian-Islamic Peace Think Tank to mediate and propose alternative solutions to violence.
- Religious minorities in most nations have been free from persecution after their houses of worship were paired with nearby majority-faith houses of worship in a show of solidarity, similar to big brother programs:
 - * A sign displaying the paired names is visible at the entrance of both houses of worship.
 - * Paired faith leaders frequently appear together in public, both physically and virtually.
 - * Inter-congregation messages between paired places of worship are published.
 - * In countries threatened by violence, human chains are formed by the congregation of one house of worship to protect the paired house of worship during their weekly services.

Handshake4Peace is an online coalition of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish peacemakers that has successfully inspired peace in numerous conflict regions by:

- Mobilizing global resources to identify, launch, incubate, empower, support, and sponsor local and global grassroots peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives.
- Empowering and supporting The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant.

A Twenty-First Century Living Agreement among the faith leaders of the three main Abrahamic traditions. At its core, the Peace Covenant translates shared beliefs, virtues, and values into common causes, pledges, and commitments. Faith leaders use the Common Cause and Vision Lifecycle (CCVL) to draft and fulfill these Covenant articles.

- Faith leaders from the three primary Abrahamic traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have found common ground in their shared beliefs.
- They have collectively endorsed Indiscriminate Compassion as a global common cause and first CCVL building block to inspire peace on earth.
- Theological differences now drive a holy competition to demonstrate compassion instead of violence and love instead of hate.
- Missionaries from these faiths preach and practice indiscriminate love and compassion towards all people, especially innocent victims.

Covenant Sanctuaries are JCIC member churches, mosques, synagogues, and other temples displaying JCIC/Indiscriminate Compassion symbols on their street signs.



- JCIC/Indiscriminate Compassion signs are prominently placed at city entrances and dedication monuments.
- Covenant Sanctuaries serve as global hubs for peace activism, offering programs in education, economic development, and environmental protection.
- In times of emergency, these sanctuaries provide refuge for all victims fleeing religious persecution. In democratic nations, they also function as centers for peace advocacy.
- JCIC intercongregation messages reach most of the world's elected officials, as those who worship at Covenant Sanctuaries use their public platforms to promote these messages.

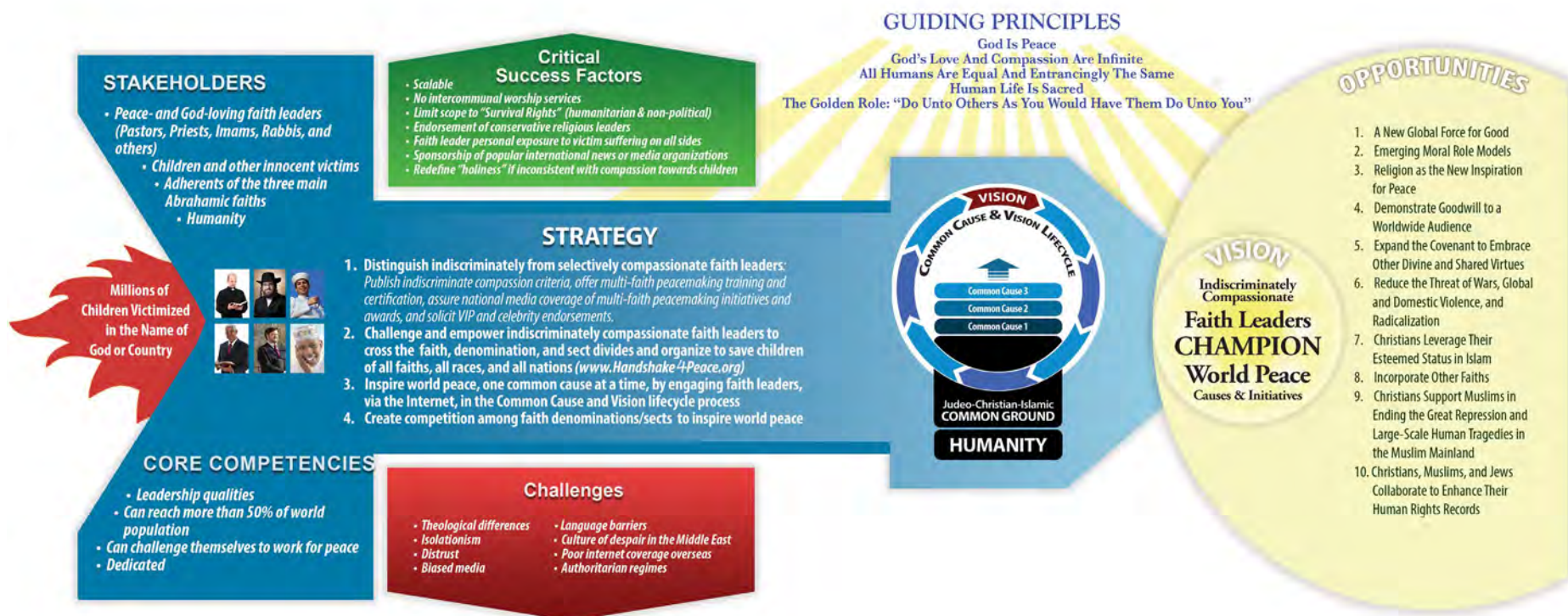
The Covenant name, intercongregation messages, pairing houses of worship, Covenant Sanctuary Peace Drills, and Peacemaker Weeks offered community inclusion to Christians, Muslims, and Jews while they remain largely segregated.



