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Criminal Mediation in the Quran, Old Testament, and Talmud

Mohammad Kaveh Nafchi ¹ 

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Abstract

Criminal mediation is a common theme among Muslims, Jews, and Christians. However, what similarities and differences exist regarding the mediator and their role, individual versus collective mediation, location, and scope? Are certain statements in their respective scriptures compatible with the belief in the inherent, active unity, and justice of God? The necessity of referring to the epistemological sources of religion, the Quran's call for common ground among religions (Āli 'Imrān/64), and the value of clarification emphasized in the Quran (al-Zumar/18) underscore the importance of this topic. This research, employing a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizes comparative studies of the aforementioned religious texts. The results indicated that the only complete and independent otherworldly mediator is God. The simplicity of God's essence negates the concept of a son or multiplicity of divine beings. Certain statements in their scriptures require correction. Intercession does not negate the punishment of discrimination and injustice; rather, it specifically excludes violations of divine law and discrimination. This act is related to the divine attribute of mercy. While sharing commonalities such as divine mercy, the mediator's proximity, and the faith of those who benefit, otherworldly mediators also exhibit differences regarding the possibility or certainty of acceptance, whether the

1 . Assistance professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch, IRAN. MKaveh@azad.ac.ir

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mediation is fundamental or supplementary, obstacles to intercession, the role of Sharia, and the scope of intercession in terms of the types of sins and the number of those saved.

Keywords: Mediation, Divine Punishment, Ransom, Inherent and Active Tawhī (Oneness), Quran, Old Testament, and Talmud.

Introduction

The books of Abrahamic religions share common themes in thought and belief. This can foster unity and agreement among them against atheists and polytheists.

The Quran calls on Muslims to take the initiative in finding common ground among religions: "Qul yā Ahl al-Kitāb Ta'ālaw ilā Kalimatin Sawā'in Baynanā wa Baynakum allā Na'buda illā Allāh wa lā Nushrika bihī Shay'an wa lā Yattakhidha Ba'dunā Ba'dan Arbāban min Dūn Allāh fa in Tawallaw fa Qūlū Ashhidū bi Annā Muslimūn." (Āli 'Imrān/64) It also holds the People of the Book accountable for clarifying matters: "Wa Idh Akhadha Allāh Mīthāq Alladhīna Ūtū al-Kitāb Latubayyinunnahū lil Nās wa lā Taktumūnahū," (Āli 'Imrān/187) and the Prophet played a clarifying role: "Fabashshir 'Ibād Alladhīna Yastami'ūna al-Qawla fa-Yattabi'ūna Aḥsanahū. Ulā'ika Alladhīna Hadāhum Allāh wa Ulā'ika Hum Ulūl Albāb." (al-Zumar/17-18) Similarly, the practical conduct of the Ahl al-Bayt involved dispelling doubts.

1. Problem Statement

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Resurrection and the afterlife are nearly universal themes among Abrahamic religions. One related topic is divine punishment. The scriptures of Jews, Christians, and Muslims mention mediation in divine punishment. Therefore, criminal mediation is a fundamental belief or doctrine. For example:

Quran: "That Day, no intercession will benefit except [that of] one to whom the Most Merciful has given permission and whose word He has approved." (Tāhā/109) In this verse, intercession is associated with the "Attribute of mercy" of God.

Torah: The Lord said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, despite all the signs that I have done among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." Please, show the power of your greatness by forgiving our sins, and show your great love to us.... Then the Lord said, "I have pardoned, according to your word." (Numbers, 14:11-21)

Talmud: Abraham, the patriarch and leader of the Jewish people, strives to liberate souls condemned to punishment in hell. Abraham brings them out of that place and hosts them (Cohen, 1382: 385).

New Testament: For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already (John 3:17-18 and Galatians 3:13).

Also, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for

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them... having paid the penalty for our sins with his own blood (Hebrews, 7:24-25).

Considering the apparent meaning of the above passages and the reliance of society and rational people on the authority of the literal meanings of words – the first meaning that comes to mind from a word is its literal meaning, and adhering to the literal meaning is logically correct – there are different interpretations of these words among the followers of the mentioned religions. This leads to doubts regarding the violation of God's will and decree, God's favoritism, and in the oneness of God's essence – the existence of another essence alongside God's essence that is also God – and the oneness of God's actions. Therefore, it requires clarification and the removal of these doubts.

