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## Revisiting the Crucifixion of Jesus within Islam

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# REVISITING THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS WITHIN ISLAM

Mohamad Younes\*

**Abstract:** This article demonstrates that Muslim teachings, specifically on the historical crucifixion event of Jesus, are by no means monolithic. While the Qur'ān's reference to the crucifixion (Surah 4:157) has typically been interpreted as fostering explicit rejection of the belief that Christ was crucified, its meaning of this issue constitutes neither denial nor affirmation of its historicity. Over successive centuries, discussion of the crucifixion within the Islamic tradition was proportionately formed to accommodate a rejection that obscured the neutrality of the original Qur'ānic position. One of the schools of Islamic thought, which affirmed the historicity of the crucifixion on a Qur'ānic basis and glorified it, is the tradition of Shi'a Isma'ili Islam. This article focuses on the conceptualisation of the crucifixion of Jesus within Shi'ite Isma'ili Islam and its connection with mainstream Islam. From the Isma'ili Muslim perspective, the Qur'ān is not denying the crucifixion of Jesus; rather, it is only denying that the People of the Book crucified Jesus and this appears to be in response to their boasting to have done so. The ambiguity of Surah 4:157 remains a vigorous debate among classical and later Muslim scholars with references to the crucifixion as preserved in early and medieval literature furnishing distinctively divergent accounts of its unfolding. Even classical scholars such as al-Ghazali were persuaded by the views about the crucifixion expressed by leading Isma'ili thinkers such as Abu Ḥatim al-Razi (d. 934 CE) and Naṣir Khusraw (d. 1078 CE).<sup>1</sup> Numerous other factors were also at work at different levels of the Islamic learned tradition, which impinged on Qur'ān hermeneutics. Ultimately, the objective of this article is twofold: to demonstrate that the Qur'ān offers a neutral account of the crucifixion and to examine Shi'ite exegetical analysis on the crucifixion event in contrast to mainstream Islam. Overall, it adds further insight to a hidden discourse within Islamic tradition.

**Keywords:** *Islamic crucifixion, Jesus in Islam, Qur'ān on crucifixion*

## INTRODUCTION

Muslims have varying interpretations of the crucifixion of Jesus, with different schools of thought and sects holding unique perspectives. The majority of Sunni Muslims believe Jesus

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<sup>1</sup> Todd Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'ān: A Study in the History of Muslim Thought* (Simon and Schuster, 2014).

was not crucified but instead was raised to heaven by God before the crucifixion could take place. Shia Muslims generally have the same view; however, some believe Jesus was crucified but did not die from this. They believe he was raised to heaven by God and will return to establish a just society. This view is based on the teachings of Shia Imams who have interpreted Qur'ānic verse 4:157 to mean that Jesus was not killed or crucified in the sense of dying a physical death, but was saved from death. Some of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community believe Jesus survived the crucifixion and was later buried in Kashmir, India.<sup>2</sup> They hold that Qur'ānic verse 4:157 only denies the fact that Jesus died on the cross, but it does not deny the fact he was crucified. Some Sufi scholars interpret the crucifixion of Jesus as a symbolic event rather than a historical one. Some Muslims, regardless of sect, believe in a combination of the above traditions and believe Jesus survived the crucifixion and was later raised to God, referencing the empty tomb in the New Testament (Matt 28). Nonetheless, I will limit this article to focus primarily on Isma'ili Islam and its connection with mainstream Muslim understanding. Isma'ili Muslims generally believe the Qur'ān is only denying that the People of the Book crucified Jesus and this appears to be in response to their boasting to have taken credit for it. Isma'ilis would argue that the Qur'ān intends to say the death of Jesus was ultimately due to God's will and not the desires of those who may have killed him. These interpretations are not mutually exclusive and Muslims may hold a combination of these views depending on their individual beliefs and cultural background.

## THE CRUCIFIXION IN THE QUR'ĀN

Only one verse in the Qur'ān mentions the crucifixion of Jesus. It has largely been understood by most Muslims, and more interestingly by Christians, as a denial of the historical and to many irrefutable 'fact' of the crucifixion of Jesus:

and for boasting, "We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of Allah." But they neither killed nor crucified him—it was only made to appear so. Even those who argue for this [crucifixion] are in doubt. They have no knowledge whatsoever—only making assumptions. They certainly did not kill him.<sup>3</sup>

This stance of rejection not only serves as an obstacle between Muslims and Christians but more importantly serves to diminish Islam in the eyes of Christians and so-called Westerners. By far, the vast majority of the followers of Islam hold that Jesus was not crucified, but remains alive "with God" in a spiritual realm from where he will descend at the end of time in an Islamic version of the Second Coming. A factor that is frequently overlooked in discussions of the crucifixion is the history of the 'rejection interpretation;' that is, the interpretation of verse 4:157 denies the historicity of the crucifixion of Jesus. It is important to recognise that the earliest textual evidence for such an interpretation is not Muslim; rather it is from the pen of none other than the last great Church Father, John of Damascus (d. 749). In Book IV of "The

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<sup>2</sup> Andi Hendra Dimansa, "Ahmadiyya in Islam: teachings and developments," *Texas Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 6 (2022).

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān 4:157.

Fount of Knowledge,” John of Damascus addresses the apparent Islamic denial of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He is referring to Prophet Muhammad when he states:

And he says that the Jews wanted to crucify Him in violation of the law, and that they seized His shadow and crucified this. But the Christ Himself was not crucified, he says, nor did He die, for God out of His love for Him took Him to Himself into heaven.<sup>4</sup>

This is interestingly one of the earliest written documents that charges the Qur’ān with denying the crucifixion of Jesus. This manuscript was written approximately 100 years after the death of Prophet Muhammad, sometime in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. What is more interesting is that it stems from a non-Muslim who was critical of Islamic teachings, politically and doctrinally.<sup>5</sup> From the Isma’ili Muslim perspective, John of Damascus’ interpretation of the Qur’ānic account is unjustifiable. The Qur’ān only asserts that the Jews did not crucify Jesus, which is obviously different from saying that Jesus was not crucified. The point is that John of Damascus and *tafsīr* (exegesis), not the Qur’ān, deny the crucifixion.

## CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Exegesis of verse 4:157 is by no means uniform. From the 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, exegesis of this verse has generally reflected a need to deny the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>6</sup> This article brings to light an important fact that has been completely neglected or minimised in previous studies. That is, exegesis is by no means unanimous on any interpretation of the verse and these interpretations range from outright denial of the crucifixion of Jesus to simple affirmation of the event’s historicity. The first type is by far the most frequent and this explains why it has had such influence. This interpretation maintains that someone else was substituted for Jesus, while God rescued Jesus in a miraculous manner. This explanation is based on various traditions, which may be considered intrusive to the Islamic tradition and generally are considered to fall under the category of *Isrā’īlīyāt* (legitimacy). These interpretations are related on the authority of Wahb ibn Munabbih, who was an early Muslim scholar who lived in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. It would be unfair to say that all scholars have made much of the so-called Qur’ānic denial of Jesus’ crucifixion. Nevertheless, they have done little to advance the study of the Qur’ān on this specific point beyond the position held by John of Damascus (676-749 CE). For these authors, the denial has become a fact of the Muslim-Christian encounter. Others have devoted a great deal of attention to the problem and have made valuable contributions to our understanding of the Qur’ān.<sup>7</sup> The Qur’ān is the first source of *tafsīr*, which needs no argument and is an axiom held by the greater Muslim exegetical tradition and it is one subscribed to here. It also happens to be a first principle in literary theory; namely, that a text

<sup>4</sup> John of Damascus, *Writings: The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 37, trans. Frederic H. Chase Jr. (The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 41.

<sup>5</sup> Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1991), 106-7. The author refers to the interpretation of John of Damascus as “one of the earliest extant Christian writings to contain a reference to the crucifixion.” Not only is it the earliest Christian writing, it is the earliest written interpretation of the verse by anyone, regardless of religious confession.

<sup>6</sup> Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur’ān*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

is a discrete entity and provides its own context for understanding its contents.<sup>8</sup> My enquiry in this article is restricted, by the fact that the crucifixion of Jesus is mentioned only once in the Qur'ān, and may be said to occupy no more than two verses: one directly (4:157) and the other by inference (4:158). It is of the first importance to determine the context of these otherwise isolated statements.

A superficial reading of the verse – “But they neither killed nor crucified him” – for any reader, Muslim or non-Muslim, seems to be denying the crucifixion of Jesus. However, closer examination of the surrounding contextual verses shows that God is consistently referring to a group of Jews who are being condemned. The word **they** is referring to “a group designated throughout the Qur'ān by the Arabic word *yāhūd*.”<sup>9</sup> This word is universally translated as Jews. They are being condemned for breaking the sabbath and covenant to rejecting Allah's signs and accusing Mary of adultery. For example, “...**They** were [condemned] for breaking **their** covenant, rejecting Allah's signs, killing the prophets...” (4:155), “for **their** denial and outrageous accusation against Mary...” (4:156) “and for **boasting**...” (4:157). These Jews are the same group of people the Qur'ān is referring to in verse 4:157. The Qur'ān, in the verses leading up to the “crucifixion verse,” says that an example of faithlessness may be found in the history of the Jews when they: 1) “killed their prophets without justification”; 2) slandered Mary, the mother of Jesus, by defaming her virtue; and 3) when they boasted that they had killed the Messiah. The verse states clearly “and for **their** boasting” and “But **they** neither killed nor crucified him.” Notice there is consistent reference to “they did” and “their” and not the Qur'ān stating “he” was not crucified or did not die.

The Qur'ān speaks of the crucifixion once and only in the nature of parenthesis. It is not a central topic for the Qur'ān. However, it has been central to Muslim–Christian relations over the centuries. Since this verse was revealed in Medina sometime between 622 CE and 632 CE, it has been interpreted by many Muslims and Christians as denying the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>10</sup> Islam and the Qur'ān have thus come to be recognised and identified as denying the reality of arguably the most important doctrinal and historical values held by Christians.<sup>11</sup> The Isma'ili Muslim community differ from the traditional exegesis of Jesus. Isma'ili Muslims are a branch of Shia Islam that follow the teachings of Imam Ismail, who was the seventh imam in the line of succession from Prophet Muhammad. Isma'ili Muslims believe in an esoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān, which involves delving deeper into the hidden meanings of the text to understand its spiritual significance.<sup>12</sup> All Muslims recognise Jesus as a great prophet and messenger of God. Like the Gospels, the Qur'ān refers to Jesus as the Messiah or Christ (*al-Masih*) sent to the Children of Israel in the footsteps of Moses and the Jewish Prophets. Interestingly, the Qur'ān also refers to Jesus as God's Word (*kalimat*) and God's Spirit (*ruh*) breathed into the

<sup>8</sup> Abu-Isa Webb, Aaron Wannamaker and Hisham Sharif, eds., *The Clear Qur'ān: A Thematic English Translation of the Message of the Final Revelation* (Book of Signs Foundation, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'ān*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, trans. Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani (Darussalam Publishers, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Sahas, “Book Review: Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991). Pp. 246,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 1 (1993).

<sup>12</sup> Farhad Daftary, *The Isma'ilis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

virgin Mary. In Islam generally and in Isma'ili thought particularly, Jesus and his mission are of great importance as he is the precursor of Muhammad, who was the seal of the prophets.<sup>13</sup> Jesus occupies a pre-eminent position in Isma'ili philosophy in which he is regarded as one of the 'Possessors of Resolution' (*ulu'l-azam*) and a speaking prophet or law that had come before him: a guidance and admonition to those who fear God.<sup>14</sup> It is not surprising then to see why many Isma'ili philosophers devote great attention to the figure of Jesus, his mission and the esoteric meaning of various symbols and events in his life.

