

ABRAHAM AND IBRAHIM

The Bible and the Qurán Told to Children

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Francien van Overbeeke-Rippen
Study Guide by Kenneth and Margaret Thomas

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever heard of Ibrahim? Perhaps there is a Muslim boy in your classroom with the same name. But I don’t mean him. I mean the other Ibrahim.

I mean the Ibrahim from the Qur’an, the holy book for the Muslims, written in the Arabic language. That book tells us a lot about Allah. Allah is the Arabic word for God, the Creator of heaven and earth. In the Qur’an is also written what happened many many years ago, so it tells us about Ibrahim too.

Perhaps you even know about Abraham from the Bible, the holy book for the Christians.

Yes, the two names Ibrahim and Abraham look alike; that is because Ibrahim is an Arabic name and Abraham is an English name; but it is the same man. The Bible tells us he is called a “friend of God” (Isaiah 41:8), and the Qur’an says he is a “friend of Allah” (Surah 4:125). So you can say he was a friend of the Almighty. In both books it is written about this friend;

not only about him,
but also about the Almighty
who made the world and all beautiful things on it
for the people.

Let us read together what both books tell us.

Unit 1

THE FIRST STORIES

THE CREATOR AND THE CREATION

(Genesis 1; Surahs 2:29–33; 41:10)

In many parts of the Qur'an you can read about the Creator and the creation; and the Bible says on the first page that God created heaven and earth. God in Arabic is "Allah."

This is the beginning of the Bible:
God created the earth.
The earth was empty and without form.
It was very dark on the earth and the deep.
But the Spirit of God floated above.
And God said, "Let there be light," and the
light appeared.
God saw that it was good,
so God divided the light from the darkness.
Only God knows how much time it really took,
because there was nothing on earth
to measure exactly when God was finished.

But, it says in the Bible and the Qur'an,
that for the Lord a thousand years is
the same
as one day, and one day is the same as
a thousand years
(Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8; Surah 32:5).

*In the Qur'an it even states that it could well
be fifty thousand years.*

We know now that the Lord counts in
a different way than people do.
God's time is different.
God stops God's working day when God

wants to.

After the light and darkness were divided,
God made a division between heaven and earth
and between land and sea.
Then God said that there has to be green grass, young
plants that give seeds, and fruit trees with fruit, fruit
with seeds for new trees;

and then God spoke: "Let it be" and it was so
(Genesis 1:11–13; Surah 2:117).

The earth was covered with trees and plants with seeds
for new trees and plants.
God saw what God had created was good.
Then God said that there has to be light in the sky,
so everything that lives and grows would know
the difference between day and night.
On God's word there came the sun
as a sign for the daytime, and the moon for
the nighttime;
stars appeared in the sky to light the earth
and show the way by night.
And the sea?
God said that it has to be alive
with big and small sea animals,
lots and lots of fish big and small,
birds that fly around the earth and over the horizon.
The Lord blessed the birds, the fish, and the
sea animals.
God made male and female and said,
"There is enough space to live in, so go and
be plentiful."

God did not only look after the sea,
God also looked after the land. God spoke,
"On this earth there have to be living things,
there have to be different sorts
of animals, crawling ones, wild ones,
and cattle"
(Genesis 1:20–25; Surahs 24:45; 36:36).

*The Qur'an tells us that the
animal's body shall give us warmth,
food, and drink. Horses, donkeys, and
mules shall*

*not only carry freight but you can also ride
on them
(Surah 16:5, 8).*

God created the wild animals
and cattle with their own nature, even the ones that crawl,
big and small ones.
God created male and female of all the animals.
The skies, earth, and seas were filled with them.
God saw it was good.
Then God said,
"And now we will make human beings;
they will be like us and resemble us;
they will care for the fish, the birds, the cattle,
yes, for the whole world with all the animals."

*It is written in the Qur'an (Surah 112:4)
that no one or thing looks like Allah (God),
but it says that Allah spoke to the angels
and said
that Allah was going to create a human who
would look after the world
instead of Allah (Surah 2:30).*

God created the human as a man and a woman.
First the man was created.
God brought the man to the animals.
God explained the different varieties
with their different names,
and for every male animal there was a female.
The Bible tells us it was then that the man knew
he was on his own and he had nobody;
he was lonely.
God did not like this either,
so God said,
"I will create a human companion for this man."
And God caused the man to sleep,
a deep long sleep;
God took one of the man's ribs,
covered the empty space with flesh,
and made a woman from the rib.
The Creator brought the woman to meet the man
and the man saw himself in her
and he was surprised.
He said: "The bones and flesh are the same as mine.
We are the same, a couple!"

So he called her “woman.”

In Arabic she is Hawwa’.

These two people were blessed by God.
And God told them to be a couple and to
be fruitful
and become a great people, so the world
would be filled
(Genesis 1:26–28; Surah 4:1).

When God saw that God’s creation was completed and
good,
God had a rest. The Lord blessed that day.
It was called a holy day, the day of rest.
It is a day for people to take a rest from their work
and to thank God for all things bright and beautiful
in creation (Genesis 2:1–3).
Many years later there was a psalm written about
the creation.
A king wrote it.
His name was “David.”

*In the Qur’an his name is “Dawud,”
and there he is called a prophet.*

He sang:
“O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in
all the earth!
When I look at your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that
you have established,
what are human beings that you
are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?
Yet you have made them a little
lower than God,
and crowned them with glory
and honor.
You have given them dominion
over the works of your
hands;
you have put all things under
their feet,
all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish
of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in
all the earth!” (Psalm 8:1a, 3–9)
This creation psalm is in the Bible.

*The Qur’an tells us about the Creator:
Whatever is in Heaven and on the earth,
praise Allah!
For Allah is mighty and wise.
Allah has the rule over heaven and earth.
Allah gives life and takes life.
Allah is Almighty.
Allah is the First and the Last,
visible and invisible,
and Allah knows everything
(Surah 57:1–3).*

HUMANIKIND

(Genesis 3; Surahs 7:11–25; 20:115–123)

Adam and Eve

—in Arabic, Adam and Hawwa’—

were placed by God in the garden of Eden

—Aden in the Qur’an.

The name of Adam means “man taken from
soil,”
and Eve means “life,”
for she is the mother of humankind.
They were very happy to be in the garden.
A river flowed through the place.
All was green, growing, and flowering,
and the trees were bearing fruit for the
couple.
The tree of everlasting life
stood in the middle of the garden,
as well as the tree that gives knowledge
of what is good and what is bad.
The fruit of the tree of knowledge was the
only fruit
they were not allowed to eat.
If they did eat it, they would die.
But once a satan came.

*Previously the satan was an angel
who quarreled with Allah; so Allah sent the
angel away.
Then this angel became a satan.
The Qur’an says that this happened
when Allah created Adam; the satan didn’t want*

*to bow
before this new creation.*

The Bible tells us that the satan came as a snake
and then said to Eve,
“Did God really tell you
not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?”
“We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden,” the
woman answered, “except the tree
that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.
If we eat its fruit, we will die.”
The snake replied: “That’s not true;
you will not die. God said so
because God knows that when you eat it
you will be like God,
knowing what is good and what is bad.”
The woman saw how beautiful the tree was.
She trusted the snake and thought
how wonderful it would be
to become wise.
So she took some of the fruit and ate it.
Then she also gave some to her husband
and he also ate it.

*In the Qur’an it is Adam
to whom Satan whispered,
“Shall I lead you to the tree of Eternity
and to a kingdom that never decays? (Surah
20:120)
Your Lord only forbade you this tree
lest you should become angels
or such beings as live forever” (Surah 7:20).
And he swore to them both, that he was their
sincere adviser.
So they tasted of the tree.*

As soon as they had eaten it
they saw that they were naked.

Both books tell that they sewed leaves
together
and covered themselves.

Then they hid from the Lord among the trees.
But the Almighty knows everything,
also what has happened in the garden.

In the Bible it is told that God called Adam,
“Adam, where are you?”
Adam replied from his hiding place,
“When I heard you coming I was afraid,
because I was naked.”
“Who told you that you were naked?” the Lord an-
swered.
“Did you eat the fruit
that I told you not to eat?”

*“Didn’t I forbid you this
and didn’t I warn you about Satan?”
is the reply of Allah in the Qur’an (Surah 7:22).*

But Adam said to the Lord,
“The woman you put here with me
gave the fruit to me
and then I ate it.”
The Lord asked the woman,
“Why did you do this?”
She replied: “The snake tricked me into eating it.”
Then the Lord said to the snake,
“Because you have done so,
you will be punished for this;
you alone of all the animals must bear this curse,
that from now on, you will crawl on your belly,
and you will have to eat dust
as long as you live.
I will put enmity between you and humankind.
Man will crush your head and you will bite his heel.”
Then the Lord sent Adam out of the garden,
with Eve, to cultivate the soil
from which he had been formed.
Outside the garden they had to work hard
to survive, and their children were
to be born with trouble and pain.

*“Forgive us and have mercy upon us,”
they begged (Surah 7:23).
And the Almighty replied,
“If you follow my guidance,
you will not lose my way,
nor fall into misery” (Surah 20:123).
This prayer of man and woman
and the promise of Allah (God)
are the last words in the Qur’an*

*about what happened in the garden
of Aden (Eden).*

THE FIRST SONS

(Genesis 4; Surah 5:27–32)

Outside the garden of Eden

—in the Qur'an, Aden—

life was totally different for Adam and Eve.
It was a life of heavy work, sorrows, and sadness.
But there was also happiness,
especially when their sons were born.
The first one was Cain
and the second one was Abel.

*In the Qur'an their names are not mentioned,
but Muslims call them Kabil and Habil.*

When they grew up, Cain became a farmer
and Abel became a shepherd.

After some time the two brothers brought an
offering to the Lord.
It is told in both holy books.

Cain brought some of his harvest
and gave it as an offering to the Lord.
Then Abel brought the first lamb
born to one of his sheep, killed it,
and gave the best parts of it
as an offering to the Lord.
The Lord accepted the offering of Abel,
but did not accept Cain's offering.
Cain got angry, but the Lord said to him,
"Why are you angry . . . ?
If you do well, will you not be accepted?
And if you don't do well,

sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you,
but you should master it" (Genesis 4:6-7).
But Cain remained angry and he said to Abel,
"Let us go out to the field."

*When they came into the field
—so the Qur'an tells us—
he said to his younger brother,
"I will slay you."
But the younger brother replied,
"Even if you stretch out your hand to slay me,
I will not slay you; for I fear Allah"
(Surah 5:28).*

And Cain killed Abel.

Then the Lord said to Cain,
"Where is your brother Abel?"
Cain answered, "I do not know.
Am I my brother's keeper?"
But God said, "What have you done?
Your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground!
And now you are cursed from the ground,
which has opened its mouth
to receive your brother's blood from your hand.
When you till the ground, it will no longer
yield to you its strength.
You will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth"
(Genesis 4:9-12).
Then Cain said to the Lord,
"Isn't my sin so great that I cannot bear the punish-
ment?
Away from this land and away from your presence,
anyone who finds me will kill me."
"No," the Lord answered, "if anyone kills you,
seven lives will be taken in revenge."
So the Lord put a mark on Cain
to warn anyone who met him
not to kill him.
That's what the Bible tells us.

*And because of this occurrence these words of
Allah
are given in the Qur'an,
"Therefore We ordained for the Israelites
that if anyone killed a person*

*who was not murdering others,
it would be as if he killed
the whole people;
and if anyone saved a life,
it would be as if he saved
the life of the whole people (Surah 5:32).*

Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord
and lived in the land of Nod,
east of Eden—the Bible tells us.
Adam and Eve had another son and
they called him Seth; it means "replacement."
"For God has appointed me another son to replace
Abel," Eve said.
And still more children were born,
sons and daughters.
Seth also had children.
They were faithful to God.

NUH/NOAH

(Genesis 6—9; Surahs 7:59–63; 11:25–49; 71:1–28)

Years and years passed.
More and more people were living on the
earth,
but less and less people were faithful to
God.
They turned away from God
and made idols to serve them
instead of worshiping God.
The Lord was sorry that the Lord had made
humankind.
The Lord said, "I will wipe out
these people I have created."
But the Lord was pleased with a few people;
one of them was Noah.

*Nuh is his name in the Qur'an.
In that book he is called a prophet
with whom Allah has made a covenant.
Allah has sent Nuh with a message
to the idolaters of Wadd, Souwa,
Jaghut, Jawuk, and Masr to tell them,
"You have no other god but Allah.
So fear Allah; then Allah may forgive you your
sins.
I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day."
Meanwhile Allah ordered Nuh to build a boat*

(in the Bible it is called an ark).
Noah had to build it of good timber,
and to cover the ark with tar inside and out.
The ark must have a roof, decks, and doors in it
with rooms for all animals, male and female.
God gave all measurements of the boat to Noah

and God said,
"I am going to send a flood to destroy the earth."

*The Qur'an gives the people's response
to Nuh's warning.
Their leaders said to him,
"You are confused."
But he replied: "I am not confused,
but in the Name of Allah I give you good advice.
Don't you wonder that there has come
a reminder from your Lord
through a man of your own people to warn you,
so that you may fear Allah
and may receive the Lord's mercy?"
But the people accused Nuh of being a liar
and they said, "Bring upon us what you
threaten us with, if you speak the truth!"
Nuh said: "Allah will bring it on you if Allah
wills,
and then you will not be able to stop it!"*

When the ark was ready,

God told Noah to go into the ark
with his wife and with his sons,

Shem, Ham, and Japheth, their wives,
and all kinds of animals.
God closed the door,
and the sky burst open,
and water from beneath and rains from above
filled up the earth for forty days and nights.
As the water rose,
the boat began to float.
Above the mountains the water rose,
and above the mountains the ark was raised up by the
water.

*In the Qur'an it is mentioned that another son
of Nuh
didn't want to go into the ark. He said:
"I will find a high mountain that protects me
against the water."
But he was drowned (Surah 11:42-43).*

After forty days and forty nights the rain stopped.
The Lord caused a wind to blow
and slowly the water went down
together with the ark.
After one hundred and fifty days

the ark came to rest upon a mountain;

Ararat is its name in the Bible

and Judi in the Qur'an (Surah 11:44).

Slowly the tops of the mountains
rose up from the water
and the mountains became visible again.
It took weeks and weeks
before Noah could open a window.
He sent out a raven
and the raven flew to and fro
until the water was completely gone.
Then Noah sent out a dove,
but the dove didn't find food
and flew back to the ark.
One week later Noah sent the dove out again;
it returned to him in the evening
with a fresh olive leaf in its beak.
So Noah knew that the water had gone down.
Then he waited another seven days
and sent the dove out once more;
this time it didn't come back.
Then Noah removed the covering from the boat.
He looked around and saw
that the ground was getting dry.
When it was completely dry,

God allowed Noah to go out of the ark
with his wife and children
and with all animals;
both books tell us so.

Outside the ark Noah built an altar to the Lord
and offered burnt offerings on the altar
to thank God.
And God made a covenant with Noah and his descen-
dants,
and with all animals

that came out of the ark.

This is the covenant:

that never again would all living beings
be destroyed by a flood.

And God said,

"I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall
be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and
remember the covenant that is between me and
you and every living creature of all flesh;
and the waters shall never again become
a flood to destroy all flesh" (Genesis 9:13–15).

*In the Qur'an, Nuh is mentioned
together with Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa,
and Muhammad.
They are called prophets with whom Allah
has made
a covenant (Surah 33:7).*

Abraham, or Ibrahim, lived after Noah.
The next story tells us more about Abraham.

Unit 2

IBRAHIM/
ABRAHAM

IBRAHIM/ABRAHAM
(Genesis 11:22–32; 12:1–9; Surah 21:51–71)

Noah lived to be very old.
His household grew into a large family.
He saw his grandchildren and great-grandchildren
grow up.
The Bible lists many names of Noah's offspring
up to the name of Abraham.

In the Qur'an his name is Ibrahim.

Who was that man?
He was the son of Terah
and the grandson of Nahor,
who was a descendant of Noah's son Shem.
The name of Abraham's wife was Sarah.
Abraham and Sarah had no children,
but God promised Abraham offspring,
as countless as the stars in the sky.
They first had to go on a journey.
God said to Abraham that he had to leave
his father's house and his country,
to go to the land that God was going to show him.

*In the Qur'an it is written
that Ibrahim left his country
because the people did wrong things.
They made idols and bowed down to them;
this is called "shirk."
Even Ibrahim's father did so.
Therefore, Ibrahim destroyed all idols,
except the biggest one.
When the people asked Ibrahim,
"Is it you who did this to our gods?" he said,*

*“Nay, this was done by the biggest one.
Ask him!”
This put the people to shame,
because they knew very well
that a statue cannot speak.
Finally they said to Ibrahim,
“You know that such a statue can’t talk.”
Then he replied,
“So, instead of Allah, you worship
something that helps you in no way?
Do you have no sense?”
This made the people angry
and they wanted to set Ibrahim on fire.
But Allah saved him from the fire
and sent him away from these people,
the Qur’an tells us.*

Then this descendant of Noah,
together with his wife, Sarah, and his
nephew, Lot

—Lut in the Qur’an—

moved to the land promised by God.

