

O People of the Scripture! Come to a Word Common to You and Us (Q. 3:64): The Ten Commandments and the Qur'an

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The Ten Commandments of the Hebrew Bible, or the Old Testament, are undisputedly of fundamental significance for communities, societies and cultures of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Indeed, for many Jews and Christians this Biblical list of religious and ethical precepts is the *Magna Carta* of social order. It is a privileged record of law that constitutes a Biblical microcosm of God's covenant with humankind. Naturally, the question arises as to whether the Qur'an also includes or expressly refers to God's Ten Commandments. In other words, do the followers of the three monotheistic religions share a codex of religious and ethical rules equally crucial to their lives and coexistence?¹

In the Bible, as is well known, the Ten Commandments – termed in Biblical Hebrew *aseret ha-dvarim* and in Rabbinical Hebrew *aseret ha-dibrōt*, 'the ten words'; also called the Decalogue, derived from the Greek *deka logoi*, 'ten words' or 'ten sayings' – occur in two versions, in Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:5–21.² An additional, perhaps older, though less prestigious list of the Ten Commandments is included in Exodus 34:14–28.³ According to these passages, the Ten Commandments were divinely revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai and were engraved on two tablets of stone.⁴ They appear as a summary statement of the covenant requirement between God and the Israelites. Although they primarily consist of prohibitions, they carry direct implications for positive action.⁵

The Ten Commandments are commonly divided into two groups, with five commandments in each.⁶ The first group primarily includes the rules concerning the relation of humans to God. They unconditionally prohibit polytheism, all forms of idolatry and blasphemy. Furthermore, there are the decrees that people are to rest on one day in seven, and honour their parents. The second group more directly regulates interaction between humans. These rules command that one shall not take human life, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness against one's neighbour, nor desire persons or things not one's own. The Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1–17 read as follows:⁷

- (1) And God spoke all these words, saying,
 (2) 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
- [1] (3) *You shall have no other gods* before (or: besides) me.
 [2] (4) *You shall not make for yourself a carved image*, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
 (5) *You shall not bow down to them or serve them*, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,
 (6) but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
- [3] (7) *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain*, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
 [4] (8) *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*. (9) Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. (11) For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.⁸ Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
- [5] (12) *Honour your father and your mother*, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.
 [6] (13) *You shall not murder*.
 [7] (14) *You shall not commit adultery*.
 [8] (15) *You shall not steal*.
 [9] (16) *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour*.
 [10] (17) *You shall not covet your neighbour's house*; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's.'

The Ten Commandments are restated with a reinforcement of their significance in the New Testament. Jesus, who refers to them as simply 'The Commandments' (Mark 10:19), proclaimed them as binding under the New Law and provided a short list of them (Matthew 19:17–19).⁹

The Qur'an and Classical Islamic Exegesis on the 'Tablets' given to Moses

The Qur'an does not contain a passage commonly known as the Ten Commandments as such.¹⁰ However, on two occasions the Qur'an appears to make specific reference to the Commandments revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. One

such reference is apparent in Q. 2:83–4 (Medinan period). It is the only Qur'anic passage that explicitly refers both to God's Covenant and 'the words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments'.¹¹ The passage reads as follows:¹²

(83) *REMEMBER WHEN WE MADE A COVENANT WITH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL,*

'You shall not serve any save God, and to

Be good to parents, and the near kinsman, and to orphans, and to the needy; and

Speak good to all people, and

Perform the prayer, and

Pay the alms'. Then you turned away, all but a few of you, swerving aside.

(84) *REMEMBER WHEN WE MADE A COVENANT WITH YOU:*

'You shall not shed your own blood,

Neither expel your own from your habitations'; then you confirmed it and yourselves bore witness ...

The only other explicit reference is made in Q. 7:142–5 (late Meccan period), which relate that God revealed himself to Moses on Mount Sinai and wrote for him on the tablets (*al-awwāh*) 'admonitions and explanations for all things'.¹³ However, the contents of the text on these tablets are not specified any further in these passages:

(142) *And We appointed with Moses thirty nights and We completed them with ten, so the appointed time of his Lord was forty nights ...*

(143) *And when Moses came [to Mount Sinai] to Our appointed time and his Lord spoke with him ...*

(144) *Said He, 'Moses, I have chosen thee above all men for My Messages and My Utterance; take what I have given thee, and be of the thankful.'*

(145) *And We wrote for him on the Tablets of everything an admonition, and a distinguishing of everything (maw⁶iẓatan wa-taḥḥīlan li-kulli shay³): 'So take it forcefully, and command thy people to take the fairest of it.'*

In their comments on Q. 2:83–4, early and classical Muslim exegetes¹⁴ offer extensive philological, grammatical, legal and contextual explanations regarding the laws of God's covenant (*mīthāq*) with the Israelites. They indicate, for example, that these ayas are part of those passages in the Qur'an that are directed to the Jews in order to win them to the cause of Islam and make them allies of the Muslims. Apart from the particulars of these laws, the commentators discuss the belief that the Israelites broke the Covenant made at Sinai¹⁵ (Q. 2:83; see also Exodus 32:8), as the Jews in Medina during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad testified¹⁶ (Q. 2:84).

Generally, the medieval Muslim commentators advance the idea that the precepts in these Qur'anic passages are also recorded or paralleled in the Torah. However, they do not assert a direct connection with the Biblical Ten Commandments.¹⁷

In contrast, the commentators' explanations of Q. 7:145 deal to some degree with 'the Tablets' given to Moses, the prophet whose life-experience and career so closely parallels and, in the Muslim view, foreshadows that of Muḥammad; and who is, therefore, generally viewed as an important figure in the Islamic tradition.¹⁸ They identify, for example, the precious materials of which these Tablets were made. Emerald (*zumurruda khaḍrā'*) and green topaz (*zabarjad, zabarjada khaḍrā'*),¹⁹ but also ruby (*yāqūta ḥamrā'*) and diamond (*jawhar*) are mentioned, along with the wood of a tree from Paradise. The script on the Tablets is said to have been in gold. Other accounts relate that the Tablets were made of solid rock (*ṣakhra ṣammā'*, green in colour, with the script in red, like the radiant beams of the sun (*shu'ā' al-shams*).²⁰ It is also believed that the Tablets were cleansed by Moses in a golden basin (*tast*) from Paradise, which Moses was given by God; it was 'the basin in which the Lord purifies (*yaghsilu*) the hearts of the prophets'.²¹ The number of the Tablets is given as ten, seven and two.²² However, the remarks on these technical details are rather brief.

As for the 'contents' of the text on the Tablets revealed to Moses, the medieval Muslim exegetes say little. This indifference seems to be grounded in the Islamic belief that, through the revelation of the Qur'an, God ultimately determined what Muslims were to know of God's revelation to humankind. Hence, the exegetes apparently felt no need to inquire further about a text that – from the viewpoint of the Sharī'a – was of no relevance to Muslims. In any case, since the Qur'an was the perfect iteration of the divine law, it seemed to these scholars more useful to refer to Islam's holy scripture instead of consulting a text that may or may not represent the pure revelation to Moses.²³

An explanation as to why this might have been so is given by the authoritative Qur'an commentator and historian Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923). He states, for example, that '[the text on the Tablets] determines things that the Israelites have been permitted to do and prohibited from doing'.²⁴ In other words, for al-Ṭabarī this text provided Moses and his people with laws and guidance; it was not deemed to have a direct bearing on Muslims. Nonetheless, al-Ṭabarī – unlike most other commentators – provides short paraphrases of the content of the Tablets, although without identifying them as the Biblical Decalogue. He relies in this regard on the earliest authority of Judeo-Islamic traditions, Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 114/732), a Jewish convert to Islam.²⁵

The theologian and exegete Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) also deals with these issues. He states that the text on these Tablets includes 'legal regulations' (*aḥkām*), but also narrative material intended to induce obedience. The Tablets contain, he

says, 'everything that Moses and his people needed [to know] concerning their religion (*fī dīnīhim*): that is, what is permitted and what is forbidden, what is virtuous and what is detestable'.²⁶

Interestingly, °Imād al-Dīn ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), the prominent Syrian Shāfi'ī Ḥadīth scholar, jurist and historian, maintains that the Tablets were given to Moses 'before' he received the Torah.²⁷ Ibn Kathīr, like some other exegetes, also mentions that the plural word *alwāḥ* in this Qur'anic passage would refer to only 'two tablets (*lawḥān*)' – an explanation supported by the Biblical notion that 'Moses ... went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand'.²⁸ A somewhat different view is offered in the popular commentary *Jalālayn* from the 9th/15th century. Here it is said that, in the Qur'anic passage referring to the Tablets given to Moses, '[the term] "the Tablets" means "the Tablets of the Torah"'.²⁹

According to these and other, similar statements in the classical Qur'an commentaries, it appears that the medieval Muslim exegetes did not generally attempt to identify 'the text' of the Biblical Decalogue, or establish a connection between the Biblical Decalogue and any particular Qur'anic passage. Instead, most exegetes confined themselves to stating in general terms that the Tablets given to Moses stood for the text of the Torah.³⁰

Early Exegesis: Literary, Historical and Encyclopaedic Sources

A different picture evolves from the exegetical tradition prior to the classical commentaries, and from certain literary and historical sources from medieval times.

1. The Decalogue and its Contents

The first example of this somewhat different approach to the Ten Commandments is drawn from the scholar of prophetic traditions and Qur'an commentator Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767). Muqātil is known – and was often criticised by later medieval scholars – both for elaborating on the Biblical stories in the Qur'an and for regularly tracing his explanations of them back to the *ahl al-kitāb*, the 'possessors of the Scripture' or 'People of the Book'.³¹ Perhaps for this reason, al-Ṭabarī makes no use of Muqātil's exegetical work.³² Interestingly, Muqātil is quite specific when dealing with the Tablets given to Moses. He says:³³

God wrote on them (the Tablets) with His own hand:

I am God; there is no god but I, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

- [1] ***You shall not associate anything with Me,***
- [2] ***You shall not murder a human.***
- [3] ***You shall not commit adultery.***
- [4] ***You shall not steal.***
- [5] ***You shall not dishonour your parents!***

Another similarly definite piece of information is offered by the learned book-seller Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995) in his *Fihrist*, the great catalogue of the Arabic books known at his time. Ibn al-Nadīm notes that one of the two Tablets given to Moses contained 'the Covenant' with God (*al-mīthāq*), the other 'the Testimony' that there is no other god but God (*al-shahāda*).³⁴

2. *The Ten Commandments in the Qur'an*

A uniquely different perspective of the matter is evident in the work of the man of letters and Qur'an exegete Abū Ishāq al-Tha'labī (d. 427/1035). In his popular *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* ('The Legends of Pre-Islamic Prophets'), probably the most comprehensive collection of its kind, al-Tha'labī devotes several pages to the Tablets which Moses received.³⁵ He relates, for instance, how God sent Gabriel to Paradise to cut down a tree and manufacture nine tablets from it. Each of these tablets was made to fit Moses' arm exactly. The tree from which Gabriel made the tablets was of green emerald. It is also said that God formed a pen from light which was longer than the distance between Heaven and Earth, and that – on a Friday – God wrote the Torah on the tablets for Moses with his own hand. God then commanded Gabriel, supported by as many angels as the number of the letters in the Torah, to carry the tablets to Moses and display them before him on the mountain.³⁶ Al-Tha'labī then provides a chapter (*faṣl*), which is entitled 'The Copy of the Ten Commandments (*nuskhat al-ashr al-kalimāt*) that God Wrote on the Tablets for Moses, His Prophet and His Chosen One, Containing the Main Portion of the Torah, on which Each Prescription of the Religious Law Centres'.³⁷ Al-Tha'labī goes on to offer close paraphrases of Q. 17:22–39.³⁸ At the end of his account of the text on the Tablets, he expressly states:³⁹

These are the words of the Ten Commandments. God gave them in their entirety to the Prophet Muḥammad in eighteen ayas⁴⁰ of *Sūrat Banī Isrā'īl* ('The Israelites'), starting with [the first commandment] *Thy Lord has decreed you shall not serve any but Him* [Q. 17:23] to where He says *That is of the wisdom thy Lord has revealed to thee* [Q. 17:39].

