



The Divine Covenant in Abrahamic Traditions: A Comparative Study of the Human–Divine Relationship in Judaism and Islam

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Abstract

The concept of *covenant* (Heb. *berit*; Ar. *'ahd*) is a foundational element of Abrahamic theology, yet it functions differently within Jewish and Islamic traditions. This study examines the central question of how the Abrahamic covenant is interpreted in both traditions and what conceptual transformation occurs from its formulation in the Hebrew Bible to its Qur'anic reconfiguration. The research addresses a gap in previous scholarship, which has often treated the covenant either in a non-comparative manner or with limited attention to its theological development across traditions.

Using a comparative textual method, the study analyzes key covenantal passages in Genesis (12, 15, 17) and the Qur'an, alongside the interpretations of major Jewish exegetes—particularly Rashi and Maimonides—and insights from contemporary biblical scholarship. The article's contribution lies in integrating scriptural analysis with classical Jewish exegesis and comparative theological reflection.

Findings indicate that the covenant in Judaism retains a predominantly ethnic and ritual character, whereas the Qur'an reinterprets it within a universal, ethical, and monotheistic framework, transforming it from an ethnic bond into a spiritual commitment rooted in human nature. This distinction reflects differing foundations of religious identity in the two traditions.

Keywords: Abraham; Covenant; Judaism; Islam; Monotheism; Divine–Human Relation; Comparative Theology.

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1. Introduction

The concept of covenant is one of the foundational concepts in Abrahamic theology and, as a primary structure governing the relationship between God and human beings, has played a central role in the formation of the religious identity of Abrahamic communities. In the Jewish tradition, the Abrahamic covenant, particularly as presented in Genesis 12, 15, and 17, is regarded as the foundation of the divine relationship and the basis of the identity of the people of Israel. Classical Jewish exegetes such as Rashi and Maimonides consider it the basis for the distinction of the chosen people (Rashi, *Commentary on Genesis*, 1040–1105, p. 51; Maimonides, *The Guide*, 1963, pp. 72–75). By contrast, although the Qur'an emphasizes Abraham's eminent position in the history of faith, it removes the covenant narrative from a purely ethnic and genealogical framework and rereads it within the context of a monotheistic, ethical, and universal relationship (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 272–274; al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf*, 1987, Vol. 1, p. 215).

The significance of this issue lies in the fact that the concept of covenant is not merely a ritual or legal contract; rather, it constitutes an epistemological framework through which the position of human beings in relation to God can be understood. In contemporary biblical studies, scholars such as Hendel (*The Book of Genesis*, 2021, pp. 55–60), Ska (*Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 2019, pp. 113–118), and Levin (*The Old Testament World*, 2019, pp. 44–49) have demonstrated that the covenant, within the cultural context of the ancient Near East, was associated with concepts such as the suzerainty treaty. Within the Islamic tradition, Orientalists such as Neuwirth (2010), Sinai (2017), and Wansbrough (1977) have likewise examined the development of the concept of covenant in the Qur'an and its divergence from the Hebrew model. Nevertheless, comparative studies of the Jewish and Qur'anic concepts of covenant have not yet been examined in a sufficiently systematic and integrated manner, particularly with regard to the relationship between covenant and identity, prophethood, *fiṭrah* (primordial human disposition), and ethics.

Within Jewish exegetical scholarship, differences in interpretation are also significant. Rashi interprets the covenant in connection with the promise of land and the continuity of Abraham's descendants (Rashi, 1040–1105, p. 53), whereas Maimonides, adopting a philosophical approach, understands the covenant as an ethical-rational contract intended to lead human beings toward knowledge of God (Maimonides, 1963, pp. 72–78). By contrast, the Qur'an presents the covenant not as an ethnic marker but as a criterion of guidance and responsibility. In verses such as Qur'an 2:124, 3:67, and 6:75–79, the covenant is connected to a monotheistic and ethical paradigm (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 266–274).

Furthermore, recent archaeological investigations and linguistic studies of royal contracts and international treaties in Hittite, Assyrian, and Babylonian contexts indicate that the structure of covenant had previously been employed in the form of suzerain–vassal treaties (Kitchen, 2013, pp. 41–59; Hallo, 1997). Despite the significance of these findings, relatively few studies have integrated such evidence with the theological interpretations of the two traditions in a comparative framework. This gap is particularly evident in the scholarly literature on Islam, since most studies have either examined the Qur'an independently (Neuwirth, 2010; Sinai, 2017) or analyzed the covenantal structure in Judaism separately, without placing the two traditions within a common analytical framework.

Accordingly, the present study aims to provide a comparative analysis of the Abrahamic covenant in the Jewish and Islamic traditions, examine the evolution of its meaning from its ancient context to its Qur'anic reinterpretation, and evaluate the exegetical accounts offered by classical Jewish interpreters and Islamic sources. Within this framework, the central research question is as follows: How has the Abrahamic covenant been defined and functionally understood within the Jewish tradition, and how does the Qur'an redefine and universalize this structure?

The methodology of the study is based on textual, semantic, and comparative analysis. The data include the Hebrew biblical text, authoritative translations, classical Jewish exegetical works (Rashi, Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, and Nahmanides [Ramban]), Islamic exegetical sources (Ṭabāṭabā'ī and al-Zamakhsharī), and modern Western scholarship in biblical and Qur'anic studies. The novelty of the study lies in combining three relatively distinct domains—archaeological studies of covenant, Jewish exegetical traditions, and Qur'anic analysis—in order to develop a new framework for understanding the transformation of the covenant concept. It demonstrates how the Qur'an, by moving beyond an ethnicity-centered paradigm, redefines the Abrahamic covenant as a primordial, ethical, and universal relationship.

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have examined the concept of covenant within the Abrahamic religions, particularly within the Jewish tradition. These studies can be broadly classified into three main categories.

2.1. Jewish–Christian Theological Studies

Covenant theology within the Jewish and Christian traditions encompasses a wide range of classical and contemporary scholarship. Among Jewish thinkers, Will Herberg, Martin Buber, Georg Weiss, and Michael Fishbane have played

significant roles in reinterpreting the Abrahamic covenant. Herberg and Buber have focused on the ontological dimension of the covenant, regarding it as the foundation of the I–Thou relationship between human beings and God (Buber, *I and Thou*, 1958, p. 112). Georg Weiss likewise understands the covenant as a form of “sacred history” in which God acts strategically within the course of history (Weiss, 1967, pp. 41–52).