- Peace Drills are Covenant Sanctuary exercises designed to train faith leaders in coordinated responses to emergency situations, particularly in regions where religious riots are prevalent (e.g., Pakistan, Nigeria, etc.) These drills also serve as effective peacetime public relations campaigns in the US and Europe.
- Peacemaker Week is an annual international and faith-based anti-violence (terrorism and war) campaign led by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faith leaders. The campaign primarily focuses on public relations and educational programs, as well as faith leader outreach initiatives.
- Covenant Sanctuary Peace Drills and Peacemaker Week have been game changers

JCIC STRATEGY

Rev 1.00 of JCIC strategy constituted a list of separate strategic steps, not a continuous process. In this version the steps constitute a process called the “Common Cause and Vision Lifecycle”:



CHAPTER 10

AUTHOR'S PERSONAL APPEAL ON BEHALF OF THE PALESTINIAN NATION

TO US PASTORS

God is love... 1 John 4:16b

In the name of the God of grace and mercy we all glorify, worship, and cherish, and on behalf of millions of Palestinian victims, I humbly reach out:

To all pastors, reverends, ministers, bishops, chaplains, and elders who lead within the evangelical and other faith communities: You are well-versed in the explicit scripture verses that call us to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). It is within this scriptural mandate that I urge you to reflect upon the role that your churches may inadvertently play in sustaining more than 75 years of trials and dispossession of Palestinian families. Reflect upon the life and teachings of Jesus, who consistently reached out to the marginalized and spoke boldly against injustice. If he were walking among us today, would he turn away from the pleas of the innocent Palestinians desiring to reclaim their homes? Let us give explicit and reiterated scripture verses more weight than the debatable implied verses and strive to emulate Jesus’ example, advocating for a just peace that allows for the dignified coexistence of all God’s children. As you stand before your congregations to share the message of God’s love, I implore you to extend that love to include the Palestinian children, women, and elderly.

After you tuck your children into bed and lie down to rest tonight, remember the children who, at that very moment, may be searching for shelter while shivering from the cold because some of us did not care to speak out for them. Let us encourage our churches, mosques, and synagogues to demonstrate God’s love in action by standing with the weak and defenseless, including the Palestinian innocents.



Support Your Brethren Whether Oppressed or Are the Oppressors

"Support your brethren, whether they are oppressed or oppressors." The prophet said. His companions responded, "O Prophet of God, we understand supporting the oppressed, but how do we support the oppressors?" The prophet then replied, "By preventing them from committing oppression and guiding them to justice."



The grayish background of the Indiscriminate Compassion poster above features a list of ethnicities from around the world, organized and grouped by country. You can download a free, high-resolution, print-ready PDF file at www.handshake4peace.org



Fear God and Repent

.. whoever kills a person – unless in retribution for murder or corruption in the land – it is as if he killed all mankind; and whoever saves a life, it is as if he saved the life of all mankind ... (Quran 5:32)

The 75 years and continuing forced displacement of Palestinian families, the profound anguish and death of millions of children, mothers, and fathers, and the destruction of tens of thousands of homes are stark realities. In Arabic, the root word for "Martyr" is "witness." It is believed that the tens or hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children who have violently lost their lives will bear witness on the Day of Judgment, testifying against those responsible for their fate including those who financially and morally support their unjust end.

