In contrast to the common Muslim conception that asserts both a sharp disconnect between previous revelations and the Qur’ān as well as that such revelations are corrupt in their present form, a thorough study of all of the verses in the Qur’ān referencing any of the previous revelations (the Tawrāt, Zabūr, Injīl or the Torah, Psalms, and Gospel respectively) demonstrates the following: first, there is a coherent conceptual web describing a close interconnected relationship between the Qur’ān and those previous revelations; second, the qur’ānic view of such revelations is one of praise, support, and integration; and third, the web displays cycles of relationship and interdependence that suggest a working epistemology of all the revealed books, an epistemology that could have important implications for interfaith dialogue.

The overall flow of the Master’s thesis that this opening paragraph comes from has five chapters and two associated figures illustrating the concepts of the research.¹ For this much shorter work I will simply offer a few

¹This is from my MA thesis. If you would like the complete thesis in electronic format contact bryancgallant@gmail.com
introductory comments and the concluding chapter with a few associated endnotes. I will also include the two figures for reference.

Reasons for This Study

In the current world in which we live, the role of interfaith dialogue and cooperation is taking a more central role as we attempt to coalesce a peaceful relationship between peoples, countries, and religions. Religion and faith seem to be at the very core of many of our conflicts and deepest emotions. This means that there needs to be a more positive interaction between Jews, Christians, and Muslims than has been seen in the past—even though they all claim to worship the same God! Unfortunately, dialogue like that is immediately hampered by truth claims, doctrinal challenges, historic scars, and even attacks on the very veracity of each other’s scriptures. All of these complicated realities minimize any tangible possibility for meaningful and positive interaction.

The full thesis, of which this is only a shortened summary for the Festschrift project, had a very tight scope for its study. It was written from the perspective of Islamic logic and not necessarily for a Christian readership, in the sense that it was attempting to answer Christian questions. This essay is also written from within an Islamic worldview of thought so that the conclusions would be more readily accepted within the Islamic world. This needs to be kept in mind when Christians read the document. It also must be noted that this essay is only a summary of the full work. Most of the documentation and facts referenced here are dealt with in greater detail in the larger work.

From the Qur’ānic perspective, God has sent his revelations (some of them named directly, others not) throughout time and to many different peoples. These messages, of which the Qur’ān is also, one, have all proclaimed the same overall words and Divine message and are given to humanity for guidance and preparation for the Day of Judgment. If it can be shown that from the Qur’ānic point of view the revelations are all considered Divinely inspired and protected by God (such that the forms in which we have them now still retain their essential salvific value), there would be the possibility of calling all of the People of the Book(s)\(^2\) to a quality of faith and lived out reality based on those revelations in order.

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\(^2\)This phrase is very common and in Arabic is: ahl al-kitāb. In this particular sentence, however, I am attempting to group all people of all the revelations into one group—which may be problematic for some.
to live in peace and cooperation instead of animosity, betrayal, and war. Such is the grand hope that this study is undertaken with and written in such a way as to be just one voice towards creating such a possible outcome.

Even though this paper is written from the perspective that assumes and accepts the Muslim understanding of the Qur’ān and the role that the Prophet Muhammad plays in revelatory history from a qur’ānic worldview, it is not saying that I am claiming inspiration for the Qur’ān, nor saying that I believe it is inspired or that Muhammad is a prophet by the biblical definition. I am saying that the paper is written from within the Muslim framework and logic, therefore the conclusions cannot be readily dismissed based upon someone’s view of the Qur’ān. This is a critical point and the whole thesis as well as this shortened version must be read with that in mind. This may mean that some of the logic will only make sense for someone who has already accepted the role of the Qur’ān in their life (or at least can appreciate its affect on people).

Neither this article nor the larger work answer the issues of whether or not the Qur’ān is inspired or what role it is to play in the lives of the believers (whether Muslim or non-Muslim). I assume from the beginning that the reader already comes with those decisions in mind and reads accordingly. Whether or not this study will draw the reader deeper in their understanding and appreciation of the Qur’ān remains to be seen, but that is not part of the scope of this study.