Furthermore, He summed up these words in the three ayas of *Sūrat al-An'ām* ('Cattle'), beginning with His words *Say: 'Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden you'*, [Q. 6:151] and concluding with *That then He has charged you with; haply you will be godfearing* [Q. 6:153].

Al-Tha'labī makes two points in his comments on these Qur'anic passages. First, for al-Tha'labī, the Qur'an contains the Biblical commandments not merely in general terms, but the Decalogue itself. Second, the Ten Commandments given to Moses were revealed to Muḥammad in full: in eighteen ayas from *Sūrat Banī Isrā'īl*

(Q. 17); and in concise form in three ayas of *Sūrat al-An'ām* (Q. 6). The Qur'anic passages which al-Tha'labī identified as containing the Ten Commandments read as follows:

Q. 17:22–39

(22) ***Set not up with God another god, or thou wilt sit condemned and forsaken.***

(23) *THY LORD HAS DECREED:*

[1] ***You shall not serve any but Him, and to***

[2] ***Be good to parents, whether one or both of them attains old age with thee;***

Say not to them 'Fie'

Neither chide them, but

Speak unto them words respectful, (24) and

Lower to them the wing of humbleness out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them, as they raised me up when I was little.'

(25) Your Lord knows very well what is in your hearts if you are righteous, for He is All-forgiving to those who are penitent. (26) And

[3] ***Give the kinsman his right, and the needy, and the traveller; and***

Never squander; (27) *the squanderers are brothers of Satan, and Satan is unthankful to his Lord. (28) But if thou turnest from them, seeking mercy from thy Lord that thou hopest for, then speak unto them gentle words. (29) And*

Keep not thy hand chained to thy neck, nor outspread it widespread altogether, or thou wilt sit reproached and denuded. (30) Surely thy Lord outspreads and straitens His provision unto whom He will; surely He is aware of and sees His servants. (31) And

[4] ***Slay not your children for fear of poverty; We will provide for you and them; surely the slaying of them is a grievous sin. (32) And***

[5] ***Approach not fornication; surely it is an indecency, and evil as a way. (33) And***

[6] ***Slay not the soul God has forbidden [to be killed], except by right. Whosoever is slain unjustly, We have appointed to his next-of-kin authority; but let him not exceed in slaying; he shall be helped. (34) And***

[7] ***Do not approach the property of the orphan, save in the fairest manner, until he is of age. And fulfil the covenant; surely the covenant shall be questioned of. (35) And***

[8] ***Fill up the measure when you measure, and weigh with the straight balance; that is better and fairer in the issue. (36) And***

- [9] ***Pursue not that thou hast no knowledge of; the hearing, the sight, the heart – all of those shall be questioned of.*** (37) *And*
- [10] ***Walk not in the earth exultantly; certainly thou wilt never tear the earth open, nor attain the mountains in height.*** (38) *All of that – the wickedness of it is hateful in the sight of thy Lord.*
 (39) ***THAT IS OF THE WISDOM THY LORD HAS REVEALED TO THEE:***
Set not up with God another god, or thou wilt be cast into Hell, reproached and rejected.

Q. 6:151–3

- (151) *Say: ‘Come, I will recite WHAT YOUR LORD HAS FORBIDDEN YOU;’ that you*
- [1] ***Associate not anything with Him, and to***
- [2] ***Be good to your parents, and***
- [3] ***Slay not your children because of poverty; We will provide you and them; and that you***
- [4] ***Approach not any indecency outward or inward, and that you***
- [5] ***Slay not the soul God has forbidden, except by right. That then He has charged you with; haply you will understand.*** (152) *And that you*
- [6] ***Approach not the property of the orphan, save in the fairer manner, until he is of age. And***
- [7] ***Fill up the measure and the balance with justice. We charge not any soul save to its capacity. And when you speak,***
- [8] ***Be just, even if it should be to a near kinsman. And***
- [9] ***Fulfil God’s covenant. That then He has charged you with; haply you will remember.*** (153) *And that*
- [10] ***THIS IS MY PATH, STRAIGHT;***
SO DO YOU FOLLOW IT, AND FOLLOW NOT DIVERS PATHS lest they scatter you from His path. That then He has charged you with; haply you will be godfearing.’

It is worth noting that contemporaries of the Prophet Muḥammad are said to have called Sura 17 *Banū Isrāʾīl* (‘The Israelites’) while the designation *al-Isrāʾ* (‘The Night Journey’), has been preferred for this sura only since the time of the classical commentators.⁴¹ This change of name seems to echo a complex development and shift in focus that the Muslim community had been experiencing since the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad but that, from the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries onward, became more pronounced. It concerned the growing awareness and self-confidence of the Muslims regarding the originality of Islam vis-à-vis Judaism and Christianity, to the extent that, by this time, the excellence of Mecca and Medina as holy cities and centres of worship in Islam was more prominently stressed than that of

Jerusalem.⁴² Such dynamic historical developments must be considered as well when surveying the Islamic literature on the issue of the Ten Commandments.⁴³ However, if one compares the content, form and style of the relevant *ayas* in Suras 6 and 17 with the respective passages in the Old Testament, one can only agree with Hartwig Hirschfeld's assessment that the identified Qur'anic passages greatly resemble their equivalents in the Bible.⁴⁴

3. *A Change in Perspective: Ten Qur'anic Ayas in the Torah*

The apparent reference to the Ten Commandments in al-Suyūṭī's (d. 911/1505) *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* ('Manual for the Study of the Qur'an') stands out due to the way in which it is formulated. Al-Suyūṭī first quotes the grammarian and Qur'an scholar Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224/838) to the effect that, although this reference clearly pertains to Moses and the Torah, it subtly but unmistakably stresses the Islamic creed of the Qur'an's superiority as God's ultimate revelation. Abū 'Ubayd states:⁴⁵

The first [part] that was revealed of the Torah were ten *ayas* of *Sūrat al-An'ām* [Q. 6], [beginning with] *In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Say: 'Come, I will recite [what your Lord has forbidden you (Q. 6:151)] [and including] the ayas [following next, as indicated].*

Al-Suyūṭī then goes on to state:

Some scholars said: 'This means that these *ayas* [of *Sūrat al-An'ām*] comprise the very first ten verses that God wrote for Moses in the Torah. They are [as follows]:

- [1] The affirmation that there is no other god but God (*tawḥīd Allāh*);
The prohibition of:
- [2] Polytheism (*shirk*);
- [3] [Pronouncing] a false oath (*al-yamīn al-kādhība*);
- [4] Dishonouring one's parents (*'uqūq*);⁴⁶
- [5] Murder (*qatl*);
- [6] Adultery (*zinā*);
- [7] Stealing (*sariqa*);
- [8] Bearing false witness (*zūr*);
- [9] Desiring that which belongs to others (*madd al-'ayn ilā mā fī yad al-ghayr*); and
- [10] The command to honour Saturday [as a day without work] (*al-amr bi-ta'zīm al-sabt*).

4. *Equivalents of the Ten Commandments in the Qur'an*

Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. ca 300/912), a scholar of the prophetic tradition and an eminent mystic, expressly promotes the idea of an intimate connection between the Biblical Decalogue and the text of the Qur'an. Like al-Ṭabarī, al-Tirmidhī also quotes Wahb ibn Munabbih to paraphrase the Biblical Ten Words. However, unlike al-Ṭabarī, al-Tirmidhī also reiterates Wahb's comment that the Biblical Commandments have their exact equivalents in the Qur'an. Al-Tirmidhī says:⁴⁷

- Wahb mentioned that these Ten Commandments (*al-kalimāt al-^ʿashr*), which God wrote for Moses on the Tablets, are written down in the Qur'an (*maktūbāt fī'l-Qur'ān*); these are God's statements that:
- [1] *Whoso associates with God anything, God shall prohibit him entrance to Paradise, and his refuge shall be fire; and wrongdoers shall have no helpers* [Q. 5:72];
 - [2] God declared about parents: *Be thankful to Me and to thy parents; to Me is the homecoming* [Q. 31:14];
 - [3] He said about murderers [sing. *al-qātil*]: *And whoso slays a believer wilfully, his recompense is Hell, therein dwelling for ever, and God will be wroth with him and will curse him, and prepare for him a mighty chastisement* [Q. 4:93];
 - [4] and about the oath (*al-ḥilf*): *Do not make God a hindrance, through your oath, [to being pious and godfearing, and putting things right between people]* [Q. 2:224];
 - [5] and about the testimony [that there is no other god but God] (*shahāda*): *Pursue not that [which] thou hast no knowledge of; the hearing, the sight, the heart – all those shall be questioned of* [Q. 17:36].

Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Kisāʿī, the (probably 5th/11th century) author of another famous *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* work, portrays the issue of the Ten Commandments in a distinctly different manner.⁴⁸ In his book on the pre-Islamic prophets – an exquisite example of imaginative story-telling in medieval Arabic literature – al-Kisāʿī describes how the archangel Gabriel descended to Moses and said to him 'Rise and mount my pearl- and coral-studded wing, which no one has ever mounted before!' He also tells his readers that Gabriel bore Moses to the place where God had previously spoken to Moses; and that – upon arriving on Mount Sinai – Moses heard the sound of the Pen moving across the Tablets when God said to the Pen 'Write!'⁴⁹ Al-Kisāʿī then lists the commandments which God dictated. He quotes Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687–8), a junior companion of the Prophet and later prominent exegete of the first generation of Muslims, who determines for each of the Biblical Commandments its equivalent in the Qur'an. This passage reads as follows:⁵⁰

- [1] 'O Moses, I am God. There is no God but I. Worship Me and associate not anything with Me ...' Ibn ʿAbbās said: The equivalent of this in the Qur'an (*naẓīruhā fī'l-Qurʿān*) is: *Be thankful to Me, and to thy parents; to Me is the homecoming* [Q. 31:14].
- [2] 'O Moses, kill not an inviolate soul except rightfully ...' The equivalent of this in the Qur'an is: *And whoso slays a believer wilfully, his recompense is hell ...* [Q. 4:93].
- [3] 'O Moses, steal not what belongs to another ...' [Ibn ʿAbbās] said: The equivalent of this in the Qur'an is: *And the thief, male and female, cut off the hands of both ...* [Q. 5:38].
- [4] 'O Moses, commit not fornication with your neighbour's wife.' The equivalent of this in the Qur'an is: *Any one of you who has not the affluence to be able to marry believing freewomen in wedlock, let him take believing handmaids that your right hand owns ...* [Q. 4:25].
- [5] 'O Moses, do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' Ibn ʿAbbās said: The equivalent of this in the Qur'an is: *The believers indeed are brothers; so set things right between your brothers ...* [Q. 49:10].
- [6] 'O Moses, eat not that over which my name has not been spoken.' Ibn ʿAbbās said: The equivalent of this in the Qur'an is: *And eat not of that over which God's Name has not been mentioned ...* [Q. 6:121].
- [7] 'O Moses, give yourself leisure to worship me on the Sabbath day.' Ibn ʿAbbās said: *And well you know there were those among you that transgressed the Sabbath ...* [Q. 2:65].

