

The Sacred Texts of Abrahamic Faiths: Common Themes in the Torah, Bible, and Qur'an

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Abstract

The divine Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have similarities in a shared base of their basic beliefs which are reflected in sacred divine books: the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an. These texts have basic teachings about the nature of God, prophets, moral values, and the life after death which influence the spiritual and moral lives of followers since ancient times. This study highlights key themes which are shared by these books that begin from the concept of God and each text mainly shows the oneness of God, however, there are differences like the Christian followers later developed the trinity belief which was not in their divine book and not by the Prophet Jesus AS. They exalted the prophet at extreme level and made him the part of God, this concept is opposed both by Judaism and Islam. Moreover, the present followers of Judaism have refined their belief in line with Qur'anic guidelines and they no more believe that Uzair AS was the son of God. Present Jewish people now also have belief in one God. Then the study explores the role of prophets as conveyer to humanity about the divine revelation through Moses AS, Jesus AS, and Muhammad PBUH as messengers of God's commandments. Another important focus is on divine law that develops moral frameworks and reveals each tradition's dedication to morality and justice. Finally, it explores the concept of afterlife and highlights the common belief in Day of Judgment and reward that create the sense of accountability in believers. By analyzing key themes it reveals a deep interfaith potential for mutual understanding of religion and respect in the

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Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The comparative analysis highlights the interconnectedness among Torah, Bible, and Qur'an as texts which affirm their divine doctrines and reflect common theological foundations.

Keywords: *Abrahamic religions; Monotheism; Prophecy; Divine law; Afterlife; Torah; Bible; Qur'an; Interfaith understanding*

Introduction

The Abrahamic religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are linked by common ancestry and overlapping religious fundamentals. This is specifically visible in their books, Torah, Bible, and Qur'an. Collectively, these religious texts provide teachings on belief in God, revelation, prophet hood, ethical law, and afterlife that develop understanding in the shared beliefs which have shaped spiritual and moral frameworks of billions of people globally. Scholars in various interfaith disciplines highlight these shared concepts as strong points for unity that bridge differences among the faiths and reveal a deep interreligious connections. This study analyzes these shared themes and presents each theme with references to texts from the divine books and commentary from religious scholars as well as recent analyses of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Belief in Creator and Sustainer God

A central belief of Judaism, Christianity and Islam is to have belief in God. Each divine text highlights the creator and sustainer God and motivates followers to seek for God's help in all affairs of life.

According to the Torah, in the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4): "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." This declaration is base in Judaism that represents God as both creator and sustainer deity. Jewish literature interprets this affirmation as a theological statement and as a call to exclusive loyalty and worship and to God alone. In *The Jewish Study Bible*, commentary describes that the Shema advocates for monotheism in a polytheistic context in the ancient Near East and reinforces a unique covenant with the people of Israel.⁴

⁴ *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 356.

Same as the Bible's New Testament repeats this fundamental belief. When asked about the greatest commandment of God, Jesus AS responded, "The Lord our God is one Lord".⁵ However Christianity has later developed the belief of Trinity. Theologian N.T. Wright discusses on this in *The Resurrection of the Son of God* and asserts that early Christians had a strict monotheism, viewing Jesus' divinity as consistent with God's oneness.⁶

The Qur'an's concept of God's unity is known as *Tawhid* which is absolute and uncompromising emphasize on God's transcendence and singularity. According to Surah Al-Ikhlās: "Say, He is Allah, the One; Allah, the Eternal Refuge".⁷ The Islamic doctrine of *Tawhid* refines the God concept in its original form which is central to Islamic belief, with Muslim scholars like Seyyed Hossein Nasr observed that *Tawhid* defines the nature of God and the essence of the universe as the manifestation of His unity and singularity.⁸

Each divine text asserts monotheism and also demands for exclusive worship and commitment to one Almighty God.

Prophecy and Divine Revelation

Prophecy is another major theme in Torah, Bible, and Qur'an which describe that prophets are divinely chosen messengers of God who guide people and convey God's message.

