



God in Awe and Intimacy: Jewish and Muslim Perspectives on Understanding and Pronouncing the Name(s) of God and its Relation to the Humanitarian Crisis

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Abstract: The concept of God is essential for both Jews and Muslims. Instead of using the terms Judaism and Islam, this study considers the terms Jews/Jewish and Muslims as more proper to focus on human beings as the subject of religion who are open to dialogue and change. Loving God's creations is a process of loving the Creator. Thus, this study tries to connect Jewish and Muslim understanding and belief in God's Names and its implications for their actions concerning the humanitarian crisis, especially today's Israel-Palestine relationship. This study applies the content and comparative analysis of the texts (documents, videos, and pictures) related to the issue, along with the teachings of Isaac Luria and Mulla Sadra. In addition, a phenomenological approach is also used as it leads to an effort to understand religious thought and behavior from the point of view of the religious person. This study revealed that how humans understand Divine Names is manifested in how they treat each other. As human beings are the best manifestation of God, how we see, treat, and interact with others reflects our understanding of God's names and vice versa. God's names are all beautiful. Therefore, those who believe in God will do good to themselves, others, and the universe.

Contribution: This study provides insight into a correlation between one's beliefs and actions among Jews and Muslims. One's actions reflect one's understanding of God and vice versa. Also, how we can try to stay physically, mentally and spiritually strong amidst the happening conflicts and chaos through the reflection on the topic.

Keywords: Jews; Muslim; Divine Names; humanitarian crisis

Introduction

The concept of God is essential for both Jews and Muslims. One cannot be a Muslim without believing in God. In Judaism, one is Jewish if one's mother is Jewish or if one converts to Judaism, but belief in God is also central to Judaism. Whether or not Jews and Muslims are referring to the same God has long been a matter of discussion in religious studies; however, this research will not focus on the Muslims' and Jews' views on Who God is. Instead, how each faith tradition's believers refer to the Divine Name of God in Whom they believe and the implications and reflections from the approaches.

Both Jews and Muslims agree that all believers should be living their lives purposefully and in accordance with their beliefs in God. Everything that human beings do has intention and reason. What intentions and reasons inform how Jewish and Muslim people speak about the divine name of God Who is the Source of their life? Can their intentions and reasons for referring to God's Name relate to their engagement with others?

Furthermore, in this present world, where there are a lot of devilish events triggered by the so-called religious people, does that mean that religion and God Himself are bad? Just because someone claims themselves as a believer does not mean they are true believers. God is always right, but our understanding and expressions towards Him are diverse. So, declining the fact that devilish behavior has a religion might not be suitable in this regard. People might want to believe in God and express it in different ways, which, unfortunately, are dangerous for others and even themselves.

Meanwhile, the Israel-Palestine conflict, if we think that this is a religion-based conflict, is also actual. However, the fact that Israel, or more precisely, Zionists, wants to establish a Jewish state by eliminating any other faiths, not only Muslims but also Christians and even pro-Palestine Jewish, proves that this conflict is actually beyond religion. The occupation is driven by several factors: political, social, historical, economic, ethnic, etc.

On April 10, 2015, at a conference entitled "The Israel Lobby: Is it Good for the U.S.? Is it Good for Israel?" Gideon Levy, a well-known Israeli journalist and author, avowed:

"I will just give the three principles that enabled us Israelis to live so easily with this brutal reality. (A). Most Israelis, if not all, deeply believe that we are chosen people. And if we are chosen, we have the right to do whatever we want. (B). There were more brutal and longer occupations in history, even though the Israeli occupation gets to quite a nice record. But there was never in history an occupation in which the occupier presented himself as a victim. Not only the victim but also the only victim around. This also enables any Israeli to live in peace because we are the victims. (C).