## ISMA'ILI MUSLIM UNDERSTANDING OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

For Isma'ili philosophers such as Abu Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī (d. 972 CE), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209 CE) and the Brethren of Purity,<sup>15</sup> the crucifixion of Christ was a public event witnessed by a multitude; it holds great symbolic and eschatological significance. Isma'ili philosophy holds that God has sent six great Messengers, called Natiqs, to the world since the time of Adam. Each Natiq inaugurated a great 'Cycle of Religion,' which lasted about 1,000 years in which the Scripture and religious law (Sharia), consisting of the exoteric (*zahir*) rituals and commandments prescribed by the Natiq, had authority over the people. The coming of a new Natiq ended one cycle and began a new one, abrogating the religious law of the previous Natiq. For example, the religious law prescribed by Noah was known as Noachide laws, the law delivered by Moses was called Mosaic Law, and the law revealed by Muhammad is what Muslims formally refer to as Sharia.<sup>16</sup>

According to Todd Lawson, the Isma'ili interpretation of the crucifixion is distinct from that of the Christian faith. While Christians believe Jesus died on the cross to atone for the sins of humanity, Isma'ili Muslims who accept the historicity of the crucifixion view the event as a symbol of sacrifice and devotion to God. They see the crucifixion as a demonstration of the strength of faith and willingness to sacrifice everything for God. In Isma'ili theology, the concept of sacrifice is central to their faith. Sacrifice is not limited to material possessions but also involves the sacrifice of one's ego and personal desires for the sake of God. The crucifixion is seen as the ultimate sacrifice, where Jesus willingly gave up his physical body and life to God. However, the Isma'ili interpretation of the crucifixion also involves an understanding of the symbolic meaning behind the event. They see the cross as a symbol of spiritual ascent,

<sup>13</sup> Khalil Andani. "They Killed Him Not": *The Crucifixion in Shi'a Isma'ili Islam* (The Matheson Trust, 2011), <https://www.themathesontrust.org/papers/islam/andani-crucifixion.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Qur'ān 4:171 – "Christ Jesus the Son of Mary was a Messenger of God, and His Word (*kalimatuhu*), which he bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit from Him (*ruhu minhu*)..." Five Prophets in Islam are known as the *Ulu'l-'Azam*, which means 'the Possessors of Resolution'. This term is used in Qur'ān 46:35 – "Therefore have patience as the *Ulu'l-'Azam* from the Messengers." They are mentioned as a group in two verses: 33:7 and 3:169 – "And remember We took Think not of those who are slain in God's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord.

<sup>15</sup> The Brethren of Purity were a secret society of Muslim philosophers in Basra, Iraq, in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. Their esoteric teachings and philosophy are expounded in an epistolary style in the Encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity (*Rasa'il Ikhwan al-safa'*), a giant compendium of 52 epistles that would greatly influence later encyclopedias.

<sup>16</sup> Andani, "They Killed Him Not."

where the vertical axis represents the journey towards God and the horizontal axis represents the worldly plane.<sup>17</sup>

For Isma'ili Muslims, Jesus is not seen as the Son of God, as he is in Christianity, but they instead regard him as a prophet and guide in their spiritual journey. They see Jesus as an example of selflessness and devotion to God. In appearance, the Christian Cross and the Islamic *shahadah* evoke completely different outlooks and meanings. The symbol of the Cross communicates 'mystery' – the mystery of the 'Christ Crucified,' which is the mystery of God's immanence – the Son of God incarnating on earth and experiencing death on the Cross. The *shahadah*, however, evokes a sense of certainty – the certainty of the absolute unity of God who neither begets nor is begotten. In their external appearance the Cross and *shahadah* appear to be communicating entirely different and perhaps conflicting visions of the truth. But, in the Isma'ili worldview, the Cross and *shahadah* are exoteric (*zahir*) symbols conveying the same esoteric meanings and essential truths (*haqa'iq*). Isma'ili philosophers perform esoteric exegesis, known as *ta'wil*, to unveil the esoteric meanings hidden in the *shahadah* and Cross to demonstrate their unity at the spiritual level. The sources for this Isma'ili *ta'wil* are *Kitab al-Yanabi* by Abu Yaqub al-Sijistani, *Sara'ir an-Nutaqa* by Ja'far ibn Mansur al-Yaman and *Wajh-i Din* by Nasir-i Khusraw. Another major figure in the Isma'ili mission or *da'wa*, though in western regions, is Ja'far ibn Mansur, who is credited with numerous works of great interest to the history of Islamic thought. One of these, *Sarā'ir al-nutaqā*, has recently been studied. It is now clear the author upheld an assent to the historicity of the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>18</sup> Within this text, four brief chapters are concerned with proper interpretation of the Cross: 1) a parable hidden within the Cross; 2) the Cross and its dimensions; 3) an explanation of the Cross with its 12 positions; and 4) a parable of the Cross and *sunna* of the prophets.<sup>19</sup> Ja'far ibn Mansur, in *Kitāb al-fatarāt wa'-l-qirānāt*, also affirms the crucifixion in his discussion:

[One] of the ancient wise ones said that the beginning of existence is two lines, one on the other in the middle, in this shape: †. Because of this, the Messiah (al-masīḥ) was erected on the cross to exemplify it, indicating the two sources.<sup>20</sup>

The Isma'ili interpretation of the crucifixion highlights the importance of the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān in their faith, such as the belief that the Qur'ān has multiple levels of meaning and the true spiritual significance of the text is hidden beneath the surface.

