

The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

A Basis for Interfaith Dialogue

Máire Byrne

which children
God /gɒd/, *n.*
of the univ
reference to :
a deity, esp.

The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Also available from Continuum:

Images of Jesus Christ in Islam: 2nd Edition, Oddbjørn Leirvik

A Mirror for Our Times, Paul Weller

Religious Cohesion in Times of Conflict, Andrew Holden

Understanding Christian–Muslim Relations, Clinton Bennett

The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

A Basis for Interfaith Dialogue

Máire Byrne

Continuum International Publishing Group
The Tower Building 80 Maiden Lane
11 York Road Suite 704
London SE1 7NX New York NY 10038

www.continuumbooks.com

© Máire Byrne, 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-4411-4198-9 (HB)
978-1-4411-5356-2 (PB)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Byrne, Máire.

The names of God in Judaism, Christianity and Islam : a basis for interfaith dialogue / Máire Byrne.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-4411-4198-9 -- ISBN 978-1-4411-5356-2 1. God--Name. 2. Abrahamic religions.

I. Title.

BL473.B97 2011

202'.11--dc22

2010050008

Typeset by Pindar NZ, Auckland, New Zealand
Printed and bound in India

Contents

Acknowledgements	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
Notes on Sacred Texts Used	xii
1 Interfaith Dialogue and Comparative Theology	1
Introduction	1
Objectives of this Work	2
Searching for a Methodology of Approach	2
Using Comparative Theology as a Framework Methodology	3
What Does This Study Mean by ‘Theology’?	4
Comparative Theology and Reading Religious Texts	5
Possible Difficulties with Comparative Theology	6
Approach	8
2 Names and Naming	9
The Importance of Names and Naming	9
Naming: The Human Perspective	10
The Philosophical Approach to Names	11
The Function of a Name	12
Naming the Divine	13
A Christian Approach	13
A Judaic Approach	14
An Islamic Approach	17
Limits of Language	18
Anthropomorphism	18

3	Divine Designations in the Hebrew Bible	21
	Introduction	21
	Selecting the Names	21
	The Tetragrammaton (יהוה)	22
	The Divine Name as a Form of Self-Revelation	24
	Adonai (אֲדֹנָי) Adon (אֲדוֹן)	25
	<i>El</i> (אֵל) God	26
	<i>Elohim</i> (אֱלֹהִים)	27
	<i>Shaddai</i> (Almighty) (שַׁדַּי)	29
	YHWH (Lord) of Hosts (יהוה צְבָאוֹת) (<i>YHWH Sabaoth</i>)	30
	Creator (בּוֹרֵא)	33
	Maker (עֹשֶׂה)	34
	The Holy God (הָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ)	36
	The Holy One of Israel (קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל)	37
	King (מֶלֶךְ)	38
	Mighty God (אֵל גְּבוּר), Mighty One of Jacob (אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל), Mighty One of Israel (אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל)	39
	Redeemer (גֹּאֲל)	42
	Saviour (מוֹשִׁיעַ)	42
	The Living God (אֱלֹהֵי חַי)	43
	The God of Israel (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) / God of Jacob (אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב)	44
	God of Your Ancestor David (אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אֲבִיךָ)	44
	Father (אָב)	45
	Rock (צוּר)	45
4	Divine Designations in the New Testament	47
	Introduction	47
	God as a Character in the New Testament	48
	Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) and Naming God	50
	Gender-Neutral Language and God of the New Testament	51
	Is Jesus God?	52
	The Trinity in Christianity	53
	God as ‘Father’	53
	Θεός Theos	54
	Abba	56
	Joachim Jeremias (1900–79)	56
	Does <i>abba</i> Mean Daddy?	58
	Reader-Response	61
	Some Conclusions of ‘Father’ and <i>Abbai</i>	74
	Other Designations	75
	Conclusion	80
5	Divine Designations in the Qur’an	81
	Introduction	81

Categorizing the Names	90
The Qur'an	90
Recitation	91
Memorization	92
Translation	92
Translation into English	93
Theology in Islam	93
God	93
Interpreting the Qur'an	94
99 Most Beautiful Names <i>Asma ul Husna</i>	94
Allah	95
The 99 Most Beautiful Names of Allah	95
Conclusion	122
6 Comparative Theologies and the Names of God	123
Introduction	123
Benefit for the Field of Academic Study of the Sacred Texts	123
Benefit for a Religious Understanding of the Text	124
The Deity as Creator	125
The Deity as Father	130
Conclusion	132
Notes	135
Bibliography	155
Index	169

Acknowledgements

This work was generously funded by a postdoctoral position as the Finlay Fellow in Theology at the Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Dublin (2008–10), funded by the Jesuits of Ireland.