However, the third set of values is the most dangerous one. This is the systematic dehumanization of the Palestinians, which enables us Israelis to live in peace with everything because if they are not human beings like us, then there is no question of human rights. And if you scratch under the skin of almost every Israeli, you will find it there. Almost no one will treat the Palestinians as equal human beings like us.”¹

Dehumanization can be defined as the perception and treatment of others as less than fully human.² Initially, it was conceptualized as an extreme phenomenon during major intergroup conflicts,³ like the one currently happening with Palestine, Sudan, Uyghur, and more. Dehumanization is also understood as the failure to recognize the cognitive and emotional complexities of the people around us. While its presence has been well documented in horrific acts of violence, it can also take form in humans’ daily actions.⁴

Many people try to investigate the factors that might increase humanity’s values and thus decrease the negative implications of dehumanization. Many will agree that faith in God is vital in countering the causes of dehumanization. It provides fundamental reasons and understanding that we are all God’s creation and part of the universe with basic human rights and qualities.

God reveals His Divine Name through revelations. Still, apart from God’s revelations, people name God variously, according to their differing understandings. Among the many Divine names revealed through revelation and understood through human capacity, this research focuses more on the Divine Personal Name of YHWH from the Jewish perspective and ALLAH from the Muslim perspective. Through this research, it is hoped that humans’

¹ Gideon Levy, ...“...About Israel,” <https://www.youtube.com/videoarhiv23>, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fn0GVnEVCNE>; Gideon Levy, “What I Would Tell a Visiting Congressional Delegation,” in *Israel’s Influence: Good or Bad for America?* (Washington DC, 2016), https://www.israelinfluence.org/transcripts/gideon_levy.html.

² Nick Haslam and Michelle Stratemeyer, “Recent Research on Dehumanization,” *Current Opinion in Psychology* 11 (October 2016): 25–29, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.03.009>; Andrea Scatolon et al., “Focusing on the Self to Humanize Others: The Role of Empathy and Morality,” *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* 51 (June 2023): 101264, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2023.101264>.

³ Gery C. Karantzas, Jeffry A. Simpson, and Nick Haslam, “Dehumanization: Beyond the Intergroup to the Interpersonal,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 32, no. 6 (December 30, 2023): 501–7, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214231204196>.

⁴ Jeremy C Simon and Jennifer N Gutsell, “Recognizing Humanity: Dehumanization Predicts Neural Mirroring and Empathic Accuracy in Face-to-Face Interactions,” *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 16, no. 5 (May 4, 2021): 463–73, <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsab014>.

understanding of the beauty of the Divine Names can be actualized in humans' actions, respecting fellow humans as everyone is God's creation, thus preventing the seeds of dehumanization and violence.

To understand how Jews and Muslims view the pronouncing the Name(s) of God, this research also discusses the topic and its implications from the teachings and perspectives of Isaac Luria, an influential thinker of medieval Jewish mysticism, and Mulla Sadra, who is considered a pioneer of interdisciplinary thought in Islamic culture.

Literature Review

The information extracted from the previous research, including the readings and the theoretical perspectives of the issues, acted as guides for and supports the development of this research. There has been much research on this topic, especially on the broader issues of the Name(s) of God. However, previous research mainly concentrated on only one religious tradition's view. When there is more than one religious tradition view, the researchers mainly discuss broader or different topics. Furthermore, the author has not found research that explicitly discusses more than one religious tradition's view on God's Name(s) while elaborating on studying human behavior, especially with humanitarian crises and dehumanization. Thus, the author hopes this can be one of the novelties of this research.

Currently, the author can only find one article that closely discusses the topics of this research. The article was written by Hillel Ben-Sasson in *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 114, Issue 2, on April 2021, entitled "Representation and Presence: Divine Names in Judaism and Islam." This article analyzes the interaction between presentation and representation concerning Divine Names in major trends within Judaism and Islam, from the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'an to medieval theological debates. It aims to demonstrate how central currents within both traditions shaped the intricate relation between divine presentation and representation through the prism of Divine Names.⁵

Method

This research focuses on studying Jewish and Muslim understanding and views of the divine name(s) through written text and its implications for their behavior. Thus, the researcher believes that the documentary method, which

⁵ Hillel Ben-Sasson, "Representation and Presence: Divine Names in Judaism and Islam," *Harvard Theological Review* 114, no. 2 (April 20, 2021): 219–40, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816021000158>.

focuses on the text and phenomenological approach that connects with human behavior, fits this research more.