For al-Kisāʿī, there is no doubt that the commandments which Moses received are entirely included in the Qur'an and that they are binding on Muslims. Therefore, it is not necessary for us to pursue further the question as to whether or not the commandments which al-Kisāʿī provides perfectly match the commandments in the Bible, and whether or not Ibn ʿAbbās' assignment of Qur'anic equivalents is warranted.⁵¹

Ḥadīth Literature and Classical Exegetes on the 'Contents' of the Ten Commandments

It is telling that the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad as preserved in the early and medieval Sunnī Ḥadīth literature do not expressly mention or otherwise deal with the Biblical Ten Commandments revealed to Moses.⁵² However, it seems to have gone unnoticed by modern scholars so far that in the Ḥadīth literature there is a very strong presence of an Islamic equivalent to the Biblical Decalogue, even though medieval Muslim scholars did not associate these traditions in any way with Moses or the Bible. There are at least three distinct sets of ḥadīth reports that consist of a

short list of religious-ethical precepts decreed by the Prophet Muḥammad. All three traditions are very well attested in the most widely accepted and authoritative Sunnī Ḥadīth collections.

The first and perhaps most widespread tradition relates the Prophet's warning of the seven most severe offences or 'seven deadly sins' (*al-sab^c al-mūbiqāt*). This tradition is transmitted on the authority of Abū Hurayra (d. 58/678), a close companion of the Prophet. It presents itself as what may be referred to as an 'Islamic Septalogue', and reads as follows:⁵³

The Prophet [once] stated, 'Avoid (*ijtanibū*) the seven deadly sins'. The people asked him, 'O Messenger of God, what are they?' He replied:

- [1] 'Associating another god with God (*al-shirk bi'llāh*);
- [2] Practising sorcery (*siḥr*);
- [3] Killing a human that God has forbidden to kill, except by way of justice and law (*qatl al-nafs allatī ḥarrama Allāh illā bi'l-ḥaqq*);⁵⁴
- [4] Practising usury (*akl al-ribā*);
- [5] Consumption of an orphan's property (*akl māl al-yatīm*);
- [6] Retreating when marching on the day of battle (*al-tawallī yawm al-zahf*); and
- [7] Falsely accusing chaste and virtuous women who are [good] believers (*qadhf al-muḥṣināt al-ghāfilāt al-mu'mināt*).'

According to another tradition, the Prophet Muḥammad asked his followers during an assembly (*majlis*) to swear allegiance to him and collectively recognise and adhere to (*bāyi^cūnī^c alā*) six particular precepts. They are as follows: '[1] Do not associate anything with God; [2] do not steal; [3] do not commit adultery; [4] do not kill your children; [5] do not accuse an innocent person; and [6] do not disobey [when ordered] to do good deeds.'⁵⁵ It is worth noting that the authenticity of this prophetic saying is stressed in the introductory paragraph of the tradition, where it is said that the Prophet's words were reported by °Ubāda al-Ṣāmit (d. 34/654–5), a close companion and active supporter of the Prophet, who was one of the leaders (*naqīb*) of those who promised to protect and defend Muḥammad on the night of the °Aqaba Pledge (in 621 and/or 622 AD). Furthermore, °Ubāda is identified as someone who had fought for the Muslim cause at the Battle of Badr (in 624 AD), the first significant and victorious battle of Muḥammad's career.⁵⁶

Lastly, a very similar list of commands is also present in a third tradition transmitted by another, though slightly less prominent companion of the Prophet, Ṣafwān ibn °Assāl al-Murādī. This tradition relates how the Prophet was asked by two Jews about 'the nine clear signs (*tis^c āyāt bayyināt*)' that appeared by the hand of Moses to make Pharaoh stop his injustice and believe in God.⁵⁷ Muḥammad is said to have

replied with a list of precepts that largely reiterates the injunctions in Q. 6:151–3. However, at the end this list also mentions the command – specifically addressing the Jews – to observe Saturday as a day of rest. The latter idea, as is well known, is not part of the Islamic religion. Thus, its inclusion in this list of precepts clearly shows that these ordinances were indeed meant to echo the Commandments in the Bible. Remarkably enough, the account of this encounter between the Prophet and two Jews concludes by stating that the Jews were so impressed by the Prophet's answer that they kissed his hand and confirmed that he was a prophet.⁵⁸

It is worth emphasising that these distinct lists of prophetic axioms were well known to Muslims since the rise of Islam. These ideas thrived in the oral culture of early Ḥadīth transmission (as shown by how widespread they are in medieval religious literature), and they have come to be an integral and, in fact, characteristic part of the moral and ethical code of Islamic civilisation.

Let us return at this point once more to the classical literature of Qur'anic exegesis. We may recall from what was demonstrated above that the medieval Muslim exegetes deal to some extent with the physical appearance of the tablets and the circumstances surrounding their revelation to Moses. However, as we have seen, the majority of the commentators do not expressly refer to the Ten Commandments or 'the ten words'. They do so neither in their comments on Q. 6:151–3 and Q. 17:22–39, nor on Q. 2:83–4, despite the fact that al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, for example, do mention in general terms that these Qur'anic passages contain portions believed to be in the Torah.

Other, later commentators present quite similar views, sometimes in an even more explicit way. For example, the Mālikī scholar and exegete Abū °Abd Allāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272), in his explanations of Q. 6:151–3, refers to Ka°b ibn Aḥbār, a Jewish convert to Islam and the oldest authority on Judaeo-Islamic traditions. Ka°b is reported to have commented on Q. 6:151 by saying 'This aya is the opening passage of the Torah (*hādhihi'l-āya muftataḥ al-Tawrāt*)'.⁵⁹ Al-Qurṭubī also quotes Ibn °Abbās to state that:⁶⁰

These ayas (Q. 6:151–3) are clear in and by themselves (*muḥkamāt*) ... All religions on earth have agreed upon them. It is also said that they are the *Ten Commandments* [originally] revealed to Moses.

Al-Qurṭubī concludes by asserting that these ayas embody 'God's order to His prophet [Moses]', mandating him in his time to call upon all humankind to adhere to the commandments.⁶¹

Al-Rāzī, a generation before al-Qurṭubī, offers an explanation that is particularly interesting. Al-Rāzī differentiates between the instructions contained in Q. 6:151–3 and 'the book' given to Moses, mentioned in the following aya, Q. 6:154. He says

that these Qur'anic instructions are everlasting and maintains that they date back to the time when God first gave rights and responsibilities to humankind. For al-Rāzī, the instructions which the Qur'an here provides are common to all humankind and valid until doomsday. The Torah, on the other hand, was given to Moses at a time later than that which these ancient teachings represent. Al-Rāzī reinforces the idea of the universal value of the Qur'anic Commandments when commenting on Q. 17:22–39. Here he says that the rules given in this sura are common to all the religions.⁶²

These views arguably reflect the Islamic creed, according to which the Qur'an is the last and 'perfect' revelation of God to humankind, which, for Muslims, incorporates and reflects the reality of previously revealed holy scriptures. As Ibn Kathīr emphasises, the clear instructions provided in Q. 6:151–3 are part of 'the very essence of the Scripture (*umm al-kitāb*)'.⁶³ The stress though – for al-Qurṭubī, al-Rāzī and other classical exegetes – is on the *universal validity* of these sets of religious-ethical values in Suras 6 and 17, rather than on any possible references to the Biblical Commandments.

Later Medieval Theological and Historical Sources

Several later medieval scholars also touch upon the issue of the Biblical Ten Commandments. The Ḥanbalī theologian and jurisconsult Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), for example, states: 'believing and affirming that God is one and unique (*al-tawḥīd*) ... is the mightiest of God's commands; it is the first of the Ten Commandments (*al-kalimāt al-ʿashr*) in the Torah, while the Ten Commandments (*al-waṣāyā al-ʿashr*) in the concluding part of *Sūrat al-Anʿām* constitute their equivalent (*naṣīruḥā*)' in the Qur'an.⁶⁴ Ibn Taymiyya, however, does not specify further which ayas at the end of Sura 6 are meant. Furthermore, it is of note that Ibn Taymiyya seems to be the first Muslim scholar to use different terms for the Ten Commandments in the Bible (*al-kalimat al-ʿashr*) and in the Qur'an (*al-waṣayā al-ʿashr*).⁶⁵

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), a jurist and secretary in the Mamlūk administration, writes that 'the Ten Commandments (*al-ʿashr kalimāt*) on the Tablet revealed to Moses ... are like a summary of what is contained in the Torah; they comprise orders (*awāmir*) ... admonitions and explanations for all things [Q. 7:145], as God determined in the Qur'an'.⁶⁶ However, like most other medieval Muslim scholars from later times, al-Qalqashandī does not expressly link the Biblical commandments to the Qur'anic revelation.

The late, though very popular, Ḥadīth collection of al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī (d. 740/1339–40) does not directly deal with the commandments revealed to Moses. However, al-Tibrīzī gives remarkable prominence to the Prophetic Commandments transmitted in the Ḥadīth. Thirteen traditions, consisting of lists of religious and,

above all, ethical axioms – these lists differ in wording and length, but not in essence – constitute the text of a chapter entitled ‘Capital Sins and the Signs of Hypocrisy’. Among these traditions, one stands out clearly, wherein a Jew asks the Prophet about ‘the nine clear signs’ that appeared by the hand of Moses. Muḥammad is said to have answered with paraphrases of the Biblical Ten Commandments, including the command to observe the Sabbath.⁶⁷

The famous historian, sociologist and philosopher Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) is explicit when he writes:⁶⁸

[After Moses and the Israelites had left Egypt, pursued by Pharaoh and his troops.] it took place: the special conversation with God (*munājāt*) on Mount Sinai (*Tūr*), God’s proclamation to Moses, the miracles following thereafter, and the revelation of the Tablets (*nuzūl al-alwāh*) – the Israelites claim they were two – containing *the Ten Commandments* (*al-kalimāt al-‘ashara*, [sic]). They include:

[1] The belief and verbal affirmation that there is no other god but God (*kalimat al-tawhīd*); [the command of] [2] observing the Sabbath by abstaining from any work during it (*al-muhafaẓa ‘alā’l-sabt bi-tark al-a‘māl fihī*); and [3] piety towards parents during their entire life (*birr al-wālidayn li-ṭūli’l-‘umr*); the prohibition of [4] murder, [5] adultery, [6] stealing and [7] bearing false witness; and that you shall not desire [8] anything from your neighbour’s house, [9] nor his wife [10] or any of his property. These are *the Ten Commandments* that the Tablets contain.

Finally, the Arabic language lexicon *Majma‘ al-baḥrayn* (‘The Mingling of the Two Oceans’), by the Imāmī Shī‘ī scholar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ṭurayḥī (d. 1085/1648), needs to be mentioned for it provides similar straightforward information. When explaining *tābūt*, the term used in Arabic for the Ark, or ‘gold-plated wooden chest’ believed to have housed in Biblical times the Tablets that God had given to Moses, al-Ṭurayḥī not only tells his Muslim readers that these Tablets contained the Ten Commandments, but also provides an accurate summary of the Biblical Decalogue. Moreover, he mentions the Decalogue again in the entry *sifr*, ‘book’ (especially for books of scripture), when identifying the main contents of the second book of the Torah which he says included the Ten Commandments revealed to Moses.⁶⁹

Modern Muslim Commentators and the Universal Value of the Commandments

As with the classical exegetes, the ideas of the Islamic character and the universal value of the Qur’anic commandments are also given prominence by modern Muslim commentators and translators of the Qur’an. Three points will be highlighted here.