I have always been fortunate in being surrounded by people who help me grow the small kernels of ideas into what I and, it is to be hoped, others may see as fruitful discussions. Thanks especially to Rev Brendan McConvery CSsR, supervisor of my MTh and PhD theses at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, for turning a throwaway comment into a lifelong project.

I am extremely grateful to Francis Cousins, Dr Suzanne Mulligan, and Dr Jason M. Silverman for their support and academic assistance. Thank you to Mal and my family for their encouragement.

Máire Byrne

A Thiana, ár dTiarna, nach éachtach é d'ainm ar fud na cruinne

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of Biblical Books

Gen.	Genesis
Exod.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus
Num.	Numbers
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1–2 Sam.	1–2 Samuel
1–2 Kgs	1–2 Kings
1–2 Chron.	1–2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh.	Nehemiah
Job	Job
Ps. (pl. Pss.)	Psalms
Prov.	Proverbs
Song	Song of Songs
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel
Hos.	Hosea
Amos	Amos
Jon.	Jonah
Hag.	Haggai
Zech.	Zechariah
Mal.	Malachi
Matt.	Matthew
Mk	Mark

Lk.	Luke
Jn	John
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Rom.	Romans
1–2 Cor.	1–2 Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1–2 Thess.	1–2 Thessalonians
1–2 Tim.	1–2 Timothy
Tit.	Titus
Heb.	Hebrews
1 Jn	1 John
Sir.	Sirach

Abbreviations of Translations

ASV	American Standard Version
ESV	English Standard Version
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
NAB	New American Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version

Other Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 volumes. New York, 1992.
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton, 1969.
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DBI	<i>Dictionary of Biblical Imagery</i> . Edited by Leland

	Ryken. Leicester, 1998.
<i>EDB</i>	<i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. Grand Rapids, MI, 2000.
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
<i>IDB</i>	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by G. A. Buttrick. 4 volumes. Nashville, 1962.
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>NJBC</i>	<i>The New Jerome Biblical Commentary</i> . Edited by R. E. Brown et al. Englewood Cliffs, 1990.
<i>SOTSMS</i>	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 volumes. Grand Rapids, MI, 1974–.
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by Ernst Jenni, with assistance from Claus Westermann. Translated by Mark Biddle. 3 volumes. Peabody, MA, 1997.
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>

Notes on Sacred Texts Used

All English quotations from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament (unless otherwise stated) are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations of Hebrew text are taken from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (4th edition). The Greek text used is the LXX *Septuaginta* (Old Greek Jewish Scriptures) edited by Alfred Rahlfs (copyright 1935).

Translations of the 99 Most Beautiful Names into English are from various English translations of the Qur'an and from literature based on it. Quotations from the Qur'an, unless stated otherwise, are from the Yusef Ali translation, published as *The Holy Qur'an* by Wordsworth Editions in 2001.

Chapter 1

Interfaith Dialogue and Comparative Theology

Introduction

Throughout most of the history of world religions there have always been efforts among some adherents of a particular religion to understand other belief systems. This task has been undertaken with a variety of aims; some simply out of curiosity, academic or otherwise, and some to foster a more developed and understanding relationship between two or more religions. This exercise has never succeeded on a very large scale, as geography and world events in history tend to steer the process away from a particularly coherent route. The modern process of interreligious dialogue has become an increasingly vibrant and successful endeavour, helped by the increasing interest in the growth of religious pluralism.¹ Despite considerable progress in the academic pursuit of interreligious dialogue, there exists still a certain degree of distrust and suspicion regarding the beliefs and practices of other religions, a clear example of this being the view of modern Islam following world events such as September 11, 2001 and the London bombings of July 7, 2005. Humans as a rule tend to be suspicious of things they do not understand (as in the fear of the unknown),² and this lack of education and understanding is conducive to the development of false ideas concerning a religion – for example, that Muslims are predominately extremists and fundamentalists. Interactions and intersections between religious faiths are not usually considered an overwhelming success; one of the many reasons for this is that we do not have a common language with which to further (or in some cases begin) a dialogue. As Leonard Swidler³ stated, ‘We always needed dialogue as a species, but now we are aware of it. These are times like no other in human history.’⁴