A broad definition of a document is a 'written text.' Documentary research analyzes documents containing information about the phenomenon we wish to study. Documentary research is a type of research method that involves the systematic investigation and analysis of existing documents or records. These documents can be written, visual, or audio materials, such as books, articles, photographs, videos, and audio recordings. Some documentary research data collection methods used are Systematic Searching which involves conducting a thorough and systematic search of documents to identify relevant information by using keywords, search terms, and other techniques to locate relevant documents; Content Analysis which involves analyzing the content of documents to identify patterns, themes, and other insights; Historical Analysis that consists in analyzing historical documents to understand past events, trends, and cultural contexts with either primary or secondary sources, as well as oral histories and other forms of documentation; Comparative Analysis that involves comparing documents from multiple sources or locations to identify similarities and differences.⁶

Meanwhile, the phenomenological approach used in this research is the approach used to study the commonality in the behaviors of a group of people, namely Jews and Muslims. It also uses observations and documents to construct a universal meaning of experiences and establish an understanding of the phenomenon. The richness of the data obtained in phenomenological research opens up opportunities for further inquiry.⁷ Furthermore, the data collected through documentary research or phenomenological approach is then processed through three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. While data condensation refers to selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appears in the empirical materials to make the data stronger, a display is an organized,

⁶ Jashim Uddin Ahmed, "Documentary Research Method: New Dimensions," *Indus Journal of Management & Social Science (IJMSS)* 4, no. 1 (2010): 1–14, <https://ideas.repec.org/a/iijh/journal/v4y2010i1p1-14.html>; Muhammad Hassan, "Documentary Research – Types, Methods and Examples," <https://researchmethod.net/documentary-research/>, 2024.

⁷ Linda A. Bliss, "Phenomenological Research: Inquiry to Understand the Meanings of People's Experiences," *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology* 7, no. 3 (2016): 14–26, <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJAVET.201607010>.

compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing and action.⁸

Results and Discussion

The Divine Name in Jewish Perspective (YHWH)

In Jewish thought, a name is not merely an arbitrary designation or a random combination of letters and sounds. The name conveys its nature and essence. Because a name represents the reputation of the named one, a name should be treated with the same respect as the named one. For this reason, God's Names, in all of their forms, are treated with enormous respect and reverence in Judaism.⁹

God in Judaism could be referred to using several names and titles as recorded in the Hebrew Bible. Some designations are used in both the generic and the specific sense. Others are used only as the personal name for The God of Israel.¹⁰

The Tetragrammaton, the “four-letter” name (יהוה), is viewed as the ‘proper/personal name’ for the God of Israel and is used 5.410 times in the Hebrew Bible. The term serves to distinguish God from the gods of other nations,¹¹ as in the Exodus 3: 13-15:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים הַנִּה אֲנֹכִי בָא אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתִּי לָהֶם אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם שְׁלַחְנִי אֲלֵיכֶם וְאָמְרוּ לִי מַה שְּׁמוֹ מַה אָמַר אֱלֹהִים? וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה // כֹּה תֹאמַר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ הַנִּה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁלַחְנִי אֲלֵיכֶם זֶה שְׁמִי לְעֹלָם וְזֶה זְכוּרִי לְדֹר דָּר.

“Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD,¹² The God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’”

The name YHWH occurs repeatedly throughout the book of Genesis, but is only introduced formally, in direct response to Moses’ request for it, in Exod.

⁸ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook (3rd Edition)* (USA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 31.

⁹ “The Name of God,” accessed March 2, 2024, <https://mechon-mamre.org/jewfaq/name.htm>.