First, a number of modern Muslim scholars view the passages in Q. 6:151–3 and Q. 17:22–39 as particularly crucial for a deep understanding of Islam and the legacy of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁷⁰ The Maghribi scholar Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī (1863–1913) promotes this view in an exemplary way by quoting the widespread tradition, ‘Whoso wishes to ponder (*naẓara*) the ultimate injunction of the Messenger of God (*waṣīyat rasūl Allāh allatī ‘alayhā khātima*) should read the Ten Commandments (*al-waṣāya al-‘ashr*) safeguarded in the ayas [Q. 6:151–3]’. Al-Shinqīṭī provides this insight on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd (d. ca 32/652–3), one of the closest companions of the Prophet Muḥammad and an early authority on Qur’anic exegesis.⁷¹

Second, there is clear preference among modern Muslim scholars for the view that the Ten Commandments were already given to Abraham, the ‘first Muslim’ as Muslims believe, and then to Moses.⁷² This would support the Islamic idea that all the religions communicated by the prophets are based on the same fundamental principles. This essentially is what the twentieth-century Qur’an translator Abdul Hamid Siddiqui notes in his remarks on Sura 6.⁷³ The modern day Shī‘ī Indian scholar Syed Mir Ahmed Ali argues in the same spirit. In his translation of the Qur’an, Syed Ali clearly states that the ancient Covenant between God and humankind – as manifest in the commandments of Q. 2:84 and Exodus 20:13–17 – ‘is binding on Muslims’. This is particularly true for the divine ordinances ‘not to shed human blood’ and ‘not to disrespect the property and rights of one’s fellow humans’. Syed Ali maintains that these commandments carry additional gravity for Shī‘īs given the ‘Tragedy of Karbala’ when Muslims fought against Muslims and the Prophet’s grandson al-Ḥusayn was killed.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the liberal Muslim thinker Muḥammad Shaḥrūr (b. 1938) from Syria makes specific reference to Q. 6:151–3 to support the assertion of the timelessness of the Word of God and of its manifestation in the Qur’an. In his thought-provoking publication *al-Kitāb wa’l-Qur’ān: qirā’a mu‘āṣira* (‘The Book and the Qur’an: A Contemporary Reading’), he states: ‘If we reflect on these ayas, we easily realise that they are the Ten Commandments’.⁷⁵ Moreover, Sayyid Abū’l-A‘lā Mawdūdī (1903–79), a noted interpreter of Islam and an influential political activist from Hyderabad, stated that the catalogue of commandments to be found in Sura 17 determines ‘those main basic principles ... on which Islam desires to build the whole structure of human life’. These precepts concern all areas of state, society and family affairs. They are a ‘manifesto’ revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad in Mecca shortly before the Hijra and, thus, at the beginning of a new era, to let everybody know ‘that the new Islamic Society and State’ are based on these eternal ‘ideological, moral, cultural, economic and legal principles’.⁷⁶

Third, the universal value of the commandments in the Qur’an is prioritised. This is particularly evident, for example, in Sayyid Quṭb’s (1906–66) comments on Q. 6:151–3:⁷⁷

When we reflect on these commandments (*waṣāyā*) ... we find that they provide an outline of our religion as a whole. They form the most essential element in the life of the human conscience as they establish the principle of God's oneness. They are also most essential for the life of the human family and community since they ensure mutual security within society and make cleanliness an important quality of all social transactions. They are indeed pivotal for human life, since they guarantee the rights of every individual ...

It is noteworthy that Sayyid Quṭb is speaking here about the universality of Islam, for he concludes with this unambiguous observation: 'these basic and clear rules [as manifest in Q. 6:151–3] ... provide a summary of the Islamic faith and its social legislation'.⁷⁸

Conclusion

The aim of this article has not been to identify and examine those statements evident throughout the Qur'an that refer more or less directly to legal, ethical and ritual issues addressed in the Ten Commandments of the Bible. Had that been our intention, we would have had to discuss the many specific Qur'anic rules concerning the relationships of humans to God and among themselves, including piety towards parents; respect for life; issues of family and sexuality; and care for truth, justice and protection of property.⁷⁹ More specifically, we would have had to study all those other Qur'anic passages, which – like the Ten Commandments – use a 'list' to effectively convey laws and other instructions of religious and ethical significance.⁸⁰ Rather, this study has aimed to investigate and set forth what the Qur'an and Muslim scholars have said about the Biblical Decalogue and its relevance for Muslims. This approach has uncovered three key points:

(1) Since the rise of Islam, it has been part of Muslim scholarly discourse to view two passages in the Qur'an (Q. 6:151–3 and 17:22–39) as representing a catalogue of commands which, to some extent, reflect or parallel the Ten Commandments in the Bible. (This view has also been posited by such nineteenth-century Western scholars as Sprenger, Hirschfeld and Speyer, and more recently by Brinner, Khoury and Lewinstein.⁸¹) However, while the close relationship between these particular Qur'anic passages and the Bible was evident and worth mentioning for the early exegete Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, as well as for certain medieval, Muslim littérateurs and historians, it was much less so for the classical Qur'an commentators, who highlighted instead the *Islamic character* and the *universal, timeless value* of these Qur'anic sets of religious-ethical precepts. This subtle shift in emphasis may reflect – or may have been in response to – the development of an Islamic society and state in medieval times that was fully fledged, consolidated and in need of divinely ordained social rules and identity. This shift, however, may also have resulted from

the classical exegetes' increased awareness of and sensitivity to issues such as the originality of the text and the message of the Qur'an, the relationship of the Qur'an to the Bible, and the position of Islam vis-à-vis Judaism and Christianity; issues that evidently had become a major theme of theological and polemical discussions between Muslims and Christians and Jews by this time.

(2) If one compares the lists of commandments in the Bible and Qur'an, it is striking that both scriptures give the utmost prominence to the existence of one true God, who is the unique sovereign of the universe and the only ruler. In both the Bible and the Qur'an, the very first commandment thus requires those who believe in God to nourish and protect their faith, and to reject anything that is opposed to it. Furthermore, legal and ethical mandates that are key to human life and existence are also expressed in both scriptures in a similarly clear and powerful way. These commands mandate the honouring of parents and strictly prohibit murder, adultery, stealing, bearing false witness and coveting things not one's own.

(3) Despite these significant similarities, however, there are differences between the catalogues of religious-ethical precepts in the Bible and in the Qur'an. These differences relate to the emphasis and wording of certain commandments. Moreover, there are other commandments in the Qur'anic lists that are entirely absent from the Biblical lists, just as particular Biblical commandments are not included in the Qur'an.

On the one hand, for example, the command 'to keep the Sabbath holy' and not to do any work on this day (so as to rest and devote one day in seven exclusively to the worship of God) is not included in the Qur'anic sets of the Commandments. On the other hand, unlike their Biblical counterparts the Qur'anic lists of the Commandments specifically emphasise human values such as giving one's kinsman his due, not slaying one's children because of poverty, trading correctly and fairly, and not following other people or their ideas blindly. At the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, moral stipulations of this kind were clearly of particular significance in Arabian (Bedouin) society. Given the enduring importance of these principles, however, it is not surprising that they were likewise emphasised by the medieval and especially the modern Muslim scholars quoted in this article.⁸²

These findings make it impossible to speak of *one code* common to and equally binding on all three monotheistic religions. However, as we have demonstrated, most of the crucial ideas at issue here are shared by the Bible *and* the Qur'an, and they are evidently held in particularly high esteem by the followers of all three monotheistic religions.

We may conclude with a quotation from a letter that the Prophet Muḥammad is purported to have sent to the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (*reg.* 610–41 AD). In it the Prophet of Islam appealed to the Christian ruler by citing Q. 3:64, *O People of*

*the Scripture! Come to a word common to you and us: that we serve none but God, and that we associate not anything [in worship] with Him; and none of us shall take others as Lords, apart from God.*⁸³ For those familiar with the Bible, the Prophet's reference brings to mind the first of the Ten Commandments, 'And God spoke ... "I am the Lord your God, You shall have no other gods besides me ..."' (Exodus 20:1–3) and the Sinai revelation. For those familiar with the Qur'an, Muḥammad's quotation from Sura 3 evokes the text and context of this sura, that is, a chapter of the Qur'an which 'first documents the tension that arose between the Muslims and certain of the Jews and Christians' at the time of the Qur'anic revelation but, importantly enough, 'closes by emphasizing the unity of faith and conduct between the Muslims and [the] People of the Book'.⁸⁴ Moreover, this reference effectively prompts recollection of other Qur'anic passages that begin with the summons: *Remember when we took a covenant with the Israelites: You shall not serve any but him ...* (Q. 2:83); *Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden you: that you associate not anything with Him ...* (Q. 6:151); and *Set not up with God another god ... Thy Lord has decreed: You shall not serve any but Him ...* (Q. 17:22–3).

As we have seen, these Qur'anic passages are uniquely valued by classical and modern Muslim scholars. Three main points stand out: (1) the plain and emphatic declaration of the oneness of God, a doctrine central both to the Bible and the Qur'an, that these Qur'anic passages convey;⁸⁵ (2) their succinct and unequivocal articulation of 'the fundamental and absolute tenets of Divine faith', teachings of enduring power throughout human history;⁸⁶ and (3) their specific reference to God's solemn covenant with humankind and the revelation of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai.

The prophetic instruction to *come to a word common to you and us* and seek ground that is common to Muslims, Christians and Jews thus gains a new dimension of significance. Given our increasingly diverse world, one may wonder if this prophetic message is not strong encouragement for us to recognise and make full use of the great potential inherent in the principles and values that civilisations, cultures and faith communities share. Such an outlook, which builds on this prophetic word, might indeed help animate a frank, sincere and constructive dialogue between communities and faiths, while at the same time reinforcing the idea that respect for our differences and the appreciation of cultural diversity and pluralism are sources of strength, not causes for division.

NOTES

1 All translations from the Arabic are my own, unless otherwise indicated. Qur'anic passages are given from Arthur Arberry's translation, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Other translations consulted are: M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an. A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Rudi Paret, *Der Koran*, 2 vols, vol. 1: *Übersetzung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1985);

vol. 2: *Kommentar und Konkordanz* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1985); Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1984); M.H. Shakir, *The Qur'an [al-Qur'an al-hakim]*, Translated by M.H. Shakir, *English & Arabic* (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1993); Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Washington DC: American International Print Co., 1946); Marmaduke William Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran: An Explanatory Translation* (London: Knopf, 1930). Quotations from the Bible follow the *English Standard Version (ESV)*, *Classics Reference Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001), accessed through <http://www.gnpcb.org/esv/>. For a definition of 'rules' (basically meaning 'decrees') in contrast to 'principles' ('standards' to be observed) and 'admonitions', see A. Kevin Reinhart, art. 'Ethics and the Qur'ān' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*; Richard Kimber, art. 'Boundaries and Precepts' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*.

2 The expression 'ten commandments' (literally the 'ten words') occurs in Exodus 34:28; see also Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4. Its Greek equivalent is used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Bible made in about 280 AD.