In addition these pages will not endeavor to answer the issue as to whether or not the revelations named and dealt with within the Qur’ān (i.e., the Tawrāt, Zabūr, and Injīl) are the same revelations that we have today (i.e., the Jewish Tanakh, or the Bible, whether Protestant or Catholic). That is outside the scope of this particular research as well. However, some of the conclusions from this study will shed light on a few serious principles with which to consider those issues within the grand scheme of the qur’ānic teachings regarding those revelations.³

**Foundational Methodology**

The field of qur’ānic studies is by no means new to either Muslims or non-Muslims, and spans many centuries of scholarly interaction with the text. However when one turns to thematic studies in English the field

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³All qur’ānic verses quoted in English are from Ali 2001.
is relatively new and representatively small (Abdel Haleem 1999:vii).\textsuperscript{4} Within that fairly limited field of the last century one name and one particular methodology rises above and acts as the foundation for following works. The name is Toshihiko Izutsu and his methodological framework is called the semantic field.\textsuperscript{5}

Recognizing that it is often said that any translation is in some sense a betrayal, the mere statement of letting the Qur‘ān speak for itself within another language constraint seems ridiculous at best and even criminal at worst. However, Izutsu has pioneered a way that seeks to go underneath the translations and build a coherent grouping of words that run together and create an actual worldview of meaning, which he calls the “semantic Weltanschauung” (1998:34).

In order to do this one must have a particular attitude as well as a specific method. The necessary attitude is:

We should try to read the Book without any preconception. We must, in other words, try not to read into it thoughts that have been developed and elaborated by the Muslim thinkers of the post-Koranic ages in their effort to understand and interpret their Sacred Book, each according to his particular position. We must try to grasp the structure of the Koranic world conception in its original form, that is, as it was read and understood by the Prophet’s contemporaries and his immediate followers. Strictly speaking, this must always remain an unattainable ideal, and yet at least we should do our best to approach this ideal even a step nearer. (Izutsu 1998:74)

In order to approach that seemingly unattainable ideal, he uses semantic fields. A semantic field, offering my own simple definition, is a connected collection of all the words that are related to one another within a particular worldview. This is formed by taking a word or concept and going beyond its basic meaning to find its relational meaning according to the other words that it is repeatedly associated with. That in turn builds more relationships with other terms that create an overall coherent understanding of how that one word is relationally defined as opposed to a mere context-less definition (for a more detailed discussion see Izutsu 1998:18-24). In view of this, each


\textsuperscript{5}The focus in describing Izutsu’s work will be to identify the process and explain its usefulness to our study, and not to express all the intricacies and reasons for the semantic field as they relate to other linguistic studies. If someone wants to read more of that history, Madigan 2001 offers some of that history and the footnotes lead to the rest as needed. While Izutsu seems to be the first to apply and explain this method for the study of the Qur’an, others have used it since.
word is part of a larger relational set that ends up forming a conceptual framework for meaning and action. Within these fields and relationships there arises certain “poles” of words that act as opposites. Those pole words are then called focus words. Izutsu summarizes pole words as a “complicated system of oppositions that are formed, each one of them, by two poles that stand facing each other. . . . In short, from the semantical point of view, the Koranic Weltanschauung is capable of being represented as a system built on the principle of conceptual opposition” (1998:74).

Before leaving this rich subject of methodology there is one more important point in favor of a thematic, Qur’ān only kind of study. It is the principle of exegesis outlined by Ibn Taymiya (d. 728/1328) in his Introductory Treatise on the Principles of Tafsīr, translated by J. McAuliffe in Renard’s Windows on the House of Islam. Ibn Taymiya writes, “If someone asks, ‘What is the best method of interpretation?’ the answer is that the soundest method is that whereby the Qur’ān is interpreted through the Qur’ān. For what is summarily expressed in one place is expatiated upon in another. What is abridged in one place is elaborated upon in another” (Renard 1998:36). Therefore, the practice of letting the Qur’ān “speak” for itself as I am currently outlining is exactly what Ibn Taymiya is advocating as his first point of correct exegesis. Of course, he goes on to mention the role of the Sunna of the Prophet, the Companions, the Followers, and personal opinion (ra’y) as well. But, the first and best way is using the Qur’ān to define itself. In this, Ibn Taymiya was echoing a basic principle of tafsīr, namely, that first and foremost, the Qur’ān’s own self-understanding and exegesis is of utmost importance.6

Traditional Qur’ān commentaries agreed but combined this with the Prophet’s tafsīr (in hadith), that of the companions, and others. With that principle in place, and the preceding discussion as a foundation, I now turn to an explanation of my personal methodology, keeping in mind that even though I am extolling the virtue of the Qur’ān’s own self-commentary, I myself am doing the arranging and jumping into the commentarial fray.

With those preliminary comments in place we now move from the foundation to the resulting conclusions in an effort to keep this work to the appropriate size.