IBRAHIM AND LUT —ABRAHAM AND LOT

(Genesis 13—18; 19:1–29; Surahs 26:160–173; 11:70–83)

The Bible tells us that Abraham went to the country of Canaan. He arrived in the city of Shechem. And God said to Abraham, “This is the country that I am going to give to your descendants. And through you I will bless all the nations.” Then Abraham built there an altar to God. Thereafter he moved on to a city called Bethel. There he built another altar and worshiped God. And God blessed Abraham and his family with so many cattle that the grass and the water were no longer enough for all his and Lot’s animals. So the shepherds ran into trouble. Abraham said to Lot, “It is not good that our shepherds have troubles, because we are relatives. So let us separate and spread out our living places, as the land is large enough. If you go to the north, I’ll go to the south; and if you want to go to the south, I’ll go to the north.” Lot chose the region of the river Jordan, with its green prairies. Near Sodom and Gomorrah he set up his camp on the beautiful ground. But the people of these cities were wicked and sinned against the Lord. And where did Abraham go? Abraham stayed in the land of Canaan and settled near Hebron;

there he built another altar to the Lord.
 God said to him,
 "Look carefully in all directions;
 I am going to give all the land as far as you can see it
 to you and to all your countless descendants."
 And God promised Abraham a son
 with whom God would make a covenant forever.
 Some time later Ishmael was born;

in the Qur'an his name is Isma'il.

Abraham and Sarah had no children yet,
 so Abraham asked God to make that covenant
 with Ishmael. But God said,
 Surely, I will bless Ishmael, as you are his father.
 He will be the father of twelve princes
 and I will make a great nation of his descendants.
 But I will keep my covenant
 with the son born to you and Sarah, Isaac,
 as we agreed."
 And God's token of the covenant
 was the circumcision of all males from eight days old
 who lived with Abraham,
 including Ishmael and Abraham himself.
 And how did Lot do in Sodom?
 He found a wife; they married,
 and two daughters were born.
 But a war began in that beautiful place.
 Kings of big cities fought against
 kings of other big cities.
 The king of Sodom lost
 and all people in that town were captured
 by the winning kings.
 Lot and his wife and daughters were also taken.
 But a man escaped and reported all this to Abraham.
 Then Abraham called all the fighting men in his camp,
 pursued with them the enemies, attacked them,
 and rescued Lot, the women, all other prisoners
 and the loot that had been taken.
 When Abraham returned,
 Melchizedek brought bread and wine to him.
 He was the king of Salem
 and also a priest of the Most High God,
 the Bible tells us.
 Melchizedek blessed Abraham in the name of God.
 And Abraham gave a tenth of all the loot

to Melchizedek.
 But the men of Sodom and Gomorrah
 still sinned against God
 and didn't want to do God's will.

*The Qur'an says that Allah make Lot a prophet,
 and told him to warn the people.
 But the men of Sodom accused him of being a liar
 and they said that they would expel him from the
 city
 (Surah 26:161–167).*

They continued sinning until
 it was too late for them.
 Then two messengers came to visit Lot.
 They told him that in the name of God
 he must leave that place,
 because God was going to punish the city.

The men of the city came to know this
 and wanted to do evil things to the visitors.
 They would have attacked Lot,
 but the visitors pulled him back into the house,
 shut the door, and struck all the men outside
 with blindness,
 so that they couldn't find the door.

Then the two visitors told Lot to leave the
 city with his wife, daughters, and sons-in-
 law, before sunrise.

But Lot's sons-in-law didn't want to go with him;
 they thought that he was joking.

Then the two men urged Lot and his family,
 "Run for your lives! Don't look back!"
 But Lot's wife looked back

and she was turned into a pillar of salt,
 the Bible tells us.

*In the Qur'an it was already predicted
 that the woman would not be saved;
 she lingered behind and was struck
 by a shower of brimstone.
 The Qur'an calls her an old woman*

(Surahs 26:171; 37:135).

The next morning God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire.

When Abraham came out of his camp and saw the fire, he remembered the message of the visitors. They had visited Abraham before going to Lot. He had offered them a meal and they had explained to him the plan to destroy both cities. Afterward they went up to Lot in Sodom. A third visitor stayed with Abraham to tell him what would happen with the city.

Abraham again and again asked God to save the city, because Lot and his family lived there.

And repeatedly he was told that God would do so if fifty or forty innocent people were found, or even if it was only thirty or twenty people (for Abraham reduced the number every time). Finally, he asked what God would do, if only ten innocents were found; and he was told that even then the city would be saved. But he was not allowed to ask again. So when that morning he looked out and saw the fire from afar, he understood that not even ten innocent people could be found in Sodom and Gomorrah.

He also had heard a good message from his visitors. It was their promise that next year Sarah would bear a son, with whom God would make a covenant. In the Qur'an and the Bible it is written that Abraham's wife could hardly believe it, as she was very old already. But in both books it is also written that for the Lord nothing is impossible (Genesis 18:14; Surah 11:72–73).

THE SONS OF IBRAHIM/ABRAHAM

(Genesis 21 — 22; Surah 37:102–107)

One year later a son was born to Abraham and Sarah. His name is Isaac

—in the Qur'an, Ishak.

In both books we can read that, one night in a dream, the Almighty ordered Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice.

In the Bible, Isaac is mentioned;

in the Qur'an, Isma'il is intended, although his name is not mentioned. When his son was old enough to work with his father, Ibrahim said, "My son, I have seen myself sacrifice you in a dream. What do you think?" He said, "Father, do as you are commanded and, God willing, you will find me steadfast." (Surah 37:102–103)

Happily this ended well. God saw Abraham willing to obey God and this was sufficient to God. The Lord stopped him. Then, when Abraham raised his eyes he saw a ram caught by the horns in a bush. And Abraham thankfully offered the ram to God instead of his son.

The Muslims celebrate this event every year. A ram or other animal is slaughtered and the meat is shared with the family, friends, and the poor.

*In the Arabic language this feast
is called Id-al-Adha.*

Much happened in the lives of the
two sons of Abraham.
The Bible tells us that Ishmael had been living
with his small brother Isaac for a few years.
But then Sarah wanted him to leave
with his mother.
That became a time of great sadness.
Ishmael almost perished with thirst
on the long way through the desert.
But God protected Hagar and her son.
God sent an angel to her to show a well;

the Arabic name of this well is Zamzam.

God also gave Hagar
a dwelling place in the desert of Paran;
there she could stay with Ishmael.
And once again God promised Hagar
that God would give many children to her son,
so that they would become a great nation.
Ishmael became a skilful hunter.
Although he was now living far away from his father,
Abraham didn't forget him.
For Ishmael was his son, wasn't he?

*In the Qur'an it is written
that father and son together
built a house for the Lord
in Ismai'l's new dwelling place.
It is the Ka'ba, in Makkah, or Mecca.
In that place Ibrahim prayed to Allah
for himself and for both of his sons.
"O my Lord!" he said, "make this city
a city of peace and security;
and preserve me and my sons
from worshipping idols.
Because they indeed lead many people astray"
(Surah 14:35-41).
The Lord heard Ibrahim's prayer;
Allah sanctified the newly built house
and made of it a place of worship
and sacrifice.
And much later Allah sent the angel Jabra'il*

*with messages for the descendants of Isma'il,
especially to one of them called Muhammad.
Muhammad was to give these messages to his
people;
therefore Allah called him a "prophet."
All these messages were written down in a book;
it became the Holy Qur'an,
full of words through Jabra'il to Muhammad
in the Name of Allah,
and full of memories of the past:
the time of Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishak, and Ya'kub
and all other believers.*

Warnings and guidelines are also given
in that book, as are given in the Bible,
the book of the descendants of Ishak.
And like the Bible, the Qur'an also delivers
the most important message that the Lord
Almighty is one,
and that there is no god but Allah,
the Creator, the Eternal,
the First and the Last,
the Light of heaven and earth
(Surahs 57:3; 24:35; see Revelation 22:13).

*Right up to today these words are being read and
told
to the descendants; also about the Ka'ba,
the house of the Lord in Mecca.
And many Muslims still go on pilgrimage
to that place, at least once in their lives.
And if the journey is too expensive,
or people are very poor,
then sometimes they collect money
to send one member of their family
or one inhabitant of their village
to Mecca, on behalf of all.*

THE SONS OF ISMA'IL/ISHMAEL AND ISHAK/ ISAAC

(Genesis 21 — 22; Surah 37:102–107)

Ishmael grew in length and strength.
His mother found an Egyptian wife for him,
the Bible tells us.
They got married and, in the years after that,
twelve sons and at least one daughter were born.
She was called Mahalath, or Basemath
(Genesis 25:12–17).
Later, this daughter was married to a son of Isaac.
The sons lived east of Egypt
and became ancestors of their tribes.

*In the Qur'an it is written that Isma'il was true
to what he promised, and that he taught his
people
how to pray and how to share with the poor.
Therefore Allah called him a messenger
and a prophet (Surah 19:54–55).*

Isaac also grew into an adult,
and his father Abraham wanted to find a good wife for
him.
Abraham felt too old to do this himself,
so he sent his oldest servant, Eliezer,
to his old country
where his relatives were still living.
Perhaps Eliezer could find among them a woman
who would agree to marry Isaac.
He found Rebecca, and after some days
he was allowed to take her to Isaac.
When Isaac saw her, he loved her (Genesis 24).

They married and twins were born,
Esau and Jacob.
Later it was Esau who married Mahalath,
the daughter of Ishmael (Genesis 28:8–9).

About Ishmael the Bible also tells us
that when Abraham died,
Ishmael and Isaac together
buried their father in the cave of Machpelah,
the place where Abraham's wife, Sarah, was also buried
(Genesis 25).

Much later, after Rebecca had died
and Isaac's life had also come to an end,
he also was buried, like his wife,
in the cave of Machpelah,
by his twin sons, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 35:28).

Esau had five sons, Jacob twelve,
and both had daughters (Genesis 29—30).
Both families increased so much
and had so many cattle,
that they could no longer live together.
Therefore, Esau and his family went to another place.
The brothers parted in peace from each other.
That was better than in the past,
when they were still younger.
At that time there was trouble between them
about which of the two was most important
and would inherit the greater part of
their father Isaac's heritage.
Then Jacob ran away from his father's house,
as he had cheated his father
and his brother, and Esau wanted to kill Jacob
because of that.
This is told to us in the Bible.
In spite of that, God promised Jacob that God would be
with him on his way.
And the Lord gave a new name to Jacob: "Israel" (Gen-
esis 32:22–29).

Many years later, before Isaac died,
the two brothers met again.
They hugged and kissed each other.
So all fear and all anger was wiped away (Genesis 33).
This is what reconciliation means.

Unit 3

YA'KUB/JACOB

THE SONS OF YA'KUB/JACOB

(Genesis 37—50; Surah 12)

Much is written about Jacob,
in the Qur'an as well as in the Bible.

In the Qur'an his name is Ya'kub.

Both books tell us about his twelve sons,
especially about one of them.
Joseph was his name;

in the Qur'an his name is Yusef.

He was the eleventh of the twelve sons of Jacob,
and the eldest of Rachel's two sons.
Rachel was already dead.
Jacob spoiled Joseph; he made a beautiful robe for him.
Joseph brought bad reports to his father
about what his brothers were doing.

He also had some dreams;
in the dreams it seemed
that his father and brothers bowed for him.
He told his father and his brothers this.

*"Oh my father, I dreamt that I saw eleven stars
and the sun and the moon. I saw them bow
down to me." His father warned him
not to tell his brothers,
and to leave the interpretation to Allah,
the Qur'an tells us (Surah 12:5).*

But Joseph's brothers had already heard it
and they got angry, the Bible says.

They wanted to rid themselves of this proud
Joseph.
And once, when all were far from home,
they attacked him and threw him
into a deep, dry well.

And as they were considering
whether or not to kill him,
they saw a caravan of traders
coming from Gilead and
traveling on the way to Egypt.

In the Qur'an the name of that country is Misr.

They were Ishmaelites and Midianites;
those are descendants of Abraham and Hagar
and of Abraham and Keturah, whom he married
after Sarah's death (Genesis 25).
Joseph's brothers decided
it was better to sell Joseph than to kill him.
So they pulled him out of the well
and sold him for twenty pieces of silver,
the Bible tells us.

*According to the Qur'an, the merchants themselves
pulled Yusef out of the well.
For their water carrier let his bucket down
into the well to get water.
Instead of water, he found a boy in the well
and called: "Good news! A young man in
the well!"
So the merchants concealed him as a treasure.
But then the brothers came along
and wanted to be paid for Yusef.
For a few dirhams he was sold,
the Qur'an tells us (Surah 12:19–20).*

Then the brothers told their father Jacob
that a wild animal had killed Joseph;

a wolf, the Qur'an says.

They showed him Joseph's robe,
after having dipped it into a goat's blood.
And Jacob mourned his son for many years,
so it is written in both books.

YUSEF/JOSEPH IN EGYPT

(Genesis 39–41; Surah 12:21–57)

In Egypt

— "Misr" in the Qur'an —

Joseph was sold to one of Pharaoh's officers;

in the Bible his name is Potiphar.

Joseph lived in Potiphar's house.
The Lord Almighty blessed Joseph
and gave him wisdom, both books tell us.
So Joseph made the right decisions
and Potiphar saw that the Lord was
with Joseph
and he was pleased with him.
Potiphar made him his personal servant.
Potiphar's wife also saw that he was a
good man.
She fell in love with him
and wanted him to fall in love with her.
But Joseph said that he didn't want to
do wicked things toward the Lord
and toward her husband.
And when she couldn't tempt him,
she had him imprisoned by lying.
However, even in prison, the Lord took care
of him
and gave him wisdom. Joseph saw this
when the Pharaoh's wine steward and the
chief baker
were put in prison.
Something wrong had taken place in the palace
and because of that, both men were punished,

so is written in both books.
 Then, one night each man had a dream.
 The wine steward said,
 "In my dream there was a grapevine
 with three branches on it.
 I took the ripe grapes and squeezed them
 into the king's cup and I gave it to him."
 The chief baker also told his dream to Joseph,
 "I was carrying three bread-baskets on
 my head.
 In the top basket there were all kinds of
 pastries for the king, and the birds were eat-
 ing them."
 What could be the meaning of these dreams?

*Then Yusef first told about the faith
 of his ancestors Ibrahim, Ishak, and Ya'kub,
 their faith in Allah, the only God to be worshiped,
 the Qur'an says (Surah 12:38–40).*

Speaking about the dreams, Joseph said,
 "It is only God who grants the ability to
 interpret dreams:
 The three branches in the wine steward's
 dream
 represent three days. In three days you will
 give the king
 his cup, as you did before.
 Please remember me and be kind enough
 to mention me to the king
 and help me to get out of this prison,
 when everything is going well for you.
 The three baskets of the chief baker
 also represent three days.
 In three days you will be killed
 and the birds will eat you."
 And so it happened.
 But the wine steward, the one who was
 released,
 forgot what he had promised to Joseph.
 He remembered only two years later.
 That was at the time that Pharaoh

—Fir'awn in the Qur'an—

had dreams one night.

Both books tell about it.
 In the first dream, he saw seven fat cows.
 The fat cows were being eaten by seven thin
 cows.
 Then he dreamt again and saw
 seven ears of grain, full and ripe.
 Then seven other ears of grain sprouted,
 thin and scorched by the desert wind;
 and the thin ears of grain swallowed the full
 ones.
 Pharaoh woke up and was worried.
 He sent for all the wise men of Egypt
 and told them his dreams,
 but no one could explain them to him.
 Then the wine steward remembered Joseph
 and he said to Pharaoh,
 "I must confess today that I have done
 wrong,"
 and he told the king about his own dream,
 about Joseph's interpretation
 and how things turned out just as Joseph
 had said.
 So Pharaoh sent for Joseph.

*In the Qur'an it is written
 that Yusef refused to go along with him,
 until the woman who had lied
 about him hold the truth.
 Potiphar's wife told him
 that she had tried to tempt Yusef,
 but that he had remained honest.
 When Yusef heard this, he was glad to see
 that Allah rewarded honesty
 (Surah 12:50–52).*

Now he could go to the king with
 God's help.
 He was shaved and dressed
 and then taken to Pharaoh.
 Both books tell us so.
 The king said to Joseph, "It is said about you,
 that you only need to hear what I dreamt
 to be able to interpret it."
 But Joseph replied, "It is not I;
 only the Lord can give the interpretation."
 Then Pharaoh told his dreams

and Joseph explained what they meant.
 He said, "By means of these dreams God has revealed
 what God is going to do.
 The seven fat cows and the seven full ears of grain mean
 that seven years of a great harvest will come first.
 The seven thin cows
 and the seven thin and scorched ears of grain mean
 that after the seven good years
 seven years of famine will come.
 So both dreams have the same meaning
 and the reason for dreaming twice is
 that it will surely happen.
 Therefore, you must appoint some officials
 to collect a fifth of the crops
 during the seven years of plenty,
 to store it up in the cities and to guard it.
 The food will be a reserve supply for
 the country
 during the seven years of famine that are
 going to befall Egypt."
 Pharaoh approved this plan.
 He trusted Joseph and said to his officials,
 "We will never find a better man than him,
 a man who has God's spirit in him."
 So Pharaoh appointed him governor over all
 Egypt.

He removed from his finger the ring
 engraved with the royal seal
 and put it on Joseph's finger.
 He also gave him a wife, Asenath,
 the daughter of the priest Potiphara.
 Joseph traveled all over the land.
 During seven years of plenty he stored in every city
 the food collected from the fields around.

THE SONS OF YA'KUB/JACOB GO TO EGYPT

(Genesis 42—45; Surah 12:58–98)

After those seven good years
 the seven years of famine came,
 not only in Egypt but also in Canaan,
 the country where Jacob and his family lived.
 Jacob was afraid there would not be
 enough food for all his children and grandchildren.