2. Research Background

Based on the conducted search, some of the articles and theses written are:

- "Soteriology" from the Perspective of Christianity and Islam, (2004 AD/1383 SH), Hassan Taeb, Toloo', Nos. 10 and 11;
- Intercession for Punishment in the Quran and the Old and New Testaments (2011), Mohammad Kaveh, Interpretive Studies, vol. 2, no. 6;
- "Salvation in Islam and Christianity" with Emphasis on the Holy Quran and the Bible (2011 AD/1390 SH), Mostafa Azadiyan, Naghd va Nazar, vol. 6, no. 4;
- Article, "Explanation of the Doctrine of Atonement in Christianity and Intercession in Shia Islam," (2014 AD/1393 SH) Ahmad Reza Meftah, Mohsen Rabbani, Journal of Comparative Theology, vol. 5, no. 12;

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- Comparison of the Encouragements and Threats of the Quran and the Bible in Presenting the Doctrine of Life After Death, (2020 AD/1399 SH), Mehrab Sadeghnia, Abdolreza Zahedi, and Mostafa Rezaei, Journal of Quranic Interpretation and Language Research.

- Thesis, "Intercession in Islam and Christianity," (2000 AD/1379 SH) Sefat Natanzi, Supervisor: Mahdi Najaf Afra, Research Conclusion according to the author: Intercession in both religions, which are monotheistic and based on revelation, is a door of mercy that opens from God towards the sinner. Unlike worldly and otherworldly intercessions, it motivates the intercessors, which strengthens the spirit of hope and consequently leads to deliverance from the pit of destruction.

The characteristic of the present research is its reliance on the main sources of religious epistemology: the Quran, the Old Testament (excluding the Torah), the New Testament, and the Talmud, with an approach of adhering to the apparent meanings of the words. This is because the serious intention of God and any author is to convey the meaning of the "Subject matter" of the word to the minds of the audience by using words – unless there is evidence to the contrary of the serious intention. Therefore, the authority of the apparent meanings is definite and acceptable to reason and rational people. Beliefs and actions based on certainty establish the obligatoriness and excusability of the accountable person before God. The Quran states regarding this method: "Those who hold fast to the Book and establish prayer - indeed; We will not allow to be lost the reward of the reformers." (al-A'raf/170)

In addition, the scope of the research expands to include the three books of the Quran, the Old and New Testaments, and the Talmud, and compares

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them with each other. Furthermore, some of the decisions of the Church councils that are consistent with the apparent meanings of the texts are also mentioned.

3. Importance and Necessity of the Research

Referring to the primary source of religion for its epistemology, the pronouncement of the "Glorious Quran" - in the Surahs *Āli 'Imrān* and *al-Zumar* - regarding the interaction of followers of religions based on commonalities, and the Quran's emphasis on clarification, is among the necessities of the present research. The necessity of clarification is such that God commands His Prophet to explain the verses of the Quran, in the hope that people may reflect (al-Nahl/16). Furthermore, the religious leader and wise leader of the Islamic Revolution has named it "Jihad," declaring it an absolute and immediate obligation, and that everyone who is able must take action (19/11/1400).

4. Conceptualization

Fadā' and *Fidyah* in the dictionary mean the price or property that a person pays as a consequence of committing a disliked act, warding off a calamity, or for liberation (Amid).

The word "Mediation" is synonymous with the word "Intercession." In the Quran, intercession is derived from the word "*Shaf'*," meaning to attach something to another thing: "*al-Shaf'*" is the joining of something to its like," and intercession means joining oneself to another, supporting him, and requesting on his behalf.

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"*al-Shafā'ah* is joining oneself to another, supporting him and asking on his behalf." (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 2000: 266)

In the Encyclopedia of the Bible, it is stated: "Intercession can be defined as a pure, faithful, and persistent prayer in which a person asks God for help for an individual or individuals who are in dire need of God's intervention." (Mohammadiyan, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 411)

And in the terminology of theology, it refers to the attainment of mercy and forgiveness for God's servants through the saints, the righteous servants of God ('Alā' al-Baṣrī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 177 and Subḥānī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 441).

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī: A person, who has an incomplete means and cause for drawing closer to greatness, seeks to complete it with the help of another matter that is an intermediary (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 1, 158); therefore, those who are on the path of drawing closer to God but have somehow committed a sin, seek forgiveness and divine pardon by resorting to an intermediary.