Among contemporary scholarly contributions, Michael Fishbane’s seminal work, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*¹, is one of the most important references for understanding the nature of covenant. Fishbane regards the covenant not merely as a divine contract but also as an “interpretive structure” through which the people of Israel narrate their historical and religious identity (Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 1985, p. 88). Oscar Cullmann, Ernest Nicholson, and Walter Brueggemann have likewise regarded the covenant as foundational to the theology of history and the narrative structure of the Old Testament (Nicholson, 1986, pp. 13–20; Brueggemann, 1997, pp. 142–153). Collectively, these works demonstrate that, within the Jewish–Christian tradition, covenant is not merely a religious pact; rather, it constitutes a narrative, identity-forming, and theological framework through which the meaning of history is reconstructed.

2.2. Comparative Studies of Covenant in Judaism and Islam

Comparative scholarship on covenant in Judaism and Islam is a relatively recent but expanding field. Among the significant comparative contributions, *Abraham’s Children* by Kelly Gottman represents one of the early attempts to examine fundamental differences between conceptions of covenant in the Torah and the Qur’an (Gottman, *Abraham’s Children*, 2004, p. 104). Similarly, Wilferd Madelung’s studies of Abraham’s position within the Islamic tradition provide a detailed account of how the concept of covenant is reconstructed in the Qur’an (Madelung, 1997, pp. 33–45). Karen Armstrong, in her comprehensive work², has likewise highlighted the distinction between the ethnic and genealogical orientation of Judaism and the universalistic and monotheistic perspective of the Qur’an (Armstrong, 1993, pp. 71–82).

Within comparative Jewish–Islamic scholarship, the works of Angelika Neuwirth (2010) and Nicolai Sinai (2017) have paid particular attention to Abraham’s role in shaping religious identity in the Qur’an and have interpreted the covenant as indicative of a theological transition from an ethnic model to a monotheistic one. In addition, the studies of Yohanan Muffs and Jon D. Levenson have examined the intertextual significance of the Abrahamic

1. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*

2. *A History of God*

covenant and its representation across the Abrahamic religions (Levenson, 2012, pp. 55–62). Despite these contributions, a systematic framework for the comparative exegetical analysis of covenant in Judaism and Islam remains lacking.

2.3. Islamic Scholarship and Qur'anic Exegesis on Covenant

Within the Islamic tradition, the concept of covenant has attracted the attention of exegetes since the formative period of Islamic theology. In *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, al-Ṭabarī, referring to the Qur'anic verses concerning Abraham, interprets the covenant in connection with imamate and guidance (al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 2000, Vol. 2, p. 315). In *Al-Mīzān*, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī understands the covenant as an ethical and monotheistic structure and emphasizes that the Abrahamic covenant is not an ethnic contract but rather a “covenant of obedience and sincerity of faith” (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 274). Muḥammad Jawād Faḍlallāh, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, and Sayyid Quṭb have likewise emphasized the ontological dimensions of covenant and its role in shaping religious identity.

Within Western Qur'anic studies, scholars such as John Wansbrough (1977), Andrew Rippin (2001), Angelika Neuwirth (2010), and Gabriel Said Reynolds (2018) have emphasized that the Qur'an detaches the covenantal structure from the framework of ancient treaties and the Hebrew model and gives it an anthropological and ethical dimension. Sinai (2017) similarly demonstrates in his studies that, through its reinterpretation of covenant, the Qur'an transforms Abraham from an ethnic ancestor into a paradigm of universal faith.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that, although substantial scholarship has addressed the concept of covenant in both traditions, an approach that examines covenant simultaneously at the historical, theological, and exegetical levels, while also undertaking a systematic comparison between Judaism and Islam, remains relatively rare. The present study seeks to address precisely this gap in the existing literature.

3. Analysis of Key Concepts

The conceptual analysis undertaken in the present study focuses on three fundamental concepts, each of which plays a decisive role in explaining the framework of the relationship between human beings and God within the Jewish and Islamic traditions.

In the Jewish tradition, the Hebrew term בְּרִית (berit) occurs approximately 280 times in the Old Testament. The term has legal and ritual connotations and refers to a form of covenantal relationship between God and a particular people. In the Book of Genesis, the covenant with Abraham is articulated in three

stages: Genesis 12 (the promise of land), Genesis 15 (the blood covenant), and Genesis 17 (the covenant of circumcision) (Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 145). By contrast, the Qur'an employs the term 'ahd (عهد), which in its Qur'anic usage refers not merely to a historical covenant but also to an ethical and universal concept (Qur'an 2:124).

The concept of monotheism (tawḥīd) in the Islamic tradition is closely associated with terms such as *ḥanīf*, *khālīṣ*, *islām*, and *taslīm*. In the Qur'an, Abraham is characterized as a *ḥanīf* and a monotheist, standing in opposition to the idolatry of his people. By contrast, in Judaism, monotheism initially emerged as the acceptance of one God among the existing divine beings and subsequently attained its fully monotheistic form within the prophetic tradition of Israel (Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 2001, p. 52).

Within the Jewish tradition, God is frequently portrayed as commander, king, and judge, whose relationship with human beings is understood within the framework of communal loyalty and obedience. In the Islamic tradition, however, the relationship between human beings and God is grounded in servitude (*'ubūdiyyah*), submission (*taslīm*), and spiritual proximity. These differing conceptions of the divine-human relationship are also reflected in the nature of the covenant: the former is predominantly conditional and national, whereas the latter is ethical and universal.

4. Covenant in the Jewish Sacred Texts: A Conceptual and Exegetical Analysis

4.1. The Concept of Covenant in the Hebrew Scriptures

In the Hebrew sacred texts, the term בְּרִית (berit) means a "formal and sacred covenant." The term is used extensively throughout the Old Testament, occurring more than 280 times, and is associated with concepts such as loyalty, commitment, signification, and continuity of relationship. According to the linguistic analysis of the term, *berit* has traditionally been associated with a root meaning "to cut," since covenant-making in the Hebrew tradition was often performed through the cutting of animals and the ritual passage between the divided sacrificial pieces (Driver, *The Covenant in Semitic Tradition*, 1955, Vol. 1, p. 112).