3 The latter version is also present, although the sequence of commands differs, in Exodus 22:29–30; 23:12–19; see art. 'Law (in OT)' in James Hastings (ed.), *Dictionary of the Bible*, revised by Frederick C. Grant and H.H. Rowley (New York: Charles Scribers Sons, 1963), pp. 567–9, esp. p. 568. Furthermore, see the particularly clear and readable article 'Decalogue' in Jacob Neusner et al. (eds), *Dictionary of Judaism* (2 vols, New York: Macmillan, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 157–8, as well as Gershon Levi (ed.), *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition* (Jerusalem: The Magnus Press, 1990), esp. the chapters by Ephraim E. Urbach ('The Role of the Ten Commandments in Jewish Worship', pp. 161–89) and Yehoshua Amir ('The Decalogue according to Philo', pp. 121–59); Alfred McBride, *The Ten Commandments: Covenant of Love* (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2001); William P. Brown (ed.), *The Ten Commandments: The Reciprocity of Faithfulness* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

4 See note 2.

5 W.J. Harrelson, art. 'Ten Commandments' in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (4 vols, New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), vol. 4, pp. 569–73, esp. p. 569, p. 572.

6 The specifics of this division are discussed in the article 'Ten Commandments' in James Hastings (ed.), *Dictionary of the Bible*, revised by Frederick C. Grant and H.H. Rowley (New York: Charles Scribers Sons, 1963), pp. 969–70. A detailed list of commandments in the Bible is provided by Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible* (London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1963), pp. 189–92.

7 Regarding the different conventions for numbering the Ten Commandments, it is worth noting that 'Most contemporary Jews consider Exodus 20:1–2 to be the first commandment, enjoining people to recognise the Lord as their God, while the second commandment forbids both polytheistic beliefs and practices (20:3–6 together). Many Protestants consider Exodus 20:1–2 (and Deuteronomy 5:6) to be a preface to the Decalogue, so that the first commandment opposes polytheism (no other gods; Exodus 20:3), while the second commandment opposes idolatry (worshipping idols; 20:4–6). Catholics and Lutherans consider all of Exodus 20:1–6 and Deuteronomy 5:6–10 to be a single commandment, both enjoining monotheism and forbidding polytheism.' Regarding the conclusion of the Commandments, it has been observed that 'Jews and most Protestants consider the last commandment to be the injunction against coveting anything; Lutherans follow Martin Luther's division of Exodus 20:17, which first prohibits coveting someone's property (# 9) and then the spouse (# 10). Catholics follow St Augustine's division of Deuteronomy 5:21, which first mentions the spouse (# 9) and then the property (# 10)'. See Felix Just, *The Ten*

Commandments: Similarities and Differences in Religious Traditions, <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Decalogue.htm>.

8 The idea that God rested after creation is based on Genesis 2:1–3.

9 *New Testament*, Matthew 19, '(16) And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (17) And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." (18) He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "*You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, (19) Honour your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*" (20) The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" (21) Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (22) When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.'

In Matthew 22: 34–40, Jesus condenses the commandments into two cardinal commands. The passage reads '(34) But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. (35) And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. (36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (37) And he said to him, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" (38) This is the great and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: *You shall love your neighbour as yourself.* (40) On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.'

10 Most medieval Arabic sources use the term 'the ten words', *al-ʿashr kalimāt*, as the designation for the Ten Commandments revealed to Moses. *Al-Kalimāt al-ʿashr* and *al-kalimāt al-ʿashara* occur as well. The ancient expression *al-ʿashr kalimāt* echoes the rabbinical Hebrew phrase *ʿaseret ha-dibrôt*. In modern Arabic language, the term *al-waṣāyā al-ʿashr* (literally 'the ten directions' or 'injunctions') is generally used for 'the Ten Commandments'. Interestingly, Aharon Maman in his article 'The Sefrou (Morocco) Version of the *al-ʿAshar [sic] Kalimāt*' (*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 29 (2004), pp. 358–76), says that the expression *al-ʿashr kalimāt* is used in a homily 'recited by Jews in many Arabic speaking communities during Pentecost'. However, his remark that 'this expression seems to be unique to this text and is not attested elsewhere' (pp. 358–9) requires reconsideration in the light of the material presented in this study.

11 Exodus 34:28.

12 In the citation below, Arberry's translation has been adjusted insofar as *wa-idh* (lit. 'when') is rendered as 'remember' (see Paret, *Übersetzung*, Einleitung, p. 3), *al-nās* as 'all people' and *mīthāq* as 'covenant'. *Mīthāq* is the noun of instrument from *wathīqa* 'to trust, have confidence in' or *wathuqa* 'to be firm'. *Mīthāq* in Q. 2:83 and 84 has been rendered differently in English translations of the Qur'an; as 'covenant' (e.g. Yusuf Ali, Pickthal and Shakir), 'compact' (Arberry), 'pledge' (Muhammad Asad, Abdel Haleem) and 'Verpflichtung' (Paret in his German translation). See also C.E. Bosworth, art. 'Mīthāk' ('covenant, agreement', also '[political] compact') in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn.

13 See also Julian Obermann, 'Koran and Agada: The Event on Mount Sinai' in *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 58 (1941), pp. 24–48, esp. p. 30, p. 34, pp. 37–9; and Brannon Wheeler's critique of this article in his book *Moses in the Quran and Islamic Exegesis* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), pp. 1–4. For the implications of the Sinai revelation and the Mosaic discourse in Jewish and Christian traditions, see Hindy Najman's insightful *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003); and Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Moses Vermächtnis: Über göttliche und Menschliche Gesetze* (München: Beck, 2006), esp. ch. 4 'Zehn Gebote', pp. 33–64. The different methods of classifying suras according to periods of revelation and communication of the divine word, along with an initial contextual-stylistic analysis of Suras 6 and 7, are

presented in Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qurans*, 2nd edn (3 vols, Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1909–38; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms bearbeitet von Friedrich Schwally, Gotthelf Bergsträßer und Otto Pretzl, Leipzig, 2000), vol. 1, pp. 72–4, pp. 143–4, pp. 158–62.

14 For a survey of classical Muslim exegesis, see Claude Gilliot, art. 'Exegesis of the Qur'an: Classical and Medieval' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. For the specifics of Shi'ī exegesis, see Todd Lawson, art. 'Hermeneutics' in Ehsan Yar-Shater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (12 vols to date, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982–2004) vol. 12, pp. 235–9.

15 Exodus 24:7, 'Then he (Moses) took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient".'

16 '*Ma'shar al-Yahūd bi'l-Madīna*', see Abū'l-Ḥasan Muqātil ibn Sulayman al-Azdī al-Khurāsānī al-Balkhī (d. 150/767), *al-Tafsīr*, ed. °Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shihāta (5 vols, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ta'rīkh al-°Arabī, 1423/2002), vol. 1, p. 120. For example, see also Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *al-Tafsīr: jāmi° al-bayān °an ta°wīl āy al-Qur°ān* (30 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1405/1984), vol. 1, pp. 388–96; J. Cooper, W.F. Madelung, A. Jones (trs), *The Commentary on the Qur'an, ... being an abridged translation of Jāmi° al-bayān °an ta°wīl āy al-Qur°ān* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 422–9; Abū'l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn °Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), *al-Kashshāf*, ed. °Abd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī (4 vols, Beirut: Dar Ihyā° al-Turāth al-°Arabī, 1418/1997), vol. 1, pp. 186–7; Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn °Umar al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (32 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1421/2000), vol. 3, pp. 149–56. Jalāl al-Dīn °Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Kamāl al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *al-Durr al-manthūr fī'l-tafsīr al-ma°thūr* (8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), vol. 1, pp. 209–11.

17 Adel Theodor Khoury, *Der Koran: Arabisch-Deutsch, Übersetzung und wissenschaftlicher Kommentar* (9 vols, Güterloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1990–8), vol. 1, pp. 39–42. See also Uri Rubin, art. 'Children of Israel' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*; Gerhard Böwering, art. 'Covenant' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*.

18 See also William M. Brinner, 'An Islamic Decalogue' in William M. Brinner and Stephen D. Ricks (eds), *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions, Papers Presented at the Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies* (Atlanta: Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 67–84, esp. p. 68, pp. 72–5. Brinner meticulously compares the two relevant Qur'anic passages with those in the Bible. However, he limits himself to basically confirming the similarities and specifics of content and style that these Qur'anic passages display when compared with their Biblical equivalents. Brannon Wheeler offers a different and, perhaps, questionable view. Based on the accounts in the Qur'an and Qur'anic exegesis he has studied, he concluded that 'it is evident that Muslim exegesis does not hold up Moses as an exemplary prophet to be imitated or hoped for in the future ... [In fact,] Muslim exegetes use this contrast between Moses and Muhammad to conceptualize the differences between themselves and other People of the Book, particularly the Jews as imagined to be the Prophet's opponents in Medina'; see his *Moses in the Quran*, p. 125.

19 As for the materials of the Tablets, *zabarjad* can be translated as topaz, a silicate mineral valued as a gemstone. In ancient times, the stone called *topazos* stood for what is known in modern mineralist terminology as chrysolite, peridot, or olivine. (The 'topaz' in the Old Testament also may have been chrysolite.) All three names are used to determine a gemstone of sparkling, often deep green colour with a slight golden hue. See the arts 'Chrysolite', 'Olivine', 'Peridotite' and 'Topaz' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1961). Essentially, the colour green is apparently the most significant physical quality of the tablets. As for the term 'tablet' itself, it is interesting to note that in the Bahā'ī faith this expression is used to designate the entire literary legacy of Mirza Hoseyn Ali Nuri (1817–92), the founder of this religion. See Todd Lawson, art. '*Lawh* in Bahā'ī Usage' in

Ehsan Yar-Shater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982–) (forthcoming).

20 See, for example, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 9, p. 66; al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, vol. 14, p. 193; Abū °Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1223), *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān* (20 vols, Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-°Arabī li'l-Ṭibā'a wa'l-Nashr, 1387/1967), vol. 13, p. 107.

21 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 2, p. 612 (on the authority of al-Suddī, d. 127/745). Similarly, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū'l-Fāḍil Ibrāhīm (10 vols +1, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1969–), vol. 1, p. 468.

22 See, for example, al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 2, p. 149. (For an in-depth study of al-Zamakhsharī's life and work, see Andrew J. Lane, *A Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary: The Kashshāf of Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006).) Without making an explicit reference to the Ten Commandments revealed to Moses, some medieval Muslim scholars mention that Jews and Christians agree on the notion that the Hebrew ('Ibrānī) script was divinely given to the Jews on 'two tablets of stone'. See Abū'l-Faraj ibn Abī Ya'qūb Ishāq ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995), *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā Tajaddud (Tehran: n.p., 1350/1971), p. 17; translated into English by Bayard Dodge as *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture* (2 vols, New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), vol. 1, p. 27; Muṣṭafā ibn °Abd Allāh Ḥajjī Khalifa (Kātib Ḥeḍebī) (d. 1067/1657), *Kashf al-zunūn* (6 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1413/1992), vol. 1, p. 709. A similar remark on 'the Hebrew script on two tables of stone' (*al-kitāba al-°Ibrāniyya fī lawḥayn min ḥijāra*) is made by Ṣiddīq ibn Ḥasan al-Qannawjī (d. 1307/1889 or 90), *Abjad al-°ulūm: al-washī al-marqūm fī bayān aḥwāl al-°ulūm*, ed. °Abd al-Jabbār al-Zakkār (3 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1978), vol. 2, p. 267.