¹⁰ Máire Byrne, *The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: A Basis for Interfaith Dialogue* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 17.

¹¹ Byrne, 22.

¹² Some version write this translation as YHWH.

3:13 at the burning bush theophany as written above. Exodus 6:3 corroborates its unprecedented disclosure to Moses, as follow:

וַאֲרָא אֶל אַבְרָהָם אֶל יִצְחָק וְאֶל יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי וַשְּׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא נִדְעָתִי לָהֶם.

“I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as E-I Shad-dai, but I did not make Myself known to them by My name YHWH.”

After the Temple was destroyed, the prohibition on pronouncing The Name YHWH outside of it caused pronunciation of the Name to fall into disuse. The original pronunciation is uncertain, as this was lost from Jewish tradition sometime in the Middle Ages. Still, the pronunciation of *Yahweh* has been recovered as the historical name of God and is essential and primarily significant to biblical tradition.¹³ The term יהוה often appears as “YHWH” in languages that use a Roman lettering system.¹⁴

The revelation of the name YHWH to Israel through Moses represented a new and fuller revelation of the personal reality of YHWH. The people of Israel know God by this name; no further qualification or definition is needed. He has revealed himself to Israel by the saving acts of the exodus. The distinctive name יהוה indicates that He is a personal being whose essence and attributes can be shared by no one else.¹⁵

As a result, observant Jews do not pronounce the Tetragrammaton, as the name is considered too sacred to be used in prayer and reading sacred texts. Nothing explicitly written in the Torah prohibits the saying of the name; however, even during the time of the First Temple in Jerusalem, the name was pronounced only once a year by the high priest on Yom Kippur. When the temple was destroyed, the name was no longer pronounced. Jews will read the name as *Adonai* (my lord) or *HaShem* (The Name).¹⁶

The prayer book of *Saadia Gaon*¹⁷ specifically mentions about guarding the name of God:

¹³ Samuel Rayan, “Naming the Unnamable,” in *Naming God*, ed. Robert P. Scharlemann (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1985), 8; Byrne, *The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: A Basis for Interfaith Dialogue*, 22.

¹⁴ Byrne, *The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: A Basis for Interfaith Dialogue*, 22.

¹⁵ Byrne, 24.

¹⁶ Byrne, 24–25.

¹⁷ Gilana Levavi, a devout Jewish student, informs me that the prayer book of *Saadia Gaon* is one of the oldest prayer books, dating to around the 900’s C.E. Saadia Gaon was a rabbi and philosopher who wrote in Judeo-Arabic (a combination of Hebrew and Arabic). He was born in Egypt and was influenced by Islamic *kalam* philosophy.

“As far as Your glorious name is concerned, Your name is in accordance with Your praise, in Your name Your people will rejoice, for the sake of Your name You will be lenient, You will bestow honor to Your name, because everyone who knows Your name, it is Your name that is pleasing, the one who guards it will mention it in awe, purity, and holiness, in accordance with Your glory.....”¹⁸

Saadya emphasizes the limitedness of human knowledge in understanding God. He describes three reasons why human nature is limited. First, since humans are finite, their faculties, including the faculty of knowledge, are also finite. Secondly, since humans can obtain knowledge using their faculties, knowledge must be finite. Thirdly, since sense perception is the root of all knowledge, knowledge must be finite.¹⁹ Given this, people can obtain only minimal knowledge of God, including His Name, which is infinite.