When he heard that grain was being sold
 in Egypt,
 he sent ten sons to that country,
 both books tell us.
 When they arrived at the palace of Pharaoh

—in the Qur'an "Fir'awn"—

they left behind their donkeys
 and bowed down before the governor of the
 land of Egypt,
 who was selling grain.
 They didn't know that he was their brother,
 but Joseph immediately recognized
 his brothers.
 When they were bowing down
 with their faces to the ground,
 he remembered his dreams they had denied.

He acted as if he didn't know them
 and asked them harshly,
 "Where do you come from?"
 They answered, "We have come from Canaan
 to buy food." But he said,

"You are spies; you have come
to find out where our country is weak."
Then the ten men told him the story of their family,
"We were twelve brothers in all,
sons of the same man in Canaan.
One brother has died
and the youngest is now with our father."
But they didn't get away with that story.
Again the governor accused them of being spies,
and he detained them for some days.
And as proof of telling the truth, he kept one of them
in Egypt,
while the others had to go for their youngest brother,
otherwise they could not buy any more grain.

*In the Qur'an it is written that Yusef said,
"Don't you see that I give you a full measure
of grain and the best hospitality?
But if you don't bring your youngest brother to me,
you shall have no grain,
nor shall you come near me" (Surah 12:59-60).*

After having ordered this, Joseph heard
his brothers talking among themselves,
"Now we are being punished
for what we did to Joseph.
For we saw the great trouble he was in
when he begged for help, but we would not listen.
That's why we are now in trouble."
The brothers didn't know that the governor
could understand their language.
Reuben, the oldest, said to the others,
"I told you not to harm the boy,
but you wouldn't listen.
And now we are paying for his death."
Joseph left them and began to cry.
When he was able to speak, he came back,
picked out Simeon and bound him.
Nine brothers went home with the grain
and with the order to bring Benjamin with them
next time.

Joseph had secretly given orders to
his servants
to put back in each man's sack his money

—his "stock-in-trade" the Qur'an says.
Yusef hoped that this
Might cause his brothers to come back,
this book tells us.

When, on the way home, the brothers
found their money in the top of their sacks,
they were very upset.

*The Qur'an says they were happy. They said,
"Father, we need no more to trade. We will be
entitled to an extra measure so easily achieved.*

They thought that God Almighty had done
this to them.
When they got home, they sadly told their
old father
all that had happened.
And they entreated him to allow them
to take Benjamin to the governor next time.
But Jacob said,
"You rob me of children.

Joseph is gone, Simeon is gone
and now you want to take Benjamin away.
He shall not go!
Something might happen to him on the way.
I am an old man, and the sorrow you would cause me
would kill me. Why did you tell that man
that you had another brother?"
The sons answered,
"The man kept asking about us and our family:
'Is your father still living?
Do you have other brothers?'
We had to answer his questions.
How could we know that he would tell us
to bring our brother with us?"
But when the famine in Canaan intensified
and Jacob's family had eaten
all the grain they brought from Egypt,
he considered permitting his sons
to take Benjamin with them to the governor.

*In the Qur'an, Ya'kub says,
"Shall I trust you with him with any result
other than when I trusted you*

*with his brother the last time?
 Never will I send him with you
 unless you swear a solemn oath to me,
 in Allah's name,
 that you will be sure to bring him back to me."
 The brothers swore.
 And they convinced their father, saying,
 "Now we will get another full camel's load."
 Ya'kub agreed.
 "But enter not all by one gate," he said.
 "Enter by different gates."
 They did so, although it was not necessary,
 as Allah took care of them
 and nobody could interfere,
 so it is written in the Qur'an.*

Jacob sent the best products of the land
 in his sons' packs as a present for the governor:
 resin, honey, spices, pistachio nuts and almonds
 and also twice as much money,
 because of what was returned in the top of their sacks.
 Finally he gave them his son Benjamin.
 So eleven sons arrived in Egypt.
 When Joseph saw his younger brother coming with
 his brothers,
 he said to the housemaster,
 "Take these men to my house.
 They are going to eat with me at noon;
 so prepare the meal."
 But the brothers were not happy
 to be in the governor's house;
 they were afraid, because of that money,
 and they told the housemaster this.
 In the meantime, they put down
 the presents from their father;
 but the housemaster said,
 "Don't worry and don't be afraid.
 Your God must have put the money in your sacks
 for you.
 I received your payment."
 When the brothers saw how they had been seated
 at the table
 in the order of their age from the eldest to the youngest,
 they looked at one another in amazement.
 And Benjamin was served five times as much
 as the others.

Meanwhile, Joseph ordered the housemaster
 to fill the men's sacks with grain
 and to put each man's money in the top
 of his sack.
 Moreover, the governor's silver cup was
 to be put
 in the youngest man's sack,
 both books say.
 When the brothers had gone only a
 short distance
 from the city, Joseph said to his housekeeper:
 "Hurry after those men and ask them,
 why they have stolen the silver cup of
 the governor."
 Again, the brothers were frightened,
 but then they got angry and said
 "What do you mean, sir, by talking like this?
 We swear that we have done no such thing.
 You know that we brought back to you
 the money we found in the top of our sacks.
 If anyone of us is found to have it,
 he will be put to death."

*"The penalty will be the enslavement of the per-
 son in whose bag the cup is found"
 (Surah 2:75).*

The housekeeper searched carefully
 and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.
 Upset, the brothers returned to the city.
 Back in the governor's house, they
 bowed down
 before him and Joseph said,
 "What have you done? Didn't you know
 that a man in my position could find you out?"
 Then Judah rose up and pleaded in favor of
 his old father.
 The father had not been willing
 to send his youngest son with them
 as his other son had already perished,
 but he did it because the governor wanted
 him to do so.

If the young boy did not come home,
his old father would die.

And Judah proposed that, instead,
he himself would stay with the governor
as his slave.
Then Joseph was no longer able to control
his feelings.
He sent away all his servants and said,
"I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?"
The brothers were so terrified
that they could not answer.
But Joseph told them to come closer
and not to be upset.
Both books mention Joseph's words
that, although they sold him to Egypt,
it was really the Almighty who sent him
ahead of them to save people's lives.

*The Qur'an tells us that Yusef
had already told his younger brother
that he was his brother Yusef
and that he would take care
that nothing bad would happen to the boy.
It is also written that when the cup was found
in the youngest brother's sack,
the boy himself stayed with Yusef
and only the others were sent home.
It was Yusef's hope that if he did this,
his father would come to Egypt.
And that is what happened.
The Qur'an also tells us
the words of the brothers to Yusef,
"By Allah! Indeed, Allah has preferred you above
us,
and we certainly have been guilty of sin!"
(Surah 12:91)*

YA'KUB/JACOB IN EGYPT

(Genesis 46—50; Surah 12:99–101)

The Bible tells us that the Pharaoh

—*Fir'awn in the Qur'an*—

told Joseph to give wagons to his brothers
for their wives and the small children
and to have their father come with them.
He also ordered them to load their animals with grain,
bread, and other food for the journey,
as well as a change of clothes.
Benjamin even got five outfits
and three hundred pieces of silver.
Ten donkeys were loaded with the best Egyptian goods.
Then Joseph sent his brothers off and said,
"Don't quarrel on the way!"
When they came home, the sons told their father
the good news that Joseph was still alive
and that he had invited his father to come to Egypt
with his family.

*They had taken with them one of Yusef's shirts;
they cast it over his face
and Yakub regained his sight,
the Qur'an tells us.
And on the way he said,
"I do indeed sense the presence of Yusef!"*

In a dream—the Bible tells us—
God said to Jacob,
"Don't be afraid to go to Egypt;
I will make your descendants a great nation there;
I will go with you to Egypt.
Surely, I will bring your descendants back to this land,

And Joseph will be with you when you die.”
 Jacob arrived in Egypt in safety
 with all his family and all his cattle.

*The Qur'an tells us
 how Yusef welcomed his family.
 He provided a home for them with himself
 and raised them high on the throne.
 But they bowed deeply to him.
 Then Yusef said to his father, "O my father, this
 is the fulfillment
 of my vision of old!
 Allah has made it come true!
 Allah took me out of prison
 and brought you all here out of the desert!"*

Joseph took his father and five of his brothers
 to Pharaoh and introduced them, the Bible tells us.
 Jacob blessed Pharaoh;
 and Pharaoh gave Jacob the best part of the land
 in the region of Goshen,
 for his family and his cattle.
 And he said, "If there are any capable men
 among them,
 put them in charge of my own livestock."
 Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years.
 When the time drew near for him to die,
 he called his sons, one by one.
 He blessed them,
 beginning with Joseph and his two sons,
 Manasseh and Ephraim.
 The younger one was blessed first.

*The Qur'an mentions the last sayings
 of Ya'kub with his sons,
 "What will you worship after me?"
 They said, "We shall worship Allah,
 your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers Ibra-
 him, Isma'il, and Ishak,
 the Only True One; to Allah we submit"
 (Surah 2:133).*

Then Jacob lay down and he died.
 Joseph and his brothers and all relatives
 carried his body to Canaan.
 All Pharaoh's officials and the leading men of Egypt

went with Joseph, in chariots and on horseback.
 In Canaan they buried the body of Jacob
 in the cave at Machpelah, the same place
 where also his ancestors were buried,
 the Bible tells us.
 Now that their father had died,
 the sons themselves came to Joseph.
 They bowed down for him and said,
 "Before your father died, he told us to ask you,
 'Please forgive us the wrong that we have done.'"
 Joseph cried and he said,
 "I can't put myself in the place of God.
 You plotted evil against me, but God turned
 it into good,
 in order to preserve the lives of many people
 who are alive today because of what happened.
 You have nothing to fear.
 I will take care of you and your children."
 And Joseph did so unto his death.

*In the Qur'an, the story of Yusef
 is not called a story, but a confirmation
 of what happened;
 a detailed exposition of all things,
 and a guide and comfort to those who believe
 (Surah 12:111).*

Unit 4

MUSA/MOSES

THE BIRTH OF MUSA/MOSES

(Exodus 1—2:10; Surah 28:1–13)

Joseph's family lived in Egypt for a long time.
Many children were born,
so the family grew into a large nation;
"Israel" is its name, given by the Almighty.
But a new Pharaoh

—Fir'awn in the Qur'an—

who came to power in Egypt
knew nothing about Jacob and Joseph.

He only thought,
"This nation is greater than our own people.
When their men choose to join our enemies
in case of a war, Egypt will lose."
Therefore he made a plan to prevent
the Hebrew people from becoming strong.
He gave them slave labor to do and
made them
work very hard;
and they were beaten and maltreated by
slave drivers.
But the more the slave drivers did so,
the stronger the Israelites became
and the more children were born.
Then Pharaoh ordered every newborn boy
to be thrown into the Nile, a broad river.
Both books tell us so.
But some parents hid their little boys.
Amram

—Imran in the Qur'an—

and his wife Jochebed did so, as they saw
that their little son was a fine baby.
When they could no longer hide him,
they made a basket for him,
covered it with tar to make it watertight,
put their baby in it, and placed it in the tall
grass
at the edge of the river.
The baby's sister stood some distance away
to see what would happen to him.

The princess came down to the place
to take a bath in the Nile
and she noticed the basket.
When she opened it she saw a baby boy.
He began to cry and she felt sorry for him.

"This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said
and she wanted to take him with her.

*In the Qur'an, it is Pharaoh's wife who rescues him.
Pharaoh's daughter is not mentioned.*

At that moment, his sister appeared and said,
"Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman
to nurse the child for you?"
And when the woman agreed,
the girl called the baby's own mother.
Pharaoh's daughter (wife in the Qur'an) said
to her,
"Take this baby and nurse him for me,
and I will pay you."
So she took her baby and nursed him.
Later, when he was old enough,
she took him to Pharaoh's house.

The king's daughter adopted him as her own son
and called him Moses;
it means "pulled out of the water."

Moses grew into a remarkable man.
Both books tell us about him.

*In the Qur'an his name is Musa; that's Arabic.
This book also mentions Musa's rescue from
the water.*

*There it is written
that Allah had already promised the mother
that Allah would care of her son
and bring him back to her,
and that Allah would make him one of
Allah's messengers.
That is what happened.*

MUSA/MOSES IN THE ROYAL PALACE

(Exodus 2:11–15; Surah 28:14–21)

Moses grew up in the palace of Pharaoh.
When he had grown up, he went to see the
Israelites,
both books tell us.
He could see for himself
how they bent under the slavery.
He also saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew
—one of Moses' own people.
Moses got so angry,
that he killed the Egyptian.

He quickly hid his body in the sand.

Another day he again went out to his people.
Then he saw two of them
fighting, and he asked the one who
was wrong,
“Why do you beat your brother?”
But he became afraid when the man replied,
“Who made you our ruler and judge?
Are you going to kill me
just as you killed that Egyptian?”
“What shall I do?” Moses thought.
“People have found out what I have done.”
Indeed, it became dangerous for him;
for when Pharaoh heard what had happened,
he sought to kill Moses.

*There came a man, running,
from the farthest end of the city,
the Qur'an tells us. He said,*

*“O Musa, the king’s chiefs are planning
to kill you. So go away,
for my advice is true!” (Surah 28:20)
And Musa did so.
Looking about in fear he ran
and prayed to Allah, “O my Lord!
Save me from these wrong-doing people!”
So he fled into the desert,
towards the land of Madyan.*

MUSA/MOSES IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN

(Exodus 2:16–22; Surah 28:22–28)

So Moses fled to the land of Midian

*—that’s Madyan in the Qur’an;
in that book it is written that Musa said,
“I do hope that my Lord will show me
the smooth and straight path” (Surah 28:22).*

He sat down by a well—both books tell us.
Young women came to the well
to draw water and fill the troughs
for their father’s sheep and goats.
They were daughters of Jethro,
the priest of Midian, the Bible tells us.
But soon, shepherds came
to draw water for their own animals;
they drove Jethro’s daughters away.
Moses again noticed an injustice,
and he stepped in and helped the women
water their animals.
Their father was surprised to see
his daughters coming back so early.
They told him about the young man by
the well.
“Why did you leave him out there?” he asked.
“Invite him to come and eat with us.”
Then one of the daughters went back to
the well.

*She was feeling shy, the Qur’an says;
for it was not normal
for a woman to speak to an unknown man.*

*“My father invites you to his house,
so that he may reward you
for having watered our flocks for us,” she said.
So he came to her father
and told his whole story.
Then her father said, “Don’t fear;
you have escaped from unjust people.”
One of the daughters said,
“O my father, employ this man;
truly, the best man for you to employ
is the man who is strong and trusty.”
The father had a plan. He said to Musa,
“I intend to wed one of my daughters to you,
if you serve me for eight years.
And if you complete ten years,
it will be a grace for you;
but I intend not to place you under strain.
If Allah wills, you will find me one of
the righteous.”*

Moses agreed to live there,
taking care of Jethro’s sheep and goats.

He married Zipporah and they had a son;
his name was Gershom.

MUSA/MOSES CALLED BY GOD

(Exodus 2:23—4:17; Surah 28:29–35)

So Moses served his father-in-law.
But in Egypt the Israelites were still groan-
ing
under the slavery.
Both books tell us about it.

Sometimes, the people cried out for help.
Their cry went up to God;
God heard it—the Bible says—
and God remembered the covenant
with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Then it happened that one day,
near the mountain Horeb

—Mount Tur in the Qur’an—

Moses saw
a bush was on fire
but it was not burning up.

*The Qur’an says that it happened
when Musa had fulfilled his obligation
and was traveling with his family.*

When Moses wanted to come closer
to see that strange event,
a voice called to him from the bush,
“Moses! Moses!”

Moses said, “Here I am.”
“Don’t come any closer,” the voice called,
“because you are standing on holy ground.

"I am Allah; there is no god but Me, so worship Me and keep up the prayer so you remember Me" (Surah 20:13–14).

I am the God of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated
in Egypt, and I have heard them cry out
to be rescued from their slave drivers.
I know all about their sufferings.
I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians
and to bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land,
one which is rich and fertile,
with plenty of milk and honey.
Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt,
so that you can lead my people out of his country."
Then Moses became frightened and he said to God,
"I am nobody. How can I go to the king
and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"
But God answered, "I will be with you;
and when you bring the people out of Egypt,
you will worship me on this mountain.
That will be the proof that I have sent you."
But Moses was not yet reassured.
He said to God,
"When I go to the Israelites and say to them,
'The God of your ancestors sent me to you,'
they will ask me, 'What is God's name?'
So what can I tell them?"
Then God said to Moses,
"I AM WHO I AM.
This is my name forever.
So this is what you must say to them,
'I AM has sent me to you,
the Lord of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'"
Then Moses answered the Lord,
"But suppose the Israelites do not believe me
and will not listen to what I say.
What shall I do if they say
that you did not appear to me?"

In both books the answer of the Lord is this:
"What are you holding?"
"A staff," Moses answered.
The Lord said "Throw it on the ground."

When Moses threw it down,
it turned into a snake, and Moses ran away
from it.
But God said, "Put out your hand
and pick it up by the tail."
Moses did so and the snake became
a staff again.
The Lord spoke to Moses again,
"Put your hand inside your robe."
Moses obeyed; and when he took his hand out,
it was covered with white spots, like snow.
Then the Lord said,
"Put your hand inside your robe again."
He did so and when he took it out this time,
it was healthy again.

"These are two miracles for the Israelites;
if they are not convinced by the first miracle,
then this second one will convince them
that the God of their ancestors appeared to you."

*Musa spoke to Allah,
"O my Lord, I have slain a man among them,
and I fear lest they slay me.
And my brother Harun is a much better speaker
than I am: so send him with me as a helper,
to confirm and strengthen me"
(Surah 28:33–34).*

In the Bible, Harun is Aaron.

