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Across Traditions: Quranic Prophets in Judaism and

Christianity A Comparative Study of Shared Prophetic Narratives

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Introduction

The Quran is not alone in telling the stories of the prophets. The Hebrew Bible — the Torah, the Prophets (Nevi'im), and the Writings (Ketuvim) — tells many of the same stories. The Christian Old Testament shares the Hebrew Bible and adds the New Testament. The Quran retells narratives that are also found in Jewish and Christian scripture — but with differences that are sometimes subtle, sometimes striking, and always theologically significant.

Of the twenty-five prophets named in the Quran, the majority also appear in the Hebrew Bible or the Christian Bible: Adam, Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Lut (Lot), Ismail (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob), Yusuf

(Joseph), Shu'ayb (sometimes linked to Jethro), Ayyub (Job), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dhu'l-Kifl (sometimes linked to Ezekiel), Dawud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Ilyas (Elijah), Alyasa (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Zakariya (Zechariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), and Isa (Jesus). Only a few — Hud, Salih, and Muhammad — are unique to the Quranic tradition with no direct biblical counterpart.

This book — the second companion volume in the NurOne - The Prophets series — explores the prophets who appear in both the Quran and other religious traditions. It is a comparative study: how does the Quran tell the story of Nuh, and how does Genesis tell it? How does the Quran describe Musa, and how does Exodus describe him? What does the Quran say about Isa, and what do the Gospels say? Where do the traditions agree, where do they differ, and what do the differences teach us?

The purpose of this book is not to argue that one tradition is right and the others wrong. The purpose is to observe — to read the same prophets through different lenses, to notice the convergences and divergences, and to understand how each tradition shapes the prophetic narratives to serve its own theological framework. The Quran uses the shared stories to make its own arguments: the oneness of Allah (tawhid), the continuity of prophethood, the accountability of every community, and the completion of the message with Muhammad.

This is the twenty-seventh book in the NurOne - The Prophets series — the second companion volume. The first companion (Book 26, The Unnamed Messengers) explored the prophets beyond the twenty-five named in the Quran. This companion explores the twenty-five as they appear across faiths — the same prophets, different traditions, one light refracted through different lenses.

The Quran identifies certain figures as prophets beyond the boundaries of any single tradition. In Surah Maryam, Allah says: "Indeed, this is in the former scrolls. The scrolls of Ibrahim and Musa" (87:18-19). And in Surah Al-An'am: "And We sent no messenger before you except that We revealed to him: There is no deity except Me, so worship Me" (21:25). In another passage, the Quran declares: "And We have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those We have related to you and among them are those We have not related to you" (40:78).

This last verse opens a door that no other scripture opens so explicitly: the acknowledgment that prophets were sent to every people, in every time, and that not all of them are named in the Quran. The prophets named in the Quran include those known primarily through the Judeo-Christian tradition — Ibrahim, Musa, Isa — but the Quran also names Hud, Salih, and Shu'ayb, who are not found in the Bible. The chapters that follow examine the prophets who appear across traditions, the unnamed messengers the Quran references, and the universal principle that revelation was not confined to one people or one place.

The Quran adds in Surah Fatir: "And if there was any Quran by which the mountains would be removed or the earth severed or the dead made to speak, it would be this. But the matter entirely belongs to Allah. Have they not seen that We sent upon them a messenger speaking to them?" In Surah Ar-Ra'd, Allah says: "For each one is a direction to which he turns. So race to good. Wherever you are, Allah will bring you forth together. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent" (2:148). The Quran acknowledges that different communities have different directions, different practices, different customs — but it commands them to race toward goodness, not toward division.

The universal message of the prophets, across every tradition and every people, is the same: worship the One who made you, do good with what you have been given, and prepare for the day when you will return to Him. The chapters that follow examine the prophets who appear across traditions, the unnamed messengers the Quran references, and the universal principle that revelation was not given to one people alone but to every nation that has walked the earth.

The Quran elsewhere records in Surah An-Nahl: "And We did not send any messenger except speaking the language of his people to make clear to them. And Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise" (14:4). The verse confirms that every messenger spoke in a language his people understood — that revelation was not given in a universal tongue but in the specific, local speech of each community. This means that the message of the prophets was not identical in its form but was

identical in its essence: worship the One who made you, live with justice, prepare for the day of return. The prophets named in the Quran — from the Abrahamic tradition and beyond — are a sample, not the complete list. The Quran says this explicitly: messengers were sent, some named, some not named. The complete roster of prophets belongs to Allah alone.

The Quran shows a simple but profound principle: "And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, saying: Worship Allah and avoid false deities" (16:36). The verse is categorical. Every nation. Every people. Every community. No one was left without guidance. The Quran does not name them all, but it declares that they were sent. The prophets whose names the Quran preserves are a fraction of the total. The message in every case was the same: worship the One, turn away from the many, and prepare for the return to the

One who sent the message. The chapters that follow trace the named prophets and honor the unnamed, always returning to this foundational Quranic principle.

The stories exist for a purpose — to be reflected on, learned from, and returned to the One who told them who sent them with hearts that are awake and minds that are open to the guidance they contain. This guidance is a trust, and the trust must be honored by every generation that receives it.

