An Analysis of the Qurʾānic Job
Narrative, Speech, and Bond to Muḥammad

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This article investigates the Qurʾānic portrayal of prophets as divinely appointed, morally exemplary figures entrusted with God's message. It focuses in particular on Job (Ayyūb), whose unwavering patience (*ṣabr*) under trial embodies the Qurʾān's emphasis on spiritual virtue over narrative detail. Unlike his biblical counterpart, the Qurʾānic Job remains steadfast in silent submission, attributing his suffering to Satan and exemplifying faith rewarded by divine mercy. His concise story thus conveys a powerful moral lesson. Framed within a typology connecting earlier prophets to Muḥammad, Job affirms the Prophet's legitimacy and endurance amid rejection. In contrast, Jonah is depicted as a warning against the consequences of impatience. Ultimately, this typological structure stresses the Qurʾān's ethical aims, presenting prophecy through shared moral struggle rather than historical sequence. Consequently, it offers a prophetic model based on perseverance, humility, and trust in God, core values at the heart of Islamic ethical and spiritual consciousness.

Keywords: Prophetology, Job, Qurʾān

1. *Introduction*

This study aims to shed light on the Qurʾānic understanding of prophecy by examining both narrative structure and prophetic speech in their dialogue with communities and with God. Concentrating on the figure of Job (Ayyūb), it explores how his story and language reflect a meaningful interplay between lived experience and verbal expression. Through an in-depth investigation of the Qurʾān's Arabic, it seeks to reconstruct Job's personal and theological profile, highlighting his moral stance and spiritual profundity. At the same time, it questions interpretive approaches that reduce prophetic figures to mere precursors or rhetorical affirmations of Muḥammad's mission,

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while acknowledging their enduring relevance for him. The Qurʾān, in fact, presents each prophet as a "unique voice" within a unified divine purpose. Their diverse expressions, feelings, and encounters with God enrich the concept of prophecy and deepen its ethical dimension. Unlike other prophets, Job, though brief in speech, emerges as a striking embodiment of the Qurʾānic ideal, facing hardship with quiet resilience, spiritual clarity, and steadfast trust in divine mercy. This ideal reflects the core values upheld by the Qurʾān: faith in God, patience, humility, and moral integrity. In this light, Job stands as a compelling model of these virtues.

2. *Qurʾānic Conception of Prophecy*

According to the Qurʾānic text the prophets were elected by God from among humankind "in one line of descent" (Q 3:34).[1] They were entrusted with the mission of conveying God's revelation, serving as guides to His path and warders against deviation.[2] Considering the following passage, "it is inconceivable that a prophet would ever dishonestly take something from the battle gains" (Q 3:161), prophets – being divinely chosen and guided – should hold moral virtues that make them immune to sin and wrongdoing. Therefore, they should be characterised by impeccability (*ʿiṣma*), not as an intrinsic quality, but as a divine gift. This concept does not negate their human nature, as seen in several well-known Qurʾānic narratives, such as when Moses asked God: "My Lord, show Yourself to me: let me see You!" (Q

[1] The translation of the Qurʾānic passages is taken from M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾan: A New Translation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

[2] The divine election is frequently expressed using different Qurʾānic verbs: 1) *iṣṭafā*, indicating "divine election" and recurring when God chooses (*yaṣṭafī*) messengers from angels or human beings (Q 22:75; 27:59; 35:32). Furthermore, from the same root, in the *ḥadīṯ* collections, the different names and titles given to Muḥammad also include *al-nabī al-muṣṭafā*, "the chosen Prophet", but also specific prophets and Qurʾānic characters such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Saul, and Mary, Jesus' mother (Q 2:130, 132, 247; 3:33, 42; 7:144); 2) *iǧtabā*, with the same meaning of "divine election", referring to generic prophets (Q 3:179; 6:86–87; 19:58), as well as to individual prophets like Adam, Abraham, Joseph, and Jonah (Q 12:6; 16:121; 20:122; 68:50); 3) *iḫtāra*, whence *yaḫtāru* or *iḫtiyār*, with the meaning of "choosing", in relation to Moses and the children of Israel (Q 7:155; 20:13; 28:68; 44:32); 4) *iṣṭanaʿa* which is mentioned only with respect to Moses (Q 20:41).

7:143).[3] Moreover, according to the Qur'ān, sin entails intentional disobedience to God's commandments, which is different from sinful acts committed out of ignorance and negligence, followed by sincere repentance. Indeed, "God only undertakes to accept repentance from those who do evil out of ignorance and soon afterwards repent: these are the ones God will forgive, He is all knowing, all wise" (Q 4:17). Likewise, "if any of you has foolishly done a bad deed, and afterwards repented and mended his ways, God is most forgiving and most merciful" (Q 6:54).[4]

Thanks to divine election, several prophets hold unique characteristics. For instance, Abraham, Isaac, Lot, Ishmael, Idrīs, Ḏū l-Kifl, Elijah, Jonah, John, and Jesus belonged to the righteous (*min al-ṣāliḥīn*). John is further characterised as "noble and chaste" (*sayyid wa-ḥaṣūr*) (Q 3:39),[5] while Abraham and Idrīs are each called "a man of truth" (*ṣiddīq*) (Q 19:41, 56). Ishmael is praised as one who was "true to his promise" (*ṣādiq al-waʿd*) (Q 19:54). Abraham was also granted the distinctive honour of being taken by God "as a friend" (*ḫalīl*) (Q 4:125), earning him the title "Friend of God" (*ḫalīl Allāh*). Moses is described as "specially chosen" (*muḫlaṣ*) (Q 19:51), one whom God "brough close to Us in secret communion" (*qarrabnāhu naǧiyyan*) (Q 19:52), and to whom "He spoke directly" (*kallama taklīman*) (Q 4:164), hence his identification as "the one who spoke with God directly" (*kalīm Allāh*). Despite these specific features, belief in all the prophets remains indispensable in Islam. At the Last Judgment, God will question people about their response to his messengers: "How did you respond to My messengers?" (Q 28:65).[6] Although prophets were sent with clear signs (*āya*, pl. *āyāt*),[7] with God's permission, they

[3] See also Q 12:23 in relation to Joseph.

[4] See W. Madelung, "'Iṣma" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by P.J. Bearman *et al.*, vol. IV, *Iran–Kha*, Leiden, Brill, 1997, pp. 182–184; P.E. Walker, "Impeccability" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. by J.D. McAuliffe, vol. II, *E–I*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, pp. 505–507.

[5] See also Q 12:24.

[6] See also Q 39:71.

[7] The word *āya* is probably a loan word from Syriac or Aramaic (*āṭā*). Its plural form recurs almost 400 times, in addition to its cognate *bayyina* (pl. *bayyināt*) with about 60 occurrences. The Qur'ān mentions diverse signs which live in the earth (*dalāʾil al-āfāq*) and in humankind (*dalāʾil al-anfus*), granted by God as an act of his infinite benevolence for a people who reflect. See for instance Q 6:109; 10:24; 13:3; 29:50. The prophets themselves and their miracles are signs, as well as the punishment stories of unbelieving peoples by God's interventions, "a sign in this for anyone who fears the

were not always received with acceptance and obedience. Many were rejected simply because they were perceived as "only men" (Q 14:10).[8] As the Qurʾān recounts: "We sent messengers among the various communities of old, but they mocked every single messenger that came to them" (Q 15:10–11) and "called him a liar" (Q 23:44).[9] In particular, Muḥammad was denied by his contemporaries, who claimed that his revelation was just a medley of existing traditions and stories or "muddled dreams" (Q 21:5).[10] He was accused of being a poet, a magician, and a madman,[11] labels that reflected persistent resistance to the divine message throughout prophetic history.

Moreover, the Qurʾān affirms that God "appointed adversaries from the wicked, for every prophet" (Q 25:31),[12] and as a result, all prophets suffered opposition and persecution. As recorded in the Qurʾān, hostile communities threatened them, saying: "We shall expel you from our land unless you return to our religion" (Q 14:13). Yet, the prophets responded with patience: "We shall certainly bear steadfastly whatever harm you do to us" (Q 14:12). This pattern of rejection is consistently echoed in the narratives of earlier messengers. For example, the people of Ṯamūd "called the messengers liars" (Q 26:141),[13] a charge similarly repeated throughout Sura al-Šuʿarāʾ (Q 26)[14] in the stories of various prophets whose peoples rebelled against God and rejected His messengers using nearly identical words. The

punishment of the Hereafter" (Q 11:103; see also for instance Q 15:75–77; 27:52). See Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (*Mafātīḥ al-ġayb*), ed. by M.M.D. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, vol. XXV, Beirut, Dār al-Fikr, 1981, p. 111; E.W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. I, Cambridge, Islamic Text Society, 1984, p. 135; A. Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, Baroda, Oriental Institute, 1938, pp. 72–73; B. Abrahamov, "Signs" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. V, *Si–Z*, 2006, pp. 2–11; W.M. Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, pp. 121–127; F. Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'ān*, Chicago, Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980, pp. 47–53.