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The Qur’anic Worldview

The overall effect of this study creates a coherent Weltanschauung of the Qur’ān in relation to the previous revelations. I will briefly summarize the steps taken in order to arrive at these conclusions; then, I will enunciate a clear statement regarding the previous revelations in light of the study and the conceptual web; finally, I will elaborate on a few of the most obvious implications of this study in regards to interfaith dialogue.

We began with the foundational methodology of the study based on the works of T. Izutsu, F. Rahman, and D. Madigan. Even more than the methodology their works also offered reasons for the need to do studies like this. Using the methodological tools of semantic fields (with some adjustment) the study has established a substantial core of references in which to create the chorus of verses needed to hear what the Qur’ān says. This type of study is in contrast to the frequent “atomistic” approaches to the text and offers the broadest survey in order to grasp a coherent picture. It should be noted that this study did not directly deal with issues of timing of certain verses since there was no recognizable change in the qur’ānic understanding of the revelations throughout the conceptual web. Chapter three (missing in this shorter version) described the concentric circles of relationship that make up this qur’ānic worldview.

Beginning with God as the Divine Center for all guidance and revelation, the circles progressed outward through general signs of guidance on to the named revelations given to various prophets through the ages. From those named revelations the next circle included all of the terms and functions that those revelations played in drawing humanity back to God. The fourth circle identified a few correlated words that could be studied in greater detail in the future, but were noteworthy in this study as well, as they reveal certain activities connected with the believer’s response to revelation. Finally, at both a point of beginning for each person’s choice to respond to revelation (as the thread pulling him back to God), and even the eschatological endpoint describing their choice; the fifth circle collected the various words associated with either belief in the books or spurning them. All of that discussion was followed by a graphic representation of the full web.
In chapter four the web begins to display its true intricacy and coherence. In answer to the three questions embedded in this quest regarding the Qur’ānic view of the previous revelations, it deals with origin and purpose; questions of hierarchy and uniqueness; a discussion of the charge of distortion; the presentation of the cycle of validation and prophecy within the revelations themselves; and finally, a short consideration of the hermeneutical cycle suggesting a connecting epistemological role for all of the revelations (see next page).

Throughout the study, based upon consistent Qur’ānic evidence and analysis, I have shown that the revelations (all of them from the Qur’ānic worldview) stand as integral parts of God’s guidance given to humanity to call them back to himself. This worldview includes the revelations having their beginning in God, protection by God, and the same words of praise and function being attributed to them within the Divine plan. Not only...
are they considered a part of God’s historic activity in the world, but true believers (both defined within the time of the revelation of the Qur’ān and those of faith throughout time) are those who believe in all of the revelations and therefore obey. Not only is the aspect of belief in the revelations intact in the great lists of the faithful, but as one considers the internal descriptions of the roles that the revelations play in the life of the believer, two additional cycles come to light. The first one connects all of the revelations into a tight bidirectional process of validating and prophesying. The next cycle establishes the role of the revelations being studied together in order to lead the believer into the clearest understanding of God’s guidance.

Given the whole picture of the conceptual web, the overwhelming message is that people of faith will believe in all of the revelations and use them to determine direction for their lives in response to the guidance that God
The Qur’anic View  61

has given them within those revelations. Warnings are given to those who only accept a part of the message; promises are given by God to protect his words. Therefore, any view that claims that certain revelations are corrupted (thereby limiting study to one revelation) would necessarily invalidate the whole coherence of the Qur’anic worldview as well as God’s own promises of protection, thereby bringing into question the validity of all of the revelations including the Qur’ān. In light of this study, then, I agree with other authors (Ayoub 1998; Saeed 2006; Saeed 2002) quoted previously in the larger work and represented in the Works Cited section that the current Islamic view of the corruption of previous scriptures needs to be seriously reassessed.

Implications for Further Study

This research has direct implications for further study in at least three tightly interrelated areas. I shall list them here as individual subjects, although the discussion of them blurs the lines of distinction. The first area that this study sheds light on is in regards to the discussion (often a polemic one) about the role of the Bible for Muslims, which immediately raises other issues of revelation and theology. The second area is about the historic rise of the theory of tahrīf and why it has become the de-facto view of so many Muslims today. The third area involves the ongoing need for interfaith dialogue and the role that the revelations play in such interchanges. After a short discussion about these complicated subjects I will offer some final words of hope in light of this study.