The *Shahada* is built on denial and affirmation, beginning with denial and ending with affirmation. Similarly, the Cross is two pieces of wood: a piece that stands on its own and another piece whose placement depends entirely on the place of the other. The *Shahada* is four words. Likewise the Cross has four extremities. The end fixed in the ground has the position of the Master of the Interpretation (*ta'wil*). The end opposite this, high in the air, has the position of the Master of Divine Inspiration (*ta'yid*). The two ends in the middle, which are to the left and the right, indicate the Follower and the Speaking-Prophet, of whom

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> David Hollenberg, "Interpretation after the End of Days: The Fatimid-Isma'ili Ta'wil (Interpretation) of Ja'far ibn Mansūr al-Yaman (d. ca. 960)" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'ān*, 126.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 128.

one is the master of natural composition (*tarkib*) and the other master of scriptural compilation (*talif*).<sup>21</sup>

Qur'ānic exegesis is divided into two basic categories: 1) *tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr*, founded on received traditions (*aḥādīth*), which are traced to Prophet Muḥammad, his companions (*aṣḥāb*) or recognised early authorities on scriptural exegesis (*mufasssīrūn*); and 2) *tafsīr bi'l-ra'y*, which allows the exegete to offer opinions without being bound by interpretations of the verse found in the traditions.<sup>22</sup> This article is primarily concerned with the second type of commentary, which also represents the mid to later stages of exegesis. Having briefly examined the early traditions and pre-Ṭabari exegesis (pre 950 CE), such as al-Qummi (d. 309/921), al-Farra (d. 822), Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) and 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687) of the crucifixion question, I can identify several points. All the exegetes who raise the problem agree that someone was crucified, but few agree on the victim, except that it was not Jesus. There is unanimous agreement that it was not Jesus. In one instance, the commentary ascribed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the death of Jesus would appear to be affirmed. This will be expanded on later in the article. The substitution legends can be divided into two major categories: 1) those favouring “volunteer substitution”; and 2) those claiming punishment substitution. The former appears to be preferred. The exegetes who did not employ traditions did not find it necessary to reject the crucifixion of Jesus. One of them, Ja'far, commented only on the nature of “killing,” while Ibn Qutayba was concerned with the meaning of **certainty** (*yaqīnan*) in verse 4:157.

First and foremost, not all Isma'ili Muslims hold and accept the belief that Jesus was crucified and died a physical death. Many Isma'ili Muslim scholars and thinkers also hold the same views as the pre-Ṭabari interpretations above, adopting the substitution theory but amended in their own ways that deal with verse 4:157 appropriately. For example, 'Abd al-Jabbār, also known as 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Mu'tazilī, was a Muslim theologian and philosopher who lived in the 10<sup>th</sup> century – he rejected the idea that Jesus was crucified. Instead, he believed that God saved Jesus from the Cross and raised him to heaven before he could be killed.<sup>23</sup> However, a prominent group of Isma'ili thinkers had an alternative perspective to the crucifixion of Jesus within Islam. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Ikhwan al-Safa or “Brethren of Purity” were an important group of Muslim philosophers and scholars who lived in Basra, Iraq. They were known for their comprehensive approach to knowledge, which integrated elements of Islamic theology, philosophy, mysticism and science.<sup>24</sup> The Ikhwan al-Safa's most famous work is *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa* or “Epistles of the Brethren of Purity,” which is a collection of 52 treatises that cover a wide range of topics, including cosmology, metaphysics, ethics, politics and religion. These works are widely read and influential in the Muslim world, and

<sup>21</sup> Paul Walker, *The Wellsprings of Wisdom: A Study of Abu Yaqub al-Sijistani's Kitab al-Yanabi: Including a Complete English Translation with Commentary and Notes on the Arabic Text* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1994), 93-94.

<sup>22</sup> Brannon Wheeler, ed., *Prophets in the Qur'an: An Introduction to the Qur'an and Muslim Exegesis* (A&C Black, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'an*, 134.

<sup>24</sup> Andani. “They Killed Him Not.”



their ideas are often cited and debated by later scholars. Scholars, such as Sachiko Murato in her book *The Tao of Islam*, suggest the Ikhwan al-Safa believed in the physical crucifixion of Jesus, while rejecting the idea of his divine sonship.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Lawson suggests they accepted it as a historical event, even though they rejected the Christian belief in his divinity and his death as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Lawson also argues the Ikhwan al-Safa's narrative may have been influenced by earlier Islamic sources, which also affirmed the historicity of the crucifixion. Lawson bases this argument on his analysis of the Ikhwan al-Safa's Epistle 36, which contains a narrative about Jesus that includes his arrest, trial and crucifixion:

So Jesus went on the morrow and appeared to the people and summoned them and preached to them until he was seized and taken to the king of the *banū isrā'īl*. The king ordered his crucifixion, so his *nāsūt* (physical reality) was crucified, and his hands were nailed to the wooden cross and he stayed crucified from morning till evening...<sup>26</sup>

In conducting this research, I employed an analytical approach, which involved carefully reviewing and analysing a range of literature. Through a process of exegesis, historical and critical analysis of scholarly arguments, I identified areas of agreement, disagreement and debate, which informed and enriched this article. By comparing the perspectives of different scholars from different timelines, this article develops a nuanced and well-supported analysis that contributes to the broader scholarly conversation on the topic of Jesus and the crucifixion within Islam. While there are various perspectives on the crucifixion of Jesus within Islam, my analysis revealed a minority view that has been overlooked or dismissed by mainstream scholarship. Through a careful review of the literature, it became clear there was a significant number of scholars who held minority views on the crucifixion, which have been largely ignored by dominant narratives.