4.1. Mediation in the Old Testament

The issue of mediation of punishment by the figures of Abraham, Moses, Job, and Jeremiah for an individual or group is mentioned in worldly matters. As an example of mediation of punishment:

- Abraham for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah; Abraham said: "O! Lord, will you destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

Perhaps there are fifty righteous people in the city; would you not spare the place for their sake? Surely you would not destroy the righteous with the wicked. How could you treat the righteous and the wicked alike? Will not

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the Judge of the entire earth do what is just? Abraham negotiated with the Lord, and through repeated requests, reduced the number from 50 to 45, then to 40, then to 30, then to 20, and finally to ten righteous people in the city of Sodom, and the Lord accepted Abraham's request and refrained from punishment (Genesis 18:23-32).

- Moses for Miriam; Miriam's body became afflicted with white leprosy. When Aaron saw this, he cried out to Moses, "Oh my lord, do not punish us for this sin, for we have acted foolishly. So Moses prayed to the Lord, saying, "O! God, I beg you, heal her." The Lord said, "Now she must spend seven days outside the camp in isolation, and after that, she can return." (Numbers 12:11-14)

- Moses' request for the Israelites' offense against God, "Moses, I beg you, forgive the sins of this people according to the greatness of your love, just as you have forgiven them from the day they left the land of Egypt." The Lord said, "I have forgiven them as you have requested." (Numbers 14:19-20) Also, Moses' request regarding the Israelites' worship of the golden calf and the Lord's change of mind, "Then the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people." (Exodus 32:14)

- Job's request for his friends, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Now, take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves and my servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly." (Job 42:7-9)

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- The request for good for the collective, so you, Jeremiah, do not pray for this people—those who act against the Ten Commandments—nor cry, lament, or intercede for them, because I will not accept it (Jeremiah 7:16-9).

- Daniel's request for himself and his people, "O! Lord, hear our prayer and forgive our sins. O! Lord, listens and acts, and do not delay for your own sake, O my God, because your name is upon this people and upon this city." (Daniel 9:19)

The apparent conclusion of the above passages is that the penal mediators, Abraham and Moses, unlike Jeremiah, are effective in diverting the divine will. Therefore, God is, in some instances, the locus of events. Of course, this issue is not consistent with the immutability of God's attributes. Also, Moses benefited from God's love for this action. In the case of Job, God has introduced his intercession as effective in divine punishment.

4.2. Talmud

The Talmud is the second source of epistemology of the Jewish religion—in the Pharisaic tradition—which explicitly states that the future world and the resurrection of the dead will take place in the holy land of Palestine (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 367). This book was written centuries after the birth of Christ. Will Durant wrote about the importance of this book, stating that for 1400 years, this book was the core of Jewish education, and Hebrew students would immerse themselves in its study for seven hours every day for seven years, memorizing it through hearing and sight (Will Durant, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 4, 464).

In the Talmud, topics such as: heaven, hell, the future world, judgment, etc., are discussed, the background of which is not explicitly seen in the Old

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Testament, especially the Torah (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 375), and therefore, it was a point of disagreement among Jewish scholars, the Shomron (Samaritan) sect, and the Sadducees, who did not accept it. And today, the Sadducees no longer exist (ibid: 365).

In the Talmud, the intercession of Abraham and its influence is written: "Abraham, the friend of God, the patriarch and leader of the Jewish people, strives to liberate souls who are condemned to suffer a specific period in hell. Abraham brings them out of that place and welcomes them." (ibid: 385)

Regarding the learning of the Torah, it is stated: "The most important means of human liberation from the punishment of hell is learning and studying the Torah. The fire of hell has no effect on Torah scholars." (ibid: 386) Or, reciting certain prayers is another means of remaining safe from the punishment of hell. "Whoever recites the Shema Yisrael and is careful in the correct pronunciation of its letters, hell will be cooled for him. This was previously done by the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem, which atoned for the sins of Israel." (ibid.) The concept of the "World to come" and the "Book of Torah" are considered among the intercessors.

A final point, considering the deep connection between word and meaning and the validity of adhering to the literal appearance of the word and its meaning – from the apparent meanings of some books of the Torah and the Talmud, a mediating role is inferred in relation to the divine will and its influence upon it. However, these appearances are not compatible with the belief in the unity of divine action and must be understood as being within the scope of God's will and not independent of it. Therefore, resolving the contradiction in these kinds of statements is necessary.