In the Jewish tradition, covenant possesses a bilateral and ritual structure in which God enters into a relationship with a particular people, namely the Israelites; this relationship, however, is conditioned upon the religious and ethical fidelity of the people. In the Bible, covenants are established either with particular individuals—such as Noah, Abraham, and Moses—or with the entire people of Israel. An analysis of the Book of Genesis indicates that the Abrahamic covenant is presented through three distinct covenantal episodes,

each of which formulates a particular dimension of the relationship between God, Abraham, and his descendants.

A) The First Covenant – Genesis 12:1–3

In this passage, God promises to lead Abraham to a land and to make a great nation from his descendants. Although the term “covenant” does not appear explicitly in this passage, the content of the promise and divine guidance incorporates essential elements of the covenantal structure.

B) The Second Covenant – Genesis 15:7–21

In this passage, the covenant is formally described through a covenant-making ritual. Abraham prepares sacrificial animals, and God, represented in the vision, passes between them. From the perspective of Jewish tradition, this passage constitutes the first blood covenant, signifying the seriousness and binding nature of the covenant (Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 147). The central focus of this covenant is possession of the land.

C) The Third Covenant – Genesis 17:1–14

In this passage, the term בְּרִית (berit), meaning covenant, is explicitly and formally introduced for the first time, and a sign of the covenant is established: circumcision as a symbol of covenantal fidelity. The third covenant shifts its emphasis from the land to the identity of Abraham’s descendants and emphasizes that the covenant will remain with those who bear this covenantal sign.

4.2. Analysis of Classical Jewish Exegeses

Rashi (1040–1105 CE) is one of the most influential Jewish exegetes and interprets the Abrahamic covenant within a predominantly national and ritual framework. By emphasizing the term *berit* in Genesis 17, he regards the covenant as a sign of God’s election of the people of Israel and interprets circumcision as the enduring symbol of the divine bond (Rashi, *Commentary on Genesis*, 2001, p. 53). According to his interpretation, God chose Abraham and his descendants as the “chosen people,” and the covenant therefore possesses both genealogical and territorial dimensions.

Several classical Jewish commentators, including Ibn Ezra and Rashbam, have broadly supported Rashi’s interpretation. Referring to Genesis 17, Ibn Ezra regards circumcision as a physical and ethnic sign that establishes and reinforces the identity boundaries of the people (Ibn Ezra, *Genesis Commentary*, 2000, p. 122). Rashbam likewise emphasizes the relationship between covenant and the ethnic identity of the Israelites and understands the covenant as fundamentally grounded in communal identity.

Nevertheless, commentators such as Ramban (Nahmanides) differ from Rashi. Ramban maintains that the covenant is not exclusively ethnic in

character; rather, Abraham is presented as a paradigm of universal faith, while the divine promise possesses ethical and monotheistic dimensions (Ramban, *Commentary on the Torah*, 2001, p. 89). In contemporary scholarship, figures such as Jon D. Levenson and Walter Brueggemann have likewise regarded Rashi’s interpretation as excessively nationalistic and have emphasized the role of covenant in the formation of monotheistic theology.

Maimonides (1135–1204 CE) understands the Abrahamic covenant not as an ethnic pact but as a rational and ethical covenant. In *The Guide of the Perplexed*, he interprets circumcision as an “ethical and disciplinary exercise” and presents the covenant as a mechanism for the intellectual and monotheistic development of human beings (Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, 1963, pp. 76–78). From his perspective, Abraham was chosen by God not on the basis of genealogy but because of his rationality and commitment to monotheism.

Philosophers such as Saadia Gaon and Gersonides supported aspects of Maimonides’ interpretation and understood the covenant in terms of voluntary and ethical development. Gersonides maintains that the divine covenant with Abraham fundamentally constitutes an epistemic bond between human beings and God. Other thinkers, however, including Hasdai Crescas and Ramban, criticized Maimonides for excessively philosophizing the concept of covenant. They argued that his interpretation overlooks the traditional meaning of the covenant within the Torah. Some modern scholars, such as Kellner, have likewise characterized Maimonides’ theory as rationally coherent but insufficiently consistent with the primary textual meaning of the Torah.

The differences between these two perspectives can be summarized along several principal dimensions:

Axis of Comparison	Rashi	Maimonides
Nature of the Covenant	National–ritual	Rational–ethical
Basis for Abraham’s Election	Lineage and descent	Reason and faith
Circumcision	An identity marker of the people	An ethical and disciplinary practice
Purpose of the Covenant	Establishment and perpetuation of the people of Israel	Universal guidance of humanity
Status of Abraham	Father of the chosen people	Paradigm of the rational believer

4.3. The Concept of Divinity and Covenant in the Jewish Tradition

In the Torah, God identifies Himself through titles such as YHWH (Yahweh), the God of the Covenant, the God of the Fathers, and the Lord of Hosts. These titles indicate that divinity in the Jewish tradition possesses both a transpersonal¹

1. Transpersonal refers to experiences or states of consciousness that transcend the boundaries of the individual self and encompass spiritual, unitive, or transcendent dimensions of human existence (Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, p. 274).

and transcendent¹ dimension—particularly in God’s role as judge and lawgiver—as well as a historical and ethnic dimension, insofar as God enters into a relationship with a particular people (Smith, *The Early History of God*, 2002, p. 115). Within this framework, the covenant is not merely a means of establishing communication with God; it also constitutes the foundation for defining the “chosen people.” Without the covenant, the people lack a religious identity, while without the people, the divine promise remains unfulfilled. This reciprocal relationship constitutes the foundation of covenant theology in Judaism.