[8] See also for example Q 16:43; 17:94; 25:20; 36:15; 64:6.

[9] See also among others Q 2:87; 22:42; 35:25.

[10] See also Q 12:44.

[11] See for instance Q 21:5; 37:15, 36; 52:30; 69:41.

[12] See also Q 6:112; 16:63; 22:52.

[13] See also Q 15:80; 91:14.

[14] The sura relates accounts of Noah (Q 26:117), Hūd (Q 26:139), Lot (Q 26:160), and Šuʿayb (Q 26:176); see S.H. Griffith, "The 'Sunna of Our Messengers': The Qur'an's Paradigm for Messengers and Prophets; a Reading of Sūrat ash- Shuʿarāʾ (26)", in *Qur'ānic Studies Today*, ed. by A. Neuwirth and M. Sells, Abingdon-New York, Routledge, 2016, pp. 207–227.

Prophet experienced this same rejection,[15] but God consoled him and instructed him to suffer patiently,[16] just as earlier prophets – and especially Job, who exemplified steadfastness amid suffering – had done.[17] Like him, all previous envoys were met with denial and hostility by those who disbelieved.[18]

In some cases, prophets were even killed by their own people. The Qur'ān recounts: "So how is it that, whenever a messenger brings you something you do not like, you become arrogant, calling some impostors and killing others?" (Q 2:87).[19] That was the destiny of several Israelite prophets.[20] However, they were assured that divine justice would prevail, as God "punished the evildoers" (Q 30:47) with an "agonizing torment" (Q 3:21). In fact, the Qur'ān provides numerous accounts of nations that disobeyed their prophets and were consequently punished by God, underscoring the recurring Qur'ānic theme of divine retribution against communities that arrogantly rejected God's messengers: "We destroyed whole generations when they did evil – their messengers brought them clear signs but they refused to believe. This is how We repay the guilty" (Q 10:13); "Whenever We sent a prophet to a town, We afflicted its [disbelieving] people with suffering and hardships, so that they might humble themselves [before God]" (Q 7:94).[21]

The collective catastrophe that befell communities rejecting their prophets represent both the direct result of their opposition to God's message and the manifestation of divine support and the promise to his messengers. As the Qur'ān affirms: "So do not think [Prophet] that God will break His promise to His messengers: He is mighty and capable of retribution" (Q 14:47). In the face of hostility, the envoys, urgently aware of their need for divine protection, were often saved along with their close followers, as it is written: "In the end We shall save Our messengers and the believers. We take it upon Ourself to save the believers" (Q 10:103).[22] Frequently, after rejecting the clear

[15] See Q 6:33; 15:97.
[16] See Q 5:41; 10:65; 16:127; 20:130; 27:70; 31:23; 36:76; 73:10.
[17] See Q 21:83–84; 38:41–44.
[18] See Q 6:34; 14:12.
[19] See also, for example, Q 2:61, 91; 3:112, 181, 183; 4:155; 5:70.
[20] See Q 2:61, 91; 3:21, 112, 181; 4:155.
[21] See also Q 3:184; 10:74; 14:9; 35:25; 40:22.
[22] See also Q 12:110; 30:47.

signs brought to them, disbelieving communities would challenge their prophets by demanding a sign of their own choice: "'If only God would speak to us!' or 'If only a miraculous sign would come to us!'" (Q 2:118).[23] The Qur'ān, however, reproaches them, "Do you wish to demand of your messenger something similar to what was demanded of Moses? Whoever exchanges faith for disbelief has strayed far from the right path" (Q 2:108). This context highlights a defining feature of prophetic missions: they were sent "bearing good news and warning" (Q 4:165),[24] to give glad tidings to the faithful and to warn the obstinate disbelievers, as in "those who disbelieve and deny Our messages shall be the inhabitants of the Fire, and there they will remain" (Q 2:39), unless they repent. Thus, God's messengers did not only offered warnings but also announced divine mercy.[25] Nevertheless, prophets cannot change the fate of unbelievers.[26] Their mission is not measured by outward success or failure; their duty is solely to deliver God's message clearly and unambiguously.[27] The Qur'ān reminds that God is ever-watchful,[28] and on the Day of Judgment, both believers and unbelievers will realise that the messengers spoke the truth regarding destinies in paradise or hell.[29] On that day, prophets will act as witnesses over their communities.[30] Consequently, the prophets functioned as models to be followed, since God gave a guide (*hād*) to every people.[31]

Despite the distinctive traits and privileges mentioned, each prophet remains fundamentally a servant of God (*ʿabd*, pl. *ʿibād*, *ʿabīd*; also *ʿābid*, pl. *ʿābidūn*). As such, they do not claim authority over others, and people are not meant to serve them; rather, only God is to be served. In fact: "No person to whom God had given the Scripture, wisdom, and prophethood would ever say to people, 'Be my servants, not God's'" (Q 3:79). Moreover, divine election does not provide everyone with knowledge of the unseen (*ġayb*), which remains exclusively

[23] See also Q 21:5.
[24] See also Q 33:45; 48:8.
[25] See Q 4:165; 6:4; 18:56.
[26] See Q 9:80, 113.
[27] See Q 16:35.
[28] See Q 58:6; 85:9.
[29] See Q 7:43, 53; 36:52.
[30] See Q 4:41; 7:6–7; 16:84, 89.
[31] See Q 13:7; 26:208.

in God's knowledge: "He is the One who knows what is hidden" (Q 72:26). However, this privilege may be selectively disclosed, as God "does not disclose it except to a messenger of His choosing" (Q 72:27). As a result, God "would not show you [people] what is hidden; God chooses as His messengers whoever He will" (Q 3:179). Muḥammad, for example, is said to share with God several accounts that were part of what was beyond his knowledge. Indeed, the Qur'ān reads: "We revealed them to you. Neither you nor your people knew them before now, so be patient: the future belongs to those who are aware of God" (Q 11:49).[32]

In conclusion, prophets in the Qur'ān are divinely chosen human beings who serve as moral exemplars, faithful messengers, and witness to the truth, distinguished by their unwavering submission to God and their divinely guided mission.

3. *Qur'ānic Prophetic Accounts*

Most Qur'ānic accounts of the prophets, particularly those with a biblical parallel, are marked by a distinctive narrative style. Despite comprising some of the most narrative-rich sections of the Qur'ān,[33] these stories differ significantly from their biblical versions. They are typically characterised by an elliptic, formulaic style, along with narrative omissions and fragmentations.[34] In some cases, prophetic episodes

[32] See Q 3:44; 12:102.

[33] In general, the proportion of all the Qur'ānic narratives is very large: 1,453 verses, or about a quarter of the total number of verses (approximately 6,000), while 1,700 relate to eschatological themes. See Ǧ.D. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, ed. by M.A.F. Ibrāhīm, vol. I, Cairo, al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya, 1967, p. 232; F. Sherif, *A Guide to the Contents of the Qur'ān*, London, Ithaca Press, 1985, p. 46; E. Platti, "Les thèmes du Coran: Le commentaire de Mawdûdî", in *En hommage au père Jacques Jomier, o.p.*, ed. by M-T. Urvoy, Paris, Cerf, 2002, pp. 171–184, here 174. They consist of stories about prophets (25 of them fall into this category; see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. III, 1967, p. 67), sages, historical, mythical, historico-mythical, or stereotyped figures of ancient times. See R. Tottoli, "Narrative Literature", in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. by A. Rippin, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, pp. 467–480; C. Gilliot, "Narratives" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. III, *J–O*, 2003, pp. 517–526, esp. 517.

[34] Elliptical versions of several stories are found, for example, in Q 21:74–91. This specific pericope reports the stories of Lot, David and Solomon, Job, Jonah, Zechariah, and Mary. For a discussion of how the Qur'ān reinterprets biblical figures within an Ar-

appear as independent units embedded within suras that are otherwise not narrative in nature.[35] In other instances, entire suras are structured around a core narrative[36] or composed wholly of prophetic stories. Conversely, certain passages contain only brief narrative references, condensed into a few concise verses or conveyed through allusive readings.[37] Lastly, a number of verses show only a simple enumeration of prophets and key events associated with them.[38] As a consequence, these narrative sections are not always easy to follow or piece together into complete, continuous stories.[39] Instead, the Qurʾān emphasises more on the moral and theological lessons of the prophets rather than several other details. The prophets and their experiences are thus depicted primarily as ethical paradigms, instead of being portrayed through historical narratives.[40] In fact, one of the key features of the prophetic accounts is their recurring structure, which consistently impacts on both the reader and the listener. Their specific use of dual oppositional

abic-Islamic framework, see S.H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013.

[35] For instance, see Q 14:35–41 (Abraham), Q 38:71–85 (Adam), Q 40:23–56 (Moses), Q 89:6–12 (ʿĀd, Ṯamūd, and the Pharaoh).