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4.3. The New Testament

Given the Christian belief in the inspiration of the Holy Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21 and Khachiki, 1982: 7), intercession in the New Testament is associated with the doctrines of "salvation" from original sin, its consequences, and "Redemption." Redemption is exclusive to Jesus. Jesus said, "Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:19) or, "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:56)

Regarding the phrase "Son of Man," it is necessary to mention that the New Testament attributes two natures to Jesus. One is his human nature: "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles," (Matthew 12:18) and the other is the divine aspect of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1-3); as the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD affirmed the true divinity of Jesus.

Regarding the doctrine of "Ransom" and Jesus being an atonement, it is stated, "But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet; for by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." (Hebrews 10:12-14) From the words of Jesus, it was understood that "Since we have the intercession of Christ, we absolutely do not need any other intercession, whether it be from a saint or an angel." (Master Hawks, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 525)

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Intercession in the New Testament includes the "Hereafter." However, considering the words of Christ, who said, "I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them," (Matthew 5:17) mediation in the New Testament is summarized as pertaining to both worldly and otherworldly matters. Also, intercession is collective and does not require the fulfillment of the laws of the Sharia for the one being interceded for. The only condition is faith in Christ: "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:21-24)

Regarding the role of Jesus as an intermediary, whether complete and independent or by God's permission, the issue is addressed differently due to the two theological perspectives of Jesus as human and Jesus as divine. This is reflected in the apparent harmony and disharmony of the Gospels and other New Testament books. For example:

1. "Therefore everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33)
2. "I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them." (John 17:9-10)

The apparent meaning of the above passages explicitly indicates Jesus' participation with God in actions and ownership of the world. However, this

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participation, in whatever sense it is taken—whether real or metaphorical—implies that Jesus shares in the specific attributes of God. This is inconsistent with the essential unity and non-composite nature of God's being and the unity of His actions.

3. "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. He reminds us of the truth that he paid the price for our sins with his own blood." (Hebrews 7:25)

It should be explained that the Hebrew people were a group of Jewish-Christians who practiced the Law in the Temple of Jerusalem. One of the apostles wrote a letter stating that there was no longer a need to observe the Law for salvation; the Law had been abolished, and Jesus is the savior.

4. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already." (John 3:17-18 and Galatians 3:13)

It should be noted that the apparent meaning of the phrase "Son of God," whether literal or honorific, implies a real participation in the essence, attributes, and specific prerogatives of God, and the same problems mentioned above arise again.

In summary, considering the authority of the literal meanings of the words in the Gospel of John (3:17-18) regarding the son ship of God and the divine nature of Jesus (John 1:1-3), the apparent meanings of the passages in Romans (4:21-22) and Hebrews (10:12-15) suggest that the salvation and intercession of Jesus (peace be upon him) occur independently. Furthermore, in 451 AD, the Council of Chalcedon declared Christ's nature to be divine.

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However, if the aforementioned passages are considered in light of the synoptic Gospels and the human aspect of Jesus, then "Salvation" through Jesus is a manifestation of divine mercy, and no independence is inferred for him.

In any case, the mediation of Jesus in the apparent meanings of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew) and the non-synoptic Gospels is inconsistent and requires reconciliation.

4.4. The Holy Quran

The Holy Quran is a "Verifier" and "Guardian" over the previous heavenly books (al-Mā'idah/48). The Quran declares that complete, independent, and absolute intercession is exclusive to God: "Say: All intercession belongs to God. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you will be returned." (al-Zumar/44) It also attributes intercession to God's attribute of mercy: "That Day, no intercession will benefit anyone except for those whom the Most Compassionate has permitted and whose words He has approved." (Ṭāhā/109) Therefore, God's "Cosmic will" is for non-independent mediation. In reality, there is no intercessor except God: "You have no protector or intercessor besides Him." (al-Sajdah/4) And the mediator is only a permitted messenger of God: "Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?" (al-Baqarah/255)

God is pleased with the words and actions of the permitted mediator: "And they do not intercede except for whom He has approved," (Ṭāhā/109) and He is also pleased with those who benefit from the religion: "and they do not intercede except for whom He has approved." (al-Anbīyā'/28) However, God's approval of those who benefit from the religion does not encompass

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all of their actions. Otherwise, there would be no need for intercession. Rather, the beneficiary needs the help of a mediator to purify their deeds and reach the divine presence.