This search for dialogue and language does not of course mean a shared spoken language such as English, French, or Arabic as even within academic circles there has been little work on the language of the dialogue between faiths. ‘Language’ in this instance is the words and terminology (formal or otherwise) that are needed to explain and to learn from each other. The language does not necessarily have to be formal or religious but in the main the terms and words

need to be from a mutual experience and a collective understanding. Language is also not based on the spoken word; it can be written or heard as well. Learning, particularly from within a faith context, needs to be based on what people are already familiar with. There exists a very limited ‘common language’ among faith groups, even within the three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This is usually because of the fact that, when engaging in interreligious dialogue, groups tend to need to speak from their own belief system, to explain it to another group. A practical example of this is to ask a Christian theologian to explain the concept of the Trinity to a general audience. The theologian, in the majority of cases, will have the information and language in terms of vocabulary to explain the theory to a member of their peer group, but not to explain it to somebody from another faith group who may have differing views of the idea of the Trinity. Hence in order to communicate and dialogue with people from other religions, even to the level of a sociable interest to learn more about a friend, some kind of common language of theology needs to be sought.

Objectives of this Work

The principal objective of this work is, therefore, to attempt to locate some sort of starting place for locating this common or universal language in order to assist interreligious dialogue (or, indeed, ‘trialogue’⁵ if we are to take Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as our faiths of focus) in some way. First, by allowing people to understand their own context and religious understanding, and from this position allow a dialogue of explanation and learning from other faiths. My own instinct as a Christian biblical theologian is to look to the sacred texts of a particular religion in order to begin this search. The sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all are the source of ‘language’ for their respective religions and contain the core of ideas that form the basis for three ‘theologies’.

Searching for a Methodology of Approach

One of the initial problems in considering the sacred texts as a source of language is that there is such an amount of written language within the three faiths. It would be impossible to examine every text that is seen as sacred or important in its contribution to the religion’s idea of the deity or to the structures and belief systems of the religion, so a theme or component is required. For this, I have selected the names or images associated with the deity or ‘god’ in each of the written sacred texts of the three traditions.

Using Comparative Theology as a Framework Methodology

In searching for a suitable framework methodology to use in this work, I found that the processes used within the discipline of comparative theology to be particularly useful. Comparative theology has been described generally as a new method of interreligious dialogue as a sub-discipline of systematic theology that attempts to produce a more fruitful and, indeed, more manageable approach to the dialogue among religions. It is not merely a refined method of comparing religions and 'is more than finding interesting parallels between different religions.'⁶ The *Journal of Comparative Theology* defines the discipline as 'the practice of rethinking some aspect or aspects of one's own faith tradition through the study of some aspect or aspects of another faith tradition.'⁷

Many would see Francis X. Clooney as a 'pioneer' of comparative theology,⁸ and he has written extensively on the subject. Clooney describes his role as that of a 'comparative theologian' (he is also an American Catholic priest with the Society of Jesus and an Indologist); he seeks to examine how the juxtaposed texts of varied religions and their traditions can inform one another and transform those who engage with them.⁹

In his piece 'The frontier of comparative theology',¹⁰ Samuel Youngs notes that contemporary religious and secular pluralism as an international experience is having a marked influence on the ways in which academia studies religion and theology. He also believes there is a need to move beyond a typically Christian way of studying religion and theology in order to advocate a more sympathetic outlook and approach with regard to other religions. It is a relatively new process in the field of Christian theological studies and religion, described by Youngs as the process whereby 'a religious scholar or theologian reaches out from their own faith tradition – without denying that tradition – in order to intentionally and sympathetically interact and exchange with other systems of theological belief in a comparative way.'¹¹

In terms of the feasibility of taking biblical theology into this framework, Norbert Hintersteiner notes that in the process of undertaking comparative theology as a methodological framework 'the contemporary theologian must read texts of other traditions among with the believers of other traditions, and in ways that allow contemporary audiences to somehow establish familiarity while retaining their point of view.'¹² Comparative theology lends itself to biblical theology in conjunction with looking at the sacred texts of Judaism and Islam because no viewpoints or beliefs have to be surrendered or left to one side, an important aspect of examining texts that have such differing theologies and literary aspects behind them. This also points us forward to the notion of a positive outcome for the endeavour. If a Christian who is familiar with the Christian Scriptures (in the sense of the Old and New Testaments) looks to the religious texts of Judaism and Islam through the lens of comparative theology,

they will gain some understanding of the texts such as the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'an. They should also be able to use this knowledge to further their personal understanding of their 'own' religious texts.