Although this thesis from the outset was not focused on determining whether or not one can assume that the Torah, Psalms, and Gospel mentioned in the Qur’ān are the very books that exist today,9 based on this study and the integrity of the conceptual web, a few questions are raised that impact this discourse directly. First of all, if those books which were “in their hands,” having a tangible presence, sent by God, protected by God, and used to validate the message of the Qur’ān at that time; are no longer the ones “in their hands” now; then in light of the web, there are serious implications. Since the same promises for protection of God’s words are attributed to the

9Some have considered that to be the case. Sidney H. Griffith shares in the entry, “Gospel,” in the Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān, the following: “There is some evidence that the term Gospel was also sometimes used in the early Islamic period to indicate the whole New Testament, in the same way that the name Torah was used not only for the Pentateuch, but for all the books of the Jewish scriptures.” He goes on to say some early Muslim writers who quoted from scriptures include, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) and al-Yaqqubi (d. 292/905) (McAuliffe 2001: s.v. Gospel).
Qur’ān, any assumption of corruption on the other books calls into question God’s protective ability and promise for all of the books. In addition to the aspect of protection, it also brings into question the timelessness of the message of the Qur’ān (or any revelation) within Islamic theology. Given the role of the Qur’ān, specifically within Muslim thinking (though it would apply to all revelations as I have already shown), the two interrelated cycles of validation and hermeneutics existing within the qur’ānic worldview would invariably be broken as well. In other words, if the Qur’ān cannot be validated by the previous revelations then the very call of Muhammad as prophet is challenged since his proof was in bringing the same message that the previous prophets and revelations did. Within the hermeneutic cycle, the timelessness is also challenged by asking the question: Would God send believers knowingly to a book that is going to be corrupted (which was not corrupted then) or lost, thereby breaking both his promise and his guidance? The mere mention of such potential possibilities is unacceptable within the overall qur’ānic worldview and therefore needs serious thought in connection with this issue. Unfortunately, the prevalence of these views in the polemic discussions through the centuries have offered much more heat than light, and it is hoped that a study like this will establish some foundational logic to begin a more fruitful dialogue.

The same needs to be said in the area of textual criticism of the Bible, which is often pounced upon by polemicists as a major source of quotes and variant views (by either side). From the qur’ānic perspective, the ultimate cause for belief in any revelation leads back to God, not to human evidence of protection or even to perceptions of error! Although current scientific views may not always seem to fit the understood picture of faith, faith is not the handmaiden of science. God may speak in scientific ways so that humanity can appreciate his message, but he is not limited by created beings’ scientific constructs of understanding. God and faith are larger than that. The understanding of revelation as God’s giving of guidance to humanity needs to be understood appropriately as well within this paradox. Add to that reality the fact that academic opinions do not in and of themselves constitute objective truth and often change with incredible rapidity in light of eternity;¹⁰ one needs to constantly reassess the various textual critics and their opinions at any given time in the light of faith and God’s power to protect his words. In having said this, however, perceptions of revelation

¹⁰Harald Motzki has said that beginning with something that is universally accepted “is surely not a very secure starting point: unanimity on a scholarly issue is a temporary phenomenon” (Motzki 2001:1-34).
and inspiration may need to be adjusted in order to find some common ground.\textsuperscript{11}

**What about *Tahrif* and the Charge of Corruption?**

Regarding the issue of *tahrīf*, more study is needed to ascertain the exact rise of the arguments and motivation in light of how it cannot be sustained within a purely qur’ānic worldview or even within some of the early *tafsīr* authors. Taken into account what Ayoub (1984) and Saeed (2006 and 2002) have said, I feel confident that this work will add to the serious need for scholars to reassess this issue and find a more coherent view between the Qur’ān and the other revelations.\textsuperscript{12} My initial research seems to point to the historic literary interaction between Ibn Hazm (456/1064) and Ibn Nagrella (448/1056) as being the seminal example of many of the *tahrīf* arguments coming to the forefront in Islam (and repeated for centuries thereafter). D. Powers investigates this further in his interesting article, “Reading/ Misreading One Another’s Scriptures: Ibn Hazm’s Refutation of Ibn Nagrella al-Yahūdī.” Without going too deeply into this subject, let me share a few of his conclusions as they directly impact the point of what is being presented in this study.