*In the Qur'an he is called a prophet of Allah
like Musa (Surah 19:53; Exodus 4:1).
Then Allah promised Musa
that Allah would send Harun with him
to Fir'awn.*

But God also reminded Moses,
"Who gives speech to mortals?
Who makes them mute or deaf,
seeing or blind?
Is it not I, the Lord? (Exodus 4:11) Now, go!
I will help you to speak
And I will tell you what to say."
But when Moses still answered,
"No, Lord, please send someone else,"

God really became angry.
Yet God told Moses that Aaron, Moses' brother,
was already on the way to Moses.
And God promised Moses
that God would also be there.
"Take your staff with you," God added,
"for with this staff you will perform miracles."

MUSA/MOSES AND
HARUN/AARON GO TO
FIR'AWN/PHARAOH
(Exodus 5—11; Surahs 26:16–51; 40:28–34; 7:133–135)

So Moses and Aaron

—Musa and Harun in the Qur'an—

went together to Pharaoh

—Fir'awn in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an and the Bible tell us about it.
The two men said to Pharaoh,
"We are the messengers of the Lord.

The LORD, the God of Israel says,
'Let my people go, so that they may celebrate a festival
to me in the desert' " (Exodus 5:1b).
But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD,
to whom I should listen and let Israel go?
I don't know the LORD,
and I will not let Israel go."

*The Qur'an gives Musa's answer,
"Allah is He, the Lord and Cherisher
of the heavens and the earth, and all between;
and the Lord of the East and the West,
and all between! So send with us
the children of Israel."
But Fir'awn said, "I don't know the Lord
and I will not let Israel go."*

*He got angry and said to Musa, "Did we
not cherish
you as a child among us,
and did you not stay in our midst
many years of your life?
And you did something you know you did*

—he killed the Egyptian, didn't he?—

and you are an ungrateful man!"
Musa replied, "I did it then,
when I was in error.
So I fled from you, when I feared you.
But my Lord has since invested me
with judgment and wisdom
and the Lord appointed me
as one of the Lord's messengers.
And is this the favor with which you approach me,
that you have enslaved the children of Israel?"
Fir'awn said to the Israelites around him,
"Your messenger is a veritable madman!"
And to Musa he said,
"If you take any god other than me,
I will certainly put you in prison!"
But Musa said,
"Even if I showed you something
clearly convincing?"
Fir'awn replied, "Show it then,
if you tell the truth!"
(Surah 26:23–31)

Then Moses and Aaron performed
the first miracles, with the snow-white spots
on their hands,
and with the staff turning into a snake.
Then Pharaoh called for his wise men and for
magicians, sorcerers; and they did the same
with their robes and staffs.
But the staff of Moses and Aaron
swallowed all the other staffs.

*Then the sorcerers fell down, the Qur'an says,
and they prostrated in adoration, saying,
"We believe in the Lord of the Worlds,
the Lord of Musa and Harun."
But Fir'awn said, "Believe you in the Lord*

*before I give you permission?
I am your master!"*
And he thought of a heavy punishment for them.
But they said, "No matter!
For us, we shall but return to our Lord!
Our only desire is that the Lord will forgive us
our faults" (Surah 26:46–51).
Then the Qur'an tells about a man,
from among the people of Fir'awn,
who had concealed his faith.
He said, "Will you slay a man
because he says, 'My Lord is Allah,'?
When he has indeed come to you
with clear signs from your Lord?
And if he be a liar, on him is his lie.
But if he is telling the truth,
Then there will fall on you something of
the calamity of which he warns you:
truly, Allah guides not one
who transgresses and lies!
O my people, yours is the dominion this day,
but who will save us from the punishment of Allah,
should it befall us?"
Fir'awn said,
"I but point out to you that which I see;
nor do I guide you but on the path of the right!"
Then the man who believed said,
"O my people! Truly I do fear
for something like the day of disaster,
something like the people of Nuh;
then you will have nobody to protect you.
Allah does not allow injustice to his servants."
And he reminded them of Yusef,
who, although he was not an Egyptian, came with
clear signs from Allah
and saved the nation from a famine
(Surah 40:28–34).
"O my people! This life of the present
is nothing but temporary enjoyment:
it is the hereafter that is the home
that will last.
One who works evil will receive only evil,
but one who works a righteous deed
and is a believer — whether man or woman —
such will enter the Garden of Bliss"
(Surah 40:39–40).

But Pharaoh didn't want to listen.
Both books mention the plagues that hit
Pharaoh and his people:
locusts, boils on their skin,
the Nile water changing into blood,
frogs, gnats, flies,
hailstones, thick darkness, and a cattle plague.
Only the Israelites were saved by the Lord.

*—in the Qur'an an infestation of lice
is named as one of the plagues (Surah 7:133).*

Pharaoh was arrogant until a plague hit
the Egyptians.
Then he said again and again to Moses,
"Pray for us to your God
because of what God ordered you to do.
If you can stop the plague,
we shall truly believe your words
and send away the Israelites with you."
But each time a plague was removed
from them,
Pharaoh broke his word.
Then the tenth plague came over them.
In the Bible it is written that God told Moses
that before Pharaoh would let him go,
the last plague would be this:
every firstborn son in Egypt would die
and the firstborn of all the cattle as well.
Moses gave this message to Pharaoh.
Thereafter, he left Pharaoh in great anger.
In both books it is written,
that the Lord said to Moses
to leave that very night,
because they would be persecuted.

That night, the Israelites ate in Egypt
for the last time.
Moses had ordered them to bake their bread
in a hurry, without preparing leavened dough.
They also had to kill a lamb or a young goat
and smear its blood on the doorposts
as a sign that Israelites were living in this house.
And when the meat of that animal was prepared
and they were dressed for the journey,
they ate in a hurry.

That very night, God's angel killed
all firstborn Egyptian sons
and the firstborn of all the cattle,
as Moses had warned the king before (Exodus 4:23).
But all houses with blood on the doorposts
were passed by the angel
and the dwellers in those houses were saved.
Then Pharaoh—whose firstborn son also died—
called Moses and Aaron by night and he said,
"Be ready to go away, out of the midst of my people,
you and all Israelites as well.
Go and celebrate your Lord as you have said.
Take also your flocks and herds, but go!"
And his last words to Moses were,
"Also pray for a blessing on me."
The Egyptians urged the people to hurry
and leave the country; they said,
"We will all be dead if you don't leave."
And when the Israelites asked the Egyptians
for gold and silver jewelry and for clothing,
they gave them what they asked for.
The people filled their baking pans
with unleavened dough, wrapped them in clothing,
and carried them on their shoulders,
so they could bake on their way.
Then a very large number of Israelites set out on foot:
six hundred thousand men, not counting women
and children.
A large number of other people also went with them
and many sheep, goats, and cattle.
They left Egypt four hundred thirty years
after Jacob and his family had arrived there,
the Bible says.
They also took the body of Joseph with them,
as was promised to him before his death.
(This night of departure has become
the Passover festival for all Israelites,
to honor the Lord.
And the month of the Passover festival
has become for them the first month of the Hebrew year.
Passover is still celebrated in the houses
with a meal of a slaughtered lamb or goat
and unleavened bread,
on the evening of the fourteenth day
of that first month.)

MUSA/MOSES WITH THE
ISRAELITES THROUGH THE RED SEA

(Exodus 13:17—15:21; Surahs 20:77; 26:52; 26:60–66; 44:23–24)

God

—Allah in the Qur'an—

led Moses with the Israelites
in the direction of the Red Sea.

During the day the Lord went in front of them
in a pillar of cloud, to show them the way,
and during the night the Lord went in front of them
in a pillar of fire, to give them light,
so that they could travel by day and by night.

But soon after Israel's departure from Egypt
Pharaoh regretted
having let the Israelites go.
Both books tell us so.
One day at sunrise the Israelites saw
they were being pursued by Pharaoh
with all the horses, chariots, and drivers,
and they were terrified and
cried out to the Lord for help.

*"We are sure to be overtaken!"
was their cry in the Qur'an.
But Musa said, "By no means!
My Lord is with me!
Soon the Lord will guide me!"
(Surah 26:61–62.)*

In the Bible, Moses' words are,
 "Don't be afraid!
 Stand firm, and see the deliverance
 that the LORD will accomplish for you today;
 for the Egyptians whom you see today
 you shall never see again.
 The LORD will fight for you,
 and you have only to keep still" (Exodus 14:13-14).

So they moved forward to the Red Sea.
 Then the Lord said to Moses,
 "Lift up your staff, stretch it out over the sea;
 strike the water and it will divide,
 and the Israelites will be able
 to walk through the sea on dry ground."

And Moses did so; he held his hand over the sea,
 and the Lord drove the sea back
 with a strong east wind. It blew all night
 and turned the sea into dry land.
 The pillar of fire that had been in front of the Israelites
 moved and went behind them;
 and the pillar of cloud also moved
 until it was between the Egyptians and the Israelites.
 The cloud made it dark for the Egyptians,
 but the pillar of fire gave light to the people of Israel.
 So the Israelites went through the sea
 with walls of water on both sides.
 The Egyptians pursued them
 and went after them into the sea
 with all their horses, chariots, and drivers.
 Just before dawn, the Lord looked down
 at the Egyptians.
 The Lord made the wheels of their chariots get stuck,
 so that they moved with great difficulty.
 The Egyptians cried out,
 "The Lord is fighting for the Israelites
 against us!"

*In the Qur'an it is written,
 "We (Allah) revealed to Moses: 'Strike the sea
 with your staff!' It parted — each side like a
 mighty mountain — and we brought the others
 to that place. We saved Musa and all his com-
 panions and drowned the rest"
 (Surah 26:63-66).*

Then the Lord again said to Moses,
 "Hold out your hand over the sea,
 and the water will come back
 over the Egyptians and their chariots and drivers."
 Moses did so and at daybreak
 the water returned to its normal level.
 It covered the chariots, the drivers
 and all of the Egyptian army; not one of them was left.
 On that day the Lord saved the people of Israel
 from the Egyptians.
 Then Moses and the Israelites
 sang a song to the Lord,
 "I will sing to the LORD,
 for God has triumphed gloriously;
 horse and rider God has thrown into the sea.
 The LORD is my strength and my might,
 and God has become my salvation;
 this is my God, and I will praise the Lord,
 my father's God, and I will exalt God"
 (Exodus 15:1b-2).
 And the prophet Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron,
 took her tambourine,
 and all the women followed her,
 playing tambourines, and dancing.
 Miriam sang for them,
 "Sing to the LORD; for God has triumphed gloriously;
 horse and rider God has thrown into the sea"
 (Exodus 15:21).

Unit 5

THE DESERT JOURNEY

BEGINNING OF THE DESERT JOURNEY

(Exodus 15:22 — 17; Surahs 2:57; 7:138–141; 20:80–82)

After praising the Lord,
Moses led the people away from the Red Sea
into the desert of Shur.

*The Qur'an says that they came upon a people
devoted entirely to some idols they had;
in Arabic such devotion is called "shirk."
The Israelites said,
"O Musa, fashion for us a god
like the gods they have."
But Musa said,
"You don't know what you are asking for.
The cult these people are in
is bound to destruction,
and they worship in vain.
Shall I seek for you
a god other than Allah, when it is Allah
who has endowed you with gifts above
other nations?
Allah rescued you from Fir'awn's people!"
(Surah 7:138–141)*

For three days they walked through the desert,
without finding water.
Then they came to a place called Marah,
but the water there was so bitter that they could not
drink it.
They complained to Moses and asked
"What are we going to drink?"
Moses prayed earnestly to the Lord,
and God showed him a piece of wood,

which Moses was to throw into the water;
 then the water became fit to drink.
 God also promised them
 that God always would help them,
 if they listened to God, and
 by doing what God considered right,
 and by keeping God's commands.
 The Lord led them to a place called Elim,
 with twelve springs and seventy palm trees;
 there they camped by the water.
 After Elim the Israelites went up
 to the desert of Sin, between Elim and Sinai.
 There their food ran out and they
 complained to Moses and Aaron,
 "Better the Lord had killed us in Egypt;
 there we could eat meat and other food
 as much as we wanted."
 But Moses said,
 "When you complain against us,
 you are really complaining against the Lord."
 Then the Lord came in a cloud
 and spoke to Moses,
 "I have heard the complaints of the Israelites.
 Tell them that at twilight they will have meat to eat,
 and in the morning they will have all the bread
 they want.
 Then they will know that I, the Lord, am their God."

In the evening, a large flock of quails flew in,
 enough to cover the camp,
 and in the morning there was dew all round
 the camp.
 When the dew evaporated, there
 was something
 thin and flaky on the surface of the desert.
 It was as delicate as frost.

When the Israelites saw it they didn't know
 what it was and they asked each other,
 "What is it?"
 Moses said to them, "This is the food
 that the Lord has given you to eat.
 The Lord has commanded that each of you
 is to gather as much of it as you need,
 two liters for each member of your household.
 No one is to keep any of it for tomorrow."

But some of them did not listen to Moses
 and saved part of it. The next morning
 it was full of worms and smelled rotten,
 and Moses was angry with them.
 Every morning, each one could gather
 as much as was needed to bake and to boil.
 And when the sun grew hot,
 what was left on the ground melted.
 On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much food,
 four liters for each person,
 as Moses said to the leaders,
 "The Lord has commanded that
 tomorrow is a holy day of rest,
 dedicated to the Lord.
 So bake today what you want to bake
 and boil what you want to boil.
 Whatever is left should be put aside
 and kept for tomorrow."
 So the people did this
 and the food did not spoil or get worms in it.
 On the seventh day, some of the people
 went out to gather food, but they did not find any.
 Then the Lord said to Moses,
 "How much longer will your people refuse to obey
 my commands?
 Remember that I, the Lord,
 have given you a day of rest
 and that is why on the sixth day
 I will always give you enough food for two days."
 The people of Israel called the food manna.
 It was like a small white seed
 and tasted like biscuits made with honey.
 Moses said,
 "The Lord has commanded us to save some manna,
 to be kept for our descendants,
 so that they can see the food
 which the Lord gave us to eat in the desert
 when the Lord brought us out of Egypt."

Everywhere they walked
 along the way to the Promised Land,
 they found the manna in the morning.
 But not the water;
 again they complained to Moses about
 the water,
 before they listened to the Lord.

The Bible and Qur'an tell us so.
 However, God persisted in care for the people.
 The Lord said to Moses,
 "Take some of the leaders of Israel with you,
 and go ahead of the people.
 Take along the staff with which you struck
 the Nile.
 I will stand before you on a rock at
 Mount Sinai.
 Strike the rock, and water will come
 out of it
 for the people to drink."
 And so it happened.
 As Moses did it in the presence of the lead-
 ers of Israel,
 they could see for themselves, and tell
 the others,
 that it was the Lord who gave the water.

IN THE DESERT OF SINAI

(Exodus 19)

Three months after the Israelites had left Egypt,
 they came to the desert of Sinai.
 There they set up camp at the foot of Mount Sinai.

*In Arabic the name is Mount Tur;
 this is the holy place where Musa
 saw the bush on fire that did not burn up
 (Surah 28:29–35).*

Moses went up the mountain to meet with God.
 There the Lord told Moses about God's plans for
 God's people,
 the Israelites, if they obeyed God
 and kept God's covenant.
 So Moses went down and called
 the leaders of the people together
 and told them everything that the Lord had com-
 manded him.
 The leaders passed it on to all the people.
 Then the Israelites answered together,
 "We will do everything that the Lord has said";
 and Moses reported this to the Lord.
 The Lord said,
 "Tell the people to spend today and tomorrow
 purifying themselves for worship.
 They must wash their clothes and be ready
 the day after tomorrow. On that day I will come down
 on Mount Sinai, where all the people can see me.
 Tell them not to go up the mountain
 or even get near it."
 So it happened.

*In the Qur'an it is written that
before he went up
Musa charged his brother Harun,
"Act for me among my people.
Do right, and follow not the way of those
who do mischief" (Surah 7:142).*

Then Moses went up to God
and Aaron stayed with the people.

There is much written in both books
about what happened high up on
the mountain
and down in the desert.

GOD AND IDOL

(Exodus 20—33; Surahs 7:142–145, 148–156; 20:86–94)

On the mountain of Sinai much was dis-
cussed
between God and Moses.
God gave him the Ten Commandments,
written on two stone tablets,
and a great number of other laws and rules.

God also told Moses how to build an altar
for the sacrifices of the Israelites.
The sacrifices had to be offered by
Aaron and his sons.
Aaron was to be anointed high priest
and his sons priests;
special clothes had to be made for them,
exactly conforming to what God told Moses.
A tent of the Lord's Presence (called a tabernacle) also
had to be made,
and a covenant box (called the Ark of the Covenant)
with a lid,
to be put in the tent with all the other furniture.
God gave exact instructions for
how everything had to be made.
Therefore it took a long time
before Moses came down again
—forty days.

*In the Qur'an it is written
that Allah appointed for Musa thirty nights,
and completed the period with ten more
(Surah 7:142).*

The Israelites didn't understand
why their leader stayed away so long.

Then they said to Aaron,
 "We do not know what has happened
 to this man Moses, who led us out of Egypt;
 so make us a god to lead us."
 And on Aaron's instruction all people took off
 their gold earrings and brought them to him.
 Aaron took the earrings, melted them,
 poured the gold into a mold,
 and made a gold bull.
 Then the people said,
 "Israel, this is our god, who led us out of Egypt!"

*"Shirk" is the Arabic word for such idolatry.
 In the Qur'an, Allah's words are written:
 "Did they not know that an idol
 neither can speak to them nor show the way?"
 (Surah 20:89)*

Aaron also built an altar, and he announced,
 "Tomorrow there will be a festival
 to honor the Lord."
 Early the next morning they brought some animals
 to burn as sacrifices,
 and others to eat as fellowship offerings.
 The people sat down, eating, drinking, and feasting.
 But there were also people who did not participate.
 Those were the Levites, men of the tribe of Levi,
 one of Jacob's sons.