One of the stories that show how seriously Jews have taken the idea of not pronouncing God’s name is written in Avodah Zarah 18a. It states that the Romans brought Rabbi Ḥanina ben Teradyon for judgment because he was found sitting and engaging in Torah study and convening assemblies in public with a Torah scroll in his lap. The Gemara indicates that specific prohibitions do not apply when acting only to acquire knowledge, understand, and teach. But the rabbi was burnt to death because he would pronounce the Name of God in public instead of privately.²⁰

Nevertheless, Jewish people may understand equally the intention but differ in their reasons for not pronouncing the personal name of God. Some see the name in awe and think of it as too sacred to utter in casual conversation or public; some may be afraid to utter the divine name lest it should cause a dangerous discharge of divine power, for to give a name is both to empower and to exert control.²¹

What I understood from the conversation with knowledgeable Jews is that only God Himself knows the real personal name of God. YHWH is not

¹⁸ Wout Jac. Van Bekkum, “What’s in the Divine Name? Exodus 3 in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition,” in *The Revelation of the Name YHWH to Moses: Perspectives from Judaism, the Pagan Gracco-Roman World, and Early Christianity*, ed. George H. Van Kooten (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 3.

¹⁹ Saadya Gaon, *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 76–77.

²⁰ “Avodah Zarah 18a,” The William Davidson Talmud, accessed December 12, 2019, https://www.sefaria.org/Avodah_Zarah.18a?lang=bi.

²¹ Rayan, “Naming the Unnamable,” 6.

pronounced since no one knows *how* to pronounce it.²² Other Hebrew names, like *Adonai*, *El*, or *Elohim*,²³ are pronounced only in prayer or a teaching context. If written on paper, these names are prohibited to be thrown; instead, they must be buried in the ground.²⁴ Further, in casual conversation, some Jews, like Gilana, choose to pronounce the names as *Kel* or *Elokim*.

The Divine Name in Muslim Perspective (ALLAH)

The names of God in Muslims' perspective are divided into two categories: the name of the Essence (*adh-dhât*), such as Allâh, and the names of the Qualities (*aş-şifât*), such as *ar-Rahîm* (The Most Merciful). The names are referred to as the 99 Most Beautiful Names. The names come from three sources: some have been revealed directly in the Qur'an; others are derived indirectly from specific passages in the Qur'an; and others are traditional but not derived from the Qur'an.²⁵

The Name Allah is often called the supreme name (*al-ism al-A'zam*), which is not included in the 99 names.²⁶ It appears in the Qur'an 2.697 times. For Muslims, this is the divine name that most indicates the Oneness of God. It can be used only for God. It is not included in any human names (except for those words that reflect God's relationship to humans, for instance, '*Abdullah*,

²² Abraham Abulafia states that the actual name of God does not occur in the Pentateuch. The Tetragrammaton is only an allusion to the true name of God. See: Bekkum, "What's in the Divine Name? Exodus 3 in Biblical and Rabbinic Tradition," 14.

²³ Elohim is the first Name used for God in scripture. In form, the word is a masculine plural. This Name is used in scripture when emphasizing God's might, His creative power, and his attributes of justice and rulership. Variations on this name include El, Eloah, Elohai (my God), and Eloheynu (our God). See; "The Name of God." / Torah 101.

²⁴ Jews do not casually write any Name of God. The Torah does not prohibit writing the Name of God per se; it only prohibits erasing or defacing a Name of God. However, observant Jews avoid writing any Name of God casually because of the risk that the written Name might later be defaced, obliterated, or destroyed accidentally or by one who does not know better. It is worth noting that this prohibition against erasing or defacing Names of God applies only to Names that are written in some kind of permanent form, and recent rabbinical decisions have held that writing on a computer is not a permanent form, thus it is not a violation to type God's Name into a computer and then backspace over it or cut and paste it, or copy and delete files with God's Name in them. However, the document is printed out, it becomes a permanent form. Normally, Orthodox Jews avoid writing the Name by substituting letters or syllables, for example, writing "G-d" instead of "God." See: "The Name of God." / Torah 101.

²⁵ Byrne, *The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: A Basis for Interfaith Dialogue*, 17–18.

²⁶ Byrne, 90.

which means the servant of God, or *Aminullah*, trustee of God, and so on). The term's root is *al-ilâh*, which means "The God."²⁷

Similar to the Jewish perspective, Muslims also understand that no one has actual knowledge of God except God Himself. Human beings are not meant to know the essence of God; instead, we ought to focus our reflection on the creation of God. However, God reveals his beautiful Names so that believers always feel His closeness, even without full knowledge of the Essence of God. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

"And when My servant asks you concerning Me, surely I am very near; I respond (to the) invocation (of) the supplicant when he calls Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me, so that they may (be) led a right." (Al-Baqarah: 186).