In Jewish sacred texts, covenant is a multidimensional concept encompassing ritual (circumcision), promise (land), and ethnic identity. Although the term covenant may appear to be an abstract concept, it in fact constitutes a foundation for the divine order, the legitimacy of religious authority, and even the interpretation of history within the Jewish tradition. A textual and exegetical analysis of the three Abrahamic covenantal episodes indicates that the first covenant focuses on individual guidance, the second covenant on a political and territorial structure, and the third covenant on religious and ethnic identity. This tripartite structure contributes to the formation of the theological framework of Judaism.

Within the Jewish tradition, Midrashic literature, particularly *Genesis Rabbah* and *Tanchuma*, also provides diverse exegetical and allegorical interpretations of the Abrahamic covenant. In *Genesis Rabbah* 46, the covenant with Abraham is portrayed not merely as a historical contract but as the beginning of an affective and responsibility-bearing relationship between the people of Israel and YHWH. Likewise, *Tanchuma, Lech Lecha* 2 emphasizes that circumcision is not merely a physical sign but rather a divine seal upon the body of the chosen people. This Midrashic approach adds mythological, ethical, and exegetical layers to the concept of covenant.

5. Covenant in the Qur’an and Islamic Tradition: A Theological and Exegetical Reinterpretation

In the Qur’an, the term (‘ahd) and its related expressions, including *mīthāq* (covenant), *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* (solemn covenant), and *awfū bi-l-‘ahd* (fulfill the covenant), occur in approximately fifty instances. In these contexts, ‘ahd fundamentally establishes an ethical and divine bond between the Creator and the created—a bond grounded in commitment, obedience, and responsibility

1. Transcendental refers to categories or structures that make cognition or experience possible. In Kantian philosophy, such concepts are regarded as conditions underlying perception and cognition (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B25–B30).

rather than merely in a social or ethnic contract. In the verse, “And when Abraham was tested by his Lord with certain words, and he fulfilled them. He said, ‘Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.’ He said, ‘And from my descendants?’ He said, ‘My covenant does not extend to the wrongdoers’” (Qur’an 2:124), the divine covenant is characterized not as a privilege but as a status conditioned upon justice and righteousness. Commentators such as Ṭabāṭabā’ī emphasize in their interpretation of this verse that the divine covenant is not restricted to lineage but is directed toward the God-fearing and obedient servants of God (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 273).

From the perspective of Qur’anic semantics, *‘ahd* carries a deeper semantic range than its Hebrew counterpart, *berit*. Izutsu, in his analysis of ethical concepts in the Qur’an, regards *‘ahd* as one of the central terms within the ethical-monotheistic worldview of Islam—a concept that simultaneously signifies a “sense of responsibility” and “responsiveness to *fiṭrah*” (Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur’ān*, 1966, p. 114).

Alongside Qur’an 2:124, other key verses may be cited, including: “And fulfill the covenant; indeed, the covenant will be questioned about” (Qur’an 17:34), and “So set your face toward the religion, inclining to truth—the *fiṭrah* of God upon which He has created humankind” (Qur’an 30:30). These verses establish a connection between covenant, *fiṭrah*, monotheism, and ethical responsibility. In various exegetical traditions, these verses have been regarded as foundational to Islamic ethics and religious identity (Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, 1999, Vol. 20, p. 239; al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, 2003, Vol. 4, p. 81).

Within the Islamic exegetical tradition, the concept of covenant has been examined from various perspectives, which may be broadly classified into two principal approaches:

A) Classical Exegeses: Covenant as a Conditional and Divine Commitment

Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, in his interpretation of Qur’an 2:124, understands the covenant as a commitment that God grants only to the righteous and God-fearing among Abraham’s descendants. He emphasizes that the status of *imamate* is based on spiritual merit rather than genealogical inheritance (al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*, 2000, Vol. 1, p. 453). This interpretation reflects the justice-oriented tendency within Islamic thought, which fundamentally differs from the Jewish tradition insofar as the latter places greater emphasis on ethnicity as a constitutive element of the covenant. In rhetorical and theological exegeses such as al-Zamakhsharī’s *Al-Kashshāf*, the divine covenant possesses social dimensions in addition to its monotheistic significance and is consequently regarded as a source of social responsibility and religious commitment to justice

(al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf*, 1987, Vol. 1, p. 215).

B) Philosophical and Contemporary Exegeses: Covenant as a Primordial and Monotheistic Bond

Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in *Al-Mizān*, offers a philosophical-theological interpretation of covenant. He understands the covenant as a reality that transcends historical circumstances and is intrinsically connected to human *fiṭrah*, whose manifestations can be observed in faith, servitude to God, and pure monotheism (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 272–274). From his perspective, the covenant with Abraham signifies the establishment of a universal religious foundation rather than merely a communal or ethnic ritual.

Sayyid Quṭb's *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, likewise emphasizing the social structure of covenant, regards it as the foundation for the formation of a “single community” (*ummah wāḥidah*), whose objectives include establishing justice and faith and rejecting *tāghūt* (tyranny or false authority) (Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, 1992, Vol. 1, p. 143). Within this framework, the Islamic conception of covenant becomes connected to the paradigm of monotheistic governance and civilization.

C) Divinity and Covenant in the Islamic Tradition: From a Sovereign God to a Participatory God

With regard to the concept of divinity, the Qur'an presents an image of God who, while possessing absolute authority, is also characterized by covenantal fidelity and faithfulness. Unlike certain Hebrew texts that portray God primarily as the ruler of a particular people, the Qur'an presents God as the “Lord of the worlds” (*Rabb al-'ālamīn*), while also establishing a particular covenantal relationship with those who possess faith and affirm monotheism (Qur'an 2:124; 3:67).

At the conceptual level, a fundamental transformation in the understanding of divinity can be observed: the God of the Qur'an is both transcendent and immanent. Within this tradition, covenant constitutes an extension of monotheistic epistemology, in which human beings are regarded as God's *khalīfah* (vicegerent) and trustees of the divine covenant. In comparison with the Jewish tradition, this transformation represents not merely a shift from an ethnicity-centered to a universalistic paradigm, but also a transition from a lord–servant relationship toward a Creator–devoted servant relationship grounded in love (Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 65). Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī regards Qur'an 2:30—“Indeed, I am placing upon the earth a vicegerent”¹—as foundational to monotheistic knowledge and human ethical responsibility (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995, Vol. 8, p. 282). Unlike historical or ethnic covenants,

1. “Indeed, I am placing upon the earth a vicegerent” (Qur'an 2:30).

this covenant is a transhistorical bond grounded in human *fiṭrah* and the free acceptance of monotheism.