Then Moses came down from the mountain.
 In his hands he held the two stone tablets
 with the Ten Commandments of God.
 God had already told him on the mountain
 what was happening down in the desert.
 "Go back down at once," God said,
 "because your people, whom you led
 out of Egypt,
 have sinned and rejected me.
 They have already left the way
 that I commanded them to follow;
 they have made a bull out of melted gold
 and have worshiped it and offered sacrifices
 to it.
 They are saying that this is their god,
 who led them out of Egypt."
 In anger God also said

that God was going to destroy them.

"Then I will make you and your descendants
 into a great nation," the Lord said.
 But Moses pleaded with the Lord, saying,
 "Lord, why should you be so angry with your people,
 whom you rescued from Egypt with great might
 and power?
 Why should the Egyptians be able to say
 that you led your people out of Egypt,
 planning to kill them in the mountains
 and destroy them completely?
 Stop being angry; change your mind
 and do not bring this disaster on your people.
 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."
 Now that Moses himself heard the noise
 of the shouting people,
 and saw the bull, and the people dancing,
 he too became furious;
 he threw the two stone tablets of the
 Ten Commandments
 and shattered them to pieces
 at the foot of the mountain.

*The Qur'an tells us that Musa,
 angry and grieved, said to the people,
 "You have done evil
 in my absence: did you make haste
 to bring on the judgment of your Lord?"
 Moses seized his brother by his head
 and dragged him to him. Harun said,
 "Son of my mother! The people pressed me
 and nearly killed me! You know how they are.
 Make not the enemies to rejoice over
 my misfortune,
 nor count me among the people of sin"
 (Surah 7:150).*

The Bible also mentions such words.
 Moses said to Aaron,
 "What did these people do to you,
 that you have made them commit such a terrible sin?"
 Aaron answered: "Don't be angry with me;
 you know how determined these people are to do evil.
 They said to me: 'We don't know what has happened
 to this man Moses, who brought us out of Egypt;

so make us a god to lead us.’
I asked them to bring me their gold ornaments,
and those who had any took them off
and gave them to me. I threw the ornaments
into the fire and out came this bull!”
Moses saw that Aaron had let the people
get out of control and make fools of themselves
in front of their enemies. [End Section]

*The Qur’an says, that Musa prayed to the Lord,
“O my Lord! Forgive me and my brother!
Admit us to your mercy!
For you are the most merciful of those who show
mercy” (Surah 7:151).*

Moses took the bull which they had made,
melted it, ground it into fine powder,
and mixed it with water,
and he made all idolaters drink it.
Moses stood at the gate of the camp and shouted,
“Everyone who is on the Lord’s side come over here!”
So all the Levites gathered round him.
He ordered them on behalf of the Lord
to kill the idolaters.
On that day many Israelites died.
The next day, Moses said to the people,
“You have committed a terrible sin.
But now I will again go up the mountain to the Lord;
perhaps I can obtain forgiveness for your sin.”
Moses then returned to the Lord and said,
“These people have committed a terrible sin.
They have made a god out of gold and worshiped it.
Please forgive them their sin; but if not,
then remove my name from the book
in which you have written the names of your people.”
The Lord answered,
“It is those who have sinned against me
whose names I will remove from my book.
Now go, lead the people to the place I told you about.
Remember that my angel will guide you;
if I were to go with you even for a moment,
I would completely destroy you.
Now take off your jewelry,
and I will decide what to do with you.”
Moses repeated God’s words for the people.
When they heard these, Israel mourned;

and they did not wear jewelry any longer.
Some distance away from the camp,
Moses had put up the sacred tent.
Anyone who wanted to consult the Lord
could go into it.
Whenever Moses went there,
the people stood at the door of their tents
to watch him until he entered.
After Moses had gone in,
the pillar of cloud would come down
and stay at the door of the tent,
and the Lord would speak to Moses from the cloud.
As soon as the people would see the pillar of cloud
at the door of the tent, they would bow down,
everyone at the door of God’s tent.
Then the Lord spoke with Moses face to face,
just as a person speaks with a friend.
One time Moses went to God’s presence for himself.
He said to the Lord,
“It is true that you have told me
to lead these people to that land,
but you did not tell me whom you would send
with me.
You have said that you know me well
and are pleased with me.
Now if you are, tell me your plans,
so that I may serve you and continue to please you.
Remember also that you have chosen
this nation to be your own.”
Then the Lord said,
“Shall I go with you to put you at ease?”
Moses replied, “If you don’t go with us,
Don’t make us leave this place.
How will anyone know
that you are pleased with your people and with me,
if you do not go with us?
Your presence with us will distinguish us
from any other people on earth.”
Then the Lord said,
“I will do just as you have asked,
because I know you very well
and I am pleased with you.”

THE COMMANDMENTS

(Exodus 20:1–17; 25 — 30; 34 — 35; Surah 7:145)

Another time Moses went up the mountain
to meet with God. God said to him,
“Cut two stone tablets like the first ones,
and I will write on them the words
that were on the first tablets, which you broke.
Be ready tomorrow morning, and come up Mount Sinai
to meet me at the top.”
Moses did so.
The Lord came down in a cloud.
Moses quickly bowed down to the ground
and worshiped. He said,
“Lord, if you really are pleased with me,
I ask you to go with us.
Forgive our evil and our sin,
and accept us as your own people.”
Then God made a covenant with Israel through Moses.
The Lord promised to do great things in their presence,
such as have never been done anywhere on earth
among any of the nations. All the people would see
the great things God could do.
Moses, on behalf of the people,
had also given promises to the Lord
that God’s laws would be obeyed;
that no treaties would be made
with the people of other countries;
that they would not worship any other god,
as the Lord tolerates no rivals;
that they would keep the Festival
of Unleavened Bread in the month of Abib,
because it was in that month that they left Egypt;
that every firstborn son and firstborn domestic animal
belongs to God
as a sacrifice; the firstborn son

would then be bought back with a sacrificial animal,
as no one is to appear before God
without an offering.

Also the best of the first harvest
had to be brought to the house of the Lord.

After six days of working,
the seventh day has to be a day of rest,
even during plowing time or harvest.

And three times a year all believers must come
to worship the Lord, the God of Israel.

And God said,

“Write these words down,
because it is on the basis of these words
that I am making a covenant with you
and with Israel.”

And God wrote the Ten Commandments
on the two new stone tablets.

And God gave more guidelines to Moses.
So Moses stayed another forty days and nights
with the Lord.

But now the Israelites did wait for him
till he came down with both stone tablets.

Aaron and all the people looked at Moses
and saw that his face was shining,
and they were afraid to go near him;
but Moses did not know it and he called them.

Aaron and all the leaders of the community
went to him, and Moses spoke to them.

The leaders, obliged to set a good example,
heard from Moses the Ten Commandments,
given by the Lord on the two stone tablets from the

Mount of Sinai:

“Worship no god but me.

Do not make for yourselves images.

Do not bow down to any idol or worship it.

Do not use my name for evil purposes.

Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.

Respect your father and your mother.

Do not commit murder.

Do not commit adultery. (This commandment is also
found in the Qur’an.)

Do not steal.

Do not accuse anyone falsely.

Do not desire anything of another.”

And the great Commandment of God
was given by Moses with these words,

“Hear, O Israel:

The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.

You shall love the LORD your God

with all your heart,

and with all your soul,

and with all your might.

Keep these words that I am commanding you
today in your heart.

Recite them to your children

And talk about them when you are at home and when
you are away,

when you lie down and when you rise.

Bind them as a sign on your hand,

fix them as an emblem on your forehead,

and write them on the doorposts of your house

and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:4–9).

*Each of the Ten Commandments
is also mentioned in the Qur’an.*

*“We (Allah) inscribed everything for him in the
Tablets, which taught and explained every-
thing, saying, ‘Hold onto them firmly and
urge your people to hold fast to their excellent
teachings.’ Here is guidance and mercy for
those who do wrong, then repent afterwards
and truly believe”*

(Surah 7:145,154).

About parents the Qur’an says,

“That you be kind to parents.

*Whether one or both of them attain
old age in your life, say,*

*‘My Lord! Bestow on them your mercy
even as they cherished me in childhood”*

(Surah 17:23–24).

Allah also ordered care for the poor,

for the needy, for orphans,

for the suppressed people,

for those who are in your debt

and also for the indigent

(Surahs 9:60; 76:8–9; 90:15–17).

And as in the Bible,

in the Qur’an the Great Commandment is this:

“The Lord is Allah, the One!” (Surah 112:1)

After all these Commandments and the instructions
 on how to worship the Lord,
 the Israelites built a new tent of the Lord's presence
 and made precious furniture for it,
 just as the Lord had commanded.
 They also made the Covenant Box
 and the clothes for the high priest and the priests.
 Meanwhile, Aaron and his sons learned all the pre-
 scriptions for worshipping
 that the Lord had given to Moses.
 The Israelites worked for a long time.
 When everything was ready,
 they dedicated the tent of the Lord's presence
 and all its equipment,
 by anointing it with the sacred oil.
 Aaron and his sons were dressed and anointed
 as high priest and priests.
 And Aaron blessed the people of Israel
 with the words given by God,
 "May the LORD bless you and keep you;
 the LORD make his face to shine upon you
 and be gracious to you;
 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you,
 and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24–26).
 And the Lord said,
 "If the priests in this way pronounce my name
 as a blessing upon the people of Israel,
 I will bless them" (Numbers 6:22–27).
 After these dedications,
 the Israelites carefully packed up everything
 and started on their journey
 out of the Sinai desert,
 led by Moses and Aaron.

IN THE DESERT OF PARAN

(Exodus 25 — 26; Numbers 10 — 11; 13 — 14; Surahs 2:57, 61; 5:20–26)

When Moses and Aaron left Sinai with the people,
 they traveled for three days.
 They took the tent of the Lord's presence (also called
 the Tabernacle) with them,
 woven of fine linen and wool and embroidered in colors.
 Its frame was made of wood and covered with gold.
 The tent was covered with several pieces of cloth
 made of goat's hair, ram's skin, and fine leather,
 to protect it against the weather.
 The Lord's covenant box (also called the Ark of
 the Covenant)
 was being carried ahead to find the next place to camp.
 The box was made of wood covered with pure gold;
 and golden carrying rings were fitted
 for its four acacia wooden legs.
 The lid of the box was made of pure gold,
 with two winged creatures of hammered gold on it,
 forming one piece with the lid.
 Two wings were spread upward and the other
 two covered the lid.
 The two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments
 were carried in the box,
 as a reminder of the covenant God would keep,
 if the people continued listening to the Lord.

*The Qur'an also mentions the box
 of the covenant;
 in it lay assurance of safety from the Lord,
 and the relics left by the family of Musa
 and the family of Harun, as a symbol
 for those who have faith (Surah 2:248).*

So the Lord's covenant box went ahead;
 the two poles through the four golden rings
 were carried on the shoulders of four strong men.
 The Lord's cloud went on above the box,
 showing the way to the next place.
 After three days, they arrived in the desert of Paran,
 where Hagar and Ishmael had lived long ago.
 There the cloud stayed.

The people set up their camp
 and also found manna every morning.
 But they began murmuring again.
 The complaints came first from people
 who were not Israelites, but foreigners,
 traveling with them since Egypt.
 But later everybody murmured; both books
 tell us so.

*In the Qur'an it is written that the people said,
 "O Musa! We cannot stand having only one
 kind of food.
 So beg your Lord on our behalf to produce for us
 what the earth grows: potherbs and cucumbers,
 its garlic, lentils, and onions."
 He said, "Will you change the better for the worse?
 Go down to any town and you shall find what
 you want!" (Surah 2:61)*

The Bible also mentions people's complaints,
 "If only we could have some meat!
 In Egypt we used to eat all the fish we wanted,
 and it cost us nothing.
 And remember the cucumbers, the watermelons,
 the leeks, the onions, and the garlic we had!
 But now our strength is gone.
 There is nothing at all to eat
 —nothing but this manna day after day!"
 Moses heard all the people complaining,
 as they stood at the entrance of their tents.
 He was distressed and said to God,
 "Why have you given me the responsibility
 for all these people? Where could I get
 enough meat for them all?
 I can't be responsible for all the people
 myself; it's too much for me!
 If you are going to treat me like this,

take pity on me and kill me."
 Then the Lord said,
 "Gather seventy respected men
 who are recognized as leaders of the people,
 bring them to me at the tent of my presence.
 I will take some of the spirit I have given you
 and give it to them. Then they can help you
 to bear the responsibility for these people,
 and you will not have it to bear alone.
 Now tell the people: 'Purify yourselves for tomorrow;
 you will have meat to eat, not just for one or two days,
 or five, or ten, or even twenty days,
 but for a whole month,
 until it comes out of your ears,
 until you are sick of it; this will happen,
 because you have complained to the Lord,
 that you should never have left Egypt.' "
 And so it happened.
 Seventy men were assembled
 and God blessed them with the Spirit,
 so that they could help Moses with his work.
 And God sent a wind that brought quails from the sea.
 They settled on the camp and all round it
 for many miles in every direction.
 So that day and night and the next day
 the people worked catching quails.
 While the meat was yet between their teeth,
 before it was consumed, the anger of the Lord
 was kindled against the people,
 and God smote them with a very great plague.
 That place was named Kibroth-hattaavah,
 which means "graves of craving,"
 because there were buried the people who
 had craved meat (Numbers 11:31–34).
 From there the people moved
 through the desert of Paran, to Haseroth,
 where they made camp.
 Now they were already near to the Promised Land.
 The Lord said to Moses, "Choose one of the leaders
 from each of the twelve tribes,
 and send them as spies to explore the land of Canaan,
 which I am giving to the Israelites."
 Moses obeyed and chose the twelve men
 and told them the message of the Lord.
 He said,
 "Go into the southern part of the land of Canaan

and then on into the hill country.
 Find out what kind of country it is,
 how many people live there, and how strong they are.
 Find out whether the land is good or bad
 and whether the people live in open towns
 or in fortified cities.
 Find out whether the soil is fertile
 and whether the land is wooded.
 And be sure to bring back
 some of the fruits that grow there.”
 It was the season when grapes were beginning
 to ripen.
 The men did what Moses had said
 and after forty days they returned to
 Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel.
 They reported what they had seen
 and showed them the fruit they had brought:
 one bunch of grapes, so heavy
 that it took two men to carry it
 on a pole between them. They also
 brought back some pomegranates and figs.
 And they told about the fertile land,
 and about the powerful people
 and the large and fortified cities,
 where giants lived.
 Yet Caleb, one of the two men who trusted God,
 said, “We should attack now and take the land;
 we are strong enough to conquer it,
 if we have trust in God.”
 But the other ten men said,
 “No, we are not strong enough to attack them;
 the people there are more powerful than we are.”
 And they made the people afraid.

*The Qur'an tells us that Musa said,
 "O my people! Remember God's favor for you,
 when Allah gave you what Allah had not given
 to any other people.
 Enter the holy land which Allah has assigned
 to you."
 But they said, "O Musa!
 In this land are a people of exceeding strength:
 We will not enter it
 until they leave it.
 If they leave, then we shall enter.
 You go, and your Lord,*

*and you two fight, while we sit here”
 (Surah 5:20–24).*

All night long the people cried out in distress.
 They complained against Moses and Aaron, and said,
 “It would have better to die in Egypt
 or even here in the wilderness!
 Why is the Lord taking us into that land?
 We will be killed in battle,
 and our wives and children will be captured.
 Wouldn't it be better to go back to Egypt?”
 So they said to one another,
 “Let's choose a leader and go back to Egypt!”
 Then Moses and Aaron bowed down to the ground
 in front of all the people.
 And Joshua and Caleb, the two men who trusted in God,
 tore their clothes in sorrow and said to the people,
 “The land we explored is an excellent land.
 If the Lord is pleased with us, God will take us there
 and give us that rich and fertile land.
 Do not rebel against the Lord
 and don't be afraid of the people who live there.
 We will conquer them easily.
 The Lord is with us and has defeated the gods
 who protected them; so don't be afraid.”
 The whole community was threatening
 to stone them to death; but suddenly the people saw
 the dazzling light of the Lord's presence
 appear over the tent.
 The Lord said to Moses,
 “How much longer will these people reject me?
 How much longer will they refuse to trust in me,
 even though I have performed so many miracles
 among them?
 I will send an epidemic and destroy them,
 but I will make you the father of a nation
 that is larger and more powerful than they are!”
 But Moses said to the Lord,
 “You brought these people out of Egypt by your power.
 When the Egyptians hear what you have done
 to your people, they will tell the people
 who live in this land.
 These people have already heard that you, Lord,
 are with us, that you are plainly seen
 when your cloud stops over us,
 and that you go before us in a pillar of cloud by day

and a pillar of fire by night.
 Now if you kill all your people,
 the nations who have heard of your fame will say
 that you killed your people in the wilderness
 because You were not able to bring them
 into the land you promised to give them.”
 And Moses continued,
 “So now, Lord, I pray, show us your power
 and do what you promised when you said,
 ‘I, the Lord, am not easily angered,
 and I show great love and faithfulness
 and I forgive sin and rebellion,
 although I will not fail to punish.’
 So now, Lord, according to the greatness
 of your unchanging love, forgive, I pray,
 the sin of these people, just as you
 have forgiven them ever since they left Egypt.”
 After this prayer from Moses the Lord answered,
 “I will forgive them, as you have asked.
 But I promise that as surely as I live,
 and as surely as my presence fills the earth,
 none of these people, except Caleb and Joshua,
 will live to enter that land,
 which I promised to their ancestors.”