The Torah shows Moses AS as the ultimate prophet the one who lead people of Israel out from Egypt and received the divine Law on Mount Sinai. The Book of Exodus describes God's words to Moses AS, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you" (Deuteronomy 18:18), which the Jewish tradition interprets as a unique prophetic role directly mediating between God and His people.⁹

The Bible also holds the prophetic tradition with Jesus AS as a messenger who fulfilled to earlier prophecies. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus AS stated, "Do not

⁵ Bible, *New International Version* (NIV), Mark 12:29.

⁶ N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 89.

⁷ Qur'an 112:1-2.

⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam* (New York: Harper One, 2002), 45.

⁹ Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 238.

think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17).¹⁰ This text suggests continuity with earlier revelations that aligns Jesus' AS mission with the chain of previous prophets. Christian scholars like James D.G. Dunn argue that Jesus saw his mission as deepening and fulfilling the prophetic legacy rather than nullifying it.¹¹

The Qur'an presents a broader lineage of all prophets and affirms the divine link of the prophet Moses AS and Jesus AS as significant precursors to prophet Muhammad PBUH, the final prophet of God in for whole humanity till the Day of judgement. The Qur'an describes, "We believe in Allah and in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus" (Qur'an 2:136).¹² The basic role of prophets in Islam is considered as a continuum of divine message and revelation towards the humanity. Karen Armstrong describes in *A History of God* that Islam reveres previous prophets while view Muhammad PBUH as the seal of the prophetic tradition that brings completion to God's message for whole humanity.¹³

Through the chain of prophets, each of divine text affirms God's ongoing guidance for humans highlights the importance of holding to divine will in different communities and generations.

Divine Law and Moral Conduct

Divine law and moral values are also central in Abrahamic faiths, each of that describes a moral code for the guidance of individual and societal conducts.

The Torah has extensive laws that often referred as *Halakha* that guide different aspects of Jewish life. These are included in the Ten Commandments and numerous other prescriptions that are considered as a part of the covenant which was held between God and people of Israel. In *The Jewish Way*, Rabbi Irving Greenberg

¹⁰ Bible, NIV, Matthew 5:17.

¹¹ James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 57.

¹² Qur'an 2:136.

¹³ Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 211.

describes that Jewish law served as a mean of sanctifying Jewish life by bringing up holiness in the daily actions.¹⁴

The Bible specifically in the preaching of Jesus AS, focused on the importance of the law for the well being of Christian societies. Jesus AS described love, forgiveness and mercy as fundamental Christian principles that are mentioned in his teaching: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself".¹⁵ This reinterpretation of law aims to emphasize moral intention over mere ritual compliance.¹⁶

The Qur'an includes moral teachings and specific legal injunctions in its verses. It commands for justice, charity and honesty such as it states, "Indeed, Allah commands justice, and good conduct, and giving to relatives, and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression".¹⁷ Fazlur Rahman in *Islam and Modernity* described Islamic law as a base of social justice which means to embody both divine will and communal harmony.¹⁸

In all three divine religious traditions divine law highlights the importance of moral values as essential to religion and belief that illustrate the role of law as a driving vehicle for living a life which pleases God.

The Afterlife: Judgment and Reward

Belief in an afterlife and the Day of Judgment is a also a common theme in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as each divine text emphasizes that human actions will bear consequences after this worldly life.

The Torah is less explicit about the afterlife and contains passages that suggest the concept of divine reward and punishment specifically in the prophetic writings.¹⁹ The Bible also elaborates on this belief with the teachings on heaven, hell, and resurrection.

The Qur'an provides comprehensive descriptions of the life after death which include the rewards of paradise as well as the punishment of hell. It says, "And whoever does

¹⁴ Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 117.

¹⁵ Bible, NIV, Matthew 22:39.

¹⁶ Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 53.

¹⁷ Qur'an 16:90.

¹⁸ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 81.

¹⁹ David Novak, *The Jewish Social Contract* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 67.

righteous deeds, they will have Paradise as a lodging".²⁰ According to Islamic theology in works such as *The Hereafter* by Al-Ghazali, the life after death is central to moral accountability.²¹

The belief in the divine judgment and the life after death connects the Abrahamic religions and reinforces the concept of accountability and justice of God.