Alongside Qur'anic and exegetical analyses of covenant, hadith sources also play a prominent role in the Islamic tradition in elucidating the inner and primordial dimensions of covenant. Among the most significant traditions in this regard is the "Primordial Covenant" (*Mithāq al-Alast*), associated with the divine address, "*Alastu bi-Rabbikum*" ("Am I not your Lord?"). According to Qur'an 7:172, human beings affirmed God's lordship in a primordial realm prior to their earthly existence. This tradition appears in Shi'i and Sunni hadith sources, including *Al-Kāfi* (al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, 1990, Vol. 2, p. 13), *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* by al-Ṣadūq, and *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1995, Vol. 2, p. 335), and points to a primordial and eternal covenant that every human being bears in relation to God.

6. The Relationship between Covenant and the Transformation of Divinity and the Human–God Relationship in the Islamic Tradition

This section focuses on the analytical relationship between the concept of covenant in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition and the transformation in conceptions of divinity and the nature of the human–God relationship. More specifically, it examines the transition from the conception of a tribal and contract-centered God in certain pre-monotheistic texts to the conception of the one, primordial, relational, and ethically oriented God within the Islamic tradition. One of the most significant transformations in religious epistemology within Islam is the transition from the conception of a deity associated with a particular people or geographical territory to that of God as the Lord of the worlds (*Rabb al-‘ālamīn*)—a conception of divinity in which God establishes a covenant with His servants not on the basis of lineage but within the context of faith and righteous action. By rejecting the attribution of Abraham to either Judaism or Christianity and emphasizing his identity as a "ḥanīf Muslim" (Qur'an 3:67), the Qur'an redirects the ethnicity-centered covenantal paradigm toward a *fiṭrah*-centered, monotheistic, and universalistic paradigm.

In the pivotal verse Qur'an 2:124, God explicitly responds to Abraham's request concerning his descendants: "My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers" (*lā yanālu 'ahdī al-zālimīn*). This response removes the covenant, in its historical, genealogical, and ethnic dimensions, from the basis of lineage and transfers it into the domain of ethical justice and spiritual merit (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 273). Such a conception fundamentally differs from the covenant presented in the Old Testament, where it is directly associated with ethnicity and circumcision (Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 145).

From a theological perspective, this conceptual transformation—from a tribal deity to a universal God—constitutes the starting point for a corresponding transformation in the understanding of the human–God relationship. In the Qur’an, God simultaneously possesses attributes expressing transcendence and sovereignty, such as Creator, Lord, All-Knowing, and All-Powerful, as well as attributes expressing mercy and intimacy, such as Forgiving, Merciful, All-Hearing, and Near. The coexistence of these two dimensions provides the basis for a participatory and loving covenantal relationship between human beings and God (Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur’ān*, 1980, p. 72).

In the Jewish tradition, according to the covenantal narrative, the relationship between human beings and God is shaped primarily by obedience and communal commitment (Weinfeld, *The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament*, 1970, p. 184). The Qur’an, however, defines covenant in terms of servitude to God (*‘ubūdiyyah*): a conscious, voluntary, and inward relationship between the Creator and the created. In this regard, two key Qur’anic concepts play a fundamental role in redefining this relationship:

1) Faith (*īmān*): the sign of conscious acceptance of the divine covenant and inward submission of the heart.

2) Submission (*islām*): the actualization of the covenant through righteous action and piety.

The Qur’anic God is presented not merely as an omnipotent sovereign but also as a teacher, guide, and recipient of repentance. This conception is clearly reflected in verses such as: “And We are closer to him than his jugular vein” (Qur’an 50:16) and “And when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am placing upon the earth a vicegerent’” (Qur’an 2:30). This relationship is grounded in love, proximity, and human spiritual development. From an exegetical perspective, covenant therefore signifies not only humanity’s commitment to God but also God’s invitation to human beings to enter into a constructive relationship with Him (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Al-Mīzān*, 1982, Vol. 2, p. 92).

Abraham, as the most prominent monotheistic figure in the Qur’an, plays a fundamental role in this transformation in the conception of God. Qur’an 6:75–79 depicts the gradual process through which Abraham moves from contemplating the manifestations of nature toward recognition of the One God. This process may be understood as simultaneously constituting the formation of monotheistic knowledge and conscious covenantal commitment. In *Al-Taḥrīr wa-l-Tanwīr*, Ibn ‘Āshūr emphasizes the rational and intuitive dimensions of this transformation and regards it as an instance of a philosophical movement from sensible phenomena toward the Absolute (Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Al-Taḥrīr wa-l-Tanwīr*, 1984, Vol. 7, p. 146). A similar approach can be observed in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, although he places greater emphasis on divine inspiration and

election. From al-Rāzī's perspective, God selected Abraham as a paradigm of monotheism following a "cognitive trial" (Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Al-Taḥṣīn al-Kabīr*, 1999, Vol. 14, p. 199).

Another fundamental transformation associated with the concept of covenant in the Islamic tradition is the transition from a model of tribal allegiance to a model of inward and mystical participation. In Islamic thought, covenant is not merely an external contract but a *mīthāq* grounded in *fiṭrah* (Qur'an 30:30), rationality (Qur'an 2:269), and divine love (Qur'an 5:54).

This transformation provided an important foundation for the emergence of Islamic mysticism, in which the "covenant with God" came to be understood as a foundational moment in the spiritual journey and as the axis of connection with the Beloved. Mystical literature likewise contains expressions such as the "Primordial Covenant" (*Mīthāq al-Alast*) (Qur'an 7:172), which represent the spiritual dimension of this transformation.

Accordingly, the relationship between covenant and Islamic conceptions of divinity may be understood as involving a fundamental conceptual transformation. In this tradition, covenant is not merely a legal or ritual structure; it constitutes an epistemological, ethical, and spiritual foundation for a relationship in which God, as the universal Creator, invites human beings to participate in the divine project of monotheism.