## MODERN MUSLIM SCHOLARS AFFIRMING THE HISTORICITY OF THE CRUCIFIXION

One contemporary Muslim scholar who affirmed the crucifixion was Mahmoud Ayoub, a professor of Islamic studies. Ayoub argues the Qur'ān does not deny the crucifixion of Jesus but suggests it was part of God's plan.<sup>27</sup> In his view, the Qur'ān affirms the crucifixion as a historical event, but not as an atonement for sin. Ayoub believes the traditional Islamic interpretation of verses 4:157-158 as denying the crucifixion of Jesus is not the only possible reading of the text. Ayoub also argues that the idea that someone or something other than Jesus appeared on the Cross is inconsistent with the Qur'ān's theological principles. He asks "Would it be in consonance with God's covenant, his mercy and justice to deceive humanity for so

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<sup>25</sup> Sachiko Murato, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (State University of New York Press, 1992).

<sup>26</sup> Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'ān*, 130.

<sup>27</sup> Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Qur'ān and its Interpreters* (Islamic Book Trust, 2013), vol. 2, Surah 4.

many centuries?”<sup>28</sup> Reza Aslan, who is an Iranian-American scholar of religion, has also taken an open approach on this subject and states:

Some Muslim scholars believe that Jesus was not crucified, while others argue that he was, but that he did not die on the cross. Regardless of the details, what is important for Muslims is that Jesus was a prophet of God who embodied the divine qualities of love and compassion.<sup>29</sup>

Abdullah Saeed is an Australian scholar of Islamic studies who has written on the subject of Islamic law and ethics. In his book, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction*, he acknowledges the diversity of views among Muslim scholars on the crucifixion, but notes that many classical scholars affirmed its historical reality:

The Qur’ān does not deny that Jesus was crucified. However, it challenges the Christian interpretation of the event. The Qur’ān seems to suggest that Jesus was not crucified as an act of divine punishment for the sins of humankind, nor was he crucified to atone for those sins. Rather, the Qur’ān suggests that Jesus’ crucifixion was a temporary event, and that he was taken up to God’s presence and will return at the end of time.<sup>30</sup>

Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss-Muslim philosopher and theologian, does not explicitly deny the crucifixion of Jesus in his works. Instead, he offers the Islamic perspective on the event and challenges the Christian interpretation. Ramadan emphasises the importance of understanding the event within the context of Islamic theology and tradition and calls for interfaith dialogue and understanding with other religions, including Christianity. While he does not affirm or deny the historical occurrence of the crucifixion, his overall approach suggests a willingness to engage with other perspectives and find common ground.<sup>31</sup>

## CLASSICAL/MEDIEVAL MUSLIMS AFFIRMING THE HISTORICITY OF THE CRUCIFIXION

In addition to contemporary Muslim scholars who accept the crucifixion of Jesus, it is important to understand the thoughts of medieval and classical Muslim scholars who held this belief. Muhammad al-Ghazali, a 12<sup>th</sup> century Islamic scholar from Iran, believed the crucifixion was a historical event. In an important article published in 1932, Louis Massignon brought attention to what might be thought a somewhat anomalous instance of the great “renewer of religion” Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) affirming the historicity of the crucifixion of Jesus. The authorship of this work in which this affirmation occurs is *al-Radd al-Jamīl* and has long been disputed, with some preferring to ascribe it to one of Ghazali’s students, and has recently become once again a topic of vigorous scholarly debate.<sup>32</sup> Another

<sup>28</sup> Mahmoud Ayoub, “Towards an Islamic Christology, II: The Death of Jesus, Reality or Delusion,” *The Muslim World* 70, no. 2 (1980): 104.

<sup>29</sup> Reza Aslan, *Beyond fundamentalism: Confronting Religious Extremism in the Age of Globalization* (Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2010), 117.

<sup>30</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2006), 108.

<sup>31</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazzali* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1975), 458-487.

such scholar was Ibn Hazm, an 11<sup>th</sup> century Spanish Muslim theologian and jurist. In his book *Al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* (The Separator Concerning Religions, Sects and Philosophical Schools), Ibn Hazm argues that Jesus was crucified and died on the Cross, but his body was then taken up to heaven and replaced with a substitute.<sup>33</sup>

Some scholars even argue that Imam Malik, the founder of one of the four major Sunni schools of thought, expressed an opinion on this matter affirming the death of Jesus while others claim he did not. One of the arguments used to support the claim that Imam Malik believed in the death and crucifixion is that his student, Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani, mentioned in his famous Maliki fiqh book *Al-Risala* that Jesus was crucified and this was the view of Imam Malik. However, this is not conclusive evidence, as it is possible Ibn Abi Zayd was expressing his own opinion and not necessarily that of Imam Malik.<sup>34</sup>

Ibn Arabi (1165-1240 CE) was a Spanish Muslim philosopher and mystic who believed in the crucifixion of Jesus. In his book, *Futuhāt al-Makkiyya*, he seems to imply that Jesus was crucified, but his death on the Cross was a mystical event with deep spiritual significance.<sup>35</sup> Further, a famous medieval Persian philosopher and theologian, Abu al-Fath al-Razi (1149-1209 CE), argues that the Qur'ānic denial of the crucifixion should be understood as a rejection of the idea that Jesus was killed by his enemies, rather than a denial of the event. Al-Razi argues that the crucifixion of Jesus was not a punishment for his claims to divinity, but a consequence of his political activism and challenge to the Roman authorities. In support of this position, he quotes from Christian scriptures claiming the Qur'ān is in line with them.