23 'The Qur'anic allegation that significant portions of the Torah and Gospels have been falsified, commonly identified as *tahrīf*, has played an important role in the relations between the Muslim *umma* and Christians and Jews throughout history. It is perhaps the most contentious theological issue between the communities, and arguably lies at the root of all other disagreements. Initially, the claim of *tahrīf* was primarily employed by Muslims to defend the truth of the revelation to Muḥammad and the authenticity of his prophethood against those who contended [that] they were not legitimate. Over the centuries, however, the argument was expanded and elaborated to explain a wide range of discrepancies between the Qur'an and the Bible. The charge eventually provided the starting point for all other polemical themes in Islam, becoming one of the most common subjects found in apologetical texts' (Sandra Toenies Keating, 'Refuting the Charge of *Tahrīf*: Abū Rā'īṭa (d. ca 835) and his "First *Risāla* on the Holy Trinity"' in Sebastian Günther (ed.), *Ideas, Images, and Methods of Portrayal: Insights into Classical Arabic Literature and Islam* (Leiden, E.J. Brill: 2005), pp. 41–57, esp. p. 41).

24 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 280, pp. 285–6, p. 292, p. 324; vol. 9, pp. 57–8; see also Keith Lewinstein, art. 'Commandments' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*.

25 '[God] wrote: [1] *Do not associate with me anything of the heavens and the earth*, for all of that is my creation; [2] *Do not swear falsely in my name*, for I will not cleanse the one who swears falsely; and [3] *Honour your parents*' (al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 9, pp. 57–8; tr. in Lewinstein, art. 'Commandments', p. 365). For the substantial body of Jewish tradition in early Islamic sources, see Philip S. Alexander, 'Jewish Tradition in Early Islam: The Case of Enoch/Idris' in G.R. Hawting, J.A. Mojaddedi and A. Samely (eds), *Studies in Islamic and Middle Eastern Texts and Traditions – In Memory of Norman Calder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 11–29.

26 '*Kullu mā yaḥtāju ilayhi Mūsā wa-qawmuhu fī dīnihim min al-ḥalāl wa'l-ḥarām wa'l-maḥāsini wa'l-maqābiḥ*' (al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, vol. 14, p. 193, p. 195).

27 Abū'l-Fidā° °Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl ibn °Umar ibn Kathīr al-Qurashī al-Dimashqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-°aẓīm*, ed. by 'a committee of scholars' (8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1389/1970), vol. 3, p. 120 (on Q. 6:151), p. 221 (on Q. 7:145). See also Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, vol. 3, p. 244.

28 Exodus 32:15–16. The passage reads: '(15) Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. (16) The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.'

29 'Al-Alwāh ay alwāh al-Tawrāt' (Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Maḥallī (d. 864/1459) and Jalāl al-Dīn °Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *Tafsīr Jalālayn* (completed in 870/1465) (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, n.d.), p. 214 (on Q. 7:145)); see also al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi° al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 292; and the rendering by the noted Indian Muslim writer and exegete, Abdul Majid Daryabadi (1892–1977) in his *Tafsīr-II-Qur'an: Translation and Commentary of the Holy Qur'an* (4 vols, Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1982), vol. 2, p. 149 (on Q. 7:145).

30 In Q. 17:101, Moses is said to have also received nine 'clear signs' (*āyāt bayyināt*), which most commentators of the Qur'an explain as referring to nine miracles performed by him for the benefit of Pharaoh and his people. Some commentators, however, view these 'signs' as legal statutes; see Lewinstein, art. 'Commandments'.

31 The term 'people of the Book', as Jews and Christians are referred to in the Qur'an, occurs 31 times in the Qur'an. See also G. Vajda, art. 'Ahl al-Kitāb' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn.

32 See Martin Plessner and Andrew Rippin, 'Muḥātil ibn Sulaymān' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn; Gilliot, art. 'Exegesis', pp. 106–7.

33 Muḥātil, *al-Tafsīr*, vol. 2, pp. 62–3. The list cited in the quotation below includes the Commandments 1 (and 2), 6–8 and 5 of the Old Testament. It very much resembles Jesus' short list of the Commandments present in the New Testament, Matthew 19:18–19 (see note 9).

34 Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 25; Dodge, *The Fihrist*, vol. 1, p. 43 (Dodge simply gives 'witnessing' for *al-shahāda*). Interestingly, Ibn al-Nadīm mentions that the Iranian Mani (d. 274? AD at Gundeshapur), eponymous founder of the Manichean religion, was also known to have composed a treatise entitled 'The Ten Commandments' (*Risālat al-Kalimāt al-°ashr*) (see Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 400; Dodge, *The Fihrist*, vol. 2, p. 799). Earlier in his discussion of Manichean doctrines, Ibn al-Nadīm gives Mani's 'Ten Commandments' (here using the expression *al-farā'id al-°ashr*) as follows: 'Renouncing: [1] the worship of idols; [2] the telling of lies; [3] avarice; [4] killing (*qatl*); [5] adultery; [6] stealing; [7] the teaching of defects (*ta°īm al-°ilal*); [8] magic (*sihr*); [9] the upholding of two opinions about the faith; and [10] neglect and lassitude in action' (Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 396; Dodge, *The Fihrist*, vol. 2, p. 7. Ibn al-Nadīm's information is supported by a refutation of Mani's 'Ten Commandments' by Ephraim the Syrian (d. 373 AD), a Christian theologian and doctrinal consultant to Eastern churchmen, who is known for his numerous theological-Biblical commentaries and polemical works (see S. Ephraim's *Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan, transcribed from the Palimpsest B.M. Add. 14623 ... by the Charles Wand Mitchell*, reprint (2 vols, Farnborough: Gregg International, 1969), vol. 2, p. 190). For the general context, see also Sidney H. Griffith, 'Christianity in Edessa and the Syriac-Speaking World: Mani, Bar Daysan, and Ephraem; the Struggle for Allegiance on the Armenian Frontier' in *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 2 (2002), pp. 5–20.

35 Abū Ishāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Nisābūrī, known as al-Tha°labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā° al-musammā °Arā°is al-majālis* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā° al-Kutub al-°Arabiyya, °Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1928); tr. William Brinner as °Arā°is al-majālis fi qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā° or 'The Lives of the Prophets,' as Recounted by Abū Ishāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-

Tha^clabī (E.J. Brill: Leiden, 2002), esp. pp. 331–8. For the life and scholarly output of al-Tha^clabī, see Carl Brockelman, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (3 vols + 2 supplements, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1943; reprinted Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), vol. 1, p. 429, no. 2; Tilman Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā³. Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, unpublished PhD dissertation (Bonn: Universität Bonn, Philosophische Fakultät, 1967), pp. 80–102; Andrew Rippin, art. ‘al-Tha^clabī’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn; Walid Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsīr Tradition: The Qur[’]ān Commentary of al-Tha^clabī* (d. 427/1035) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2004), esp. pp. 26–52.

36 For the role that angels are said to have played during the revelation of the law in Judaism, see Hindy Najman, ‘Angels at Sinai: Exegesis, Theology and Interpretative Authority’, *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7.3 (2000), pp. 313–33.

37 Al-Tha^clabī, ‘*Arā³is*’, p. 180; Brinner, *Lives of the Prophets*, p. 337 (slightly adjusted).

38 Al-Tha^clabī’s rendering of Q. 17:22–38 reads as follows (Brinner, *Lives of the Prophets*, pp. 337–8): ‘*THERE IS NO GOD BUT ME. [1] Worship Me and associate nothing with Me; [2] Be grateful to Me and thy parents ... [3] Take not a life that God has forbidden you ... [4] Do not swear falsely by My name ... [5] Do not bear witness to what your hearing did not perceive, or your eyes did not see, or your mind did not comprehend ... [6] Do not envy people for the favours and blessings which I bestowed on them ... [7] Do not fornicate. [8] Do not steal ... [9] Sacrifice to none but Me ... [10] Do not commit adultery ... [11] Wish for people what you wish for yourself; do not wish on them what is repugnant to you.*’ It is of note that both in Q. 17:22–38 and Q. 6:152–4 God speaks to the people in the plural form. However, in the passage which al-Tha^clabī provides, God speaks to Moses in the singular. See Brinner, ‘An Islamic Decalogue’, pp. 67–84.

39 Al-Tha^clabī, ‘*Arā³is al-majālis*’, pp. 180–1; Brinner, *Lives of the Prophets*, pp. 337–8 (translation adjusted).

40 Brinner’s translation has ‘ten’ ayas; however, the Arabic original has ‘eighteen’, a number that correctly represents the total of the respective ayas in Sura 17, if one includes Q. 17:22, *Set not up with God another god.*

41 For the different names of Sura 17, see Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur’an*, p. 417.

42 In a most stimulating study, Angelika Neuwirth has dealt with the complexities of Jerusalem’s significance and ‘ambivalent position’ in Islam. Specifically, she examined the question of the three honorary titles assigned to Jerusalem by Muslims: the ‘first of the two directions of prayer’ (*ūlā³’l-qiblatayn*), the ‘second of the two sanctuaries’ (*thānī³’l-masjidayn*) and the ‘third [important sacred site] after the two places of pilgrimage’ (*thālith al-ḥaramayn*). See A. Neuwirth, ‘Erste Qibla - Fernstes Masǧid? Jerusalem im Horizont des historischen Muḥammad’ in Ferdinand Hahn et al. (eds), *Zion – Ort der Begegnung. Festschrift für Laurentius Klein zur Vollendung des 65. Lebensjahres*, Bonner Biblische Beiträge 90 (Bodenheim: Athenäum Hain Hanstein, 1993;), pp. 227–70; A. Neuwirth, ‘From the Sacred Mosque to the Remote Temple: *Sūrat al-Isrā³* between Text and Commentary’ in Jane Dammen McAuliffe et al. (eds), *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 373–407, esp. p. 376. This shift in focus is also apparent, as Brannon Wheeler has noted, in that ‘Islamic exegesis appropriate[d] many of the key passages, used in rabbinical and Christian exegesis of the Bible as references to Jerusalem and Jesus, to be references to the sanctuary at Mecca’ (Wheeler, *Moses in the Quran*, p. 89, p. 123).

43 The Qur’anic mention of *isrā³* (‘night journey’) has traditionally been understood by Muslims as a reference to Muḥammad’s travel in one night from Mecca to ‘the Furthest Place’ of prayer, i.e. the sanctuary in Jerusalem, or the heavenly prototype of the Ka’ba in heaven. This Qur’anic reference came to be viewed as a divine affirmation of Muḥammad’s prophethood. For the concepts – and spiritual interpretations – of *isrā³* and *mi^crāj* (‘ascent to

heaven'), see Asad, *The Message*, appendix 4, pp. 996–8. See also J. Knappert, art. 'Mi^crādī' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn; Michael Sells, art. 'Ascension' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*; Uri Rubin, art. 'Prophet and Prophethood' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*; Joseph van Ess, 'Vision and Ascension: *Sūrat al-Najm* and its Relation with Muḥammad's mi^crāj', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1 (1999), pp. 47–62; Gerhard Böwering's article on Šūfī interpretation of the Prophet's Night Journey, 'From the Word of God to the Vision of God: Muḥammad's Heavenly Journey in Classical Šūfī Qur'an Commentary' in M.A. Amir-Moezzi (ed.), *Le Voyage Initiatique en terre d'Islam: Ascensions célestes et itinéraires spirituels* (Louvain: Peeters, 1996), pp. 205–21.