Within Islamic mysticism, the concept of covenant extends beyond a merely doctrinal or ritual divine pact and becomes a foundational moment in the human being's inner spiritual journey (*sulūk*). Mystics, particularly within the traditions associated with Ibn 'Arabī, Suhrawardī, and Rūmī, understand the Primordial Covenant (*'ahd al-Alast*) not merely as a prehistoric event but as an ontological remembrance revived at the moment of mystical awakening.

Ibn 'Arabī emphasizes in *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* that every spiritual wayfarer on the path to God encounters the remembrance of the primordial covenant, where the soul confronts its original *fiṭrah* and responds to its pre-eternal covenant (Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, 1980, Vol. 2, p. 324). Suhrawardī likewise refers in his *Al-Muṭārahāt* to this covenant as an "eternal imprint upon the tablets of the soul" and understands the spiritual journey as a return to this primordial pact (Suhrawardī, *Al-Muṭārahāt*, 1993, p. 118).

In Islamic mysticism, covenant is therefore not merely an epistemological or theological structure but also an affective bond with the Eternal Beloved, realized through spiritual discipline, ascetic struggle, and annihilation of the self (*fanā*). Rūmī expresses this idea in the *Maṣnavī*:

"From eternity, the call of the Beloved came to us: 'Return, you who have been severed from the outer shell.'"

This approach adds a spiritual dimension to the concept of covenant: a

commitment to remembrance, return, and loving presence in relation to God. Within this framework, the concept of bay'ah (pledge of allegiance) is also reinterpreted in Islamic Sufism as the renewal of a spiritual covenant between the disciple and God through the spiritual guide (*murshid*) (Nasr, *In Search of the Sacred*, 1994, p. 176).

One relatively neglected dimension in discussions of covenant within the Islamic tradition is its conceptual continuity from Abraham to the Prophetic era. By portraying Abraham as *imām* (leader), *ḥanīf*, and founder of monotheism, the Qur'an establishes a basis for the continuation of the covenantal concept within the Islamic community. The verse "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people" (Qur'an 2:124) presents not merely a personal covenant but also a model for the continuity of spiritual and ethical leadership up to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. In this context, the Prophet Muhammad is likewise presented in several Qur'anic passages as an inheritor of the Abrahamic covenant, particularly through the concept of the "one community" (*ummah wāḥidah*) (Qur'an 21:92), as well as the verse: "Then We revealed to you, 'Follow the creed of Abraham, inclining toward truth'" (Qur'an 16:123). This following of Abraham's *millah* constitutes, in effect, a reproduction of the covenant in a universal and ethically oriented form, defining the Islamic community as the bearer of this covenant (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 274; Vol. 16, p. 112).

Furthermore, the Pledge of 'Aqabah and the Pledge of Riḍwān in the Prophetic biography demonstrate the social and political dimensions of covenant. In these events, the community pledges allegiance and loyalty to the Prophet, and this pledge constitutes a continuation of the covenant of faith that originated with Abraham. The verse "Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you are actually pledging allegiance to God" (Qur'an 48:10) establishes this divine-human continuity of covenant (Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, 1992, Vol. 6, p. 224).

Thus, within the Islamic tradition, the concept of covenant develops from Abraham to Muhammad beyond a merely historical and tribal framework into an ethical, universal, and community-forming structure—one that simultaneously possesses mystical, juridical, and political dimensions. This transformation constitutes one of the fundamental distinctions between the Islamic and Jewish conceptions of covenant.

7. The Role of Abraham in the Comparative Narrative of Covenant: A Comparison of Genesis 12, 15, and 17 with Qur'anic Verses from al-Baqarah, Āl 'Imrān, and al-An'ām

Abraham, in both the Jewish and Islamic traditions, is recognized not only as

the “father of monotheism” but also as the central figure in the covenantal narrative and the founder of a new form of relationship between humanity and God. Nevertheless, the representation of this covenant in the Hebrew and Qur’anic sacred texts differs fundamentally in terms of structure, language, objectives, and signs. The purpose of this section is to undertake an analytical comparison between the three principal covenantal episodes in the Book of Genesis and the key Qur’anic verses concerning covenant, thereby elucidating the conceptual, exegetical, and theological differences between the two traditions.

7.1. The Threefold Covenantal Structure in the Book of Genesis

a) Genesis 12:1–3 – The Promise of Land and Descendants

In this covenantal episode, God promises Abraham that He will lead him to the Promised Land and make a great nation from him. Although the term “covenant” (*berit*) does not explicitly occur in this passage, Jewish interpreters such as Sarna regard its structure as containing the preliminary elements of a covenantal relationship¹ (Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 1985, p. 83). Here, the relationship between God and Abraham is grounded in divine promises, while the human being appears primarily as the recipient of divine blessings rather than as an active partner.

b) Genesis 15:7–21 – The Blood Covenant and the Sacrificial Ritual

In this passage, a ritual ceremony for the establishment of the covenant is described for the first time: Abraham sacrifices animals, and God, appearing in a visionary form, passes between the divided pieces. Driver interprets this covenant as an example of a “blood covenant” within the Semitic tradition, through which legitimacy and binding force are added to the relationship (Driver, *The Covenant in Semitic Tradition*, 1958, p. 112). The principal focus of this covenant is the granting of the land to Abraham’s descendants, and it still lacks an explicit universal or ethical dimension.

c) Genesis 17:1–14 – The Covenant of Circumcision

At this stage, the term ברית (*berit*) appears explicitly and repeatedly. God calls upon Abraham to perform circumcision as the sign of the covenant and emphasizes the ethnic identity of his descendants. From Rashi’s perspective, this

1. The expression “preliminary covenantal elements” in Jewish exegetical scholarship, particularly in Nahum Sarna’s interpretation, refers to a structure in which the relationship between God and the human being is based on a unilateral divine commitment. Unlike conditional and reciprocal covenants, such as the Sinaitic covenant, God unilaterally grants promises concerning descendants, land, and blessing, while the human recipient primarily receives these divine benefactions. This form of covenant bears similarities to ancient Near Eastern traditions, including royal grants and oaths, in which a ruler bestows gifts or privileges upon a subject without necessarily requiring a reciprocal obligation.

covenant marks the beginning of the formation of the Israelite people as bearers of fidelity to God (Rashi, *Commentary on Genesis 17:10*, 1040–1105). The key components of this covenant are circumcision, legitimate descent, and ethnic identity. From the Jewish perspective, these three covenants constitute a progressive development of the Abrahamic covenantal structure.