[36] See, for example, Q 7 which contains six stories: Noah (Q 7:59–64), Hūd (Q 7:65–72), Ṣāliḥ (Q 7:73–79), Lot (Q 7:80–84), Šuʿayb (Q 7:85–93), and Moses (Q 7:103–157); Q 54 with five stories: Noah (Q 54:9–17), Hūd (Q 54:18–22), Ṣāliḥ (Q 54:23–32), Lot (Q 54:33–40), and the Pharaoh (Q 54:41–42). Q 20 has two stories about Moses (Q 20:9–99) and Adam (Q 20:115–128); while Q 26:10–189 narrates seven stories: Moses (Q 26:10–68), Abraham (Q 26:69–104), Noah (Q 26:105–122), Hūd (Q 26:123–140), Ṣāliḥ (Q 26:141–159), Lot (Q 26:160–175), and Šuʿayb (Q 26:176–189). See Gilliot, "Narratives", pp. 518–522.

[37] See, for instance, Q 17:61–65 (Adam), Q 17:101–104 (Moses and the Pharaoh), Q 53:50–54 (ʿĀd, Ṯamūd, Noah, "the ruined cities"), Q 69:4–12 (Ṯamūd, ʿĀd, Pharaoh, "the ruined cities", *al-muʾtafikāt*, and Noah), Q 85:1–7 ("the makers of the trench"), Q 85:17–20 (the Pharaoh and Ṯamūd).

[38] See Q 4:163–165; 6:83–87; 9:70; 22:42–45; 25:38; 38:12–14; 50:12–14.

[39] R. Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qurʾān and Muslim Literature*, Abingdon-New York, Routledge, 2002, pp. 17–18.

[40] See F.M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Princeton, Darwin Press, 1998, pp. 76–85. The lack of specific narrative features could suggest a certain knowledge by the first listeners of the Qurʾān of biblical traditions, through Jewish and Christian interpretations, in some circles where Muḥammad shared his revelations. See *Bible and Qurʾān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*, ed. by J.C. Reeves, Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003; *New Perspectives on the Qurʾān: The Qurʾān in its Historical Context 2*, ed. by G.S. Reynolds, Abingdon-New York, Routledge, 2011; *Behind the Story: Ethical Readings of Qurʾānic Narratives*, ed. by S. Rashwani, Leiden, Brill, 2024.

form (for instance, good vs evil; believers vs unbelievers; messenger/prophet vs Pharaoh; good cities vs subverted/destroyed cities) serves to prompt a moral or theological decision from the audience.[41]

Although some stories (like those of Moses and Jesus) could be seen as reported in detail, all of them (except for Joseph's in Q 12) are spread across the Qur'ān in different contexts.[42] Specific narrative elements often reappear in multiple suras, sometimes with a few variations or additions to the plot.[43] This means that the Qur'ānic presentation of prophetic episodes is dispersed and not arranged in a continuous or chronological order, unlike the more linear style found in biblical prophetic accounts.[44] This structure reflects the unique composition of the Qur'ān, which is shaped by the context of its gradual revelation to Muḥammad, through the angel Gabriel, as affirmed in: "The disbelievers also say, 'Why was the Qur'an not sent down to him all at once?' We sent it in this way to strengthen your heart [Prophet]; We gave it to you in gradual revelation" (Q 25:32) and "it is a recitation that We have revealed in parts, so that you can recite it to people at intervals; We have sent it down little by little" (Q 17:106).[45]

[41] See C. Gilliot, "De l'impossible censure du récit légendaire: Adab et tafsīr: deux voies pour edifier l'ethos de l'homo islamicus", *Israel Oriental Studies* 19 (1999), pp. 49–96. The importance of the Qur'ānic narratives of the prophets, along with the will to follow their actions, gave rise to the literary genre of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* in Arabic Islamic literature, since the end of the 1st/6th century. See R.G. Khoury, *Les légendes prophétiques dans l'Islam: Depuis le I^er^ jusqu'au III^e^ siècle de l'Hégire*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1978; W.M. Brinner, "Prophets and Prophecy in the Islamic and Jewish Traditions", in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions*, ed. by W.M. Brinner and S.D. Ricks, Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1986, pp. 63–82; R. Tottoli, "The Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' of Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī (454/1062): Stories of the prophets from al-Andalus", *Al-Qantara* 19/1 (1998), pp. 131–160; Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān*, pp. 42, 138–164; al-Ṭarafī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*; ET: *The Stories of the Prophets of Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī*, ed. by R. Tottoli, Berlin, Klaus Schawz Verlag, 2003; M. Klar, "Stories of the Prophets", in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, pp. 339–349.

[42] A single story is the focus of only a few suras: Q 71 ("Noah"), Q 12 ("Joseph"), Q 28, ("The Story": tells of Moses, Aaron and Hāmān, adding an account on Korah).

[43] See the story of Ṣāliḥ reported in Q 27:45–53, which varies almost completely from the one given by the Qur'ān in other suras. See also Q 7:73–79; 11:61–68; 26:141–159; 27:45–53; 54:23–31; 91:11–15.

[44] An overview of major versions of the chronological re-arrangement of the suras in comparison to their actual numbered order in the Qur'ān may be found in Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān*, pp. 205–213; *New Perspectives on the Qur'ān*.

[45] According to Q 97:1–5, the Qur'ān was sent down on *laylat al-qadr*, "the night of the destiny/revelation/divine determination"; see also Q 44:3. See Abū Ǧa'far Muḥam-

Another defining feature of Qur'ānic narrative style, particularly in relation to the stories of the prophets, is its minimal concern with chronological sequence. Instead, the emphasis is placed on the moral and spiritual significance of each story. These narratives are presented as divine signs and serve as a reminder for listeners.[46] The Qur'ān itself gives evidence of this trait, for instance, at the end of "the best of stories" (*aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ*) (Q 12:3), namely the account of Joseph: "There is a lesson in the stories of such people for those who understand. This revelation is no fabrication: it is a confirmation of the truth of what was sent before it; an explanation of everything; a guide and a blessing for those who believe" (Q 12:111).

Furthermore, the Qur'ān makes clear that it does not recount the stories of all the prophets God sent down. The number of envoys mentioned is therefore not exhaustive. As it is stated: "We have sent other messengers before you – some We have mentioned to you [Muḥammad] and some We have not" (Q 40:78); "to other messengers We have already mentioned to you [Muḥammad], and also to some We have not" (Q 4:164). Some exegetes have explained this selectivity by noting that various envoys were either too numerous or insufficiently distinct to be mentioned individually. According to some traditions, the total number of prophets sent throughout history is said to be 124,000,[47] underscoring the Qur'ān focus on purpose and guidance over comprehensive enumeration.

Twenty-five Qur'ānic messengers are explicitly quoted by name, though there is some scholarly debate regarding the precise identity of a few among them. In addition to these, the Qur'ān also alludes

mad ibn Ǧarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl fī al-Qurʾān*, vol. XXV, al-Qāhira, Dār al-Ḥadīṯ, 1987, p. 64. This night is generally identified by Islamic tradition as the twenty-seventh day of the month of Ramaḍān; see Q 2:185. The Qur'ān was then revealed by Gabriel to Muḥammad over a period of twenty or twenty-three years. See al-Ṭabarī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. XXX, p. 166; A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Isḥāq's* Sīrat rasūl Allāh, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1955; repr., Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 111–112.

[46] See H. Schwarzbaum, *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk-Literature*, Walldorf-Hessen, Verlag für Orientkunde Dr. H. Vorndran, 1982; H.T. Norris, "*Qiṣaṣ* Elements in the Qur'an", in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. by A.F.L. Beeston *et al.*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 246–259; Watt, *Bell's introduction to the Qur'ān*, pp. 124–125.

[47] See ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-taʾwīl*, ed. by M.ʿA.R. al-Marʿašlī, vol. II, Beirut, Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāṯ al-ʿArabī, 1988, p. 346.

to other envoys without mentioning their names directly.[48] However, later Muslim exegetes identified some of these unnamed figures based on contextual clues, prophetic traditions, and exegetical texts.[49]

4. *Job's Narrative in the Qur'ān*

The presence of Job in the Qurʾān as a prophetic figure presents a notable interpretive challenge. Unlike many other prophetic figures, Job is not explicitly described as receiving a divine call, delivering a message, or being sent to a specific community. This narrative ambiguity could raise important questions about the nature and criteria of prophethood in the Qurʾānic narrative framework. As Anthony H. Johns observes in his analysis of Job's Qurʾānic portrayal, "Job does not at first sight fit into the general prophetic mould. There is no account of his call, of divine words by which he is commissioned, the giving to him of a Book, the people to whom he preached, their acceptance or rejection of him, or the punishment that would follow such a rejection".[50] While Johns is not the only scholar to address the role

[48] See B.M. Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis*, London, Continuum, 2002, p. 9; Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān*, pp. 44–45.