The Quran explicitly excludes certain categories of sinful acts from intercession, such as injustice (al-Ghāfir/18), denial of the afterlife (al-Muddathir/46), and idolatry (Rūm/13), among others. Furthermore, the apparent meaning of the Quranic verses does not indicate intercession on behalf of groups, ethnicities, or all of humanity. These two points contrast with the apparent meaning of the New Testament, which suggests a complete abolishment of the law and the collective forgiveness of sinners. The Quran places the context of intercession on the Day of Judgment in the hereafter: "That Day shall no intercession avail, except for those to whom the Most Gracious has granted permission and whose word is acceptable to Him." (Ṭāhā/109) Some theologians and Quranic commentators have written that "The totality of verses on intercession refers to the Day of Resurrection." (Subhani, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 8, 67)

5. Repentance and Mediation in the Quran, New Testament, and Talmud

Repentance means returning. It is the primary means of removing the consequences of religious sins in this "World": "And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O! Believers that you might succeed." (Nūr/31) In another verse, God is described as accepting repentance for all sins: "And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons evil deeds, and He knows what you do." (Shurā/25) Thus, repentance is both the means by which a servant returns to God's mercy and God's acceptance of the

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servant's return to His mercy without reproach: "Indeed, He is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful." (al-Baqarah/54)

Based on the apparent meaning of the Quranic verses, the admission of error and repentance were taught to Adam by God: "Then Adam received from his Lord words [of repentance], and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, He is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful." (al-Baqarah/37)

However, "Leaving what is preferable" differs from "Religious repentance." Religious repentance occurs after the establishment of legal rulings. In Paradise, legal rulings had not yet been established. After the descent, legal rulings were established (al-Baqarah/38). Furthermore, the apparent meaning of the verse contrasts with the first sin and the doctrine of "Atonement."

In the Old Testament, prayer is one way to avert punishment (Exodus 34:8), and in the Talmud, the concept of "Repentance" is established before the creation of the world, with the reason for its establishment being "God's justice." This is because God created man with the inclination for evil and wickedness, making him susceptible to sin and transgression (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 122). The opportunity for repentance exists in this world, but regarding the afterlife, conflicting answers have been given. Repentance is available to everyone. Through repentance, sins are immediately forgiven, and a person is purified. However, if someone sins after repenting, they are not given another opportunity for repentance (ibid: 125).

In the New Testament, "Repentance" is discussed after belief in the doctrine of "Atonement" and is one of the common rituals of Christian denominations. Repentance is based on sins that a Christian commits after baptism. "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ

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Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Paul's letter to the Romans, 6:3-6)

Christians cite the following two passages for the doctrine of repentance: "John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea" (Matthew 3:1-2); and "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." (James 5:16)

The act of repentance takes place in the presence of a priest, with the specific sins mentioned, and forgiveness is granted by the priest. This right has been passed down from the disciples of Jesus to the priests. Jesus said to his disciples: "If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (John 20:21-22)

After hearing the confession, the priest says: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I absolve you of your sins." (Brantl, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 137) These statements all clearly indicate the independence of Jesus' disciples, the Pope, bishops, and priests—the hierarchy of the Catholic Church—in the forgiveness of sins, which is incompatible with monotheism.

According to the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 AD), every Catholic is required to perform the act of repentance at least once a year (ibid: 136, Lane, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 194, and Peters, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 1, 434).

This statement also clearly indicates the independence of Jesus' disciples, the Pope, bishops, and priests—the hierarchy of the Catholic Church—in the forgiveness of sins, which is incompatible with monotheism.

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In summary, the path to repentance, the place of repentance, its implementation, and the forgiver of sins are different in Christianity compared to Muslims and Jews.

6. Justification of Intercession

The correct justification of intercession removes some ambiguities and dispels doubts surrounding it. Regarding the mechanism of intercession, some commentators of the Holy Quran have written: the intercessor does not seek an excessive or irrational influence on the ruler. Rather, the intercessor mediates something that truly exists within the ruler, leading to the release of the person in question from their predicament. The intercessor does not ask the master ruler to, for example, nullify his mastership and abolish the servitude of the servant. Nor does he ask him to abandon his judgment and obligation, or to repeal it with another judgment, either repealing it for everyone or for the specific person, so that he would not punish him. Nor does he ask him to abolish his penal law, either in general or for the specific person, or not to punish in any case or in this particular case. Intercession does not mean this, and the intercessor does not have such an effect on the mastership of the master and the servitude of the servant, or on the judgment of the master or his punishment. Rather, after considering these three aspects sacred and valid, he performs his intercession through other means. For example, he appeals to attributes of the master ruler that necessitate him to forgive his disobedient servant, such as the attributes of generosity, munificence, and honor; or he appeals to attributes in the servant, such as humility, poverty, and insignificance, or to attributes in the

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intercessor himself, such as his closeness and high status with the ruler (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 1, 240).