Chapter 1: The Shared Prophets — An Overview

The three Abrahamic religions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — share a core of prophetic figures. These figures lived (or in some cases, were understood to have lived) in the ancient Near East, and their stories were transmitted, adapted, and theologized by each tradition. The Quran, revealed in 7th-century Arabia, entered a world where Jewish and Christian communities had been telling these stories for centuries.

Of the twenty-five prophets named in the Quran:

Prophets with direct biblical counterparts: Adam, Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Lut (Lot), Ismail (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Ayyub (Job), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dawud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Ilyas (Elijah), Alyasa (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Zakariya (Zechariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), Isa (Jesus).

Prophets with debated or indirect biblical links: Shu'ayb (sometimes linked to Jethro/Reuel, the father-in-law of Moses), Dhu'l-Kifl (sometimes linked to Ezekiel or Obadiah).

Prophets unique to the Quran (no biblical counterpart): Hud, Salih, Muhammad.

The sharing of prophetic figures across the three traditions is not a simple case of one tradition borrowing from another. The prophetic narratives evolved in a shared cultural and geographical space — the ancient Near East, the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. The stories circulated orally for generations before being committed to writing. Each tradition received the stories, shaped them according to its own theological needs, and passed them on.

The Quran does not claim to introduce new prophets (except Hud, Salih, and Muhammad). Instead, the Quran claims to confirm what was already known:

"We have inspired you as We inspired Nuh and the prophets after him" (4:163). The Quran positions itself not as a new revelation about new figures but as a correction and completion of the existing tradition — the same prophets, the same God, the same message, restored to its original purity.

Each tradition theologizes the prophets according to its own framework:

Judaism presents the prophets as the spokespeople of the God of Israel — figures who called the Israelites to covenant faithfulness, warned of exile, and promised restoration. The prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah,

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve) are large and detailed, focusing on the Israelite community and its relationship with Yahweh.

Christianity inherits the Hebrew prophetic tradition and adds its own interpretive layer: the prophets of the Old Testament are read as foreshadowing the coming of Jesus the Messiah. The New Testament presents Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy and the apostles as continuing the prophetic mission. The Christian framework reads the Old Testament prophets Christologically — through the lens of Christ.

Islam presents the prophets as messengers of Allah — figures who called all people (not just the Israelites) to the worship of the one God. The Quranic framework is universal: every nation received a prophet, and Muhammad is the final prophet for all of humanity. The Quran retells the stories of the biblical prophets but strips away what it considers accretions — the theological claims (divinity of Jesus, sonship of God) and the narrative details (the sins of the prophets) that the Quran considers incompatible with the original monotheistic message.

The differences between the traditions are not merely literary variations; they are theological statements. When the Quran says Isa was not crucified (4:157), it is not correcting a historical error — it is rejecting a theological claim (the atonement). When the Quran says Ibrahim was not a Jew or a Christian (3:67), it is not revising ethnic history — it is claiming Ibrahim for the universal monotheistic tradition that predates both Judaism and Christianity.

The differences matter because they reveal what each tradition considers essential. For Judaism, the essential is the covenant with Israel. For Christianity, the essential is the person of Christ. For Islam, the essential is the oneness of God and the finality of prophethood. The same prophets, read through different lenses, produce different theologies.

The sharing of prophetic figures across traditions is rooted in a shared cultural and geographical space. The ancient Near East — the Levant, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Egypt — was a crossroads of civilizations. Stories circulated orally for centuries before being committed to writing. The stories of Ibrahim, Musa, Yusuf, and the others were told and retold in markets, homes, and places of worship across the region — by Jews, Christians, and the various Arab tribes.

The Quran, revealed in this milieu, did not introduce these stories to an audience that had never heard them. The audience — both the Jews and Christians of Arabia and the Arab polytheists who had contact with Jewish and Christian communities — knew the broad outlines. The Quran retells the stories in a way that corrects what it considers accretions and restores what it

considers the original monotheistic message. The Quran's retelling is not invention; it is restoration — the same stories, told according to the Quranic theological framework.

In the 7th century, when the Quran was revealed, Arabia was not religiously isolated. Jewish communities lived in Madinah, Khaybar, and other oases. Christian communities lived in Najran, and Christian influence reached Makkah through trade and travel. The Prophet Muhammad encountered both traditions directly and indirectly. The Quran engages with both — confirming what it accepts, correcting what it rejects, and establishing the Quranic position on the shared prophets.

The engagement is evident in the Quranic style: the Quran often addresses the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitab) directly, inviting them to the common ground (3:64: "Come to a word that is equitable between us and you — that we will not worship except Allah"). The common ground is the prophets — the shared figures who all three traditions honor. The Quran builds on the shared ground to make its distinctive claims.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aira Aurora is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Quranic studies. Her work focuses on close reading of the Quranic text, exploring its themes, narratives, and moral framework with attention to both the original Arabic and the broader human context.

The NurOne master series is her primary project -- a multi-sub-series exploration of the Quran covering prophets, people, places, events, lessons, commands, signs, the unseen, the hereafter, and everyday life. Each book is a close reading of the Quranic verses on a specific topic, presented in clear, accessible language.

Her work is published under the pen name Aira Aurora.

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