Islam as Final and Comprehensive Message of God

Islam holds the God connection of Abrahamic faiths that completes the monotheistic message given to previous prophets. Islam does not negate the divine link of Torah and Bible and it is fulfillment of previous messages and refinement of innovated beliefs of Christianity and Judaism. The Qur'an is the final, safe and unaltered word of God that provides a universal message for whole humanity and offers the ethical and spiritual guidance which is necessary for worldly and eternal success of peoples.

The Rational Basis for Belief in Tawhid (Oneness of God)

Islamic concept of *Tawhid*, the absolute unity of Allah is a central theological principle that invites people for reflection on the nature of existence and ultimate purpose of creation. Islam such as its Abrahamic predecessors calls for the strict rejection of polytheism and focuses on the recognition of a single and transcendent Creator. Al-Ghazali has argued that a rational analysis of the universe points toward an organized, intentional creation that requires a singular cause.²² This cause is God (Allah) who is the initiator of creation and remains actively involved in its affairs and answers to help seekers.

The Qur'an extensively invites believers and non-believers to ponder upon the natural world as a major evidence of God's existence and His oneness, stating, "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding".²³ Al-Farabi, who was an early Muslim philosopher developed this line of thinking and asserted that the order and

²⁰ Qur'an 18:107.

²¹ Al-Ghazali, *The Hereafter* (Cairo: Dar al-Taqwa, 1992), 123.

²² Al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 73.

²³ Al-Farabi, *The Perfect State*, trans. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 45.

coherence of the cosmos reflect a single source because multiplicity in divinity would lead towards chaos rather than harmony.²⁴ The philosophical justification of *Tawhid* is an appeal to reason and encourages followers of earlier religious traditions to consider upon the unity and perfection of God as foundational and necessary.

Prophet hood as a Means of Divine Guidance

Islam describes that God's guidance has been continuously delivered through chain of prophets who spoke the truth and led people towards the path of justice, fairness and righteousness. In the Qur'an, the concept of *nubuwwah* (prophethood) is described as a necessary institution to provide humanity with moral guidance and divine law. Moses AS and Jesus AS are given high respect in Islam and the Qur'an affirms respectfully their roles, stating that, "We gave Moses the Book and followed up after him with messengers. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs and supported him with the Holy Spirit".²⁵

The final prophet Muhammad's PBUH prophet hood completes and seals previous the prophetic chain that included the messages conveyed by Moses AS, Jesus AS, and other prophets. Muhammad PBUH is the "Seal of the Prophets"²⁶, a role that emphasize the finality and comprehensiveness of his message which implies that Islam brings the complete and comprehensive form of God's guidance to people. Al-Tabari, an influential Muslim scholar describes Muhammad's PBUH mission as the "culmination" of earlier revelations, meant to correct distortions and reassert the monotheistic principle.²⁷ This understanding of Muhammad's PBUH final prophet hood is a fundamental of Islamic appeal to Jews and Christians that invites them to see Islam as a fulfillment and elaboration of their own sacred texts.

The Inimitability and Preservation of the Qur'an

One of the unique claims of Islam is the Qur'an's divine protection from alteration. It is a characteristic that distinguishes it from previous scriptures. Muslims believe

²⁴ Qur'an 2:87.

²⁵ Qur'an 2:87

²⁶ Qur'an 33:4

²⁷ Al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 208.

that while the Torah and the Bible contain divine teachings, they have undergone alterations and translations that potentially obscured parts of their original messages. In contrast, the Qur'an has remained unchanged since its revelation, preserved in the original Arabic language.