The intercessor's appeal to God's generosity is, in fact, an appeal to God's munificence and forgiveness, because He Himself, while maintaining the above conditions, declared that He is forgiving and forbearing: "Know that God is Forgiving and Forbearing." (al-Baqarah/235) God's forgiveness is the accepted intercession. However, the attribution differs; it is called "Forgiveness" in relation to the independent agent of existence, and "Mediating Punishment" in relation to the intermediary and the means. Of course, God's generosity and forgiveness do not encompass all sins and have a specific system, as He said: "If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your minor sins." (al-Nisā'/31)

Some other commentators have written: the essence of intercession is, in reality, the completion of the recipient's capacity; that is, the intercessor does something that frees the recipient from deficiency and brings them to the level of acceptability. Reason dictates that if a being lacks perfection, it must receive that perfection from the source that is the essence of perfection. And if it does not have the necessary capacity for achieving perfection, it must, by seeking assistance from intermediaries and means, bring its capacity to the required level. Such a thing not only does not violate any law, but is rather a requirement of rational laws (Javadi Amoli, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 4, 216). The Quran explains the specific system of intercession in this way:

A) The intercessor: those who have observed the covenant of servitude to God and avoidance of Satan in their thoughts and actions, and to whom God has promised intercession (Maryam/87 and al-Baqarah/255). Of course,

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according to narrations, the intercessor is not only human, and other cases have been mentioned.

B) The one for whom intercession is made: according to verse 28 of Surah al-Anbīyā', it is someone whose religion – beliefs, jurisprudential rulings, and ethics – is pleasing to God.

C) Sins not subject to intercession: In the Quran, these include: polytheism and idolatry (al-Nisā'/48), disbelievers (Maryam/87), wrongdoers (al-Ghāfir/18), hypocrites (al-Nisā'/145), and deniers of the Day of Judgment (al-Muddathir/42-46).

In the Talmud, major sins not subject to intercession include: idolatry, adultery, speaking ill of others, and murder. "The essence of those sins remains for him in the world to come." (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 115) In the New Testament, the original sin and its consequences are all forgiven.

In response to the question of why some sins are excluded from the scope of intercession and forgiveness, it can be said that God is not pleased with the path of idolaters (joining with other than God), disbelievers (denying and cutting off from the One God), false claimants (hypocrites), wrongdoers, and those who violate the rights of others.

Therefore, intercession is not granted to those who are not authorized intermediaries. However, in cases other than the above, a sinful believer is capable of receiving forgiveness for their sins and having an intermediary to complete them.

7. Comparison of the Quran, the Old Testament, and the Talmud

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Given the apparent similarity of this teaching, it is necessary to explain the similarities and differences between them.

7.1. Commonalities

First: The logic of belief in divine intercession in all three books is based on textual evidence, and the validity of the literal meaning of the words "Divine Mercy."

Second: The philosophy behind the establishment of intercession is to prevent erring humans from becoming hopeless and despairing of divine mercy. This is because Satan is constantly tempting humans. And despairing of divine mercy is equivalent to disbelief and denial of God, not just sin. The level of "Disbelief" is higher than major sins and transgressions. "And do not despair of God's mercy. Indeed, no one despairs of God's mercy except the disbelieving people." (Yūsuf/87)

Third: Salvation and redemption are common teachings of religions and require an intermediary. Intermediaries are authorized by divine permission. However, their actions – according to the Quran, the Old Testament (including the Old Testament and the Gospels), and the Talmud – are under the creative will of God. No one else has any independent or shared influence on intercession.