44 Hartwig Hirschfeld, *Beiträge zur Erklärung des Korân* (Leipzig: Schulze, 1886), p. 19; and his *New Researches in the Composition and Exegesis of the Qoran* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1902), p. 81.

45 Abū'l-Faḍl Jalāl al-Dīn °Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fi 'ulūm al-Qur'an*, ed. Sa'īd al-Mandūb (4 parts in 2 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416/1999), vol. 1, p. 116 (no. 484, no. 485). Abū °Ubayd's explanation is not to be found in his *Faḍā'il al-Qur'an wa-ma'ālimuhu wa-ādābuhu*, ed. Aḥmad ibn °Abd al-Wāḥid al-Khayyāṭī (al-Muḥammadiyya: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa'l-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyya, 1995). I thank Dr Christopher Melchert (Oxford University) for kindly drawing my attention to this passage in al-Suyūṭī's *Itqān*.

46 For a definition of 'uqūq, designating the opposite of 'piety towards parents' (*birr al-wālidayn*), see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, vol. 5. p. 259; but also vol. 2, pp. 500–1 and vol. 5, pp. 257–9.

47 Abū °Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn °Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-uṣūl fi aḥādīth al-rasūl*, ed. °Abd al-Raḥmān °Umayra (4 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1992), vol. 4, p. 20 (*al-kalimāt al-°ashr*). For Western studies of this early Muslim mystic, see esp. Bernd Radtke's publications on al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, including his 'Some Recent Research on al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī', *Der Islam* 83 (2006), pp. 39–89, esp. p. 51.

48 Muḥammad ibn °Abd Allāh al-Kisā'ī, *Vita Prophetarum [= Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā']*, ed. Isaac Eisenberg (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1922); W.M. Thackston (tr.), *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisā'i* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978); see now also the German translation by Heribert Busse, *Islamische Legenden von Propheten und Gottesmännern* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006) (= *Diskurse der Arabistik* 9). For the question of identifying the author of this *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, see Tilman Nagel, art. 'al-Kisā'ī' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn. The *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literature, as part of the popular narrative tradition in medieval Islam, is discussed in W. Aichele, 'Biblische Legenden aus dem Prophetenbuch des Ḥosainī' in *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen an der Universität Berlin* (1915), vol. 2, pp. 27–57; Tilman Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*; and Roberto Tottoli's insightful article 'The *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī (d. 454/1062): Stories of the Prophets from al-Andalus', *al-Qanṭara. Revista de Estudios Arabes* 19 (1998), pp. 131–60, esp. pp. 131–4.

49 Al-Kisā'ī (relating this account on the authority of Ka'b ibn Aḥbār), *Qiṣaṣ*, pp. 220–1; Thackston, *The Tales*, pp. 235–7. Thackston's translation of al-Kisā'ī's text has been slightly adjusted; the quotations from the Qur'an are as given in Arberry's translation.

50 Al-Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ*, pp. 220–1; Thackston, *The Tales*, pp. 235–7.

51 Interestingly, Ibn °Abbās' statement includes reference to the fourth Biblical Commandment, the Sabbath command, which is often absent in the Islamic versions of the Commandments).

52 The expressions *al-°ashr kalimāt* and *al-kalimāt al-°ashr/al-°ashara* are not found in the nine canonical and semi-canonical Ḥadīth compendia. See *Mawsū'at al-ḥadīth al-šarīf* (Cairo: Sharikat Ḥarf, 1988), compact disk, which includes the *kutub al-tis'a*, the nine Ḥadīth compilations most widely accepted by Sunnī Muslims. Interestingly, the absence of the Ten Commandments in canonical Ḥadīth has also already been noted by the Egyptian writer and

political activist Sayyid Quṭb when commenting on Q. 7:145 (see his *Fī zilāl al-Qurʿān* (30 parts in 6 vols, Beirut and Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1398/1978), vol. 3, p. 1370; tr. into English by Adil Salāhi as *In the Shade of the Qurʿān* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation and Islamonline.Net, 1423/2002), p. 224).

53 See, for example, al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Baghā (6 vols, Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1407/1987), vol. 3, p. 1917 (no. 2615); vol. 6, p. 2515 (no. 6465); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Muḥammad Fuʿād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (5 vols, Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 92 (no. 89); Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī'l-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (4 parts in 2 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 115 (no. 2874); al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Beirut: Maktabat al-Maṭbūʿāt al-Islāmiyya, 1994), no. 3671.

54 The expression *bi'l-ḥaqq* (literally 'by right') is a determining component of Q. 6:151 (*wa-lā taqtulū'l-naḥsa allatī ḥarrama'llāhu illā bi'l-ḥaqq*) that apparently formed the grounds for the prophetic statement at issue here. Modern translators render the Qur'anic passage as: *take not life, which Allah hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law* (Yusuf Ali); *slay not the life which Allah hath made sacred, save in the course of justice* (Pickthall); *do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden except for the requirements of justice* (Shakir).

55 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 18, no. 3679, no. 6787; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 1709; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, no. 1439; al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan*, no. 4161, no. 4162, no. 4210, no. 5002; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1991), no. 22170; al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Ḥāshim Yamānī al-Madanī (2 parts in 1 vol., Cairo: Dār al-Maḥāsin li'l-Ṭibāʿa, 1386/1966), no. 2453.

56 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 18.

57 See Reuven Firestone, art. 'Pharaoh' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʿān*, p. 67.

58 Ṣafwān ibn ʿAssāl reported that the Prophet Muḥammad stated the following: '[1] Do not associate anything with God; [2] Do not steal; [3] Do not commit adultery; [4] Do not kill the human that God has forbidden [you] to kill, except by way of justice and law; [5] Do not take an innocent before the ruler to be killed; [6] Do not practise magic; [7] Do not practise usury; [8] Do not accuse an innocent woman [of adultery]; [9] Do not retreat when marching on the day of battle; and, especially for you, O Jews, [10] Do not work on Saturday' (al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, no. 2733, no. 3144). See also al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan*, no. 4078; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* no. 17626, no. 17630. Furthermore, see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Taḥfīr*, vol. 3, p. 68; similarly, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya* (14 parts in 7 vols, Beirut: Maktabat al-Maʿārif, n.d.), vol. 6, p. 174 and p. 273. See also note 44 and note 57.

Furthermore, the 'ten words' (*al-ʿaṣr kalimāt*) also occur (although mostly in the context of the nine miracles performed by Moses for the benefit of Pharaoh) in the following sources: Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd ibn Ḥazm al-Zāhirī (d. 456/1064), *al-Faṣl fī'l-mīlāl wa'l-ahwāʾ wa'l-niḥāl* (5 vols, Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 149; Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Zaylaʿī (d. 762/1360–1), *Takhrīj al-aḥādīth wa'l-āthār al-wāqīʿa fī Taḥfīr al-Kashshāf li'l-Zamakhsharī*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿd (4 vols, al-Riyadh: Dār Ibn Khuzayma, 1414/1993–4), vol. 2, p. 293; Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *al-Wāfi bi'l-wafāyāt*, ed. Aḥmad ibn al-ʿArnaʿūt and Turkī Muṣṭafā (29 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Nashr, 1420/2000), vol. 7, p. 12; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn al-Asyūṭī (i.e. al-Suyūṭī) (d. 880/1475), *Jawāhir al-ʿuqūd*, ed. Masʿūd ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Muḥammad al-Saʿdanī (2 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1996), vol. 2, p. 272; Kātib Ḥalībī, *Kashf al-zunūn*, vol. 1, p. 505.

59 'Hādhihi'l-āyāt al-muḥkamāt ... ajmaʿat ʿalayhā sharāʾiʿ al-khalq ... wa-qīla: innahā al-ʿaṣr kalimāt al-munazzala ʿalā Mūsā' (al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 7, p. 131). Kaʿb's statement is also quoted by Abū Ḥayyān Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Andalusī, (d. 745/1344) in his *Taḥfīr al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd (9 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1422/2001), vol. 4, p. 250. As is known, it is made explicit in the Qur'an itself that there are ayas that need interpretation (*mutashābihāt*) because they offer several meanings, in contrast

to those that are to be accepted as they stand (*muḥkamāt*) for their clear and precise meaning, for example Q. 3:7. For discussions of this aya, see Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 'Text and Textuality: Q. 3:7 as a Point of Intersection' in Issa J. Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), pp. 56–76; Kristin Zahra Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries on the Qur'an in Classical Islam* (London: Routledge, 2006).

60 Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi'*, vol. 7, p. 132.

61 'Hādhihi'l-āya amr min Allāh ta'āla li-nabīyyihi [Mūsā] °alayhi al-salām bi-an yad°uwa jamī°a'l-khalq ilā samā°c tilāwa mā ḥarrama Allāh' (al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi'*, vol. 7, p. 131, on Q. 6:151).

62 'Inna'l-aḥkām al-madhkūra fi hādhihi'l-āyāt sharā°i°c wājibat al-ri°āya fi jamī°c al-adyān wa'l-milal' (al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, vol. 10, p. 171 (on Q. 17)).

63 Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 3, p. 120. For the various meanings of *umm al-kitāb* (including: 'aṣl al-kitāb alladhī fihi °imād al-dīn wa'l-farā°id wa'l-ḥudūd'), see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 3, p. 231. The expression *umm al-kitāb* literally means 'the mother of the book'. It occurs three times in the Qur'an (Q. 3:7, Q. 13:39 and Q. 43:4) and appears to have no equivalent in the earlier Semitic languages. Frequently, the term is understood as referring to the heavenly archetype of the holy scripture (see E. Geoffroy and F. Daftary, art. 'Umm al-Kitāb' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn).

64 Sura 6 consists of a total of 165 ayas, which makes it possible to speak of Q. 6:151–3 as being at the end of this Qur'anic sura. See Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn °Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn Taymiyya, *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-istighātha al-ma°rūf bi'l-Radd °alā'l-Bakrī*, ed. Abū °Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ibn °Alī °Ajjal (2 vols, Medina: Maktabat al-Ghurabā° al-Athariyya, 1997), vol. 1, p. 296. Similarly, see Ibn Taymiyya's *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. °Alī Sayyid Ṣubḥ al-Madanī ([Cairo?:] Maṭba°at al-Madanī, n.d.), vol. 6, p. 30.

65 See note 10.

66 Abū'l-°Abbās Aḥmad ibn °Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Fazārī al-Shāfi°i al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a°shā fi kitābat al-inshā°*, ed. °Abd al-Qādir Zakkār (Damascus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 1981), vol. 2, p. 465; vol. 13, p. 258; see also vol. 13, p. 261 and p. 268.

67 Walī al-Dīn Abū °Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn °Abd Allāh al-Khaṭīb al-°Umarī al-Tibrizī, *Mishkāṭ al-maṣābīḥ*, ed. Sa°id Muḥammad al-Laḥḥām (3 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1411/1991), vol. 1, pp. 58–62; James Robson, *Mishkāṭ al-maṣābīḥ, English Translation with Explanatory Notes* (4 vols, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 17–19. See also note 49 in addition to Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam* (London: W.H. Allen, 1885; reprinted Delhi: Oriental Publisher, 1973), pp. 58–9 (art. 'Commandments'); Brinner, 'An Islamic Decalogue', pp. 68–9.

68 Walī al-Dīn °Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn, *Ta°rīkh Ibn Khaldūn [= Kitāb al-°Ibar]* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1984), vol. 2, pp. 94–5 (first using the term *al-kalimāt al-°ashr*, then *al-kalimāt al-°ashara*). Ibn Khaldūn's list of commandments seems to combine the first and the second Biblical commands into one; the third Biblical command, 'not to take the name of the Lord in vain', is absent.