He then points out to Rhazes that in fact both scriptures, the Qur'ān and the Gospels, agree in letter and spirit. He refers to the Gospel of John which he quotes as “the Messiah died in the body, whereas he is alive in the spirit...”<sup>36</sup>

Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Sijistani uphold the historicity of crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>37</sup> Sijistani was first and foremost a member of the Isma'ili underground mission – the *da'wa*, as it is known in Arabic, that operated in the Iranian province of Khurasan and Sijistan during the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In the later part of his life, he was or had become a supporter of the Fatimid imams whose centre was Cairo in the west. Many of these classical thinkers of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries argue that the Qur'ānic verses denying the crucifixion were meant to refute the claims of the Jews who believed they had killed Jesus, rather than deny the occurrence of the crucifixion. Another major figure in the Isma'ili mission, Ja'far ibn Mansur, is credited with numerous works of great interest to the history of Islamic thought. In his writing, *Kitāb al-fatarāt wa 'qirānāt*, one finds an explicit affirmation of the crucifixion during a discussion on

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Hazm and Ahmad Abu Muhammad, *Kitab al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* [The Book of Sects and Creeds] (Egypt: Matbaa al-Adabiyya, 1900).

<sup>34</sup> Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-nwār al-Jāmi'ah li-Durar Akhbār al-'Immat al-Aṭhār* [The Oceans of Lights: A Compendium of the Pearls of the Narrations of the Pure Imāms] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Wafā', 1983), vol. 1, 286.

<sup>35</sup> William Chittick, *The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi* (World Wisdom, Inc, 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Shin Nomoto, “Early Ismā'īlī Thought on Prophecy According to the Kitāb Al-Islāh by Abū Ḥātim Al-Rāzī (d. ca. 322/934-5)” (McGill University, 2002), 253.

<sup>37</sup> Hollenberg, “Interpretation after the End of Days,” 76.

cosmogony.<sup>38</sup> Also, throughout Ibn-Qutayba's exegesis, titled *Kitāb tafsīr gharīb al-Qur'ān*, he deals with difficult passages in the Qur'ān a little differently. The scholar considers it important to understand that the Qur'ān is not denying the event but focusing on the fact that the Jews were trying to take credit for the death of Jesus whereas in reality they were not sure what they had done, hence in verse 4:157 "but it appeared to them as if they did. Indeed, those who differ about him are in doubt about it." These Muslim thinkers/scholars accept the physical death of Jesus and the historicity of the crucifixion event; however, some only seem to accept the death and not mention anything further. They claim it was part of God's plan for Jesus' mission. Their views offer a unique perspective on the event and highlight the importance of understanding the Qur'ānic text in its historical and cultural contexts. Muslim scholars who accept the crucifixion of Jesus often cite Qur'ānic verses and commentaries to support their position.

### QUR'ĀNIC EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF THE CRUCIFIXION

One of the primary pieces of evidence that is often cited to support the idea that Jesus died a physical death is found in the Qur'ān in three verses (19:33, 3:55 and 5:117) and indirectly in another (5:17). Qur'ān 4:159 is also read to indicate the death of Jesus, but this verse is embroiled in exegetical debate, the details of which are too involved to discuss here.

Qur'ān 19:33: "And peace is on me the day I was born, and the day I will die, and the day I am raised alive." This verse is often understood to be a statement from Jesus, in which he affirms that he will experience physical death. Some scholars argue this verse implies that Jesus physically died on the Cross as part of his mission as a prophet and messenger of God.

Qur'ān 3:55: "Behold! Allah said: 'O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow thee superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection: Then shall ye all return unto me, and I will judge between you of the matters wherein ye dispute.'" Some scholars interpret the phrase "I will take (terminate) thee" to mean that God ended Jesus' life on earth then raised him to heaven after he was killed on the Cross, while others interpret this phrase differently.

Qur'ān 5:117: "I did not say to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness." Some scholars interpret the phrase "when You took me up" to mean that God took Jesus life and ended it. These interpretations are based on the Arabic word "*mutawaffika*" used in 3:55, which can be translated as "to cause you to die" or "to take you in death." According to Todd Lawson:

Each of these verses has its respective problems of interpretation, but they are both important because of the occurrence of *w-f-y*. Of the sixty-six times which this root appears in the Qur'ān, twenty-five are in the Vth form (4:97; 6:61; 47:27; 5:17; 16:28; 16:32; 10:46; 13:40;

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

40:77; 8:50; 39:42; 6:60; 10:104; 16:70; 32:11; 4:15; 7:37; 3:193; 7:126; 12:101; 22:5; 40:67; 2:234; 2:240; 3:55). Of these, the majority unequivocally convey the idea of physical death, including one instance where the death of Muḥammad is the issue (40:77).<sup>39</sup>

If the position of Jesus being put to death by the will of God is accepted based on the above verses, then it raises the question: why couldn't God have allowed Jesus to be killed through means of crucifixion? In addition to the Qur'ānic verses and commentaries mentioned in the previous section, some Muslim scholars also point to other sources of evidence to support the idea that Jesus was crucified.

## HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE CRUCIFIXION

Historical accounts outside the Qur'ān support the idea that Jesus was crucified. For example, the Roman historian Tacitus wrote about the crucifixion of Jesus in his *Annals*<sup>40</sup> and the Jewish historian Josephus also referred to the crucifixion in his *Antiquities of the Jews*.<sup>41</sup> One interpretation that Lawson highlights is the idea that the Qur'ān is denying the involvement of the Jews in the crucifixion of Jesus. This interpretation is based on the Arabic word used in the Qur'ānic verse for "crucifixion," which is "*sulb*." Some Muslim scholars argue this word specifically refers to the Roman form of crucifixion and the Qur'ān is denying the involvement of the Jews in this form of execution, rather than denying that Jesus was killed in some other way. Overall, Lawson's work suggests the question of the crucifixion of Jesus is a complex and contested issue within the Muslim community. While the Qur'ānic verses 4:157-158 superficially denies the crucifixion, the interpretation of these verses and other related verses is a matter of debate among Muslim scholars. There have been a variety of interpretations of these verses throughout history and the question of the crucifixion of Jesus remains an important topic of discussion within the Muslim community.