In Islam, there is a crucial difference from the Jewish perspective of not pronouncing or speaking the Name of God. Muslims believe that God reveals His Beautiful Names so that human beings can always call on Him, remember Him, and talk about Him, anytime and anywhere –Muslims start everything in the Name of Allah and finish everything by praising Allah to feel the closeness and intimacy with God. It is acknowledged that to know the name of another is, in some sense, to have him in one's soul. And to pronounce his name is to make him present here.²⁸

Many verses in the Qur'an refer to calling and speaking the Name of Allah. In my understanding as a Muslim, the calling and speaking of God's Name, the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), is not limited to the Supreme Name of *Allah* alone. It also includes those of the 99 Most Beautiful Names and other expressions that humans can understand and use to create intimacy with Allah. Here are some verses about calling and remembering the Name of Allah:

وَسَبِّحْهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

"O you who have believed, remember Allah with much remembrance, and glorify Him morning and evening." (Al-Ahzab: 41-42).

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

²⁷ Byrne, 95; Sayed S. Akhtar Rizvi, *God of Islam* (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 1994), 46.

²⁸ Rayan, "Naming the Unnamable," 6.

“He is the Ever-Living. There is none worthy of worship but He. Therefore, call upon Him with your sincere devotion. Praise be to Allah, the Rabb of the world.” (Al-Ghafir: 65).

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and meditate on the creation of the heavens and the earth, then say: Our Rabb! You have not created this in vain. Glory to You! Save us from the punishment of Fire.” (Al-Imran: 191).

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Indeed, in the remembrance of Allah do heart find comfort.” (Ar-Ra’d: 28).

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ

“Therefore, remember Me, and I will remember you, be grateful to Me and never deny Me.” (Al-Baqarah: 152).

Name(s) of God in Awe and Intimacy

Awe is an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, fear, and so on, powerful emotions inspired by something majestic or sublime and informed by respect -- tinged with fear -- for authority. On the other hand, intimacy is widely understood as the state of being intimate; it is marked by a close acquaintance, association, or familiarity and is usually found in affectionate or loving personal relationships with another person or group.²⁹

Even though both Jewish and Muslim believers refer to the Name of God differently (one in awe, another in intimacy), I believe that the two share the same reference. Jews see the divine name of YHWH as an awesome sacredness, something that cannot be known other than by God Himself. But the people of Israel know God by this Name, even without them speaking about it. This approach means that they feel the closeness, unity, and intimacy attached to the

²⁹ William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), 92, 686; Stuart Berg Flexner and Leonore Crary Hauck, eds., *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Random House Inc., 1987), 144, 1000.

Name, even without knowing the exact vocalization and without speaking the Name.

The rabbis avowed that their God was both far and near, remarkable and intimate. As the soul fills the body, God's presence pervades the universe. God as *Hamakom*, the Spacious One, was meant to convey that one could pray in one's heart without uttering a sound and still be heard by God. God was never out of reach. We were immersed in God's ubiquitous presence.³⁰

Differently, Muslims speak and call the names of Allah anytime as a verbal expression of closeness, unity, and intimacy. Still, at the same time, they also consider the Name of Allah as something sacred and full of awe, a Name that people cannot use in vain for legalizing wrongdoing or false oaths.

Names often carry enormous significance, being inextricably connected to the very nature of that which is named. Hence, to know the name is to know something of the fundamental traits or nature of the name's bearer.³¹ Furthermore, names are bound up with profound experiences of love, respect, and admiration, which they carry, evoke, deepen, and confirm. What they evoke and imply through their suggestive power is much more than the loved and adored one's name, which is the spoken, explicit appellation. Such names are meeting places of trust and intimacy. They are not definitions or concepts but living relationships.³²

Repairing the World and the Journey with God

Talking about the humanitarian crisis and (in)equality, it is hard not to mention the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. It is understood that this research brings out this issue since it also focuses on both Jews and Muslim, the so-called ones responsible for the humanitarian crisis happening now in Palestine.