First of all, he found that “both Ibn Hazm and Ibn Nagrella are religious polemicists, not disinterested scholars, and even a cursory examination of their arguments reveals the application of a double standard; what is acceptable within one’s own religious tradition is not acceptable within another.” Then, the deeper he studied their interaction, he shares “the more familiar I have become with their respective arguments, the less convinced I am that either one actually sat down and read the other’s scripture.” (Powers & Brinner 1986:116-117) In other words, they merely were parroting the previous attacks offered to them from writers within the opposing tradition or from outside. At no point was there a sincere effort to find mutual direction from the books that God has given!\textsuperscript{13}

Powers’ cogent conclusion resounds yet another note to the chorus of

\textsuperscript{11}Zebiri shares the following comment in the entry “Polemic,” from the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an* that fits with what I have been saying: “Contemporary Muslim polemic tends to draw more on sources external to the Qur’an, in particular higher biblical criticism which can be used to demonstrate that the Bible is not “revealed” in the sense that Muslims generally understand revelation, i.e. the verbatim word of God (q.v.) preserved without any alterations.” McAuliffe 2001: s.v. Polemic).

\textsuperscript{12}These two authors are noted along with an enlarged study of Nickel’s excellent study that I shared in chapter four of the larger work

\textsuperscript{13}For a useful handbook on the various views of Muslims and Christians and the role of polemics see Zebiri 1997:258.
voices affirming the need for a more coherent view of the Qurʾān and the reading of other revelations:

Our examination of the interchange between Ibn Hazm and Ibn Nagrella provides us with an example of one way to read a sacred text, namely, with the intent of undermining the claim of the Hebrew Bible or the Qurʾān to be a scripture. It is to be hoped, however, that today, when increasing numbers of Jews and Muslims have access to the other’s scripture, either in the original language or in translation, and when the need for mutual understanding is so great, that the adherents of these two major religions will begin to read one another’s sacred text from a non-polemical perspective. (Powers & Brinner 1986:118)

In light of the conceptual web of the Qurʾān, as seen within this study, the person of faith would be bound to do exactly that.

It is recognized that the mere thought of connecting the Bible to the Qurʾān through a common epistemological stance, seems to conjure up immediate impossibilities based upon centuries of interaction, polemic, theology, wars, and so forth. However, it may not be as farfetched in the current era, where people of faith and heart are searching for the common message and hope needed to walk forward peacefully.¹⁴

Applying the Web to Interfaith Discussions

First of all, if one accepts both a timelessness and a timeliness for the various revelations (reading scripture with reference to the historic context—which is being acknowledged more and more by Muslim thinkers recently in regards to the Qurʾān)¹⁵—the gap may not actually be as intractable as some believe; even in regards to the more challenging issues related to Jesus and Muhammad. Authors such as Ayoub¹⁶ and Rahman discuss issues of Christology in a way that would warm many a Christian heart as a great beginning for further conversation. One such quote from Rahman says it this way:

¹⁴One such book (among many) is by John Dudley Woodberry, Osman Zumrut, and Mustafa Koylu entitled Muslim and Christian Reflections on Peace: Divine and Human Dimensions published in Lanham, MD by the University Press of America in 2005 (see page 157).


The Qur’ān would most probably have no objections to the Logos having become flesh if the Logos were not simply identified with God and the identification were understood less literally. For the Qur’ān, the Word of God is never identified simply with God. Jesus, again, is the “Spirit of God” in a special sense for the Qur’ān, although God had breathed His spirit into Adam as well (Q 15:29; 38:72). It was on the basis of some such expectations from the self-proclaimed monotheism of Christians – and, of course, Jews – that the Qur’ān issued its invitation: “O People of the Book! Let us come together upon a formula which is common between us – that we shall not serve anyone but God, that we shall associate none with Him” (Q 3:64). This invitation, probably issued at a time when Muhammad thought not all was yet lost among the three self-proclaimed monotheistic communities, must have appeared specious to Christians. It has remained unheeded. But I believe something can still be worked by way of positive cooperation, provided the Muslims hearken more to the Qur’ān than to the historic formulations of Islam and provided that recent pioneering efforts continue to yield a Christian doctrine more compatible with universal monotheism and egalitarianism. (Rahman 1989:170)

Note that Rahman identifies the need to anchor the discussion in the Qur’ān and not Islamic doctrines and the same assumption for Christianity taking them away from creeds and back to a more holistic view of God (i.e., from the Bible).

Another challenging area is in regards to prophecies pointing to Muhammad and his role in history. The apparent denial of these by Jews and Christians and the ensuing challenge for Muslims to find them clearly marked within scripture is one of the major reasons for the charge of the previous revelations being corrupted. Yet, if it could be shown that there have been biblical perceptions and prophecies allowing for the legitimacy of both the line of Ishmael and Muhammad’s coming this would necessarily remove that obstacle as well. In the spirit of cooperation and appreciation (as opposed to polemic conflict) much more study is needed in this area.