In the early centuries of Islam, some Muslim scholars accepted the crucifixion as a historical event. However, as time went on, the dominant view among Muslim scholars became denial of the crucifixion. If verse 4:157 is read in context, the Qur'ān is only denying the actions and boastful statements of a particular group of Jews who are claiming to have killed and crucified Jesus 'the son of Mary'. But the Qur'ān does not make a statement regarding the historicity of the crucifixion; it takes a neutral stance, neither affirming or denying it. However, it seems to assume the historicity of the event, hence the reference to it implies it happened and was God's will, but not by the Jews. Lawson argues this shift was influenced by a variety of factors, including the rise of anti-Christian sentiment in the Islamic world, the desire to establish a distinct Islamic identity in opposition to Christian beliefs and a growing emphasis on the miraculous nature of Jesus.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'ān*, 42.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Grant, trans., *Tacitus: The Annals of Imperial Rome* (Penguin Classics, 1989), 303-304.

<sup>41</sup> Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. William Whiston (Books on Demand, 2018).

<sup>42</sup> Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'ān*.

While Islam and Christianity share a belief in the importance of Jesus, they differ in their understanding of his role and significance. For Christians, Jesus is seen as the son of God and the saviour of humanity, while for Muslims, he is a prophet and messenger of God. This fundamental difference in belief has significant implications for the interpretation of the crucifixion. For Christians, the crucifixion is seen as a central event in the process of salvation, with Jesus' death on the Cross serving as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. In contrast, Muslim theology emphasises the importance of personal accountability and the individual's relationship with God, rather than the external sacrifice or atonement. Lawson notes the Arabic language, in which the Qur'ān is written, has a complex and nuanced system of expression that is often rich in metaphor and symbolism. He argues this richness of language is reflected in Islamic theology, which often uses metaphor and symbols to express complex theological concepts. One example of this use of metaphor can be seen in the Arabic word "*shubbiha*" (doubt), which is used in the Qur'ān to describe the crucifixion. This word means "made to appear" or "made to resemble," suggesting the event of the crucifixion may have been something other than what it appeared. Isma'ili Muslims interpret this part of the verse to suggest 'what was made to appear' was that it appeared as if the Jews had killed Jesus but they were mistaken and not able to take credit or be held responsible for his death.<sup>43</sup> Isma'ilis claim the Qur'ān is responding to the Talmud, which was written roughly 700 years before the Qur'ān. The Talmud mentions that the Jews slander and accuse Mary of adultery<sup>44</sup> as well as claim they had executed Jesus.<sup>45</sup> The Qur'ān responds to these claims and denies them.<sup>46</sup> *Tafsir* is a rich and complex tradition that involves exploration of the many layers of meaning and symbolism contained within the Qur'ānic text. In this sense, Lawson argues that the Muslim rejection of the crucifixion can be understood as a refutation of a specific interpretation of the event, rather than denial of the event.

While the Qur'ānic denial of the crucifixion is a foundational aspect of Islamic belief, the interpretation of this denial and its significance in relation to other religious traditions is a matter of ongoing debate and discussion among Muslim scholars. There are several sources of evidence that have been cited to support the position of Jesus being crucified, including historical accounts, linguistic analysis and theological considerations. However, not all Muslim scholars accept the idea of the crucifixion and there is diversity of opinion on this topic within the Muslim community. In the Shia tradition, some scholars have developed a more nuanced view of the crucifixion that emphasises its symbolic and spiritual dimensions. In Sunni and Shia traditions, there is strong emphasis on the idea of Jesus as a saviour figure who will return at the end of time to establish justice and restore balance to the world. This belief in the return of Jesus is known as the Second Coming or the advent of the Mahdi (12<sup>th</sup> Imam, who is hidden in occultation) in Shia Islam. The Shia believe Jesus was crucified but did not die on the Cross.

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<sup>43</sup> Andani, "*They Killed Him Not.*"

<sup>44</sup> Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 98-99.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>46</sup> Ian Mevorach, "Qur'an, Crucifixion, and Talmud: A New Reading of Q4:157-58," *The Journal of Religion & Society* 19 (2017): 7.

He was raised to heaven by God and will return to establish a just society.<sup>47</sup> Shia Muslims believe Jesus, after being taken down from the Cross, was taken alive into heaven by God and he will return to earth to bring justice to the world.<sup>48</sup> Sunni Muslims believe Jesus was not crucified; rather, he was raised to heaven by God before the crucifixion could take place.<sup>49</sup> Sunni Islam, generally speaking, rejects the notion of Jesus' crucifixion and instead suggests he was replaced on the Cross by someone else as God would never humiliate one of his prophets like that.<sup>50</sup> The Sunni and Shia beliefs do not negate the importance of Jesus in Islamic theology, as he is considered one of the greatest prophets and messengers of God. In both traditions, the return of Jesus is seen as a sign of the coming of the Day of Judgment and as a time when all humanity will be held accountable for their actions. In Sunni Islam, the belief that Jesus will return at the end of time as a saviour figure is often linked with the concept of the Dajjal or the false messiah. According to this view, the Dajjal will emerge before the return of Jesus and will spread chaos and confusion throughout the world. It is believed Jesus will eventually appear and defeat the Dajjal then establish justice and peace on earth.