[49] The exegetical literature claims a Qurʾānic allusion to Ezekiel (Ḥizqīl) in Q 2:243. Moreover, a few exegetical traditions identify Ezekiel with Ḏū l-Kifl and with Elisha. See G. Vajda, "Dhu l-Kifl" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. II, *C–G*, 1991, p. 242; H. Busse, "Dhū l-Kifl" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. I, *A–D*, 2001, pp. 527–529. The biblical Samuel (Šamwīl, Šamwāʾīl, Ášmawīl, Ašmāwīl, or Išmawīl) has been seen in the anonymous prophet referred to in Q 2:246–248. See Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*; ET: *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisāʾī*, ed. by W.M. Thackston Jr., Chicago, Kazi Publications, 1997, pp. 270–278; W.M. Brinner, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ, or "Lives of the Prophets" as Recounted by Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Thaʿlabī*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, pp. 439–444. Finally, Jeremiah (Irmiyā), according to traditional exegesis, has been identified with the prophet quoted in Q 2:259–261. See al-Ṭabarī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. V, pp. 438–484; al-Ṭarafī, *The Stories of the Prophets*, pp. 322–345; Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran*, pp. 161–163, 250–258, 289–290; Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān*, pp. 102–102. Three other anonymous messengers must be added to these prophets; see Q 36:13–30. They are usually identified with three Christian apostles who were sent by Jesus to Antioch; see J. Walker, *Bible Characters in the Koran*, London, Gardner, 1931, p. 34.

[50] A.H. Johns, "Narrative, Intertext and Allusion in the Qur'anic Presentation of Job", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1/1 (1999), pp. 1–25, here 3.

of Job in the Qurʾān, his remarks concisely emphasise the difficulty in categorising Job alongside other prophetic figures.

In the Qurʾānic text, the prophet Job (أيوب, Ayyūb)[51] is mentioned by name in four suras.[52] He is quoted twice as a prophet in two lists of envoys, affirming the idea of a divinely guided succession. In Q 4:163, he is enumerated along with a number of prophets to whom God revealed himself, in particular in relation to the lineage of Noah, Abraham, and Israel,[53] underlining that all of them experienced the same process of revelation (*waḥī*): "We have sent revelation to you [Prophet] as We did to Noah and the prophets after him, to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon– to David We gave the book [of Psalms]" (Q 4:163).[54] All of these figures "were messengers bearing good news and warning, so that mankind would have no excuse before God, once the messengers had been sent" (Q 4:165). In Q 6:84, Job is again listed alongside envoys (that is David, Solomon, Moses, Aaron) and is clearly described as a descendent of Abraham. Furthermore, in Q 6:86–87, he is included among those to whom God granted prophethood and elevated in rank "over other people" (*ʿalā al-ʿālamīn*), guiding them along "a straight

[51] See Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, pp. 73–74; A.H. Johns, "Job" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, vol. III, pp. 50–51; A. Jeffery, "Ayyūb" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. I, *A–B*, 1986, pp. 795–796; Brinner, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, pp. 254–273; al-Ṭarafī, *The Tales of the Prophets*, pp. 166–179; Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qurʾān*, p. 42; Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran*, pp. 157–163; D.B. Macdonald, "Some External Evidence of the Original Form of the Legend of Job", *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 14 (1898), pp. 137–164; J.-F. Legrain, "Variations musulmanes sur le thème de Job", *Bulletin d'études orientales* 37–38 (1985–1986), pp. 51–114; Brinner, "Prophets and Prophecy in the Islamic and Jewish Traditions", pp. 63–82; A.H. Johns, "Three Stories of a Prophet: Al-Ṭabarī's Treatment of Job in *Sūrah al- Anbiyāʾ* 83–4 (Part I)", *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 3/2 (2001), pp. 39–61; A.H. Johns, "Three Stories of a Prophet: Al-Ṭabarī's Treatment of Job in *Sūrat al-Anbiyāʾ* 83–4 (Part II)", *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 4/1 (2002), pp. 49–60; M.O. Klar, *Interpreting al-Thaʿlabi's* Tales of the Prophets*: Temptation, Responsibility and Loss*, Abingdon-New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 25–60. A detailed analysis of the exegetical literature on Job is given by J.-L. Déclais, *Les premiers musulmans face à la tradition biblique: Trois récits sur Job*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1996. For a specific analysis of inconsistent or incorrect translations of Qurʾānic passages on Job, see P. Branca, "Tra Bibbia e Corano: Problemi relativi alla traduzione di un passo riguardante Giobbe", *Kervan – Rivista Internazionale di studi afroasiatici* 2 (2005), pp. 13–16.

[52] See Q 4:163; 6:84; 21:83; 38:41.

[53] See Q 4:54; 40:53; 57:26.

[54] A cognate passage is found in Q 2:136 and Q 3:84, with the addition of other prophets.

path" (*ṣirāṭ mustaqīm*). Apart from the lists, Job's personal character is highlighted in several pericopes in Q 21 and Q 38, which focus on his well-known trials and his exemplary patience in suffering.[55]

With regard to his personal qualities, Job is described in Q 38:44 as "patient" (*ṣābir*),[56] "excellent servant" (*niʿm al-ʿabd*),[57] "always turned to God" (*awwāb*).[58] Additionally, in Q 6:85 he is counted among the "righteous" (*mīn al-ṣāliḥīn*).[59] His story is further characterised in Q 21:84 as "a reminder for all who serve Us" (*ḏikrā li-l-ʿābidīn*), demonstrating his function as a model of virtue and devotion for the faithful.

In the Islamic history of salvation, God always imposed trials on his prophets. They endured them and, in the end, prevailed by submitting to God's will. A particular group of envoys, namely Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and Muḥammad, is mentioned in Q

[55] Traditionalists have tried to explain Job's trials. The entire structure of their narratives depends on their fundamental premise, which throughout history has been divided between: Job is guilty, and his sufferings are a divine punishment; and Job is innocent, and his trials are an honour with which God grants him a high reward; see Legrain, "Variations musulmanes sur le thème de Job", pp. 59–61.

[56] This term also recurs in connection with Abraham's son during the attempted sacrifice in Q 37:102; see A.J. Wensinck, "Ṣabr" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. VIII, *Ned–Sam*, 1995, pp. 685–687. Patience is a regular trait of prophets and messengers, and its persistent presence in the Qurʾān is clear proof of its importance in Islamic moral thought; see I. Zilio-Grandi, *The Virtues of the Good Muslim*, Venice, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2025, pp. 13–15. In all exegetical sources it is found that Job was the most patient of his time; see Muqātil ibn Sulaymān al-Balḫī, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, ed. by ʿA.A.M. Šaḥāta, 4 vols., Cairo, al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1979–1989, esp. vol. III, p. 89.

[57] This title is normally related to God's prophets: Noah (Q 17:3; 54:9), Abraham (Q 38:45), David (Q 38:17), Solomon (Q 38:30), Zechariah (Q 19:2), Jesus (Q 4:172; 19:30), and Muḥammad (Q 2:23; 17:1; 18:1; 25:1, 96:10). See Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, 209–210; J.E. Brockopp, "Servants" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, vol. IV, *P–Sh*, 2004, pp. 576–580; C. Wilde and J.D. McAuliffe, "Religious Pluralism and the Qurʾān" s.v., *ibid.*, pp. 400–401. See also Legrain, "Variations musulmanes sur le thème de Job", pp. 79–80.

[58] In the whole of the Qurʾān, this word is repeated in relation to David (Q 38:17), Solomon (Q 38:30), and Šuʿayb (Q 11:88). Furthermore, Muḥammad himself is associated with the topic of penitence (Q 9:117).

[59] Other prophets who are given this title are: Abraham (Q 2:130; 16:122; 29:27), Isaac (Q 37:112), Lot (Q 21:75), Ḏū l-Kifl (Q 21:85-6), Elijah (Q 6:85), Jonah (Q 68:50), John (Q 3:39), and Jesus (Q 3:46). According to Shīʿī exegesis Job did not commit sin; see, e.g., Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, ed. by Ġ.R.ʿI. al-Yazdī, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-murfīd, 1989, p. 139.

46:35, as possessing "firm resolve" (*ulū l-ʿazm*),[60] in the face of hardships inherent in their missions. In addition to this, characters such as Jacob, Joseph, David, and especially Job are often included for their exemplary demonstration of perseverance. Job, in particular, is regarded as the personification of the virtue of "patience" (*ṣabr*), which, along with "trust in God" (*tawakkul* or *amāna*), is in the Qurʾān one of the essential virtue of a true believer.[61] Following the examples of the prophets, believers are also called upon to remain patient in adversity: "You who believe, be steadfast, more steadfast than others; be ready; always be mindful of God, so that you may prosper" (Q 3:200), so that they "will be rewarded with the highest place in Paradise for their steadfastness. There they will be met with greetings and peace" (Q 25:75).[62] Their recompense will even be multiplied, and those who suffered for the sake of their faith will have their sins forgiven.[63]

"Mémorial de patience pour les vivants, Job sera à la tête des patients au jour de la résurrection";[64] hence, Job, as well as Jacob,[65] stands as a paradigmatic embodiment of the virtue of patience, without losing belief in his Lord.[66] Given that most of the virtues of faith enter

[60] See D. De Smet, "Adam, premier prophète et législateur?: La doctrine chiite des *ulū al-ʿazm* et la controverse sur la pérennité de la *šarīʿa*", in *Le shīʿisme imāmite quarante ans après: Hommage à Etan Kohlberg*, ed. by M.A. Amir-Moezzi, M.M. Bar-Asher and S. Hopkins, Turnhout, Brepols, 2009, pp. 187–202, here 187–189.