*Musa said, “Lord, I have authority over no one
 except myself and my brother; judge the two of
 us and those disobedient people.” Allah said to
 him, “This land is forbidden to them. For forty
 years they will wander the earth aimlessly. Do
 not grieve over the ones who disobey” (Surah
 5:25–26).*

And the Lord continued,
 “Now give the people my answer,
 ‘You said that your children would be captured,
 but I will bring them into the land that you rejected,
 and it will be their home. You will die here in
 the wilderness.
 Your children will wander in the wilderness
 for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness,
 until the last one of you dies.
 Turn back tomorrow and go into the wilderness
 in the direction of the Red Sea.
 You will know what it means to have me against you!’
 ”

When the Israelites heard what the Lord had said,
 they mourned bitterly.
 But early the next morning they started out
 to invade the hill country, saying,
 “Now we are ready to go to the place
 which the Lord told us about.
 We admit that we have sinned.”
 But Moses said,
 “Why are you disobeying the Lord?
 You will not succeed. Don’t go!
 The Lord is not with you,
 and your enemies will defeat you.”
 Yet they dared to go up into the hill country.
 But they were attacked, defeated, and pursued.

BACK INTO THE DESERT

(Numbers 20: Deuteronomy 31 — 34; Surahs 19:51; 33:69)

So the Israelites could not do anything else
but go back into the desert.
This became a difficult time,
a time of worry and sorrow,
and a time of quarrel and disobedience.
Even Moses lost his patience.
Once again there was no water
and the people gathered around Moses and Aaron,
complaining and accusing them both
of having brought them out of Egypt to die.
Then Moses and Aaron moved away from the people
and stood at the entrance of the tent.
They bowed down with their faces to the ground,
and the dazzling light of the Lord's presence
appeared to them.
The Lord said to Moses,
"Take the staff that is in front
of the covenant box, and then you and Aaron
assemble the whole community.
There, in front of them all,
speak to that rock over there,
and water will gush out of it.
In this way you will bring water
out of the rock for the people,
for them and their animals to drink."
Moses went and got the staff,
as the Lord had commanded.
He and Aaron assembled the whole community
in front of the rock, and Moses said,
"Listen, you rebels! Do we have to get water
out of this rock for you?"
Then Moses raised the staff
and struck the rock twice with it,

and a great stream of water gushed out,
 and all the people and animals drank.
 But the Lord reprimanded Moses and Aaron.
 The Lord said, "Because you did not have enough faith
 to acknowledge my holy power
 before the people of Israel,
 you will not lead them into the land
 that I promised to give them."
 And so it happened.
 Moses was called by God
 to climb up the Mount of Hor,
 together with Aaron and Aaron's son Eleazar.
 So they went up in the sight of the whole community.
 There, Moses removed Aaron's priestly robes
 and put them on Eleazar.
 Then, Aaron died on the top of the mountain,
 and Moses and Eleazar came back down.
 Later the Lord called Moses and said to him,
 "You haven't much longer to live.
 Call Joshua and bring him to the tent,
 so that I may give him his instructions."
 Moses went to the tent, together with Joshua.
 Then the Lord appeared to them in a pillar of cloud.
 And the Lord said to Moses,
 "Place your hands on his head.
 Make him stand in front of Eleazar the priest
 and the whole community. And before them all
 proclaim him as your successor."
 Moses did so.
 Then the Lord said to Joshua,
 "Be confident and determined.
 You will lead the people of Israel
 into the land that I promised them,
 and I will be with you." (Numbers 27)
 And to Moses, the Lord said,
 "You shall write a song and teach it
 to the people of Israel.
 For I will take them into this rich and fertile land,
 as I promised their ancestors.
 They will have all the food they want,
 and they will live comfortably.
 However, a time will come when they turn away
 from me
 and worship other gods. They will reject me
 and break the covenant that I made with them.
 But this song will still be sung,

and it will stand as evidence against them."
 That same day, Moses wrote down the song
 and taught it to the people of Israel.
 He recited the entire song
 while all the people of Israel listened.
 Then he sang it for the Israelites,
 together with Joshua.
 So the people learned the song.
 And for their children it is written in the Bible (Deuter-
 onomy 32).
 When Moses had finished
 writing God's law on a scroll,
 he said to the Levitical priests,
 "Take this book of God's law
 and place it beside the covenant box,
 so that it will remain there
 as a witness against God's people.
 Make sure you obey all these commands
 that I have given you today.
 Repeat them to your children,
 so that they may faithfully obey all God's teachings.
 These teachings are not empty words;
 they are your very life.
 Obey them and you will live long
 in that land across the Jordan
 that you are about to occupy."
 Then, Moses gave a speech
 to these younger people,
 telling them all that had happened
 in all those years of traveling through the desert.
 For they did not have that experience
 because many of them were born in the desert.
 Their parents, who were slaves in Egypt,
 died in the meantime.
 Now these young men and women were the
 new generation
 that was allowed to enter into the Promised Land.
 Finally, Moses blessed his people.
 He gave a blessing to each of the
 twelve tribes of the Israelites.
 Thereafter, he climbed up Mount Nebo, alone.
 And God showed him the whole land
 where the twelve tribes were going to live,
 each in its own place.
 Then the Lord took the life of Moses
 and his grave was never found.

It is written in the Bible, that
there has never been a prophet in Israel like Moses:
the Lord spoke with him face to face.
No other prophet has ever done miracles and wonders
like those that the Lord sent Moses
to perform against the king of Egypt.
No other prophet has been able to do
the great and terrifying things
that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

*And in the Qur'an this message to Muhammad
is written:
"Also mention in the book the story of Musa;
for he was specially chosen.
He was a messenger and a prophet
(Surah 19:51).
You all who believe!
Be not like those who hurt Musa.
Allah cleared him of the lies they had uttered.
And he was honorable in Allah's sight"
(Surah 33:69).*

Since Moses had put his hands
on Joshua's head to bless him,
Joshua was filled with wisdom.
The people of Israel obeyed him
and kept the commands
that the Lord had given them through Moses;
so is written in the Bible.

Unit 6

GUIDES, JUDGES, AND KINGS

GUIDES AND JUDGES

(Judges 2:1—3:4; 1 Samuel 2:11—7:1; Surah 2:246–248)

It was more difficult than expected
for the people of Israel to live without
such leaders as Moses or Joshua.
As long as there were elders who had seen
the great miracles of God, things were all right.
But after that whole generation had died,
the Israelites did what was right in their own minds.
The stories of Israel were no longer told much,
so the children often did not hear
what the Lord had done for Israel.
The less they heard from their own people,
the more they saw of the people around them.
They saw the idols and how people worshiped them,
and they often decided to participate in this worship.
The Lord had warned them against this evil many times
and had forbidden it.
So the Lord became furious with Israel
and let raiders attack and rob them.
The Lord allowed their enemies all around to over-
power them,
and the Israelites could no longer protect themselves.
They groaned under their suffering and they cried;
then the Lord had mercy on them.
God gave Israel leaders
to deliver them from their enemies
and to guide them on the right way to God.
In the Bible, such a person is called a “judge,”
as he or she also judged cases of conflicts.
But whenever a judge died, the Israelites
behaved even worse than before.
This happened several times.
Finally God sent Samuel.
In the Bible he is known as a famous judge and prophet,

*and in the Qur'an he is called
a prophet of the Israelites,
but his name is not mentioned (Surah 2:246).*

Samuel was a leader of the Israelites for a long time.
He also reprimanded Eli,
priest of the house of the Lord in Shiloh.
Eli didn't watch his two priest sons
and didn't take care of the house of the Lord
and of the box of the covenant that
held the Ten Commandments.

*The Qur'an also speaks of
the Ark of the Covenant as a sign of security
from the Lord and says that in it are the relics
left by the family of Musa and Harun.
It will be carried by angels (Surah 2:248).*

Eli's two sons did bad things in God's holy place.
Once they even fetched the Lord's covenant box
to take it to their army.
For the Israelites fought against the Philistines
and they were not able to conquer them.
Therefore they had said, "Let's go and bring
the Lord's covenant box from Shiloh,
to go with us and save us from our enemies."
But they were wrong, as God did not go with the Ark.
God had already told Samuel
that God was very angry because of
all the evil in God's holy place,
and that a punishment would come.
And so it happened that in the battle
with the Philistines, the Israelites lost.
Eli's sons were killed
and the Ark was taken by the enemies.
When someone came to Shiloh to tell the news
to Eli, Eli fell backward,
broke his neck, and died.
So all three died because of
the evil they had done toward God.
And the Israelites were very frightened.
God also let it be known to the Philistines
that they were not allowed to take the Ark.
Wherever they put the Ark, something bad happened.
First, they took it into the temple of their god Dagon,
in Ashdod, and set it up beside his statue.

Early next morning, the people of Ashdod saw
that the statue of Dagon had fallen
face down to the ground,
in front of the Ark of Israel's God.
So they lifted it up and put it back in its place.
Early the following morning, they saw
that the statue had again fallen down
in front of the covenant box.
This time, its head and arms were broken off
and were lying in the doorway;
only the body was left.
The Lord punished the people of Ashdod severely,
by causing them to have tumors.
Then they said, "The God of Israel is punishing us
and our god Dagon."
They took the Ark to the city of Gath,
but there again God punished the people with tumors
and with a plague of mice.
So these people sent the box to Ekron,
another Philistine city,
but when it arrived there, the people cried out,
"They have brought the covenant box
of the God of Israel here, in order to kill us all!"
Then they sent for all Philistine kings
and said, "Send the covenant box of Israel
back to its own place, so that it won't kill us
and our families."
Tumors also developed in Ekron
and the people cried out to their gods for help.
So God's Ark came back to Israel again
after seven months. It was placed on a wagon
pulled by two cows that were to leave their calves behind.
For the people had said,
"If the cows don't return to their young,
but go straight in the direction of Israel,
then this is a sign for us:
that the box indeed has to go back to that country,
and that it is the God of Israel
who has sent this terrible disaster on us.
In that case, we also have to offer something to the Lord
for the wrong we did by taking the Ark with us."
So they made five gold models of mice
and five gold tumors, as a symbol and a memory
of the plagues of Israel's God;
they were put in a box beside the covenant box.
The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat

in the valley, when suddenly they looked up
and saw the covenant box.
The wagon was pulled by two mooing cows.
The five Philistine kings followed them
as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.
That day was a day of celebration in Beth-shemesh.
The people chopped up the wooden wagon,
killed the cows and offered them
as a burnt sacrifice to the Lord.
The five Philistine kings watched them do this
and then went back to Ekron that same day.
But when the people of Beth-shemesh became
curious and looked into the covenant box,
the Lord killed seventy of them.
The people got very frightened and they said,
"Who can stand before the Lord, this holy God?
Where can we send the Ark to get the Lord away
from here?"
They sent messengers to the people of Kirjath-jearim,
in their neighborhood, to tell them
that the Philistines had returned the Lord's covenant box
and they asked them to come down and fetch the box.
So the people of Kiriath-jearim fetched the box
and took it to the house of a man named Abinadab,
who lived on a hill.
They consecrated his son Eleazar to be
in charge of it.

ISRAEL'S FIRST KING-TALUT/SAUL

(1 Samuel 8—17; Surah 2:246–251)

When Samuel grew old, he made his sons,
Joel and Abijah, judges in Israel.
But they did not follow their father's example
and they did not decide cases honestly.
Then all leaders of Israel met together
and went to Samuel. They said to him,
"Look, you are getting old
and your sons don't follow your example.
Appoint a king to rule over us,
so that we will have a king as other countries have."
Samuel was displeased with their request for a king;
so he prayed to the Lord; and the Lord said,
"Listen to everything the people say to you.
You are not the one they have rejected;
it is me who they have rejected as their king.
So then, listen to them, but give them strict warnings
and explain how their king will treat them."
So Samuel did; he told them what a king would claim
from their crops, their sons, their possessions;
but the people persisted in asking for a king
who would lead them to war to fight their
battles.

*The Qur'an also mentions this request
of the Israelites,
and it says that later,
when their king commanded them to fight,
they turned back (Surah 2:246).*

That king was Saul from the tribe of Benjamin.

In the Qur'an, Saul is called Talut.

Samuel anointed Saul as king over
the people of Israel.
“You will rule these people,” he said,
“and protect them from all their enemies.”

*The prophet said to them, “Allah has appointed
Talut to be your king,” But they said,
“How can he be king over us when we have
a greater right to rule than he?
He does not even have great wealth.”
He said, “Allah has chosen him over you, and
has given him great knowledge and stature”
(Surah 2:247).*

When Saul turned to leave Samuel, God gave Saul
a new nature, and suddenly the spirit of God
took control over him.
So Saul could be a good king for his people,
as long as he listened to the Lord.
But a time came, when Saul no longer
did so. He felt strong and went his own way.
Then the Lord withdrew the spirit from Saul.
And God sent Samuel to Saul to reprimand him
in the name of God, and to say that, because he dis-
obeyed God,
he could no longer be a king.
Samuel was sent by God to Bethlehem,
to a man called Jesse, a father with seven sons.
The youngest one was David; he was a shepherd.

In the Qur’an, his name is Dawud.

He was anointed king by Samuel.
David first remained at home
to take care of his father’s sheep.
His brothers were commanded by king Saul
to become soldiers in his army.

They had to fight against the Philistines,
and especially against the Philistine
called Goliath

—Jalut in the Qur’an.

He is mentioned in both books.
Goliath was a giant and everyone was afraid
of him.

Once, David went to his brothers,
on behalf of his father, to take them food
and to ask them how they were getting on.
When he was talking to his brothers,
the giant Goliath came forward,
challenging the Israelites and cursing their God.
David perceived how afraid they were
and he said, “Who is this heathen Philistine
to defy the army of the living God?”
These words of David were told to Saul,
and Saul sent for David. David said to Saul,
“No one should be afraid of this Philistine!
I take care of my father’s sheep.
Whenever a lion or a bear carries off a lamb,
I go after it, attack it, and rescue the lamb.
And if a lion or bear turns on me,
I grab it by the throat and beat it to death.
The Lord has saved me from lions and bears;
God will also save me from this Philistine.”
“All right,” Saul answered; and he gave his own
armor to David to wear.
David tried to walk, but he couldn’t.
So he took it all off.
He took his shepherd’s staff and then picked up
five smooth stones from the stream
and put them in his bag. With his sling ready,
he went out to meet Goliath.
The Philistine came closer
and when he got a good look at David,
he called down curses from his god on David.
But David said,
“You are coming against me with sword, spear,
and javelin, but I come against you in the name of
the Lord Almighty, the God of the Israelite army,
which you have defied.
This very day the Lord
will be victorious in the battle
and will put all of you in our power.
Then the whole world will know that Israel has a God.”

*When they met Goliath and his warriors, they
said, “Our Lord, pour patience on us; make
us stand firm and help us against the disbel-
lievers.” So, with Allah’s permission, they
defeated him (Surah 2:250–251).*

And David put his hand into his bag, took out a stone,
and slung it at Goliath. It hit him on the forehead,
and broke his skull, and Goliath fell face downward
on the ground. David ran to him, stood over him,
took Goliath's sword out of his sheath,
and cut off his head.

So he killed him.

When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead,
they ran away. The men of Israel shouted
and ran after them, pursuing them all the way to Gath
and to the gates of Ekron.
David stayed in the charge of Saul
and he became the friend of Saul's son Jonathan.
Later, Saul separated himself from God.
In a war against the Philistines
he and two sons died; one of them was Jonathan.

Then David became king in Saul's place.

DAWUD/DAVID-KING OF ISRAEL

(2 Samuel 1—2:6; 11—12; Surah 38:21–25)

When David heard that Israel had lost the war,
and that Saul and two of his sons had died,
he fasted and mourned. He also wrote and sang a la-
ment song;
and he ordered it to be taught
to the people of Judah.
One of the verses was to his friend Jonathan:
"I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me" (2 Samuel 1:26).
David wrote and sang many songs,
accompanying himself on the harp.

*Allah knows best about everyone in the heav-
ens and the earth. We gave some prophets
more than others. We gave Dawud a book (of
psalms) (Surah 17:55).*

He had done this for Saul in the past,
when Saul was suffering from an evil spirit,
and Saul would calm down.
Many of David's songs are included in the Bible,
as psalms.
There are morning psalms and evening psalms,
psalms of joy and psalms of sadness,
psalms of trust and psalms of fear,
prayers for help and protection,
and psalms of thanksgiving to the Lord
for saving from distress.
David also wrote pilgrim songs.

*Allah also gave psalms to Dawud,
the Qur'an tells us (Surah 4:163).
Allah graced Dawud with his favor.*

He said, "You mountains, echo Allah's praises together with him, and you birds also" (Surah 34:10).

David also wrote a psalm of repentance; he sang and prayed that psalm, after the prophet Nathan had come to him.

In the Qur'an it is written that two brothers who came to him asking him to 'Judge between us fairly—do not be unjust—and guide us to the right path. My brother has ninety-nine sheep and I just the one, and he said, 'Let me take charge of her,' and he overpowered me with his words." Dawud said, 'He has done you wrong by demanding to add your one to the flock.' Then Dawud realized that Allah had been testing him and he realized his wrong in not listening to both sides before making a judgment. He asked his Lord for forgiveness, fell down on his knees and repented. Allah forgave him, and said, "Dawud, We have given you mastery over the land. Judge fairly between people" (Surah 38:22–26).