As shepherds of your flocks, you are entrusted with the divine responsibility to discern right from wrong, good from evil. Your silence unwittingly sends a message to your congregations that Palestinian suffering does not merit attention, inadvertently fostering a culture that normalizes condoning or even funding of the Palestinian Catastrophe in the name of God. This raises a profound question: Are US pastors compromising the foundational Christian belief that all people are created in the image of God and deserving of His unconditional love? What message does this send to the world about Christianity?

While the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are well-recognized, it is vital to differentiate between supporting Israel's right to exist and endorsing policies that cause widespread civilian suffering. We must remember that theological interpretations are subject to human error and should not justify actions that breach God's explicit and reiterated commands—particularly those that lead to immense human suffering.

God's scripture consistently rejects injustice and has harshly punished those who perpetrate it, regardless of their Covenant or Chosen status.

I implore you to seek God's forgiveness if any past judgments have contributed to this suffering. Let us repent together and realign our actions with God's call to practice justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. Through genuine repentance and a recommitment to divine teachings, we can provide the hope and healing our divided world desperately needs, while honoring the dignity of every human life as commanded by our Creator.



TO THEOLOGY STUDENTS

Uphold Scriptural Authority in Challenging Times

Seminary students are at the intersection of tradition and progress, uniquely equipped to address longstanding challenges in conveying God’s love and truth. This is your historic opportunity to inspire change with far-reaching, even global, impact. Embrace the call to shape a new path for understanding and sharing Scripture, bringing God’s Word to humanity in transformative ways

The Challenge: A significant challenge in Christian hermeneutics, and across other faith traditions, is the tendency to elevate human constructs—such as culture, tradition, ideology, and political views—to a level comparable with Scripture. This can lead to complex interpretations prone to human error, which may stray from God’s Word. Such deviations affect not only extremist groups but also mainstream believers. Historical examples include the use of Scripture to justify slavery, the Curse of Ham, segregation under Jim Crow, and Manifest Destiny, which led to the forced removal of Native Americans. Today, as a global power, the United States’ influence can perpetuate such misinterpretations, impacting weaker nations, including millions of displaced Palestinians whom the U.S. has, and continues to, deny the 'Right of Return' to their homes for over 75 years.

Root Cause: The root issue is that most scripture interpretation assessment methods currently taught in theological seminaries are entirely qualitative, making it difficult for the average Christian to distinguish sound interpretations from faulty ones presented by their local pastor. Errors by sincere faith leaders—due to oversight, cultural influences, or human error—can unintentionally lead believers toward spiritual or societal harm. To protect Christians, a straightforward and systematic approach is needed to measure and quantify possible deviations in scriptural interpretations, ensuring alignment with foundational truths.

Introducing the Interpretation Deviation Score (IDS): The IDS is a simple quantitative idea that can help the public know if an interpretation, scholastic view, or opinion is faulty or aligns with foundational Biblical truths. IDS also provides faith leaders with a clearer understanding of how their teachings align with core scriptural principles, encouraging them to stay grounded in foundational Christianity. Additionally, IDS allows seminary students to assess pastors and other faith leaders based on their average deviation scores.



How the IDS Works:

1. Compile a concise list (e.g., 10 verses) of “Foundational Scripture Verses” that reflect core Christian beliefs. Each denomination may adapt its own list.
2. When assessing an interpretation, scholastic view, or opinion count how many of these Foundational Verses conflict directly with it or with its inevitable consequences.
3. If the count is zero, the interpretation aligns with foundational Christian principles. If there are conflicts, it indicates a deviation, suggesting re-evaluation may be necessary.

The Role of Theology Students: To make tools like the IDS truly impactful, they need to be embraced and taught in theological seminaries. You’re in a position to champion the Bible’s core values of love, compassion, and peace for all. Approach this responsibility with passion and conviction, keeping God’s Word at the center of all interpretations. May your journey be filled with prayer, wisdom, and a steadfast dedication to divine truth.