In closing, the single, most important need for true interfaith dialogue based upon a core epistemology like the one described in this study is that it will challenge the debilitating pre-judgments of exclusivity to truth that is claimed by both Muslim and Christians alike (Zebiri 1997:175). By creating a potential modern epistemology for people of faith (Muslim and non-

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17Regarding the legitimacy of the line of Ishmael, see Maalouf 2003:367; regarding a prophetic understanding of Muhammad see Dickie 2006:140. Both of these books are from the perspective of Christians reassessing various parts of Scripture to allow for a more inclusive reading of Muslims and Muhammad. They are also written within the theme of witness and mission. But, the fact remains that “new” understandings of the Bible are opening more Christians up to a more positive view of Islam. For a comprehensive summary of Christian voices regarding the Qur’an, see Ford 1993:142-164.
Muslim) which includes a non-atomistic reading of all of the revelations, and acknowledges God’s guidance throughout time; exclusivism could be replaced by both individual humility and human community seeking God’s heart and guidance in the challenging days ahead of forging a peaceful coexistence. As the attention is lifted from human statements of truth towards God’s words of truth delivered throughout time to various prophets it invariably lifts our eyes from our systems to the God of all truth. This kind of cooperation needs to be seriously considered, especially at this time in earth’s history, as Douglas Pratt remarks:

Arguably, so many of the clashes, confusions, and violent hotspots that exist today—where, for example, “Western Judeo-Christian” interfaces with “Islamic” cultures and societies (and here we only need to think of Iraq, or Afghanistan, or the Balkans)—are born from the legacy of unexamined conflicting religious ideologies and unresolved mutual misunderstanding and confused thinking. This is where the theological dimension of interreligious dialogue, particularly between Christian and Muslim, but also in respect to Jewish-Muslim engagement, must not be set aside. It needs instead urgent advance. (2005:222)

In light of such a statement, I believe the conceptual web offers an excellent beginning point to do that even though much more research is needed from all sides.18

Yet, I also realize that more than research may be needed. This is not pluralism or inclusivism, though some will definitely say that in a derogatory sense. It is actually something higher. It is choosing to use all the books claimed by the monotheistic religions to create a coherent and timely worldview of timeless values coming from the God of Abraham to be used as guidance for a world so desperately needing direction right now. Ultimately, that may need a special group of people willing to go outside of the historic labels. The Qur’ān may be alluding to them in al-’Ankabūt 29:46-47:

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18Recent scholarship by Walid Saleh regarding the writings of Al-Biqāʾī (885/1480) display the very possibility of such an epistemology within the Islamic history of tafsīr. Consider the following quote from his forthcoming article entitled: “Sublime in Its Style, Exquisite in Its Tenderness: The Hebrew Bible Quotations in al-Biqai’s Qur’an Commentary,” in a Festschrift for Joel Kramer, ed. Tzvi Langermann. Saleh writes, “Al-Biqāʾī deployed the Bible not only for polemical or apologetic purposes, the two uses to which the Muslims customarily put the Bible, but primarily as scripture to elucidate scripture. His underlying assumption was that the Bible has something to teach the Muslims.” Saleh has also written another article (under review by Speculum) called “A Muslim Hebraist: Al-Biqai’s Bible Treatise and His Defence of Using the Bible to Interpret the Qur’an,” that further presents the reasons for such an epistemology. Both of these works in particular and the ensuing research that will follow from studying al-Biqāʾī’s works and reasons add further impetus to the understanding of the Conceptual Web that I have put forth in this study.
And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, “We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah and your Allah is one; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam).”

And thus (it is) that We have sent down the Book to thee. So the People of the Book believe therein, as also do some of these (pagan Arabs): and none but Unbelievers reject our signs.

Given the implications of this study the Conceptual Web describes a possible epistemology based upon all of the revealed scriptures of God.

Interestingly enough, when Prophet Muhammad was escaping to Medina (1/622), in what became the beginning of the Islamic calendar, he and his companion Abu Bakr were saved through a number of miracles, one of which being the spider’s web covering the mouth of the cave. It may very well be that in these days it will be another web that gives guidance and protection for those choosing to walk the way of faith: using all of the revelations within the conceptual web as was just described from the chapter of the Spider!

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Festschrift: Jerald Whitehouse