[61] Specifically, *ṣabr*, in addition to other derivatives of the same root, is attested in the Qurʾān a total of 103 times, emphasising the centrality of this virtue in Muslim piety; see S.C. Alexander, "Trust and Patience" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, vol. V, pp. 378–385. For an in-depth discussion of how translation choices affect the perception of key concepts (such as Job's endurance), see D.J. Stewart, "Understanding the Quran in English: Notes on Translation, Form, and Prophetic Typology", in *Diversity in Language: Contrastive Studies in English and Arabic Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, ed. by Z. Ibrahim, N. Kassabgy and S. Aydelott, Cairo, American University in Cairo Press, 2000, pp. 31–48.

[62] See also Q 23:111; 33:35; 76:12. In light of Griffith's analysis, Job's exemplary endurance emerges as a vital part of the Qurʾān's theology of prophethood, affirming divine justice and mercy through trial and perseverance; see Griffith, "The 'Sunna of Our Messengers'".

[63] See Q 3:195; 28:54.

[64] ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAsākir, *al-Tārīḫ al-Kabīr*, ed. by ʿA.Q. Badrān, vol. III, Damascus, s.n., 1911, p. 194.

[65] See Q 12:18, 83–84.

[66] See A. Khalil, "On Patience (*Ṣabr*) in Sufi Virtue Ethics", in *Mysticism and Ethics in Islam*, ed. by O. Bilal, A. Khalil and M. Rustom, Beirut, American University of Beirut,

through the "door" of patience,[67] Job experienced both mental and physical suffering, which he endured with humble acceptance, never cursing or turning against God.[68] Unlike the biblical account, the Qur'ānic portrayal presents Job within the broader framework of prophetic figures who exemplify exceptional submission to Lord's will. Thus, he was not afflicted by the problem of theodicy.[69] In the Bible, Job attributes his pains directly to God,[70] curses the day of his birth for the reason for his affliction,[71] and questions divine justice.[72] By contrast, in the Qur'ān, Job' trial is not caused by God directly, but rather by Satan (Iblīs), with God's permission.[73] Indeed, "Job too knows that Satan was given a respite from punishment until Judgement Day, and recognises him by this fact".[74] This depiction is consistent with the Qur'ānic understanding that Satan casts his influence into the hearts of all messengers, though "God removes what Satan insinuates" (Q 22:52) and "He makes Satan's insinuations a temptation only for the sick at heart and those whose hearts are hardened" (Q 22:53). Therefore, God can also test prophets with Satan's temptations, since "the wisdom and greatness of God can be experienced as much through the

2022, pp. 71–78, esp. 76. See also M. Greenberg, "Job", in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. by R. Alter and F. Kermode, London, Collins, 1987, pp. 283–304, esp. 283.

[67] See Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Patience and Thankfulness: Kitāb al-ṣabr wa'l-šukr*, ed. by H.T. Littlejohn, Cambridge, The Islamic Texts Society, 2010; Zilio-Grandi, *The Virtues of the Good Muslim*, pp. 13–15.

[68] Navid Kermani offers an insightful exploration of the Sufi scholar Farīd al-Dīn al-'Aṭṭār's (d. 618/1221) *Muṣībatnāma* (The Book of Suffering) through the lens of Job's narrative. Indeed, al-'Aṭṭār enters a deep counter-theological argument regarding the apparent incongruities and afflictions present in God's realm. The central conundrum posed is the reconciliation of human suffering and injustice with the fundamental faith in a benevolent and merciful God. Therefore, Kermani narrates this theological tension, as embodied in Job's enquiry; see N. Kermani, *The Terror of God: Attar, Job and the Metaphysical Revolt*, trans. by W. Hoban, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2011.

[69] See for instance Job 6:11.

[70] See for instance Job 6:4; 8:17–18; 10:3; 13:24; 16:7.

[71] See Job 3:1–12; 6:24; 10:2b.

[72] See Job 19:7. See also see Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*.

[73] See Q 38:41. The Bible narrates Satan's temptation of Job in Job 1–2. In Qur'ānic exegetical discourse, an envy-based challenge between Satan and God has been illustrated through Job's suffering. However, Job remains faithful because he knows that what has been taken away can be returned. See Legrain, "Variations musulmanes sur le thème de Job", pp. 58–59, 61–62; Johns, "Three Stories of a Prophet (Part I)", pp. 42–44, 53–55.

[74] Johns, "Three stories of a prophet (Part I)", p. 55.

pain and bewilderment of a test so painful that it passes comprehension, as through the gift of temporal blessings".[75]

Finally, Job's prosperity was restored, and he was granted twice as much as he had before: "We restored his family to him, with many more like them: a sign of Our mercy and a lesson to all who understand" (Q 38:43).[76]

5. *Job: Words and Profile*

The relationship between the Qurʾānic text and Muḥammad is so intimate that the revelation appears as a direct discourse from God to his Prophet. In this context, "the divine-human dialogue represents a special favour that man receives from God".[77] Accordingly, the Qurʾān presents God as the speaker (the revealer), who conveys his message from the preserved celestial text, and the Prophet as the first addressee (the hearer). As many early accounts affirm, Muḥammad was ordered with authority at the very beginning of the revelation: "Read! In the name of your Lord" (*iqraʾ bi-smi rabbika*) (Q 96:1).[78] Subsequently, the people (*al-nās*) represent the second group to receive the message, after Muḥammad. They are addressed through him who serves as "the mouthpiece of the divine will".[79] Depending on the situation, this audience can be either small or a large crowd. The major difference between the first and the second addressee is that the latter react at once with assent, rejection, or insist on additional explanations.[80]

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[76] The Bible adds that he lived for 140 years and also saw four generations; see Job 42:10–16. Given that the root K-F-L has the meaning of "doubling", Walker identifies Ḏū l-Kifl with Job. Indeed, in the epilogue reported in the biblical text (Job 42:10) God gives Job twice what he once had, namely he received a "double portion"; see. J. Walker, "Who is Dhu'l-Kifl?", *Muslim World* 16 (1926), pp. 399–401.

[77] M. Mir, "Dialogue in the Qurʾān", *Religion and Literature* 24/1 (1992), pp. 1–22, here 4.

[78] God's creative imperative was also a command "Be (*kun*)!". See Q 2:117; 3:47; 19:35; 40:68; cf. Q 3:59; 6:73; 16:40; 36:82. Indeed, command may represent the principal form of God's mode of speech. See T. Izutsu, *Language and Magic: Studies in the Magical Function of Speech*, Tokyo, Keio Institute of Philological Studies, 1956, pp. 52–53; R. Gwynne, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Qurʾān: God's Arguments*, Abingdon-New York, Routledge, 2004, p. 67.

[79] Watt, *Bell's introduction to the Qurʾān*, p. 67.

[80] In the field of Qurʾānic sciences various classical works investigate the different models of address (*ḫiṭāb*, *muḫāṭabāt*), but only rarely distinguish sections where the gen-

Because of its mainly oral origins, the Qur'ān shows great dynamism when addressing its audience directly, but also when reporting direct speech, such as in dialogues,[81] a significant and recurrent trait of the Qur'ānic style and "a mosaic of voices".[82] However, William Montgomery Watt seems to underestimate this literary feature since "direct speech is apt to be 'interjected' at any point, as the personages mentioned in the narrative express themselves in words".[83] Besides, dialogues, most of which are mainly "simple exchanges that are not dialogues in a strict sense",[84] as well as the quite rare monologues, prevail in the second and third Meccan periods, because of the disapproval of the Quraysh. In fact, the Qur'ān "reflects, through dialogue, the interaction between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities of Arabia on the one hand and among the members of the Muslim community itself on the other [...]. At the same time, use of dialogue makes the Qur'ān stylistically akin to the Bible, where dialogue is very prominent".[85]

Since not all prophets are shown speaking, the amount of direct speech or significant verbal exchange attributed to each prophet generally reflects the level of narrative development in their respective stories. Prophets like Adam, and especially Job, Jonah, and Elijah, whose

eral audience is addressed from those in which one character addresses another; see R. Gwynne, "Patterns of Address", in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, pp. 73–86. Some modern Arabic works discuss the general style and form of Qur'ānic narratives. Among them F.Ḥ. ʿAbbās, *al-Qaṣaṣ al-Qur'ānī: Īḥā'uhu wa Nafaḥātuhu*, Amman, Dār al Furqān, 1987, in which all of the narratives are arranged in chronological order, and M.S. Ḥasan, *Rawā'iʿu al-iʿǧāz fī al-qaṣaṣ al-Qur'ānī*, Alexandria, al-Maktab al-Ǧāmiʿī al-Ḥadīṯ, 1982, who explores many literary devices, such as "interrogative style" (*uslūb al-istifhām*), and "predicative style" (*uslūb al-asnādī*).