Empower the Peacemakers

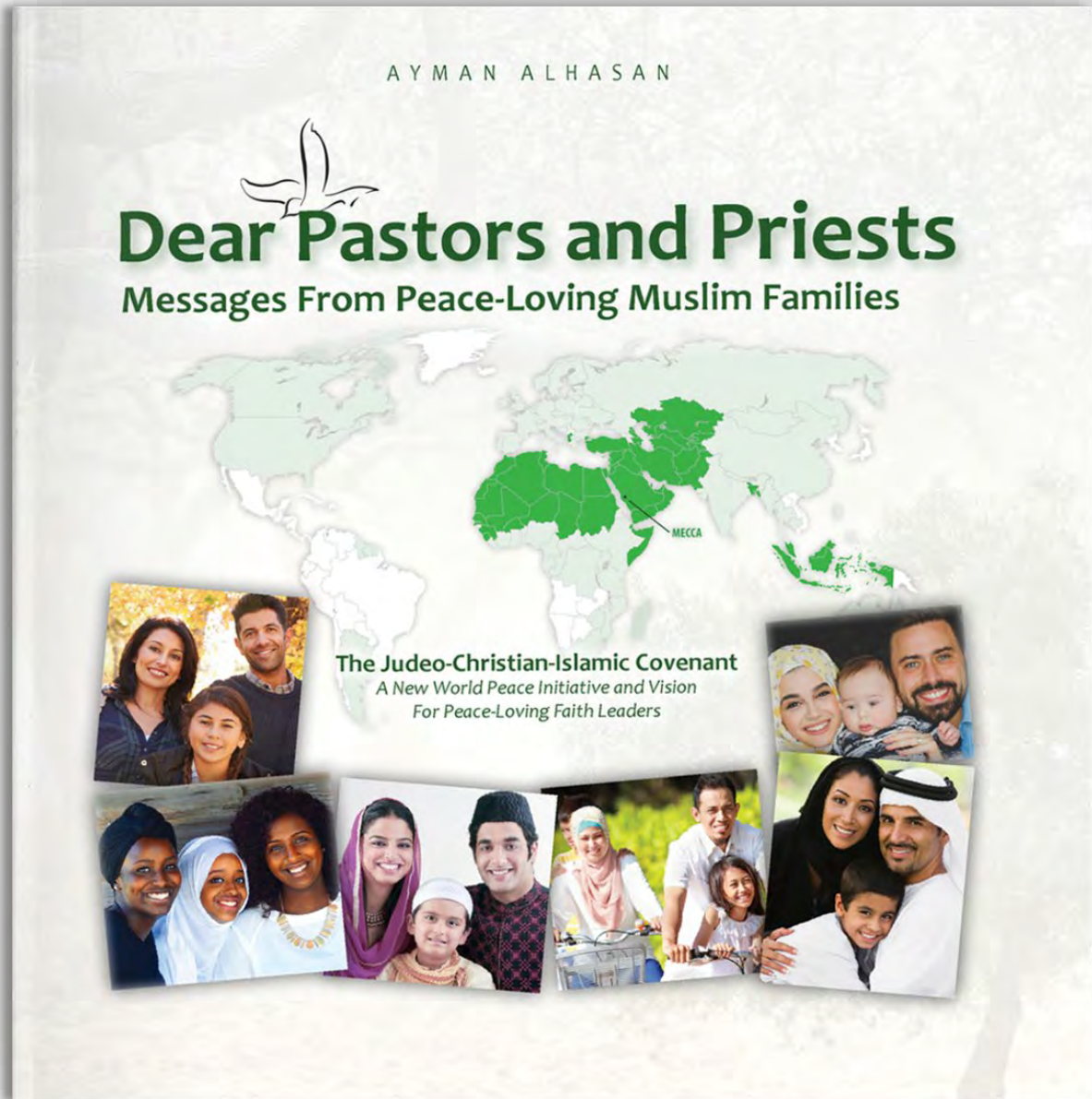
Handshake4peace.com endeavor is about the extent explicit scripture verses and messages of love, compassion, and peace can be indiscriminately shared and particularly for the little victims, the weak and helpless, and the innocent of all faiths, all races and all nations. This endeavor is about students leading by example, a new generation of American peacemakers; By remotely engaging in local and global peace initiatives, you are presented with a remarkable opportunity to redefine the narratives associated with “religion” and “God.” These terms have been mistakenly identified as catalysts of worldwide strife. Your mission is to transform them into symbols of hope, inspiring global peace and goodwill.

Please join the peacemakers at www.handshake4peace.com



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Free to Texas Pastors



SYNOPSIS

A heartfelt and urgent appeal to faith leaders in the Western world, written by a devoted Muslim author with an unwavering commitment to fostering peace and mutual understanding. This book seeks to bridge two worlds by offering profound insights into shared beliefs, values, and opportunities for peacebuilding and collaboration between Muslims and Christians.