Never again is never again for everyone. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that this Israel-Palestine conflict is a massive problem of inequality, injustice, and humanitarian crisis. However, this is not about Judaism alone. It is about politics and stuff. What is happening is against the teachings of the Torah. The Ten Commandments that work as moral guidelines for Jewish people are all violated by the Israeli Government. Thus, Anti-Semitism has no place in the Free Palestine movement. Hating people because of who they pray to is not a way of believers. Our issue is with the Israeli government and

³⁰ Ismar Schorsch, "Behind God's Names," 1993, <https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/behind-gods-names/>.

³¹ Byrne, *The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: A Basis for Interfaith Dialogue*, 15.

³² Rayan, "Naming the Unnamable," 5–6.

Zionism, not with Judaism, not with religion. Many of our Jewish brothers and sisters are standing in solidarity with us, getting arrested, protesting, and crying alongside us. Many also struggle to be devoted Jews who follow the commandments to repair the world and restore harmony.

Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572), also known as the Arizal, is a famous Kabbalist who formulated the Kabbalah into a comprehensive system known as Lurianic Kabbalah. Meanwhile, Arizal himself never wrote any books. However, all his words were faithfully recorded by his foremost disciple, Rabbi Chaim Vital, and recorded in *Kitvei Ari*, the “writings of the Arizal.”³³ His teachings soon dominated Jewish religious life and brought about many changes in the Jewish ritual, some of which continue today.³⁴

Luria introduced his mystical system into Jewish religious ceremonies. Every commandment had an esoteric meaning for him. The Sabbath, with all its ceremonies, is looked upon as the embodiment of the divinity in temporal life. Every ceremony performed on that day was considered to influence the spiritual world. Every word, every syllable, of the prescribed prayers contained hidden names of God, upon which one should meditate devoutly while reciting.³⁵

According to Isaac Luria, the Torah was the instrument by which man could restore the universe to its original design. By religious deeds and the performance of the commandments of religion, man can contribute to restoring harmony.³⁶ It is said that Lurianic Kabbalah unites Jewish mysticism and Jewish ethics. That unification occurs here in the conception of how humanity can undo the damage done in the Creation through *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). For Luria and his followers, ethical behavior takes on a new cosmic significance, no matter how seemingly trivial. It is as simple as, for example, if a Jew forgets to say the blessing over bread, meaning he has contributed to universal evil. When someone puts up a mezuzah (doorpost) on the door of his new house, it means that he has helped to redeem the entire world.³⁷ So, is the destruction happening in Palestine now can be considered repairing the world?

³³ Nissan Dovid Dubov, “The Arizal,” accessed March 3, 2024, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/361878/jewish/The-Arizal.htm.

³⁴ Gershom Scholem, “Issac Luria: A Central Figure in Jewish Mysticism,” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 29, no. 8 (May 1976): 8–13, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3823938>.

³⁵ “Isaac Luria,” accessed March 3, 2024, https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Isaac_Luria.

³⁶ Scholem, “Issac Luria: A Central Figure in Jewish Mysticism.”

³⁷ George Robinson, “Isaac Luria and Kabbalah in Safed,” accessed March 3, 2024, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/isaac-luria-kabbalah-in-safed/>.

Then, facing many discourages and challenges, what should we do to stay physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy and remain optimistic about the world's future amidst this tremendous humanitarian crisis? What should we do to promote the fundamental values of every religious teaching, such as justice, equality, and peace? Understanding and implementing mystical and philosophical teachings introduced by Isaac Luria, as mentioned above, and the ones offered by Mulla Sadra, might help.