[81] See A.S. Tritton, "The Speech of God", *Studia Islamica* 36 (1972), pp. 5–22; Mir, "Dialogue in the Qur'ān"; M. Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'ān: Themes and Style*, London, I.B. Tauris, 1999, p. 206; M. Mir, "Dialogues" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. I, pp. 531–535; T. Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung*, Petaling Jaya, Islamic Book Trust, 2002, pp. 151–197; M.T. Heemskerk, "Speech" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. V, pp. 108–112.

[82] A. Johns, "Joseph in the Quran: Dramatic Dialogue, Human Emotion and Prophetic Wisdom", *Islamochristiana* 7 (1981), pp. 29–55, here 32.

[83] Watt, *Bell's introduction to the Qur'ān*, p. 80.

[84] Mir, "Dialogue in the Qur'ān", p. 3. The same cannot be said of several of Moses' dialogues, such as Q 18:65–83 (Moses and al-Ḫiḍr [or al-Ḥaḍir]) and Q 26:16–37 (Moses and the Pharaoh); see J.D. McAuliffe, "Debate and Disputation" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. I, pp. 511–514.

[85] Mir, "Dialogues", p. 534.

accounts are less elaborated, are thus presented as minor figures, both in narrative scope and in terms of speech.[86] The most common types of dialogues involve a prophet and his people, as well as exchanges between God and individual prophets. Another frequent interlocutor is the town/tribal assembly, or council of nobles (*al-mala'*), which often represents the main obstacle to the prophet's mission.[87] In Qur'ānic narrative style, speech functions as a form of "narration-through-dialogue".[88] As Mustansir Mir points out, the narration also "lays down the parameters within which dialogue will take place, setting the terms and conditions of dialogue, and furnishing guidelines for 'correctly' evaluating and interpreting a given dialogue".[89] Lastly, several prophets are found in a sort of monologue/soliloquy, or one-sided dialogue,[90] when relating and sharing desires, feelings, or thoughts.[91]

As for Job, the Qur'ān narrates his plea to Lord for relief: "Suffering has truly afflicted me, but you are the Most Merciful of the merciful"

[86] Quite different is the case of prophets like Ishmael, Aaron, and David who, even though characterised only by a few utterances, appear evidently linked to stronger characters in terms of individual narrative development, namely, Abraham, Moses and, although at a lower level, Solomon.

[87] This specific addressee emerges in the narrative of Noah (Q 11:38) and mainly in that of Moses and the Pharaoh where the major clash between an envoy, as a representative of heavenly power, materialises against a representative of earthly evil (see for example Q 7:104–106; 10:75; 17:102; 20:50–61, 63–70; 26:26–54), or, in other words, the major clash between the celestial court of God (*al-mala' al-a'lā*) and an earthly court is materialised; see P. Heck, "Politics and the Qur'ān" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. IV, pp. 125–151. An emblematic example is certainly the figure of the Pharaoh. Indeed, he also appears as an interlocutor in the narrative of Joseph. Moreover, Joseph also converses with his master's wife and cellmates, as well as with his brothers; see Q 12:52–55; 12:23, 37–41, 42, 47–49; 12:59–61, 69, 77–79, 88–93.

[88] R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York, Basic Books, 1981, p. 69; see also Mir, "Dialogue in the Qur'ān", p. 17.

[89] Mir, "Dialogue in the Qur'ān", p. 18.

[90] This specific kind of dialogue also occurs in relation to God, for instance, when in Q 2:34–39 he addresses Satan and Adam and Eve. See Mir, "Dialogue in the Qur'ān", pp. 9–11; Id., "Dialogues" s.v., pp. 531–532.

[91] For instance, Jacob said: "Alas for Joseph!" (Q 12:84), then he became blind in one eye out of sorrow at the loss of his son Joseph. Solomon, when he was presented with standing steeds, said: "'My love of fine things is part of my remembering my Lord!' until [the horses] disappeared from sight – 'Bring them back!' [he said] and started to stroke their legs and necks" (Q 38:32–33). Lot cried: "This is a truly terrible day!" (Q 11:77), after angels had come to him. Moses, after he had accidentally killed an Egyptian, said: "This must be Satan's work: clearly he is a misleading enemy" (Q 28:15), then, while heading for Midian, he said: "May my Lord guide me to the right way" (Q 28:22).

(Q 21:83),[92] recognising that no one but God can lift his affliction. In response to Job's call, God intervenes: "We answered him, removed his suffering, and restored his family to him, along with more like them, as an act of grace from Us" (Q 21:84). This passage appears within a broader sequence of narratives describing the trials and the virtues of other Qur'ānic figures: Moses and Aaron, Abraham, Lot, Noah, David and Solomon, Job, Jonah, Zechariah, John, mention of Ishmael, Idrīs, Ḏū l-Kifl, and, implicitly, Mary and Jesus. Each is portrayed as having received divine gifts such as criterion, rectitude, judgment, and knowledge.[93] Besides, God's support is shown. They trusted in him while enduring difficulties, since he is the true "hearer of invocation" (*samīʿu l-duʿāʾ*)[94] and answers supplications. In particular, Abraham was saved from fire,[95] Lot from the punishment of his people,[96] Noah from the deluge,[97] Job from his distress,[98] Jonah from the belly of a fish,[99] and Zechariah mercifully received an answer to his prayer from God.[100] From a typological perspective,[101] Job, Jonah, and Zechariah form a distinct group of prophets, each marked by suffering, though their experiences differ in nature and cause. They all cry appeal to God in relation to their own needs: "Job calls for relief from the hurt that has touched him – loss of property, family and physical affliction, Jonah is in darkness frustrated that his people had rejected him, and Zechariah appeals out of longing for an heir because otherwise, without a child of his own, his evil nephews would inherit from him, and destroy his spiritual patrimony".[102]

In another Qur'ānic context, namely Q 38 in which Job's tale is found, his narrative is preceded by references to stories of punishment, the accounts of David and Solomon, and followed by mention of

[92] See M. Zwettler, "A Mantic Manifesto: The Sūra of 'The Poets' and the Qur'ānic Foundations of Prophetic Authority", in *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition*, ed. by J.L. Kugel, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990, pp. 75–119.
[93] See Q 12:22; 21:48–91; 28:14.
[94] See Q 3:38. See also for instance Q 2:127; 14:39.
[95] See Q 21:69–70.
[96] See Q 21:74.
[97] See Q 21:76.
[98] See Q 21:84.
[99] See Q 21:88.
[100] See Q 21:90–91.
[101] See Zwettler, "A Mantic Manifesto"; Stewart, "Understanding the Quran in English"; Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*; Id., "The 'Sunna of Our Messengers'".
[102] Johns, "Narrative, Intertext and Allusion in the Qur'anic Presentation of Job", p. 13.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ishmael, Elisha, Ḏū l-Kifl. The sura ends with reflections on the destinies of believers and unbelievers in the afterlife, and with the episode of Satan's refusal to prostrate to Adam. After enduring years of trial without ever directly asking for deliverance, Job is again reported to have called out to his Lord for help: "Satan has afflicted me with weariness and suffering" (Q 38:41).[103] In keeping with God's pattern of mercy toward His faithful servants who endure trials, relief is granted; a cool spring miraculously appears, symbolising healing and refreshment.[104] Thus, he was ordered to scuff the earth with his foot: "Stomp your foot! Here is cool water for you to wash in and drink" (Q 38:42).[105] This image may evoke the ritual purification of ablution mentioned in Q 5:6, but more broadly, it recalls other Qurʾānic accounts where water appears as a divine response in moments of need. For instance, the miraculous appearance of the well of Zamzam is implied in Q 2:158, as the scriptural basis for the narrative of Ishmael and Hagar. In Q 2:60, at God's command, Moses strikes a rock with his staff in the desert, causing twelve springs to gush forth. Similarly, in Q 19:24, when Mary suffers the pangs of childbirth, a voice reassures her, pointing to a stream of water beneath her as a divine provision. In each case, water emerges as a symbol of God's mercy, sustenance and presence in moments of human vulnerability, just as it does in Job's story.

6. *Job as an Emblem of Patience*

The prophetic experience of all the envoys in the Qurʾān mirrors that of Muḥammad, serving as a kind of prelude to his own life.[106] Qurʾānic

[103] See Zwettler, "A Mantic Manifesto".

[104] The spring is particularly significant since it is an obvious echoes of other Qurʾānic references. God's command to Job to scuff the ground with his foot, in fact, can be seen as a counterpart to the order given to Moses "to strike the rock with his staff" (Q 7:160), obtaining the water that quenched the thirst of the Israelites. Besides, Schimmel sees a reference to Job and the healing spring in the ecstatic line of Rūmī, "wherever the lover touches the ground with his dancing feet, the water of life will spring out of the darkness"; see A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p. 183.