7.2. The Reflection of the Abrahamic Covenant in the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, the covenant with Abraham is articulated in several key passages:

a) Al-Baqarah 2:124 – The Covenant of Leadership

(إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا)

“Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.”

This verse places the emphasis of the covenant not on lineage or ethnicity but on moral merit and faith. The statement (لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ), “My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers,” clearly indicates that justice constitutes a condition for participation in the divine covenant (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 273).

b) Āl 'Imrān 3:67–68 – Ḥanīfiyyah and the Rejection of Ethnic Identity

(مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا)

“Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but was a ḥanīf, one who submitted to God.”

Here, Abraham is presented as a trans-communal, ḥanīf, and monotheistic figure. The Qur'an's objective is to redefine monotheistic identity beyond ethnic and communal frameworks (Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, 1980, p. 68).

c) Al-An'ām 6:75–79 – The Rational and Monotheistic Quest

These verses recount Abraham's gradual process of recognizing God—from observing the setting of the star, moon, and sun to his final declaration:

(إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ)

“Indeed, I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth.”

Unlike the biblical narrative, this account emphasizes rational reflection, intellectual inquiry, and the search for truth in the formation of Abraham's covenantal relationship with God (Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*, 1966, p. 97).

7.3. Conceptual Comparison and Comparative Table

The following table comparatively summarizes the principal components of the covenant in the two traditions, with particular emphasis on its structure, addressees, purpose, mode of realization, and conception of God. The

comparison illustrates how the Islamic tradition reconfigures the covenant from a primarily ritual and ethnic framework into an ethical, primordial (*fiṭrah*-based), and universal framework.

Dimension of Comparison	Covenant in the Jewish Tradition (Book of Genesis)	Covenant in the Islamic Tradition (Qur'an and Exegesis)
Covenantal structure	Threefold structure: promise (Genesis 12), sacrificial ritual (Genesis 15), and circumcision (Genesis 17)	Multilayered structure: <i>imāmah</i> (leadership) (Qur'an 2:124), <i>ḥanīfiyyah</i> (Āl 'Imrān 3:67), and rational monotheism (al-An'ām 6:75–79)
External sign	Circumcision as a physical symbol of ethnic fidelity to the covenant	Faith, piety, monotheism, and justice as inward and ethical signs
Covenant addressees	Abraham's descendants, particularly the Israelite people	The believing human being, without ethnic or genealogical exclusivity
Purpose of the covenant	Establishment of the chosen people and confirmation of the promise of the land	Establishment of universal monotheism, ethical conduct, and individual responsibility
Mode of realizing the covenant	Sacrificial rituals, circumcision, and external covenantal marking	Response to <i>fiṭrah</i> , rational-spiritual development, and inward commitment
Conception of God within the covenant	YHWH, the God specifically associated with the covenantal people; a conditional reciprocal relationship	<i>Rabb al-'ālamīn</i> (Lord of the Worlds), the God of <i>fiṭrah</i> and the universal covenant; a loving and ethical relationship

As the comparison demonstrates, the human–God relationship in the Islamic tradition places greater emphasis on inward spiritual development and monotheistic *fiṭrah*, whereas in the Hebrew tradition the covenantal framework is more strongly constructed around communal election, external signs, and ritual obligations.

A comparative examination of covenant in the Book of Genesis and the Qur'an demonstrates that, within the Jewish tradition, the covenant constitutes a fundamental basis for ethnic, genealogical, and ritual identity, whereas the Qur'an reconfigures the concept around justice, reason, and *fiṭrah*, thereby transforming it into an ethical and universal framework. Abraham is consequently presented in the Qur'an not primarily as the founder of a particular ethnic community, but as the initiator of humanity's rational and monotheistic movement toward the One God.

8. The Archaeological and Cultural Context of Covenant in the Ancient Near East

The concept of covenant within the Abrahamic traditions, particularly the Abrahamic covenant, cannot be adequately understood without considering its civilizational and cultural context during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages in the ancient Near East. Archaeological evidence, legal tablets, and religious texts discovered in civilizations such as Mari, Nuzi, Ebla, and Ugarit demonstrate that structures of covenant, contractual agreement, and political–religious treaties

were widespread and ritualized throughout this cultural sphere (Weinfeld, *The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament*, 1970, p. 185; Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 1955, p. 27).

Accordingly, an analysis of the Abrahamic covenant that disregards these surrounding legal models, cultural conventions, and religious rituals would remain incomplete. This section therefore seeks to provide a clearer picture of the “covenantal system” in the ancient Near East by focusing on covenantal tablets, legal and ritual structures, and processes of cultural interaction and transmission.

Excavations at Nuzi in present-day Iraq have yielded a collection of tablets containing adoption contracts, inheritance arrangements, and loyalty agreements between members of the aristocracy and rulers. *Kaufman* and *Weinfeld*, in their analyses of these documents, have identified components including: (1) a divine or royal preamble, (2) stipulations, (3) an oath of loyalty, and (4) a symbolic sign, such as the ritual cutting of an animal (*Kaufman, The Structure of Ancient Treaties*, 1988, p. 31).

In one of the Nuzi tablets, the parties to the agreement invoke the gods as witnesses to their obligations and acknowledge themselves as liable to divine curses should the covenant be violated. A comparable pattern can be observed in Genesis 15, where Abraham sacrifices animals and God passes between the divided pieces (Genesis 15:9–17).

At Mari, tablets have likewise been discovered that attest to royal covenants between kings and particular tribes or individuals. These covenants were structured around royal benefaction in exchange for loyalty and allegiance—a pattern that appears in the Hebrew tradition in the covenant between God and Abraham (Weinfeld, *The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament*, 1970, p. 184).