Fourth: There are multiple intercessors of punishment in the Holy Quran, the Old Testament, and the Talmud. Therefore:

-In the Quran, they include: the final Prophet "And from the night, pray with it as additional worship for you; it is expected that your Lord will raise you to a praised station." (al-Isrā'/79) In narrations, the Imams have interpreted the praised station as the station of intercession (‘Arūsī Ḥuwayzī, 2005

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AD/1426 AH: 3, 207). Those whose words God is pleased with, such as: Prophets, successors, impeccable Imams, believers, martyrs (Tāhā/109), and angels (al-Najm/16). Of course, the "Holy Quran" itself is also declared an intercessor: "Whoever the Quran intercedes for on the Day of Judgment, their intercession will be accepted." (Dashti, 2005 AD/1384 SH: Sermon 176)

And in the Old Testament: Abraham (Genesis 18:20-32), Moses (Numbers 14:2-20), Job (Job 42:8), and Jeremiah (7:1-16).

In the Talmud: Abraham (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 385) and the Torah (ibid: 386).

However, apart from the "Old Testament," in two other books – Daniel and Isaiah – the act of intercession related to the afterlife – the end of the world and the return of the Messiah and the general judgment in this world as the promised Messiah – is mentioned.

A) They have "Faith." However, in the Holy Quran, the object of faith is "God"

(al-Anbīyā': 28), in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:2) and the Talmud (362 and 379), and in the New Testament, the object of faith is "Jesus Christ." (Romans 4:21-22)

B) Performing righteous deeds in the Quran is described as: "And those who believe and do righteous deeds - those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally." (al-Baqarah/82, al-Baqarah/62, and al-Mā'idah/69) This is also mentioned in the Old Testament (20:1-17) and the Talmud (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 375). This is because acting upon religious obligations refines one's character and makes a person adhere to

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religious laws. In other words, a correlation is established between righteous deeds and faith, which facilitates forgiveness.

Seventh: It creates a spiritual connection and keeps the memory and name of the intercessor alive.

Eighth: The context of intercession, in the Holy Quran and the Talmud, is the afterlife, and in the New Testament, it is the end of the world.

Ninth: Considering the justification for the nature of intercession, it is neither discrimination in punishment nor contrary to justice. Rather, the deservingness of punishment is removed, and one becomes deserving of forgiveness. Therefore, it is specifically excluded from divine punishment and the violation of punishment.

Tenth: They share a common function, which is "Purification" from some sins. However, there are qualitative differences, which are explained in the section on differences.

Regarding the principle of intercession in the cosmic realm, Professor Motahhari wrote: In the system of existence, one of the manifestations of divine mercy is the phenomenon of purification. The system of creation has the characteristic of cleansing and purification. The fact that seas and plants absorb carbon dioxide from the air and purify the atmosphere is one of the manifestations of purification. If the air, which is polluted by the respiration of living beings and the combustion of fuels, were not purified by the refineries of plants and the sea, the Earth's atmosphere would lose its suitability for life in a short time, because breathing would become impossible.

The decomposition of animal carcasses and the breakdown of waste products excreted by living organisms is another example of the purification

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and cleansing of creation. Just as there are manifestations of purification and refinement in the material world and the laws of nature, there are also instances of purification and cleansing in the spiritual realm. Forgiveness and the erasure of the negative consequences of sin are among these (Motahhari, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 232).

7.2. Differences

First: In the Holy Quran and the Talmud, sin is understood as the failure to adhere to religious law. In the Quran, regarding hypocrisy, it is stated, "Allah has promised the hypocrites, men and women, and the disbelievers, the fire of Hell, wherein they will abide eternally". (al-Tawbah/68) In the New Testament, sin is understood as the "Original Sin of Adam."

Second: In the New Testament, intercession, under the doctrine of "Salvation" and "Atonement," is freely given to cleanse the original sin and the impure nature of humanity. "Christ, by his grace, has freely taken away our sins." (Romans 4:24) However, "Free Salvation" is contrary to justice and encourages the audacity of sinners. In the Quran, human nature is pure and immutable (Rūm/30). Furthermore, salvation is not free but is contingent upon faith and adherence to religious law (al-Baqarah/82). In the Talmud, the belief in the original sin of Adam is a matter of dispute (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 114).

Third: In Islam, "Genuine Repentance" is a certain and obligatory act for the remission of punishment in this world. Unlike Catholic Christianity, where confession of sin is made to a priest individually (Matthew 3:2-1) or collectively (James 5:16), it does not require anyone other than the repentant person.

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Fourth: In the Holy Quran, the possibility of "Intercession" in the resurrection and the hereafter is certain, but its acceptance, unlike in the New Testament (Romans 5:15-16) and the Talmud (Cohen 1382: 385), is not definitive and absolute (Ṭāhā/109).