## SHIA AND SUNNI PERSPECTIVES

In the Shia tradition, the emphasis on the spiritual and esoteric dimensions of the crucifixion is reflected in the practice of mourning for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad. This practice is known as *Ashura* and is observed on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the Islamic month of Muharram. The events of Ashura are seen as a continuation of the message of Jesus, in which the sacrifice of one's life for the sake of truth and justice is seen as the ultimate act of devotion and love for God. In his book *Al-Khisal*, Sheikh Al-Saduq, a prominent Shia scholar, narrates a *hadith* in which Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq states, "Jesus son of Mary was killed just like Al-Hussain was killed."<sup>51</sup> Also, in the book *Mafatih al-Jinan*, a collection of Shia prayers and supplications, a section is dedicated to the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, which includes a prayer that states, "O Allah, bless Muhammad and his family, and grant us the reward of mourning for Al-Hussain and for Jesus son of Mary."<sup>52</sup> Moreover, there are some differences in the way that Shia and Sunni scholars view the role of Jesus in the wider context of Islamic theology. In the Shia tradition, there is strong emphasis on the concept of the Imamate, which refers to the succession of spiritual and political leaders after Prophet Muhammad. According to Shia doctrine, the Imamate is a divinely appointed institution that provides guidance and leadership to the Muslim community. Some Shia scholars argue that Jesus, as a prophet and symbol of Divine mercy and compassion, is also an Imam and he plays

<sup>47</sup> Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'an*, 132.

<sup>48</sup> Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future* (WW Norton & Company, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> Gabriel Said Reynolds, "The Muslim Jesus: Dead or Alive?" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72, no. 2 (2009): 238.

<sup>50</sup> Jerald Dirks, *The Cross & the Crescent: An Interfaith Dialogue between Christianity and Islam* (Amana Pub., 2001).

<sup>51</sup> As-Suduq, *Al-Khisal: A Numeric Classification of Traditions on Characteristics*, trans. Ali Peiravi and Talat June Peiravi (Al-Islam, 2008), 707.

<sup>52</sup> Abbas Qummi, *Mafatih al-jinan [A Treasury of Islamic Piety]* (Tehran: Kitabfurushilslami, 2002), 13.

a central role in guiding and inspiring believers on the path to God.<sup>53</sup> Allama Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī was a highly respected exponent of the classical Iranian intellectual tradition. His most important work is a Qur'ānic commentary, whose title may be translated “The Just Balance in the explanation of the Qur'ān.”<sup>54</sup> According to al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the main purpose of verses 4:157-8 is to refute the Jewish claim that they had killed Jesus. Pointing out that there is so much disagreement that it is difficult to determine what really happened, al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī says one possible interpretation (*ta'wīl*) is that “they” did not kill him in the usual (*‘ādīyan*) way.<sup>55</sup> The statement “they did not kill him and they did not crucify him” supports this in unambiguous terms, as crucifixion was a customary punishment at that time. The meaning is that Jesus did not die by “their” hands, but the matter appeared so to them (*bal shubbiha lahum amruhu*).

In contrast, Sunni scholars tend to focus more on the prophetic role of Jesus and his message of compassion and justice for all of humanity. While Jesus is not always considered to be an Imam in Sunni Islam, his message and example are seen as a powerful reminder of the importance of these values in the Islamic tradition. Overall, while there are some differences in the way that Sunni and Shia scholars approach the crucifixion and role of Jesus in Islamic theology, both traditions share deep respect and reverence for Jesus as a prophet and symbol of God's mercy and compassion.

As Muslims, who share a common Abrahamic heritage with Christians, it is natural to be curious about the significance and meaning of this event. Second, the crucifixion is mentioned in the Qur'ān, which is the central religious text of Islam. While the Islamic account of the crucifixion differs from the Christian account in several key respects, it is still an important event in the Islamic tradition and is seen as a powerful symbol of sacrifice and devotion. Third, the topic of the crucifixion has been the subject of much debate and discussion among Muslim scholars throughout history. As mentioned earlier, there are several different perspectives and interpretations of the event within the Muslim tradition, and each perspective offers valuable insights into the nature of God, the role of the prophets and the spiritual path that Muslims are called to follow. The topic of the crucifixion is also relevant to contemporary issues facing the Muslim world, such as interfaith dialogue and understanding. By exploring the similarities and differences between Islamic and Christian perspectives on this event, Muslims can build bridges of understanding and respect with people of other faiths, and work towards a more harmonious community. The topic of the crucifixion is worth exploring because it sheds light on some of the central themes and beliefs of Islam, as well as on the broader context of interfaith dialogue. From an Islamic perspective, the crucifixion is significant because it challenges some of the traditional Christian beliefs about Jesus and his role in salvation.

<sup>53</sup> Seyyed Nasr Hossein, *Islamic Life and Thought* (The Other Press, 1981).

<sup>54</sup> al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* [The Balance in Interpretation of Qur'ān] (Beirut: al-A'lamī li al-Maṭbū'āt, 1390/1970), vol. v, 131.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. v, 132.



## CONCLUSION

By examining the different interpretations and perspectives of Muslim scholars on the crucifixion event, we can gain deeper understanding of how Muslims understand the nature of God, the role of the prophets and the spiritual path that Muslims are called to follow. As Muslims engage with Christian perspectives on the event, they can learn to appreciate the diversity and richness of human religious experiences. The reason for the lack of discourse in understanding the crucifixion of Jesus within Islam is the many other important topics and issues within Islam that have received more attention and focus over the centuries. These include topics such as theology, jurisprudence, spirituality, ethics and social justice. As such, the topic of the crucifixion may simply have been overlooked or overshadowed by other issues. The Muslim approach to the crucifixion is often seen as a reaction to Christian theology and history, rather than as an independent subject. As such, discussions of the crucifixion may tend to be more reactive, rather than proactive, focusing on clarifying or correcting misunderstandings about the event, rather than exploring its deeper spiritual significance. Finally, political and social factors may have contributed to the relative neglect of this topic in some Muslim circles. For example, in some parts of the world, there may be a tendency to view the crucifixion as a primarily Christian event and less relevant or significant to Muslim concerns. Additionally, political or ideological factors may have led some groups to downplay the importance of interfaith dialogue and understanding, which could contribute to a lack of interest in the crucifixion as a subject of study and discussion. Overall, while the topic of the crucifixion may not have received as much attention in Muslim circles as some other issues, it remains an important and valuable subject for study and reflection, for its spiritual significance and potential to contribute to interfaith dialogue and understanding.

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