At Ugarit, in present-day northern Syria, Ugaritic religious texts contain indications of covenantal relationships between deities and earthly kings. The deity El is frequently represented as a father figure and as a guarantor of covenantal order. In these texts, covenantal ceremonies were accompanied by sacrifice, the use of blood, and the pronouncement of oaths (Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 2002, p. 89).

Likewise, within Canaanite ritual practices, circumcision appears to have functioned as a marker of religious allegiance. *Boyer*, in his analysis of Canaanite mythology, regards circumcision as a symbolic practice associated with incorporation into the religious order (Boyer, *Myths and Gods of Ancient Canaan*, 1995, p. 43). Within this cultural environment, the Torah and the Qur’an articulate their respective understandings of the Abrahamic covenant in relation to, or in response to, these broader cultural patterns.

8.1. Comparison of the Covenant Structure with Mesopotamian Texts

On the basis of comparative studies by Mendenhall and Kitchen, the structure of the covenant in the Book of Genesis, particularly Genesis 15, bears significant similarities to Hittite¹ and Mesopotamian treaty traditions². These models generally contain five major components:

Stage	Component in Ancient Texts	Example in Genesis
1	Royal or divine preamble	Introduction of God at the beginning of the covenant
2	Conditions and stipulations of the covenant	Promise of land and descendants
3	Ceremonial ritual	Cutting of animals and passing between them
4	External sign	Circumcision
5	Curses and blessings	Conditional promises associated with the continuation of the covenant

This structural correspondence suggests that the Abrahamic covenant in the Hebrew tradition was not solely a product of divine revelation but also possessed a cultural and civilizational formulation shaped within the broader institutional world of the ancient Near East.

8.2. The Qur’anic Perspective on the Historical Context

Although the Qur’an does not discuss in detail the covenantal rituals of neighboring civilizations, it employs concepts such as covenant (*‘ahd*), compact (*mīthāq*), pledge of allegiance (*bay‘ah*), and primordial disposition (*fiṭrah*) to articulate a distinctive model of the human–God relationship. The concept of *fiṭrah* in Qur’an 30:30 points toward a pre-historical and inward relationship between human beings and God. Unlike the ritualistic and external structures of covenant found in ancient texts, this conception emphasizes an inward and existential relationship (Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur’ān*, 1966, p. 102).

A comparative examination of archaeological evidence indicates that the concept of covenant during the period associated with the patriarchal traditions was not exclusively religious; rather, it constituted a legal, political, and ritual institution throughout the ancient Near Eastern civilizations. The biblical texts,

1. Hittite treaties were examples of suzerainty treaties between kings and their subjects in the second millennium BCE. They typically consisted of a preamble, historical prologue, stipulations of loyalty, blessings, and curses, and are regarded as an important model for many covenantal concepts found in the Hebrew Bible (Kitchen, 2003: 41–59; Mendenhall, 1954).

2. These were Assyrian and Babylonian political and ritual treaties in which the loyalty of subjects was secured through religious oaths. One of the most significant examples is the Esarhaddon Succession Treaties, whose structure bears notable similarities to certain biblical covenants (Hallo, 1997; Parpola & Watanabe, 1988).

particularly the Book of Genesis, appear to articulate this phenomenon in religious terms while drawing upon broader cultural structures associated with royal covenants. The Qur'an, however, reconfigures the concept of covenant by moving it beyond its political and ritual dimensions toward an epistemological, ethical, and primordial framework.

Conclusion

The present study, through a comparative examination of the concept of covenant in Jewish and Islamic traditions, has demonstrated that although this concept is centered on the figure of Abraham in both traditions, it has evolved along distinct theological and identity-forming trajectories. In the Jewish tradition, classical interpretations such as that of Rashi understand the covenant as a community-oriented structure grounded in ritual markers such as circumcision, whose primary function is to consolidate the ethnic and religious identity of the Israelites. By contrast, Maimonides, adopting a rational and ethical approach, conceptualizes the covenant as a cognitive–monotheistic commitment that transcends ethnic affiliation and connects it to humanity's conscious choice and rational spiritual development. An examination of the interpretations supporting and challenging each of these two exegetes indicates that their differences stem from fundamentally divergent understandings of Abraham's status and the nature of the human–divine relationship. This divergence has, in turn, contributed to the emergence of two distinct identity-oriented and epistemological readings of covenant within Jewish thought.

An examination of the Qur'anic narrative demonstrates that, while affirming the fundamental principle of divine covenant, the Qur'an reconstructs the Jewish interpretation of covenant by moving from the Hebrew framework of ethnic particularism toward a universal and ethically oriented framework. In the Qur'an, Abraham is presented not as the father of a particular ethnic group, but as a paradigm of faith and submission to God, while his covenant is articulated in terms of monotheism, individual responsibility, and sincerity in worship. This reinterpretation demonstrates that the Qur'an, while moving beyond the model of the royal and genealogical covenants characteristic of the ancient Near East, develops a theological framework in which the human–divine relationship transcends the level of ritual contracts and is reconceptualized as an ethical and primordial covenant. Accordingly, the concept of covenant acquires a universal function in the Qur'an and constitutes one of the foundations of religious identity in the Islamic tradition.

On the basis of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that covenant in both Jewish and Islamic traditions is a dynamic and continually reinterpretable concept whose meaning has evolved over time in accordance with the

theological and identity-related needs of each tradition. In the Jewish tradition, the Abrahamic covenant primarily serves to reinforce ethnic and religious identity, whereas in the Islamic tradition, the Abrahamic covenant constitutes an ethical, faith-based, and transhistorical foundation for human guidance. The significance of this finding lies in demonstrating that, although the Abrahamic religions refer to a shared religious heritage, their understandings of covenant and its functions require a precise and multilayered comparative analysis.

The findings of this study also provide a basis for theoretical and future research proposals. Given the historical and theological complexity of the concept of covenant, future studies should employ comparative semantics, discourse analysis, and philosophical hermeneutics to investigate the development of this concept systematically across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Furthermore, an intertextual analysis of the Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic terms associated with the concept of covenant could reveal deeper layers of its semantic transformation and historical development. Such an approach could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Abraham's place in interreligious dialogue and help elucidate the shared theological resources and potential points of convergence among the Abrahamic traditions.

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