[105] See H. Toelle, *Le Coran revisité: Le feu, l'eau, l'air et la terre*, Damascus, Institut français de Damas, 1999; M. Radscheit, "Springs and Fountains" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. V, pp. 121–128; A.H. Johns, "Water" s.v., *ibid.*, pp. 461–466.

[106] The narratives concerning the prophets and messengers, in particular that of the prophet Abraham, could appear as a kind of *preparatio prophetica* of Muḥammad.

references to the earlier prophets primarily aim to legitimise the truthfulness of his mission and to support him in the face of opposition from the majority of his Meccan adversaries. At the same time, these references reflect the limited success the Prophet initially encountered in Mecca.[107] By contrast, the Medinan period contains fewer and more concise accounts or phrases,[108] frequently focused on punishment stories; these thus "constitute the rather meagre narrative clothing of the believer-unbeliever relationship in Medina".[109] For this reason, the Qur'ān frequently uses the actions and experiences of earlier prophets to remind its audience of analogous events in Muḥammad's life.[110]

See T. Nöldeke and F. Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorâns*, vol. I, Leipzig, Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1909, pp. 19–20; C. Gilliot, "Récit, mythe et histoire chez Tabari: Une vision mythique de l'histoire universelle", *Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales* 21 (1993), pp. 277-189, esp. 278–279; C. Snouck Hurgronje, "La légende qoranique d'Abraham et la politique religieuse du prophète Mohammed", trans. by G.H. Bousquet, *Revue africaine* 91 (1951), pp. 73–88. In addition, Efim A. Rezvan says: "In speaking of the Biblical prophets, Muḥammad more than once fashioned his narrative on the contemporary situation in Mekka and Yathrib"; see E.A. Rezvan, "The Qur'ān and its World, IV 'Raise not your voices above the Prophet's voice' (Society, Power and Etiquette Norms)", *Manuscripta Orientalia* 3/4 (1997), pp. 35–44, here 41.

[107] See D. Marshall, *God, Muhammad and the Unbelievers: A Qur'ānic Study*, Richmond, Curzon, 1999, pp. 29–30, 36–37; W.M. Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953, esp. chapter 5. Josef Horovitz stresses the educational purpose of the narrative parts, by highlighting that not all of them are fashioned on Muḥammad's incidents; see J. Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1926, pp. 8–9. This way of dealing with the previous prophets has led scholars to use the term "monoprophetism" of the Qur'ān and its religion, since all the prophets are conceived as Muḥammad conceived himself of as a prophet; see A.L. de Prémare, "L'islam comme monoprophétisme", in *Vivre avec l'islam?: Réflexions chrétiennes sur la religion de Mahomet*, ed. by A. Laurent, Versailles, Éditions Saint-Paul, 1996, pp. 150–162.

[108] See for instance Q 2:246–251; 5:20–26.

[109] Marshall, *God, Muhammad and the Unbelievers*, p. 161. The difference between the narrative material of the two periods could be explained by starting from the transformed religious condition, as well as the growing power and authority of Muḥammad, since his attention turned to the legal themes. Thus, messengers invoked as forerunners in the Meccan period of revelation were not as functional as in the Medinan period; See also *ibid*., pp. 158–164 and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, pp. 25–27.

[110] For the stories of punishment of unbelieving communities in the generations before Muḥammad the analogy with his trials seems incontrovertible. See T. Nagel, *Der Koran: Einfiihrung Texte Erliiuterungen*, Munich, C.H. Beck, 1983, pp. 68–69; Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān*, pp. 4–7. See also, W.A. Saleh, "The Arabian Context of Muhammad's Life", in *The Cambridge Companion to Muḥammad*, ed. by J.E. Brockopp, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 21–38, esp. 36–37; F.E. Peters,

God reveals to the Prophet that the messengers sent before him were like him in both mission and in the trials they endured.[111] Nevertheless, they, "in the face of their sufferings for God's cause, did not lose heart or weaken or surrender" (Q 3:146). This is a central theme in the Qur'ān, as the Prophet dealt with various types of suspicion, criticism, and opposition, not only theologically but also politically, first during the pre-hijra period in Mecca[112] by the majority of the Arab pagans, and later, after the flight from Mecca (622), by the Jewish questioners and opponents during his first years in Medina.[113] During the Meccan period, he was derided by the pagan majority and accused of being a madman (*maǧnūn*), liar (*kaḍḍāb*), soothsayer (*kāhin*), sorcerer (*ṣāhir*), and poet (*šā'ir*). His recitations were dismissed as mere legends that ordinary people could imitate.[114] From this point of view, the Qur'ānic verses that refer to Job, "God's way of subjecting him to scrutiny and searching his heart",[115] constitute a clear exhortation to Muḥammad to remain patient and steadfast.[116]

The Qur'ān refutes all accusations against the Prophet, asserting opposition to him is, in essence, opposition to God.[117] Thus, the

Jesus and Muhammad: Parallel Tracks, Parallel Lives, New York, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 116.

[111] See for instance Q 15:10–11; 22:42–44.

[112] See Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, esp. chapter 5; M.W. Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, London, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 22, 72; R. Paret, "Der Koran als Geschichtsquelle", *Der Islam* 37 (1961), pp. 24–42, esp. 36.

[113] See Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, p. 72. The confrontation with the Jews emerges as a central subject in the Qur'ān in particular in the Medinan verses, where the polemical confrontation changed, by focusing on the demonstration that Muḥammad was the heir of the biblical tradition. Moreover, Watt speculates on "what would have happened had the Jews come to terms with Muhammad instead of opposing him. [They] might have become partners in the Arab Empire and Islam a sect of Jewry"; see M.W. Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 219. See also H. Rahman, "The Conflicts Between the Prophet and the Opposition in Madina", *Der Islam* 62 (1985), pp. 260–297.

[114] See for example Q 37:36; 38:4; 40:24; 51:39, 52; 52:29–30; 69:41–42. See also I.J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur'ān: *I'jāz* and Related Topics" in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. by A. Rippin, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 139–157, esp. 140; H. Bobzin, "The 'Seal of the Prophets': Towards an Understanding of Muhammad's Prophethood", in *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu*, ed. by A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai and M. Marx, Leiden, Brill, 2011, pp. 565–584, esp. 569–571.

[115] Johns, "Three Stories of a Prophet (Part I)", p. 41.

[116] See Legrain, "Variations musulmanes sur le thème de Job", pp. 52–55.

[117] See Q 4:80, 152; 58:5; 59:7.

Qur'ānic message put in the mouth of Muḥammad appears explicit, as well as the threats and consequent tragedies which befell those who rejected past divine envoys, by treating them as "men without honour in their native lands".[118] In fact, what unbelieving peoples suffered in the past could take place again for the Meccans. Thus, acting in his role as admonisher (*naḏīr*), the Prophet is instructed to declare: "I have warned you about a blast like the one which struck ʿAd and Thamud" (Q 41:13); "I have proclaimed the message fairly to you all. I do not know whether the judgement you are promised is near or far" (Q 21:109). As Gordon D. Newby notes, "with the aid of the story of Job, Muhammad's persecution and the afflictions and persecutions of the rest of his community can be read as negative signs of God's favor and guarantees of future success. Just as in the Bible, the message in the Quran is that the good will be rewarded and the bad will be punished. The exception is when the righteous suffer".[119]

The Qur'ānic depiction of Muḥammad's relationship to earlier prophets is deeply embedded in its vision of history, which is mainly presented as a sequence of typological events, where recurring patterns of divine guidance and human response transcend individual differences among prophetic narratives.[120] In light of this, a complementary discourse could be developed by exploring how prophets are perceived within popular religious piety. Undoubtedly, all prophets have the power to inspire believers through their stories and words serving, first and foremost, as models of faith, and then as divinely appointed envoys. Their lives communicate that each of them is a guide (*hād*), as affirmed in the Qur'ān: "[Earlier] communities each had their guide" (Q 13:7). Yet, despite the plainness of these examples, human resistance remains constant, as the Qur'ān also observes: "We have presented every kind of description for people, but man is more contentious than any other creature" (Q 18:54).[121]

In any case, the prophets are upheld as ideals to be followed and emulated, not only because of their role as messengers, but because their

[118] S. Akhtar, *The Quran and the Secular Mind: A Philosophy of Islam*, Abingdon-New York, Routledge, 2008, p. 275.
[119] G.D. Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1989, p. 87.
[120] G. Böwering, "Chronology and the Qur'ān" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. I, pp. 316–335, esp. 319.
[121] See also Q 17:89; 39:21.