Dedicated to the innocent victims of violence worldwide, both past and present, the book begins with a powerful declaration: “Pastors, Priests, Imams, and Rabbis in the USA and Europe CAN help save millions of children and other innocent victims, and champion world peace.”

Through five compelling messages, the author explores:

1. **Common Ground:** The opening chapter highlights the shared theological foundations that unite Muslims and Christians. It encourages faith leaders to view the similarities between the two traditions as evidence of God’s design and challenges them to ask: Do they see the glass as half full or half empty?
2. **Muslim Rituals and Christian Glorification of God:** This message demonstrates how *Salat* (Muslim prayers) profoundly shapes Muslim culture, traditions, and unity. It provides Christian leaders with a deeper understanding of Islamic spirituality, drawing parallels to Christian practices of worship and devotion, and underscoring a shared commitment to glorifying God.
3. **Root Causes of Muslim-Christian Conflicts:** From a Muslim perspective, this chapter examines the historical roots of tensions between the West and Muslim nations. It highlights the despair caused by prolonged military interventions, support for authoritarian regimes, and perceived double standards in foreign policies. As we step into a new millennium, the author urges Western nations to embrace strategies that uphold the universal principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all peoples. The leadership of predominantly Christian nations offers a historic opportunity to demonstrate their core values and serve as a model for the rest of the world.
4. **The Palestinian Catastrophe:** Through personal narratives, this chapter sheds light on the decades-long suffering of Palestinians. It calls on Christian leaders to take advantage of this opportunity to live out the Gospel by demonstrating indiscriminate love and compassion for all—regardless of faith, race, or nationality—and actively engaging in peacemaking and reconciliation among all conflicting parties.
5. **A Vision for Faith-Inspired Peace:** The final chapter presents a visionary roadmap for faith leaders from both traditions to use common causes as foundational blocks for peacebuilding. It empowers them to engage proactively, collaborate, foster trust, and champion faith-based peace initiatives on both local and global scales. The Vision, continually refined at www.handshake4peace.org, provides a platform for leaders to demonstrate the transformative power of divine compassion. By working together across religious boundaries, these leaders have a unique opportunity to inspire global audiences and redefine the narrative surrounding the terms 'God' and 'religion'—elevating them from

sources of division to enduring symbols of hope. The Vision also calls on faith leaders to lead by example, stepping forward as moral heroes to fill the critical void of role models desperately needed by today's youth. This chapter further introduces the Dallas-based Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant (JCIC), which serves as the custodian of a global agreement among Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faith leaders. The Covenant outlines mutually agreed-upon common causes and commitments, with details published on www.jcic.org (under construction). *Notably, faith leaders who engage in, endorse, or support ongoing aggression or military occupations are excluded from participating in the Covenant because their presence defeats the purpose of this initiative.*

This timely and transformative book is both a call to action and a vision for a brighter future—one in which faith leaders rise above theological differences to serve as proactive peacemakers in a divided and hurting world.

If you found this book to be informative, the author requests your prayers

O Lord, we humbly ask that this book serves as a bridge connecting Christian, Muslim, Jewish believers and people of all faiths across the world. May it draw together hearts and minds separated by civilizations, continents, and oceans, so that we may come to know and understand one another. Through our shared efforts, may humanity be enriched, peace be fostered, justice be upheld, and harmony flourish on Earth. And above all, may our actions lead all people to glorify

You, the One True God, with reverence, gratitude, and love.

Amen.



Serve God, Your Community, and Humanity in a New Diverse Reality

In today's increasingly diverse society, where the internet connects us all, local, regional, and global challenges resonate within our homes. Pastors are increasingly called to engage with people of various faiths, including the growing number of Muslims, who now represent a quarter of the world's population and are part of the fastest-growing religion.

By gaining a deeper understanding of the Islamic faith, you can respond to questions with greater insight, provide a well-rounded perspective on important issues, and engage in respectful and meaningful dialogue. This knowledge will enhance your theological outreach and empower you to share God's Word more effectively. In doing so, you will cultivate an atmosphere of understanding, compassion, and mutual respect within your community.

It's crucial to emphasize, particularly for students, that an accurate understanding of the Islamic faith is best obtained when provided by mainstream Muslims, rather than extremists or the perspectives of skeptics or critics of Islam.

May God's peace, salam, and shalom be with you, always and forever.
Amen.

Ayman Alhasan