Nathan told David a story about a rich man who possessed many sheep and a poor man who had only one sheep. That poor man was ordered to give his sheep to the rich man, because the rich man had visitors and didn't like to slaughter one of his own sheep for the meal. The Bible tells that when David heard the story, He got very angry with that rich man. He said to the prophet Nathan that the man must be killed. But Nathan said to David, "You are that man. For you, who have enough, have taken Bathsheba, the only wife of Uriah, your officer in the army, and you had Uriah put in a dangerous place to have him killed."

David was very frightened by Nathan's words and by his own order to kill the rich man of the story. He said, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord forgives you; you will not die, but the newborn son of you and your new wife will die." And that happened. Then David sang a psalm of repentance (Psalm 51).

Their next son lived; that was Solomon.

In the Qur'an he is called Sulaiman (Surah 38:30)

David was a good king of Israel for a long time.

He was crowned in Hebron as king of Judah for seven years, and then in Jerusalem as king of the whole nation of Israel for thirty-three years.

In the Qur'an Allah says he taught Dawud how to soften iron and make chain mail coats to protect his men in their wars (Surah 34:10; 21:80).

In that time, he brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem with great celebration. Dancing and offering sacrifices, David went ahead of the Ark. In Jerusalem, this covenant box was placed in a tent until the temple of the Lord was built. It was David's desire to have it built himself. But the Lord told him through the prophet Nathan that he was not the one to build the temple. One of his sons would become king and he would build God's temple. And so it happened.

When David died, his son Solomon became Israel's king.

KING SULAIMAN/SOLOMON

(1 Kings 2—3; 6; 10—11; Surah 27:20—44)

Solomon became the king after David.
One night, after Solomon was anointed king,
the Lord appeared to him in a dream
and asked him, “What would you like me to give
to you?”

Then Solomon replied,
“O Lord, you have let me succeed my father as king,
even though I am very young. So give me the wisdom
I need to rule your people with justice
and to know the difference between good and evil.”
The Lord was pleased that Solomon asked for this,
and said to him,
“Because you have asked for wisdom to rule justly,
instead of long life for yourself, or riches,
I will do what you have asked.

“I will give you more wisdom and under-
standing
than anyone has ever had before or will ever
have again;

“and I will also give you what you have not asked for:
wealth, and honor, and a long life,
if you obey me and keep my laws
and commandments.”
And so it happened that kings all over the world
heard of Solomon’s wisdom and sent people to listen
to him.

Also the queen of Sheba

— *Saba, in the Qur’an* —

came to visit him.

In the Qur'an, it is written that Sulaiman was told about her. He sent her a letter of invitation, for her and all her officials, in the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, to come to the king in submission of the true religion. Sulaiman wrote it in this way, as he had heard that it was her custom to worship the sun.

The queen was amazed at how great Solomon's wisdom was in his questions and answers.

In the Qur'an and the Bible, several examples of the great wisdom of this king are given (1 Kings 3:16–28; 10:1–13; Surah 27:15–44).

From the fourth to the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, Solomon worked on building the temple. It became a beautiful temple, covered with gold outside and inside. Finally, Solomon dedicated the temple to the Lord when they celebrated the Festival of Shelters. The king summoned all the leaders of the tribes to come to Jerusalem. When all the leaders had gathered, the priests lifted the covenant box, carried it into the temple, and put it in the Most Holy Place. Then the priests moved the tent of the Lord's presence, and all its relics from the past, to the temple. When the priests were leaving the temple, it was suddenly filled with a cloud shining with the dazzling light of the Lord's presence. Then Solomon went and stood in front of the altar, where he raised his arms and prayed, "Lord, God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven above or on earth below! You keep your covenant with your people. You have kept the promises you made to my father David; today every word has been fulfilled.

And now, Lord God of Israel, from this time forth let everything come true that you promised to my father, David, your servant." And the Lord replied, "I have heard your prayer. I consecrate this temple that you have built as the place where I shall be worshiped forever. I will watch over it and protect it for all time. If you will serve me in honesty and integrity, as your father David did, and if you obey my laws and do everything I have commanded you, I will keep the promise I made to your father David when I told him that Israel would always be ruled by his descendants. But if you or your descendants stop following me, if you disobey the laws and commandments I have given you, and worship other gods, then I will remove my people Israel from the land that I have given them and I will also abandon this temple, which I have consecrated as the place where I am to be worshiped." For a long time Solomon was in prayer, kneeling down on the ground with uplifted hands. Then the king stood up and turned to face the people, and he gave them the Lord's blessing, "May you, God's people, always be faithful to the Lord our God, obeying all God's laws and commandments, as you do today." Then King Solomon, and all the people who were gathered there, offered sacrifices to the Lord during the seven days of the Festival of Shelters. On the eighth day, Solomon sent the people home. They all praised their king and went home happy, because of all the blessings that the Lord had given (1 Kings 6–8). Solomon had many wives from other countries. Those women brought their own gods with them. Solomon built places of worship where all his foreign wives could offer sacrifices to their own gods (1 Kings 11:1–13). By the time he was old they had led him into the worship of their gods, although the Lord had appeared to him twice and had commanded him not to worship foreign gods.

The Lord was very angry with Solomon
and said to him,
"Because you have deliberately broken
your covenant with me and disobeyed
my commandments,
and not set yourself an example for your son,
he will not be able to reign over the whole country.
I promise that I will take the kingdom away from you
and give it to one of your officials.
I will leave your son only one tribe,
for the sake of my servant David
and for the sake of Jerusalem,
the city I have made my own."
And so it happened.
Only the lands of Judah and Benjamin were
for Solomon's son Rehoboam.

*The Qur'an says, "Some of those who had
received Scripture before, threw the
Book of God over their shoulders
as if they had no knowledge, and
followed what the evil ones had
fabricated about the kingdom of Solomon instead.
Not that Solomon himself was a disbeliever.
It was the evil ones who were disbelievers;
they taught people witchcraft"
(Surah 2:101–102).*

KINGS AND PROPHETS

(1 Kings 18; Surahs 37:123–132; 6:86)

After Solomon's death nearly all the successive kings
continued worshiping idols.
As a result, the people of Israel followed
and they left the Lord.
However, God still sent prophets to the people.
The first of these was Elijah.

*In the Qur'an, his name is Ilyas.
Ilyas came to the Israelites, the Qur'an says,
and he asked them, "Will you not fear Allah?
Will you call upon Ba'al and forsake
the best of creators, the Lord and Cherisher
and the Lord and Cherisher of your fathers of old?"
But they rejected him (Surah 37:123–132).*

This prophet is also written about in the Bible.
On Mount Carmel he demonstrated to the Israelites
that only God is the Lord, and not Ba'al.
It had not rained for three years
because the people worshiped Ba'al,
the Ba'al priests prayed to Ba'al for hours and hours,
imploing Ba'al to allow it to rain,
but nothing happened.
Then Elijah sacrificed and prayed to the Lord,
asking God for rain.
And the Lord immediately sent down fire,
and it burnt up the sacrifice.
When the people saw this, they threw themselves
on the ground and exclaimed,
"The Lord is God, the Lord is God!"
That day, heavy rain began to fall.

After Elijah was gone, Elisha became
a prophet of God.

In the Qur'an his name is Alisa'.

He took the prophet's robe that was left behind
when Elijah was taken up to heaven.
Elisha had the same power to do things
as his master Elijah had done.
As a prophet he took action against Israel's enemies
when they came with their armies.
And the enemies stood in awe of Israel's Lord
(2 Kings 6—8; Surah 36:48).
In this way, there were many prophets
who set the right example to the kings and the people.

*In the Qur'an, Job is also called a prophet;
there, his name is Aiyub; he cried to the Lord,
"Satan has afflicted me with distress
and suffering!"
And Allah said,
"Truly, we found him full of patience
and constancy.
How excellent is this servant; ever did he turn
to us!
And we gave him back his people and doubled
their number,
as a grace from us, and for commemoration,
for all who have understanding"
(Job, passim; Surah 38:41–44).*

*In the Qur'an too, Yunus (Jonah) is mentioned
as an example to Muhammad.
Yunus had to give Allah's message
to the sinning people of Nineveh;
Yunus fled away by boat, but was thrown over-
board
because he was found guilty of causing the heavy
storm;
and he was swallowed by a big fish
and prayed for forgiveness to the Lord
in the belly of the fish;
and the Lord heard Yunus and made the fish
spare Yunus (Surah 37:139–148). [End Section]*

The Bible also tells this story;
here the prophet's name is Jonah.

After the fish spewed Jonah up
he went to Nineveh to warn the people,
and they converted to the Lord.
So the Lord did not punish that city
(Surahs 21:87; 68:48–50; 37:139–148).

Jonah was angry, and he regretted warning them.
Then the Lord spoke sternly to Jonah.
The Lord pointed out to him that the great number
of human beings
and all the children living in that city—
more than a hundred and twenty thousand people
as well as many animals—were all God's creatures.
A prophet of the Lord should not neglect them,
should he? (Jonah, passim)

The Lord sent other prophets to the Israel-
ites,
but their names are not mentioned in the
Qur'an (Surah 40:78).
Those are the prophets who told the people
the messages from God.
Those prophets' words are included
in the Bible
as messages from God.

EXILE

(2 Kings 17:1–6; 25:1–12; Ezra, passim; Nehemiah passim; Daniel 11:1–14; Surah 17:4–8)

So again and again God sent prophets
to the people of Israel, to remind them of
the covenant that they had made with
the Lord,
a covenant of faithfulness and obedience.

For God loved Israel as a father loves his child
(Hosea 11:1–4),
and God saw the covenant with Israel as a
covenant between a bridegroom and a bride
(Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 2:2).
But in spite of this, the people again and again
turned away from God.
Finally, God's patience ran out.

The Lord sent enemies who occupied the
people's land,
destroyed their cities,

and took the Israelites
as exiles to their countries;
first the ten tribes (Israel) to Assyria
and later the two tribes (Judah) to Babylon.
But the Lord did not forget the people.
The prophet Jeremiah wrote a letter
to the exiles in Babylon.
On behalf of God, he told them
to build in the new place houses for themselves
and to plant yards to be able to eat their own crops;
to get their children married
and so begin a new life there.
God also told them, through Jeremiah,

“Only when Babylon’s seventy years are completed
 will I visit you,
 and I will fulfill to you my promise
 and bring you back to this place.
 For surely I know the plans I have for you, says
 the LORD,
 plans for your welfare and not for harm,
 to give you a future with hope.
 Then when you call upon me and come and pray
 to me,
 I will hear you.
 When you search for me, you will find me;
 If you seek me with all your heart,
 I will let you find me, says the LORD,
 and I will restore your fortunes
 and gather you from all the nations
 and all the places where I
 have driven you, says the LORD,
 and I will bring you back to the place from which
 I sent you into exile” (Jeremiah 29:10a–14).
 That is mentioned in Jeremiah’s letter,
 sent to the exiles in Babylon.
 So it happened:
 After seventy years, Babylon was occupied by the
 Persians.
 And God gave a good spirit
 to the king of Persia, Cyrus,
 so that he sent the Israelites back
 to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Ezra, passim).
 Then many people returned and repaired
 the temple and Jerusalem’s walls, as well as they could.
 Afterward, they opened the temple
 to worship the Lord.
 When they heard Ezra read the words of the law,
 they promised wholeheartedly to keep all that God
 had dictated.
 Thereafter, they lived in peace in their own land
 for a long time.

*And We gave (clear) warning to the
 Children of Israel in the Book that twice
 would they spread corruption
 on the earth and be arrogant
 (and twice would they be punished)!
 When the first of the warnings came
 to pass We sent against you Our servants*

*given to
 terrible warfare: They destroyed your homes;
 and it was a warning (completely) fulfilled.
 Then did We allow you to defeat them.
 Then We gave you increase
 in resources and offspring.
 When the second of the warnings came to pass
 (We permitted your enemies) to shame you and to visit
 enter your Temple as they had before and to visit
 with destruction all that fell into their power.
 It may be that your Lord may (yet) show Mercy
 unto you; but if ye revert (to your sins) We shall
 revert (to Our punishments) (Surah 17:4–8).*

Later, the Persians were conquered by the Greeks,
 who occupied Israel’s land;
 and after that, the Greeks surrendered to the Romans.
 The land and people of Israel suffered heavily
 under all those rulers.

Unit 7

THE BIRTHS OF JESUS/'ISA AND JOHN/YAHYA

ZAKARIA/ZECHARIAH AND HIS WIFE ELIZABETH

(Luke 1:5–25; Surahs 3:38–41; 19:2–11)

So now it was the Romans who ruled the land
and the people of Israel.
The Romans had other customs and other gods.
But Israel's priests were still in charge of the temple,
and there the people worshiped the Lord.
In the Bible, one of the daily services
in particular is mentioned.
That was the day Zechariah was working
as a priest in the temple.

In the Qur'an, his name is Zakaria.

It was his turn to burn incense on the altar,
so he went into the temple of the Lord,
while the crowd of people outside prayed.
In both books—the Qur'an and the Bible—
this is written.
While Zechariah was doing his work,
an angel of the Lord appeared to him
on the right side of the altar.
Zechariah was afraid when he saw the angel.
But the angel said to him,
“Don't be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer
has been heard.
Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,
and you will name him John.

“You will have joy and gladness,
and many will rejoice at his birth,
for he will be great in the sight of the Lord
He must never drink wine or strong drink;

even before his birth he will be filled
with the Holy Spirit.
He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord
their God.
With the spirit and power of Elijah
he will go before him,
to turn the hearts of parents to their children,
and the disobedient
to the wisdom of the righteous,
to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"
(Luke 1:13-17).

*This son to be born is also mentioned in the
Qur'an.
There the name of John sounds like "Yahiya,"
"a name never given to anyone before,"
Allah says.
Zakaria could hardly believe it, as he and his wife
had always been childless and were very old now.
But the angel told him, "Your Lord said,
'That is easy for Me:
I created you before, from nothing!' "
Yet Zakaria asked for a sign.
The answer was,
"Your sign shall be that you shall speak to no one
for three days."*

In the Bible, the angel's answer to Zechariah's request
for a sign is,

"I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God,
and I have been sent to speak to you
and to bring you this good news.
But now, because you did not believe my words,
which will be fulfilled in their time,
you will become mute, unable to speak,
until the day these things occur" (Luke 1:19-20).

In the meantime, the people were waiting
for Zechariah
and they wondered why he was spending such
a long time
in the temple.

When he came out, he could not speak to them,
and he made signs to them with his hands.

*Using signs, he told them
to celebrate Allah's praises
in the morning and in the evening,
the Qur'an says
(Surah 3:41).*

So the people understood
that he had seen a vision in the temple.
When his time of service was ended
he went to his home, to his wife Elizabeth.
Some time later Elizabeth became pregnant;
and she did not leave the house for five months.
She said, "This is what the Lord has done for me
when God looked favorably on me and took
away the disgrace I have
endured among my people" (Luke 1:25).

THE CHILD YAHYA/JOHN

(Luke 1:57–80; Surah 19:12–15)

When the time came for Elizabeth
to give birth to her baby, she bore a son,
the Bible tells us.
Her neighbors and relatives rejoiced with her.
On the eighth day, they came to circumcise him
and they were going to name him Zechariah
after his father, but his mother said,
“No! His name is to be John.”
His father could not yet speak,
but he asked for a writing tablet and wrote,
“His name is John.”
And immediately his mouth was opened
and his tongue loosed and, filled with the Holy Spirit,
he thanked God and prophesied,
“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for God has looked favorably on
God’s people and redeemed them” (Luke 1:68).

He said to his newborn son,
“[You] will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in
darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:76–79).

*In the Qur’an it is told that Yahya—
that’s John—
later got Allah’s message:
“O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might.”*

*And we gave him wisdom even as a youth,
and pity for all creatures as from us, and purity:
He was devout and kind to his parents,
and he was not overbearing or rebellious.
So peace on him the day that he was born,
the day that he dies, and the day that he
will be raised up to life again!"*
(Surah 19:12–15)

MARYAM/MARY
(Luke 1:26–38; Surahs 3:35–37, 42–51; 4:171)

Another message was sent from God
to the earth.
That message went to Mary.

Maryam is her name in the Qur'an.

Who was she? A girl from Nazareth,
promised in marriage to a man named Joseph,
from the descendants of David, the Bible tells us.

*The Qur'an first tells us something about
her parents.
'Imran is the Arabic name of her father,
and the Qur'an tells that her mother
prayed to Allah,
"O my Lord! I do dedicate to you what is
in my womb
for your special service.
So accept this of me:
for you hear and know all things."
When she was delivered, she prayed again,
"Behold! I am delivered of a female child.
I have named her Maryam
and I commend her and her offspring
to your protection from Satan,
the rejected one" (Surah 3:36).
When her parents had cared for her for some years,
they took her to the temple
to dedicate her to the Lord,
as they had promised;
and they prayed to the Lord.
The Lord heard the prayer
and graciously, accepted her.*

She grew in purity and beauty:
 to the care of Zakaria she was assigned,
 the Qur'an tells us.
 (This Zachariah was the priest of the Lord's temple,
 he who, together with his wife Elizabeth, prayed
 for a son, for a long time.)
 In the Qur'an, it is written that every time
 Zachariah entered her chamber to see her,
 he found her supplied with food.
 He said, "O Maryam! Where is this coming from?"
 She said, "From Allah, for Allah provides
 sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure"
 (Surah 3:37).
 After growing up in the temple,
 Maryam got a message from heaven.
 Angels came to her and said,
 "O Maryam! Allah has chosen you and
 purified you,
 chosen you above the women of all nations.
 Allah gives you glad tidings of a Word from Him:
 his name will be 'Masih 'Isa' [Messiah Jesus],
 son of Maryam,
 held in honor in this world and the hereafter.
 He will be in the company of those nearest
 to Allah.
 He shall speak to the people
 in childhood and in maturity.
 And he shall belong to the righteous."
 Maryam said, "O my Lord! How shall I have
 a son,
 when no man has touched me?"
 He said, "Even so; Allah creates what He will;
 When the Lord has decreed a matter, the Lord
 but says to it,
 'Be!' and it is.
 And Allah will teach him the book and Wisdom,
 The Tawrat (Torah) and the Injil (Gospel),
 and appoint him a messenger
 to the children of Israel
 with this message,
 'I have come to you with a sign from your Lord,
 in that I make for you out of clay, as it were,
 the figure of a bird, and breathe into it,
 and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave;
 and I heal those born blind, and the lepers,
 and I bring the dead into life by Allah's leave;

and I know what you eat
 and what you store in your houses. Surely,
 therein is a sign for you
 if you did believe.
 And I have come to you to attest the Torah,
 which was before me,
 and to make lawful to you
 part of what was before forbidden to you
 with a sign from your Lord.
 So fear Allah, and obey me.
 It is Allah who is my Lord and your Lord;
 then worship Him; this is a way that is straight.' "
 This promise given to Maryam was fulfilled later.
 The Qur'an names 'Isa,
 Allah's Word that He bestowed on Maryam,
 and a Spirit proceeding from Him' "
 (Surah 4:171).