69 Fakhr al-Dīn [ibn Muḥammad ibn °Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭurayḥī al-Rammāḥī al-Najafī] al-Ṭurayḥī, *Majma° al-Baḥrayn* (6 vols, Najaf: Maṭba°at al-°Ādāb, 1959–6), vol. 2, p. 16 (*al-°ashr kalimāt*); vol. 3, p. 333 (*al-kalimat al-°ashr*). For al-Ṭurayḥī's life and work, see Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-°Alām* (8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-°Ilm li'l-Malāyīn, 1989), vol. 5, p. 138.

70 Muḥammad al-Amīn ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Mukhtār al-Jakanī al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1393/1972), *Aḍwa° al-bayan* (10 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr li'l-Ṭibā°a wa'l-Nashr, 1415/1995), vol. 9, pp. 95–6; see also vol. 8, p. 564; vol. 9, p. 95. Other modern commentators, who identify the three ayas of Q. 6:151–3 as the (Qur'anic) Ten Commandments (*al-waṣāya al-°ashr*), are: Muḥammad ibn °Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Shawkānī (d. 1255/1839), *Faṭḥ al-qadīr*, ed. Firyāl °Alwānī (4 vols, Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd,

1420/1999), vol. 2, p. 77 ('they are the Ten Commandments (*al-waṣayā al-ʿashr*) which are [to be found] in the Torah'); and, similarly, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīm al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-ʿirfān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* (2 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416/1996), vol. 1, p. 153.

71 Ibn Masʿūd's statement is not to be found in the canonical Ḥadīth collections. It is, however, found in several other medieval compilations. See, for example, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 188 (on Q. 6).

72 For the Biblical accounts of the Covenant with Abraham (in *ca* 1700 BC) and with Moses (in *ca* 1200 BC), see F.E. Peters, *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; The Classical Texts and their Interpretation, Volume 1: From Covenant to Community* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), esp. p. xi and p. xxi. See also Reuven Firestone, art. 'Abraham' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*. As for the views prevalent among modern exegetes, Sayyid Quṭb exemplarily states that God's covenants with humankind were first made with Adam, then Abraham, Jacob, and Moses on Mount Sinai; and that 'all these are essentially one covenant ... sent to humanity at the hands of the messengers ...'. Quṭb maintains that 'Islam ... is a continuation of the same Message and the completion of the covenant God made with man in the beginning'. See Salahi (tr.), *In the Shade*, vol. 1, pp. 60–1.

73 Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, *The Holy Qurʾān, Full Vowel Pointed Arabic Text, with English Translation and Explanatory Notes* (8 vols, Lahore: Islamic Book Centre, 1976–8), vol. 1, p. 530.

74 Syed V. Mir Ahmed Ali, *A Commentary on the Holy Qurʾan, with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait, with Special Notes from Ayatullah Mirza Mahdi Pooya Yazdi on the Philosophic Aspects of Some of the Verses* (Karachi: Sterling Printing, 1964), pp. 123–4 (on Q. 2:84). This translation carries special authority for Shiʿīs, since it was 'written, as the term "Syed" (or sayyid) indicates, by a descendant of Muhammad and because it includes commentary by one of the highest-ranking authorities in contemporary Shiʿism. A paperback edition of this commentary ... is widely found in Shiʿite institutions in North America' (Khaleel Mohammed, 'Assessing English Translations of the Qurʾan', accessed though <http://www.newsfeeds.com/archive/soc-culture-bengali/msg04743.html>). For the events at Karbala in 61/680, see L. Veccia Vaglieri, art. 'al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn; E. Honigmann, art. 'Karbala' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn. The specifics of the views on the Ten Commandments in Shiʿism requires a separate study. Such research would need to include, for example, examination of an Arabic rendering of the Ten Commandments attributed to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. I am grateful to Dr Todd Lawson (University of Toronto) for drawing my attention to this text (preserved at the India Office Library in Delhi, Arab MS. 2134, fol. 349b–357a), which is part of his forthcoming article 'Discourses Purporting to be Addressed by God to Moses and Translated into Arabic by ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib'.

75 '*Law taʿammalnā hādhihi'l-āyāt lam yakun min al-ṣuʿūba an nastantija annahā hiya al-waṣayā al-ʿashr*' (Muḥammad Shaḥrūr, *al-Kitāb wa'l-Qurʾān: qirāʾa muʿāṣira* (Damascus: al-Ahālī li'l-Ṭibāʿa wa'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzīʿ, 2000), p. 65.

76 Syed Abul ʿAla Maudoodi, *Tafhīm al-Qurʾān: The Meaning of the Quran*, 4th edn (6 vols, Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1976), vol. 6, pp. 130–6, esp. p. 133 and p. 136 (with reference to Q. 17:22–39). Mawdūdī's Qurʾan commentary is considered the masterpiece of his prolific literary output (see F.C.R. Robinson, art. 'Mawdūdī' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn).

77 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī zilāl*, vol. 3, p. 1229; Salahi (tr.), *In the Shade*, vol. 5, p. 354.

78 '*Hādhihi'l-qawāʿid al-asāsiyya al-wāḍiḥa allatī takādu tulakkhkiṣu'l-ʿaqida al-Islāmiyya wa-sharīʿatah al-ijtimāʿiyya mabdūʿa bi-tawḥīd Allāh wa-makhtūma bi-ʿahd Allāh*' (Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī zilāl*, vol. 3, p. 1234; Salahi (tr.), *In the Shade*, vol. 5, p. 362). Interestingly, Joseph E. Lowry, in his paper presented at the 214th Meeting of the American Oriental Society (March 2003) in San Diego, emphasised the importance of Q. 6:151–3 from a legal

perspective. He viewed this passage as containing 'a minimalist legal philosophy for the Qur'anic community'.

79 For an annotated survey of commandments in the Qur'an that parallel the Biblical Decalogue, see Khoury, *Der Koran*, vol. 9, pp. 136–43.

80 The extensive use of lists as an effective, mnemonic means of communication in the Qur'an has not yet received due attention. Several such lists in the Qur'an appear to relate to, or resemble, the Decalogue. Particularly striking examples are Q. 23:1–11 and Q. 25:64–74 (Meccan), as well as Q. 2:40–6 (Medinan period). Furthermore, see Heinrich Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran* (Gräfenhainichen: Schulze, 1931; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1988), pp. 305–10, and, for the use of lists in the wider context of Islamic intellectual culture, the stimulating article by Julia Bray, 'Lists and Memory: Ibn Qutayba and Muhammad b. Ḥabīb' in Farhad Daftary and Josef W. Meri (eds), *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam. Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), pp. 210–31.

81 Aloys Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad, Nach bisher grösstentheils unbenutzten Quellen* (3 vols, Berlin: Nicolai, 1861–5; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 2003), vol. 2, p. 484; Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 58–9; Hirschfeld, *Beiträge*, pp. 22–3; and his *New Researches*, pp. 81–2; Speyer, *Die biblischen*, pp. 305–10; Brinner, 'An Islamic Decalogue'; Morris S. Seale, *Qur'an and Bible: Studies in Interpretation and Dialogue* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), esp. pp. 74–5; Khoury *Der Koran*, vol. 9, p. 135; Lewinstein, art. 'Commandments', p. 366.

82 For an initial comparison of the similarities and differences between the various lists of the Ten Commandments in the Bible and their possible counterparts in the Qur'an, see Brinner, 'An Islamic Decalogue'; Hirschfeld, *Beiträge*; Khoury, *Der Koran*, vol. 9, pp. 136–43; Sprenger, *Das Leben*; Speyer, *Die biblischen*; Seale, *Qur'an and Bible*; and Lewinstein, art. 'Commandments'. A detailed study of the Ten Commandments in the Bible and in the Qur'an – as key points which may constitute the common religious ground for interfaith dialogue – is in preparation by the author of the present article.

83 'Yā-ahla'l-kitābi ta'ālaw ilā kalimatīn sawā'in baynanā wa-baynakum' (Arberry's translation, slightly adjusted). The letter to Heraclius is included in the first pages of al-Bukhārī's famous *Ṣaḥīḥ*, which is, among Sunnī Muslims, the most highly regarded collection of prophetic traditions (see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 7; Muhammad Muhsin Khan (tr.), *Saḥih al-Bukhari* (9 vols, Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 7–14, esp. p. 11 (bk 1, no. 6).

84 Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, p. 34. These observations hold significance regardless of the fact that the Prophet's letter to Heraclius was meant to call the Byzantine emperor to accept Islam and become a Muslim. The relevant passages in Sura 3 are more ambivalent and seem to promote religious unity and the co-operation of the monotheistic faiths. For example, Q. 3:60, reads *Come now, let us call our sons and your sons, our wives and your wives, our selves and your selves, then let us humbly pray and so lay God's curse upon the ones who lie.*

85 These sophisticated, inter-textual references (linking Muḥammad's letters to the Qur'an and the Bible), combined with internal textual references (connecting Q. 3:64 to such ayas as Q. 2:83, Q. 6:151 and Q. 17:22–3), 'augment' the Prophet's message to Heraclius not only with the greatness of the revelation of the Qur'an but also with Moses' powerful experience at Mount Sinai. In this context, it is also noteworthy that Mount Sinai is mentioned ten times in the Qur'an (see Ernst Honigsmann, art. 'Tūr' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn; Irfan Shahid, art. 'Sinai' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*). For the phenomenon of references and allusions to the Qur'an in classical Arabic literature, see the innovative studies by Stephan Dähne, 'Context Equivalence: A Hitherto Insufficiently Studied Use of the Qur'an in Political Speeches from the Early Period of Islam', and Alexei A. Khismatulin, 'The Alchemy of Happiness: Al-Ghazālī's *Kīmīyā* and the Origins of the Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya Principles' in Sebastian Günther (ed.), *Ideas, Images, and Methods of Portrayal: Insights into Classical*

Arabic Literature and Islam (Leiden, E.J. Brill: 2005), pp. 1–16 and pp. 227–57 respectively. Dähne brings to the fore certain intertextual elements in speeches from the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th century, in which there are frequent references to the Qur'an. However, he also deals with what he calls 'context equivalence'. According to Dähne, context equivalence depends on two factors or processes that can be summarised as follows: first, by placing fragments of quoted Qur'anic 'text' in the (new) 'context' of the speech, a modification of the original Qur'anic 'meaning' of the quoted Qur'anic 'wording' is achieved; and second, the association of the 'context' of the given speech with the 'context' of the Qur'an evokes in the minds of the audience the greatness of the time of the revelation and, thus, surrounds the political speech with an aura of sacredness. Khismatulīn, on the other hand, analyses the fortieth *khutba* of al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. His examination exposes this work's multidimensional – or matrix – structure, in which each reference, or 'link', refers the reader to one particular passage in the Qur'an. Thus, it is shown, a hypertext structure is being generated with multiple references and links similar to that found in a computer website. See S. Günther, 'Introduction' in Günther (ed.), *Ideas*, pp. xx–xxi and p. xxxviii.

86 'Wa-dhālika'l-mūthāq alladhī akhadhahu 'alayhim fī zill al-jabal ... hādha'l-mūthāq qad taḍammana al-qawā'id al-thābita li-dīn Allāh; hādhihi'l-qawā'id allatī jā'a bihā'l-Islām aydan ...' (Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī zilāl*, vol. 1, p. (on Q. 2:83–4); Salahi (tr.), *In the Shade*, vol. 1, p. 85).