Fifth: In the Holy Quran and the Talmud, intercession in salvation plays a complementary role to the practice of "religious law," while in the New Testament, it plays a fundamental and foundational role in beliefs (Romans 4:21-22). Therefore, their functions are different. If the fundamental and foundational role is undermined, it leads to the fragility of the theological structure, but undermining the complementary role does not.

Sixth: In the "New Testament," unlike the Quran and the Talmud, adherence to the law is an impediment to salvation. "Until now, we have tried to achieve this salvation and redemption and become pure and innocent in God's presence by performing religious rules and rituals. But in this new way, it is no longer so." (Romans 4:21-22)

Seventh: The sphere of mediation in the Torah is in this world and for worldly matters (Genesis 18:20-32 and Numbers 14:2-20), but in the Talmud, the New Testament, and the Quran, it is in the afterlife. In the Quran, it is through those whose words God is pleased with (Prophets 28); in the New Testament, it is through the crucifixion and sacrifice of Jesus (John 3:15 and 1 Peter 2:24); and in the Talmud, it is through Abraham (Cohen, 1382: 385).

Eighth: In the Quran, intercession is from God through literal, corresponding indication (Ṭāhā/109). In the Talmud, it is through literal, corresponding indication: "Through various means, the suffering and torment of hell can be reduced." (Cohen, 1382: 385, 386) And in the New

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Testament – Matthew 12:18 – the subject of "Judgment" and "Justice" is mentioned for Jesus, and this term implies mediation through a non-evident implicative indication. However, the subject of "Crucifixion" and "Sacrifice" in the Gospel of John, its indication of afterlife mediation is considered an evident implicative indication. In any case, the subject of mediation is not inferred from the passages of the Gospels of Matthew and John through literal indication, because implicative indication is outside the "Denotation" of the word. Reasoning based on implicative indication and its meaning is a matter of debate and doubt among logicians.

Ninth: Salvation in the afterlife differs in terms of quantity and quality. In the Quran, salvation is individual and personal in terms of quantity, and in terms of quality, the responsible person is freed from the suffering and pain – physical and spiritual – of their unrighteous deeds. In the New Testament, salvation is collective and universal. All humans are saved from "Original Sin," which is spiritual – the inclination to rebellion and disobedience. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:15-16) and "For since by man came death." (1 Corinthians 15:21-22) Collective salvation in the Talmud is for Jews from personal sins and actions contrary to religious commandments (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 385).

Tenth: In the Holy Quran, salvation takes place in the afterlife: "On the Day when the earth will be changed to another earth, and the heavens [as well], and they will come forth before Allah, the One, the Prevailing." (Ibrahim/48) In the Talmud, too, the world to come is not like the present world: "The conditions of the world to come will not be like the conditions of the present world." (Cohen, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 357) However, in the

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New Testament, the afterlife is at the end of this world with the return of Jesus: "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)

Conclusion

From examining the intercession in the hereafter in the apparent expressions of the Holy Quran, the Old and New Testaments, and the Talmud, considering the practice and rational basis of the wise in adhering to the apparent meanings of words in conveying meanings to the mind of the audience, while there are shared beliefs among the followers of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, significant qualitative differences were found using the authority of the apparent meanings of words in matters such as: the Oneness of Essence, the non-adoption of a son by God - the simplicity of Essence -, the absence of partnership in Essence, ownership and its effects, the Oneness of Actions, the atonement for sin by Jesus, the free forgiveness of sinners on the condition of faith in Christ (Romans, 3), or the forgiveness of some sins conditional on faith and adherence to the law (Holy Quran and Talmud).

The intercessor in the resurrection and the afterlife, independently, is only God, and His will is inviolable; apparent intercessors are authorized and intermediaries. Therefore, the apparent expressions of the Gospel of John in this regard need to be reconciled with the Synoptic Gospels.

The specific system of intercession in the Quran and the Talmud is based on God's satisfaction with the words and deeds of the intercessor and His satisfaction with the religion of the one interceded for, conditional on faith

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and adherence to the law. A prerequisite for God's satisfaction with the religion of the one interceded for is their remorse. Intercession for original sin is contrary to justice and causes the impudence of sinners. Intercession is individual. Some sins are excluded from the scope of intercession due to the lack of divine forgiveness; they are neither sought nor forgiven.

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