Sadr al-Din Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Yahya Qawami Shirazi (ca. 1571–1636), best known as Mulla Sadra, combined an interest in theology and drew upon insights from mystical intuition. Mulla Sadra wrote over forty-five works. His magnum opus, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'alliya fi-l-aṣfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'*, known as *al-aṣfār al-arba'* (*The Four Journeys*), maps intellectual inquiry upon a mystical metaphor of the soul's journey in this world.

The first journey from this world to God provides the seeker with the intellectual principles for understanding philosophy. In this journey, the seeker moves away from diversity and phenomenal deception towards unity and an awareness of the underlying nature of reality. The second journey in God with God is a discourse on the nature of God, the divine attributes, and his famous proof of the existence of God. It is the stage of the mystic's absorption in the divine essence and his effacement of the self. The third journey from God to this world explains the God-world relationship, nature, time and creation, and ontological categories. For the mystic, this is the return to sobriety and a realization of the duties of moral agency in this world. The final journey in this world with God describes human psychology, focusing on soteriology and eschatology. This is the final stage of the mystic's journey, a recognition that everything as a unified whole reflects the ontological unity of the divine and that the realized human recognizes a desire to return to the principle, the one who is the source of being, God.³⁸

Furthermore, in several works, he sets out eleven principles of his method that show the relevance of metaphysics to psychology and eschatology. This research chose to discuss the seventh principle since it is in accordance with this topic. The seventh principle states that the body's identity is determined by its soul, not materiality. Human identity remains constant through the eternity of the soul, from its form in the womb to childhood through to old age and into the grave and beyond into the world of the afterlife.³⁹ This can be a

³⁸ "Mulla Sadra," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2009, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mulla-sadra/>.

³⁹ "Mulla Sadra."

considerable reflection point for us in this era full of discourages, challenges, and conflicts; we should try to rethink who we are and why we are created. What do we want in this life? Is it worth harming others to chase earthly things that one day will have to be left behind?

Thus, it is essential to learn and internalize God's Name(s) so that it is easier for the positive thoughts on God to resurface and float whenever our minds drown with negativities. By remembering and saying God's Name(s), we constantly purify our thoughts about Him. It teaches us to erase our doubts about God or His Plans.

When Allah created Adam, the angels did not understand why Allah created humans who would destroy this earth: "Remember' when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a successive 'human' authority on earth." They asked 'Allah', "Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?" Allah responded, "I know what you do not know." (Al-Baqarah: 30). This shows that having good thoughts about Him and His plans makes it easy for us to be more at peace. On the other hand, doubting God's plans and judgment will only make us feel restless. So trust Him. Trust His plans. There can be no imperfection. There can be no fault. Everything happens for wisdom only He knows of, for He is *Al-'Alīm* (The All-Knowing) and *Al-Hakīm* (The All-Wise).⁴⁰

Conclusion

God is unique to each person. The human naming of God is a matter of how our understanding of God can manifest in our knowledge of God's creation. As I am created in the image of God, so are you, they, and the whole universe. How we consider God's sacredness and intimacy, even through His Name, can manifest in how we see the universe's sacredness and intimacy, actualizing God's manifestations in us properly in our relationship with others and the universe.

Human beings are named as God's most beautiful and perfect creation. As a microcosm, the Divine Names of God are manifested in us. With every imperfection, how humans actualize the divine names decides our creation's perfection. Knowing and understanding the meaning of God's Names can help us navigate our reason for creations and actions.

⁴⁰ Shameem Sultanah, "What's the Meaning of SubhanAllah?," instagram, 2023, https://www.instagram.com/p/C1KIGh_hCyF/?img_index=1.

Beautiful eyes will only see beautiful things; beautiful hearts will only intend and do lovely things. God is good, so those who believe and love God with His Divine Name(s) will only do good to others and themselves. Our behavior and actions are our most excellent promotion. To promote justice, equality, and peace, we need to manifest the beauty of the Divine Name(s) and live hand in hand together in justice, equality, and peace.

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