The concept of *I'jaz al-Qur'an* (the inimitability of the Qur'an) is frequently cited as a proof of its divine origin. This doctrine argues that the Qur'an's linguistic beauty, depth of meaning, and consistency are beyond human capacity, indicating its supernatural origin.²⁸ The Qur'an itself challenges skeptics, "And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant, then produce a surah the like thereof" (Qur'an 2:23).²⁹ This challenge, known as the *Tantheem*, has been central to Islamic discourse with scholars like Ibn Kathir emphasized the Qur'an's profound wisdom and unmatched eloquence.³⁰

For Christians and Jews who revere scripture, the Qur'an's claim of divine preservation presents a compelling invitation to consider it as a final and unaltered revelation from God. Islamic tradition encourages followers of previous faiths to engage with the Qur'an not as a contradictory message but as an extension of the truths they already hold.

The Universality of Islam's Message

Islam teaches that its message is meant for all of humanity, transcending tribal, ethnic, or regional boundaries. While Judaism and Christianity both have universal aspects, Islam uniquely emphasizes its applicability to all people regardless of cultural or historical background. The Qur'an explicitly addresses this, saying, "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner".³¹ This universality supports the Islamic view that Muhammad's PBUH message is meant for all, rather than a specific nation or community.

²⁸ Muhammad Abdullah Draz, *The Qur'an: An Eternal Challenge*, trans. Adil Salahi (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2001), 67.

²⁹ Qur'an, 2:23.

³⁰ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, trans. Trevor LeGassick (London: Islamic Book Trust, 1999), 91.

³¹ Qur'an 34:28

Seyyed Hossein Nasr describes that Islam's universality is evidenced by its focus on a simple, direct relationship with God, one accessible to any individual, without intermediaries or exclusive lineage requirements.³² For Jews and Christians, the universality of Islam's teachings invites consideration of a faith that aims to unify rather than divide, reflecting a comprehensive worldview that aligns with core monotheistic principles.

Preparing for the Afterlife through Submission to God

Islam emphasizes accountability before God, with the Qur'an repeatedly urging believers to live a righteous life in preparation for the afterlife. According to Islamic eschatology, everyone will be judged by their deeds and their adherence to God's guidance, as conveyed through the prophets. The Qur'an describes, "So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it"³³ This emphasis on accountability resonates with the ethical monotheism of Judaism and Christianity, yet it offers a distinct framework for understanding divine justice and reward.

By following the Islamic path, which Muslims believe completes the Abrahamic tradition individuals are thought to attain both a fulfilled life and a successful outcome in the afterlife. Muhammad Asad in *The Road to Mecca* argues that true submission to God, or Islam, leads one to a state of peace and certainty about their eternal destiny.³⁴ For Christians and Jews, this final call to submit to the Qur'anic revelation is extended as an invitation in the certainty and completeness that Islam offers.

The theological and philosophical justifications for Islamic beliefs align with the principles found in the Torah and the Bible and seek to bring them to their intended fulfillment. Islam's emphasis on *Tawhid*, prophethood, divine scripture,

³² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam* (New York: HarperOne, 2002), 84.

³³ Qur'an 99:7-8

³⁴ Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 189.

universality, and preparation for the life after death presents a coherent worldview that builds on and completes the messages of Judaism and Christianity. For followers of Abrahamic faiths, the Islamic perspective invites reflection on these shared roots and offers an opportunity to consider Islam as the final chapter in a continuous divine narrative.

Conclusion

The Torah, Bible, and Qur'an converge on several key theological themes that continue to resonate across Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities. Monotheism, prophecy, divine law, and the afterlife form a shared core of belief, fostering a sense of unity despite theological distinctions. Through these sacred texts, adherents of the Abrahamic religions find a common heritage that underscores ethical living, spiritual commitment, and faith in a just and merciful God. There are differences like the Christian followers later developed the trinity belief which was not in their divine book and not by the Prophet Jesus AS. They exalted the prophet at extreme level and made him the part of God, this concept is opposed both by Judaism and Islam. Moreover, the present followers of Judaism have refined their belief in line with Qur'anic guidelines and they no more believe that Uzair AS was the son of God. Present Jewish people now also have belief in one God. The Qur'an is final, safe and comprehensive message of God towards the whole humanity till the Day of Judgment. This final message refines that innovated beliefs and customs of Judaism and Christianity. The Qur'an is also a further elaboration of Judaism and Christianity.