MARY/MARYAM

(Luke 1:25–56)

In the Bible it is the angel Gabriel
who is sent to give Mary the good news.
The angel came to her and said,
“Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you”
(Luke 1:28).

These words affected her and she wondered
what they meant.

The angel said to her,
“Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor
with God.

And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear
a son,

and you will name him Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called

the Son of the Most High,

and the Lord God will give him the throne of David.

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,

and of his kingdom there will be no end”

(Luke 1:30b–33).

Mary said to the angel,

“How shall this be, since I have no husband?”

The angel answered,

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you,

and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;

therefore the child to be born will be holy;

he will be called the Son of God.

And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age

has also conceived a son;

and this is the sixth month for her

who was said to be barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord;

let it be with me according to your word.”

Then the angel departed from her (Luke 1:35–38).
Soon afterward Mary hurried off to Elizabeth.
Together they thanked and praised the Lord.
Mary stayed there for about three months,
the Bible tells us.

Unit 8

'ISA/JESUS AND MU- HAMMAD

THE CHILD 'ISA/JESUS

(Surahs 19:22–33; 23:50; 66:12)

Maryam became pregnant.
She retired to a remote place,
thus it is written in the Qur'an.
In that book, Allah says about her,
"Maryam, the daughter of 'Imran,
who guarded her chastity;
and we breathed into her body of our spirit;
and she testified to the truth of the words
of her Lord and of his revelations,
and was one of the devout servants"
(Surah 66:12).
When the time to give birth was close,
she was in the neighborhood of a
palm tree and a stream, the Qur'an says.
It was quite difficult for her,
but from beneath the palm tree
a voice cried to her not to grieve,
but to eat from the dates
and to drink from the water
and to be refreshed.
"And if you see anyone, say,
'I have vowed a fast to Allah Most Gracious,
and this day will I enter into no talk
with any human being' " (Surah 19:26).
After 'Isa was born, Maryam brought the babe
to her people, carrying him in her arms.
But they said, "O Maryam, truly you
have brought
a strange thing! O sister of Harun,
your father was not a man of evil,
nor your mother a woman unchaste!"
But she pointed to the babe.
They said, "How can we talk to one

who is a child in the cradle?"
Then the child said,
"I am indeed a servant of Allah;
He has given me revelation and made
me a prophet;
and He has made me blessed where so ever I be,
and has enjoined on me prayer and charity
as long as I live.
The Lord has made me kind to my mother,
and not overbearing or miserable;
so peace is on me the day that I was born,
the day that I die,
and the day that I shall be raised up
to life again!"
That is the story of 'Isa, the son of Maryam;
it is a statement of truth,
about which they vainly dispute;
so it is written in the Qur'an.

THE CHILD JESUS/ISA

(Luke 2)

In the Bible, it is written
 that Mary's baby was born in Bethlehem,
 the city she was traveling to with Joseph.
 Joseph had to register himself there,
 as he was a descendant of David.
 This was ordered by the Roman emperor Augustus.
 While they were in Bethlehem,
 the time came for the baby to be born.
 Mary gave birth to her son,
 wrapped him in strips of cloth
 and laid him in a manger,
 as there was no room for them to stay in the inn.
 There were some shepherds in that part of the country
 who were spending the night in the fields,
 taking care of their flocks.
 An angel of the Lord appeared to them,
 and the glory of the Lord shone over them.
 They were terribly afraid;
 but the angel said to them,
 "Don't be afraid, for see—I am bringing you
 good news
 of great joy for all the people:
 to you is born this day in the city of David
 a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.
 This will be a sign for you:
 you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth
 and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10–12).
 Suddenly a great multitude of heaven's angels
 appeared with the angel, singing praises to God,
 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
 and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"
 (Luke 2:14)
 When the angels went away from them and

back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,
 "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing
 that has happened, which the Lord has made
 known us."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph,
 and the babe lying in the manger.

When the shepherds saw him, they told them
 what the angel had said about this child.

All who heard it were amazed at what the
 shepherds said.

But Mary kept all these things to herself
 and thought deeply about them,
 the Bible tells us.

And the shepherds returned,
 glorifying and praising God
 for all they had heard and seen,
 just as the angel had told them.

Mary's son was also circumcised on the eighth day
 and he received the name of Jesus;
 in the language of his country it is Joshua,
 which means "God is Savior."

*And in the Arabic language of the Qur'an his
 name is 'Isa.*

The child grew and became strong.
 He was full of wisdom,
 and God's blessings were upon him,
 the Bible tells us.

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem
 for the Passover festival;

and when Jesus was twelve years old
 he accompanied them for the first time.

There, he sat down in the temple with the
 Jewish teachers

day after day, listening to them
 and asking questions. All who heard him
 were amazed at his intelligent answers.

His parents didn't know that he was there.

After the Passover they looked for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the temple
 and were astonished. They did not understand
 what he was doing there.

He said to them,

"Why were you searching for me?

Did you not know that I must be in my Father's

house?" (Luke 2:49)

Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom,
 gaining favor with God and with people;
 that's what the Bible tells us.

YAHYA AND 'ISA- JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS

(Luke 3:1–22; Matthew 3:1–17; Mark 1:1–13; John 1:19–34; Isaiah 40:3; Surah 19:12)

The Roman emperor Augustus, who had ordered
the whole nation of Israel to register, had died.
After him, the emperor Tiberius ruled over the empire.
In the fifteenth year of his reign,
when Pontius Pilate was governor in Judea
and Herod was his ruler in Galilee,
John, son of Zechariah, received in the desert
a message from God;
thus it is written in the Bible.
John went throughout the whole territory
of the river Jordan, preaching to the people
that they had to turn away from their sins
and be baptized with the baptism of forgiveness.
“The kingdom of heaven is near!” he called.
People came to him from Jerusalem,
and from the whole province of Judea
and all the land near the river Jordan.
They confessed their sins
and he baptized them in the Jordan.
They called him John the Baptizer.
He was “the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill
shall be made low’ ” (Luke 3:4b–5a).
The people asked him, “What are we to do, then?”
John answered,
“Whoever has two coats must
share with anyone who has none;
and whoever has food must do likewise” (Luke 3:11).

Some tax collectors came to be baptized,
and they asked him,
"Teacher, what are we to do?"
"Don't collect more than is legal," he told them.
Some soldiers also asked him,
"What about us? What are we to do?"
He said to them,
"Don't take money from anyone by force
and don't accuse anyone falsely. Be content with
your pay."
But some people wanted to be baptized
just as the children of Abraham were,
without asking what they should do,
John said to them, "Who told you that you
could escape
the punishment of God? Do those things
that will show that you have turned from your sins!
And don't think you can escape punishment by saying
that Abraham is your ancestor. I tell you
that God can take these stones
and make descendants for Abraham!"
Then John said to the people,
"I baptize you with water;
but one who is more powerful than I is coming:
I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"
(Luke 3:16).
At that time, Jesus arrived from Galilee
and came to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.
But John tried to make him change his mind.
He said, "I need to be baptized by you,
and do you come to me?" (Matthew 3:14).
But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now;
for it is proper for us in this way
to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).
Then John baptized Jesus.
And when Jesus came up out of the water,
heaven was opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God
coming down like a dove and resting on him.
Then a voice said from heaven,
"This is my Son, the Beloved,
with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).
John the Baptist gave the message of God
to many people, with many warnings.

*In the Qur'an, it is written that Yahya did
what Allah told him to do:
"O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might"
(Surah 19:12).*

Herod, the governor of Galilee,
was reprimanded by John because he had married
Herodias, his brother's wife,
and had done many other evil things.
So he put John in prison.
And later he ordered that John be killed,
because his second wife wished it so (Mark 6:14–29).
Jesus said of John
that he was not only a prophet
but more than a prophet (Matthew 11:7–11),
because already in the past
God had said about him through a prophet,
"I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before
me" (Malachi 3:1).

*In the Qur'an Allah says,
"We reward those who do good—
Zakaria, Yahya (John), 'Isa (Jesus) and Elijah,
every one of them is righteous.
Those are the ones to whom
We gave the Scripture, wisdom, and prophet-
hood" (Surah 6:84–85. 89).*

'ISA/JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

(Matthew 5:1–12; Mark 1:14–20; Luke 7:18–23; Surahs 3:52–53; 5:111; 61:14)

After John had been put in prison, Jesus

—in the Qur'an, 'Isa—

went to Galilee and preached the good news from God.

And, like John, Jesus also said to the people,

"The right time has come and the kingdom of God
is near!

Turn away from your sins and believe in the
good news!"

After that, he told them about the kingdom of God,

the kingdom of heaven that would come on earth,

where the sick are healed,

where poverty and hunger are over,

where evil makes room for love and joy.

And by telling parables, Jesus set examples of
that kingdom.

Those parables are to be found in the Gospels.

The biblical parable of the seed

is also mentioned in the Qur'an (Surah 48:29).

Jesus was part of that kingdom, saying,

"And this is the will of him who sent me,

that I should lose nothing of all that he has
given me, but raise it up in the last day.

This is indeed the will of my Father,

that all who see the Son and believe in him

may have eternal life; and I will raise them up

on the last day" (John 6:39–40).

This last day is also very important in

the Qur'an,

*as it is the day of the decision,
where good and bad deeds will become clear
and Allah will judge whether people will be
rewarded or punished (Surah 14:21–24).*

The people heard what Jesus said, and asked him,
as they had asked John the Baptist,
“What are we to do? Which commandment
is the most important of all?”
And Jesus said, as Moses said in the past,
“The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord
is one;
you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’
The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor
as yourself.’
There is no other commandment greater
than these” (Mark 12:29–31).

By Jesus’ words, the people saw
how great was his love for God and for
his neighbors.
They took to him their relatives and friends
who were ill: the deaf and blind, the crippled
and lame,
and those who were possessed by evil spirits.
Also those inflicted with leprosy came.
Jesus drove away all people’s illnesses,
and the evil spirits fled from him,
so that the people who were thus set free
could follow Jesus
in their right mind.
He even brought the dead to life again
and gave them back to those who loved them.

*This is also mentioned in the Qur’an
(Surah 3:49).*

By working the whole day for the kingdom of God,
Jesus sometimes grew very tired.
Then, he withdrew to a silent place
to rest and pray to God,
to get new strength for the coming day.
He also chose twelve disciples—followers.

“Follow me,” he said, and they followed him
and learned from him how to work for the
kingdom of God.

In the Qur’an they are called helpers
(Surah 61:14).

Jesus taught the people
what to do for a better life,
for themselves and also for others.
If they did these things, he said, the world would
resemble the kingdom of God.
Jesus said, “Everything you do
for the hungry, the thirsty, the naked,
the sick, and the foreigner,
you do it for me.”

*In the Qur’an it is also written
that alms are for the poor and the needy,
and for those in bondage and in debt
in the cause of Allah, and for the traveler,
(Surahs 9:60; 63:10)
that you establish a weight with justice
and fall not short in the balance,
that for the love of Allah you feed
the indigent, the orphan and the captive,
saying, “We feed you for the sake of Allah alone:
no reward do we desire, nor thanks.”
This is ordained by Allah;
and Allah knows what is in people’s hearts.
Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.
(Surahs 76:8–9; 90:15–17).*

In the Bible, Jesus points out to the people
that everybody is able to do something for others,
as the Lord has given skills to everyone;
in the Bible, those skills are called talents.
Such talents may be skills of your head,
or your heart, or your hands;
sometimes, it may be something you can do with
your money.

And the Lord knows very well
which talents God has given to everyone.
So, at the end of everyone’s life
God will ask each of them what he or she

has done
with the talent God gave them
(Matthew 25:14–30; Surah 14:51).

Nobody knows when that day of judgment will come,
so everybody has to prepare and always be ready
for the kingdom of heaven.
Jesus told a parable about the kingdom of heaven:
It will be like ten bridesmaids who took their oil lamps
and went out to meet the bridegroom.
But five of them did not take extra oil with them.
The bridegroom was late in coming,
so the girls fell asleep.
It was midnight when the call
to announce that the bridegroom was coming
was heard.
The bridesmaids woke up. The five who had extra oil
filled their lamps, but there was not enough
to share with the others; otherwise all the lamps
might go out and the bridegroom would
come in darkness.
The other five bridesmaids went
to the shop to buy oil for themselves.
But while they were gone, the bridegroom arrived;
he went into the wedding feast with the
bridesmaids present, and the door was closed.
The other five had not welcomed him,
so he didn't know them and they could not come in.
Jesus concluded, "Keep awake therefore, for you
know neither the day nor the hour" (Matthew 25:1–13).

*Such a warning is also given in the Qur'an;
it is a warning to unbelieving men and women,
that they cannot borrow from the light of others
who were prepared (Surah 57:12–14).*

This message was told in the past
and is still being told today.
Jesus warned the people on behalf of God,
just as John the Baptist had done.
But, as happened in the time of John's warnings,
some people didn't want to listen
to the warnings of Jesus; they got angry and said,
"He behaves like God. The words he says, only God
can say."
They didn't understand that Jesus spoke

with the authority of God;
and they did not understand that it was with the
Holy Spirit
that Jesus healed the people
and gave them wholeness.
Some preferred to force Jesus away,
so that they would not need to hear his warnings.
In fact, they wanted to kill him.
Jesus did know that, and again he warned them (Mat-
thew 21:33–46).
They tried to accuse him of blasphemy, but could not
prove it.
Then they made up lies and, after several trials,
they succeeded in having Jesus condemned and crucified
at Golgotha, outside Jerusalem.
At noon the whole country was covered
with darkness, which lasted for three hours.
No light was seen,
no Word of God gave help,
no Spirit of God gave healing and strength.
In that darkness, Jesus cried out,
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
and died.
His body was carefully laid in a tomb by good friends
(Matthew 26—27).

*In the Qur'an it is written that the
Jews did not kill the Masih 'Isa (Messiah Jesus),
nor crucify him, but that Allah took him up to
himself (Surah 4:157–158).*

It is written that two days later,
when the women came to the tomb of Jesus,
an earthquake suddenly began,
and the soldiers who were guarding the tomb
were surprised by a blinding light.
It was an angel, coming from God;
he rolled the stone away and sat on it.
The guards trembled and became like dead men.
Then they fled back to the city
and told the chief priests everything that had happened.
But the angel told the women
that Jesus had been raised from the dead,
and he showed them the place where Jesus had
been lying.
Then the angel told them to report this message

to the disciples (Matthew 28:1–7).

Jesus himself appeared to the disciples.
"Peace be upon you," he said to them.
And he breathed on them, saying,
"Receive the Holy Spirit!" (John 20:22)

When it was his time to return to God,
Jesus told his disciples
—also called apostles—to go into the world.
The Bible tells us this.
They were to make all people his disciples,
to baptize them and to teach them how to follow
Jesus in his words and deeds.
All that Jesus taught and did
has been written in the biblical Gospels.
Some time later, at Pentecost,
when many people from abroad
were present in Jerusalem,
the disciples received the Holy Spirit of God.
With the gift of the Holy Spirit
they told all present
about the coming kingdom of heaven.
And everyone understood the message,
no matter what country he or she came from.
After Pentecost, the apostles went into the world
with the good news of Jesus' message.

JESUS/'ISA
[Section from Bible]

The messages to the people of Israel
from the time before Jesus were already
included in the Torah of Israel;
they are also included in the Bible,
together with the message of Jesus—the Gospel

—in the *Qur'an* called the *Injil*.

Letters and acts of the apostles (disciples)
are also included in the Bible.
The last book of the Bible mentions Jesus' revelation
to the apostle John.
In this book there is a description of how beautiful
everything will be when a new heaven and a new
earth appear.
Then God will wipe away all tears
from the eyes of all people who suffer
from pain and sadness. [End Section]

MUHAMMAD

(Surah 14:4)

*Six centuries later,
Muhammad had to speak to the Arabs
Allah's words revealed to him by Jabra'il—Ga-
briel.*

*The messages to the people of Arabia
are written in the Qur'an.*

*The messengers went into the world
with this message.*

*To each nation, a messenger was sent,
speaking in the language of his own people,
to make things clear to them,
the Qur'an tells us (Surah 14:4).*

And so the message from the Almighty
is passing through the world.
Nations hear the message in their own
language
and pass it on
to their children and grandchildren
and to anyone who wants to hear it.

GOD IS GREAT! ALLAHOU AKBAR!