lives embody the spiritual, moral, and existential challenges that believers themselves face. Among them, the Prophet stands as the ultimate model, whose conduct is divinely praised: "The Messenger of God is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in God and the Last Day and remember Him often" (Q 33:21). His life embodies both outward righteousness and inner virtues essential to prophethood, particularly patience, which is reaffirmed in God's command "So be patient, [Prophet], as befits you" (Q 70:5). Yet, as previously noted, the quality of endurance is not exclusive to Muḥammad but is part of a broader prophetic ethos. It is powerfully conveyed in the well-known phrase "the patience of Job" (*ṣabr Ayyūb*), and echoed in the Qur'ānic words of Jacob when confronted with the loss of Joseph,[122] "patience is beautiful" (*ṣabr ǧamīl*). These expressions have become proverbial within the Islamic traditions, offering believers spiritual direction and comfort in times of hardship, as one report advises: "Whenever there is a believer put to the test, let him recall what happened to Job, and let him say, 'It befell one better than us, one of the Prophets'".[123]

Since "it is his example in bearing undeserved suffering that is his message", Job becomes "a role model for Muḥammad".[124] Job's behaviour specifically contrasts with that of Jonah. In fact, the latter did not demonstrate patience in the face of adversity: he did not expect to be swallowed by a fish and remained in captivity in its belly. As noted, patience "was a quality in which Jonah had fallen short".[125] Nevertheless, this episode should not be understood as a punishment, but rather as a form of divine correction, aimed at instructing the prophet in perseverance and trust in God's timing and judgment. From this perspective, God instructs the Prophet not to follow Jonah's example. Referring to him as "the companion of the fish" (*ṣāḥib al-ḥūt*), God tells Muḥammad: "Wait patiently [Prophet] for your Lord's judgement: do not be like the man in the whale who called out in

[122] See Q 12:18, 83. In the translation of the Qur'ān used for this article the passage is rendered as "it is best to be patient".
[123] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. XXVII, p. 38 ff. See also Macdonald, "Some External Evidence of the Original Form of the Legend of Job", p. 139; Legrain, "Variations musulmanes sur le thème de Job", p. 78.
[124] Johns, "Narrative, Intertext and Allusion in the Qur'anic Presentation Of Job", pp. 3, 23. See also Id., "Three Stories of a Prophet (Part I)", p. 39; Id., "Three Stories of a Prophet (Part II)", pp. 57–58.
[125] A.H. Johns, "Jonah in the Qur'an: An Essay on Thematic Counterpoint", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5/2 (2003), pp. 48–71, here 61.

distress" (Q 68:48). In other words, Muḥammad is urged to remain patient and steadfast, trusting in God's judgment, unlike Jonah who acted hastily. As Johns states, "the essence of God's message is that Muḥammad [unlike Jonah] should endure rejection until his Lord makes His judgement. Jonah is presented to Muḥammad as a prophet offering an example that he is not to follow".[126] This distinction is further emphasised in the commentary of Muqātil, who offers a general admonition: "Do not ask for things to be brought on swiftly, as did Jonah, do not be angry, as he was, for if you are, you will be punished as he was when he called his Lord in the belly of the fish".[127] From this perspective, Jonah's story functions as a warning, underscoring the steadfast endurance required of Muḥammad. It is thus no coincidence that Jonah is not included among the envoys "of firm resolve" (*ulū l-ʿazm*) (Q 46:35), who were praised for their perseverance. His trail in the belly of the fish stresses this point: "If he had not been one of those who glorified God, he would have stayed in its belly until the Day when all are raised up" (Q 37:143–144), that is until the Day of Resurrection.[128]

7. *Conclusions*

The Qur'ān presents prophecy across spiritual, ethical, and rhetorical dimensions, portraying prophets not merely as messengers who deliver God's words, but also as models of strong faith, moral integrity, and deep devotion to God. Rather than offering linear biographies, the Qur'ān employs a fragmented and meditative narrative style aimed at moral and spiritual instruction. Even the briefest of prophetic accounts, such as that of Job, have left a lasting imprint on Islamic religious imagination, profoundly developed through tafsīr, *qiṣaṣ al-anbi-*

[126] *Ibid.*, p. 54; see also Johns, "Narrative, Intertext and Allusion in the Qur'anic Presentation of Job", p. 8.
[127] Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *al-Aśbāh wa al-naẓā'ir fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, ed. by ʿA.A.M. Šiḥāta, vol. IV, Cairo, al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1975, p. 412.
[128] According to the biblical account, he was motivated by the fact that his Lord had delayed punishment for Nineveh; see Jonah 4:1. On the topic of anger, the Qur'ān mentions Moses when his people were led astray by worshipping a golden calf; see Q 7:150, 154; 20:86. See also S. Bashir, "Anger" s.v., in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. I, pp. 92–93.

yā', and Sufi tradition.[129] In fact, these stories have become existential and moral landmarks for believers.

Prophetic narratives often follow recurring motifs (for instance, being chosen by God, facing rejection, staying patient, and finally being vindicated), illustrating the ongoing nature of God's guidance and providing ethical paradigms for both the Prophet and the broader Muslim community. Yet, the Qur'ān also preserves the individuality of each prophet, using distinct linguistic and narrative features to reflect their unique missions and temperaments. This balance between shared function and personal distinction mirrors the Qur'ānic understanding of divine unity expressed through multiplicity. Just as God is one, yet known through various names/attributes (like the Most Merciful, the Giver of Peace, the Omnipotent) depending on how believers relate to him, the prophets embody a common mission while remaining distinct in their character and mode of engagement.

The story of Job exemplifies this dynamic. Though his narrative is concise, it powerfully conveys the Qur'ānic ideal of *ṣabr*, a patience infused with spiritual resilience and absolute trust in divine mercy. Job speaks little, but when he does he appeals to God's compassion without complaint or challenge. His quiet invocation signifies not resignation but profound inner strength. The Qur'ān calls his story "a sign of Our mercy and a lesson to all who understand" (Q 38:43), making it a source of solace and inspiration for those facing hardship. In this light, prophetic patience is more than a personal virtue, it becomes a theological pillar and a means of spiritual pedagogy.

Al-Ġazālī refers to two *ḥadīṯ*s that express this idea. The first one, although not strongly verified, reflects the Qur'ānic link between patience (*ṣabr*) and gratitude (*šukr*): "Faith has two halves: patience and thankfulness". The second *ḥadīṯ*, which is more reliable, states: "Patience is half of faith".[130] This helps explain why patience appears so often in the Qur'ān and is praised in many verses. Therefore, it is no coincidence that "the persistent presence of patience in the Qur'ān, along with the commendations it receives from divine *dicta*, is clear proof of its importance in Islamic moral thought".[131] Ibn al-ʿArabī even says God describes himself as "the Most Patient One" (*al-Ṣabūr*),

[129] See Johns, "Narrative, Intertext and Allusion in the Qur'anic Presentation of Job", p. 2.
[130] Al-Ghazālī, *Patience and Thankfulness*, pp. 23–24, 189–204.
[131] Zilio-Grandi, *The Virtues of the Good Muslim*, p. 14.

among his names in Islamic theology, because he endures the pain of human beings.[132] At the same time, since "God is with the steadfast" (Q 2:153),[133] patience defines those, men and women,[134] who "are true" and "are aware of God" (Q 2:177), "those who are steadfast, truthful, truly devout" (Q 3:17), and "thankful" (Q 31:31), "those who believe and urge one another to steadfastness and compassion" (Q 90:17) and "truth" (Q 103:3), in addition to those who followed the Prophet in the *hiǧra*.[135]

Job is not presented as superior to other prophets. Rather, his example illustrates how different prophets may offer distinct forms of guidance depending on the spiritual needs of the believer. The Qur'ān places his steady endurance alongside Jonah's early retreat, not to criticise the latter, but to reveal a spectrum of prophetic responses, all of which fulfil the same divine mission. Similarly, Muḥammad is reminded of the trials faced by earlier prophets not only for consolation but to cultivate his own distinct prophetic identity. The Qur'ān addresses him in a unique voice, combining divine command with intimate moral instruction, allowing his character to emerge within the broader prophetic tradition.

Ultimately, at the heart of the Qur'ānic vision of prophecy is *ṣabr*, not just as a human moral quality but as a reflection of divine nature. It is both a mark of authentic faith and a pathway to nearness to God. Through the diverse lives of the prophets, especially that of Job, the Qur'ān provides believers with various lenses through which to access the eternal truth. Each prophetic experience reflects a different facet of the human condition, offering spiritual guidance that transcends historical context. Their challenges are not distant stories of the past but enduring signs, lessons for those who reflect with open hearts in the present.

In this way, *ṣabr* emerges as both a divine imperative and a human aspiration, shaping Islamic spirituality as a path of steadfastness amid life's uncertainties. The Qur'ān presents unity not through uniformity but through richness of diverse prophetic expressions. It thereby fos-

[132] See Khalil, "On Patience (*Ṣabr*) in Sufi Virtue Ethics", p. 76. See also A. Samʿānī, *The Repose of the Spirits: A Sufi Commentary on the Divine Names*, trans. by W. Chittick, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2019.
[133] See also Q 8:56, 66.
[134] See for instance Q 33:35.
[135] See Q 16:42, 110.

ters a resilient and reflective community, rooted in divine oneness and attuned to the complexity of human experience. Thus, the prophetic ethos culminates in a vision of faith that is historically grounded, ethically profound, and spiritually transformative.

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