What Does This Study Mean by 'Theology'?

As comparative theology is usually aligned with systematic theology, the viewpoint of theology is normally seen in light of Anselm's view of it being 'faith seeking understanding'.¹³ Clooney discusses this definition in his work *Hindu God, Christian God* but highlights the philosophical part of this idea – namely, that the goal of theology is not to 'understand' but to know God 'more completely and intelligently'.¹⁴ With this in mind, it is therefore adaptable to the more Augustinian definition of theology that is seen as the study of God in a particular religion or faith.¹⁵ As this work deals with three religions with a similar godhead in terms of description in sacred texts, it would seem that this definition would be more helpful.

As stated previously, comparative theology is a method normally found within systematic theology. As this study focuses on sacred texts, it would be useful to see how biblical theology fits into these parameters or if its aims, objectives, and methods are too dissimilar from comparative theology to work in tandem. Biblical theology is also a discipline of Christian theology¹⁶ that in the modern sense of the phrase means 'the theology contained in the Bible'.¹⁷ This means that in carrying out the work of biblical theology, Christian texts are studied in order to see what can be learned about God from them, and from this what can be learned about the basis and foundation for the religious belief system of Christianity. In terms of comparing biblical theology with the methods of systematic theology that comparative theology normally draws on, Gerrhardus Vos (a biblical scholar who was a Dutch Reformed pastor) draws the comparison very well by noting that biblical theology draws a line, whereas systematic theology draws a circle.¹⁸ That is to say that biblical theology is mainly diachronic in its outlook – that is, the Bible has a history (or a timeline) and this needs to be taken into account when reading the text and evaluating its theology. A diachronic outlook means that biblical scholars see the theology of the Bible as something that is revealed over time and something that is not contained between the two printed covers of the book of the Bible: it is something that comes into the life experiences of a Christian. Systematic theology is therefore synchronic in its view; it sees the Bible as a 'finished product', or something that is a unified whole. This outlook would cause problems in terms of the study about to be undertaken; a synchronic reading would read the New Testament back into the Old Testament and would not keep in line with the idea of cultivating or seeking a common language and dialogue as it sees the Old Testament as a Christian text and the covenantal promises as looking to the future coming of Jesus.

Comparative Theology and Reading Religious Texts

While there has been very little direct focus on the use of Scripture in the discipline of comparative theology, Clooney states, ‘the foremost prospect for a fruitful comparative theology is the reading of texts, preferably scriptural and theological texts . . . that have guided communities in their understandings of God, self, and other.’¹⁹ Religious texts have always been central to the most religious theologies. An interreligious reading of two or more religious texts therefore, according to Clooney, ‘demands vulnerability . . . that never manages to restrict loyalty to one of the other tradition alone, and that in the end is intensified by the spiritual power of both of the texts to which one has surrendered.’²⁰ One of the problems I have encountered among some Christians (and they are often hesitant to verbalize this as they perceive it as being faintly ridiculous, but important) is that we as Christians (and it follows for adherents of other religions) should not be engaging in a study or even a reading of another religious text, such as the Qur’an. This is normally for a variety of reasons, principal among them that Christians should spend more time learning about our own texts, and that we would somehow ‘insult’ Muslims by reading the Qur’an or that we would be showing some sort of disservice to our ‘own’ texts if we studied or began to appreciate the texts from another religion. Comparative theology goes to some lengths to show how this is not the case and that, in fact, a sense of gaining wisdom and a deeper spiritual insight into religious texts can be gained.

It is interesting to look at Clooney’s process for an ‘intelligent reading’ of a religious text, in terms of reading religiously and reading a religious text from a viewpoint of interreligious dialogue. Clooney notes²¹ that we must:

- Decide which text or texts belonging to which religion form the ‘site’ for our study. In this case, the ‘site’ will be as described above and detailed in later examinations of the text, the Hebrew Bible (Judaism), the Gospels (Christianity), and the Qur’an (Islam).
- The languages required to read these texts must be learned. Clooney does not say what extent of fluency needs to be reached to do this, but his idea that reading a translation of the text as ‘commendably realistic’ would seem that it requires a relatively non-academic level of familiarity with the languages. This opinion would be at variance with those of the majority of biblical scholars and certainly would not be agreeable to Muslims who see the only true reading of the Qur’an to be that conducted in Classical Arabic, the original language of the text. Islamic belief holds that the text of the Qur’an contains the exact words and phrases dictated by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad and these have not been contaminated by human editing or translation; therefore, in order to appreciate the text and the theological meaning and significance, the text must be read in Classical Arabic.²² These viewpoints do not necessarily mean that the text

is accessible to all and, in not insisting on a level of knowledge of biblical languages or Classical Arabic, comparative theology is already serving its own ideal that anyone can interact in this discipline. On the other hand, some would note that systematic theology may use translations of texts or biblical quotations without full knowledge of the background of and context to a text or quotation (though this of course is a biblical scholar's point of view). It is important that the comparative theological method does not fall foul to this. A balance must therefore be achieved, as for this study to be of any use to the field of comparative theology it must serve a wide religious and secular audience but it must also be loyal to the textual, literary, and oral tradition of all three texts. To this end, knowledge of no language other than English shall be presumed but all texts will have been studied in Biblical Hebrew, Greek, or Classical Arabic as appropriate, and these languages shall be referred to where deemed necessary, using transliteration where appropriate.

- The text in question must be read and engaged with, as Clooney favours a 'deeper' reading to the text, in the sense of moving beyond the 'words on the page' and seeking a meaning outside of the original literary and historical contexts.
- Clooney emphasizes the theological aspect of the reading and describes it as putting 'the whole back together' with the hope that what has been achieved in terms of learning may be communicated to a wider audience. The important point here for our study is that this wider context includes both the academic community and faith communities, which highlights how the various levels of comparative theology can work for different levels of dissemination of information. In this way, therefore, the practice of comparative theology with the reading of sacred texts would seem on a theoretical level at least to be beneficial when using the lens of comparative religions. An academic reading of a biblical text (especially in a close reading of a text or theme in a text) can seem somewhat remote to a reader of the text. This is usually from a purely 'faith-informing' examination of the text, and the fact that comparative theology attempts to merge the two can only be beneficial to faith communities and academics (though of course the two do not need to be mutually exclusive).

Possible Difficulties with Comparative Theology

While very few texts that consider comparative theology include any specific reflection on its use of or inclusion with biblical theology, I see the two as being very compatible in the sense that interreligious dialogue would benefit from the diachronic methods that biblical studies employs. As biblical theology has a proven and demonstrable success with methods such as reading

the Old Testament in a Christian light but still taking into account the sacred nature of the text to the Jewish people, it would appear that merging the two disciplines would expand the dimensions of both comparative and biblical theology.

It is worth noting that difficulty arises in performing a ‘comparative’ method on a theme or part of the text of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur’an, especially in terms of something that is quite detailed and nuanced as the names that are attributed to the deity in each of the texts. If you simply take a name that is common to all three texts²³ and examine how it is used in each context, you have a huge amount of lexical and etymological resources to use in the case of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. You are also able to use the vast amount of thorough academic scholarship on the meaning and use of the name from various angles such as historical, linguistic, anthropological, and so forth. When the same is attempted with the 99 Most Beautiful Names of Allah in Islam, in terms of their use either in the Qur’an or simply in a religious setting, there is little if any English academic work on the subject, in the same vein as there is in Judaism or Christianity. In terms of ‘Qur’anic criticism’ there has been much less of a development in academic study of the text. For example, the *Journal of Qur’anic Studies*, the first scholarly periodical dedicated to the study of the Qur’an, launched in October 1999. There is no study version of the Qur’an; *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* was first published in December 1993²⁴ and *The Jewish Study Bible* in 2004.²⁵ Though these are recent additions, critically translated works and commentaries have been available in many languages for many years. There is a study copy of the Qur’an currently being compiled by HarperCollins, which will be published in the near future.²⁶ This should make the English text of the Qur’an more accessible and, therefore, result in readings that are more critical. It is important to note that ‘critical’ in this sense does not mean a negative reading of the text. Rather, as biblical criticism has shown, by closely reading the text in an educated way with a good knowledge of the language it is written in the text can be appreciated and understood by more people.

Using a simple ‘compare and contrast’ method in analysing the use of the name in the three religions therefore seems futile – and, indeed, a little unfair – as the body of academic work is weighted with Judaism and Christianity. Just because a subject might not have what may be deemed an ‘adequate’ amount of footnotes or references to back up or demonstrate what previous study has been done on the subject, this does not diminish the religious and theological outlook of an aspect of a religious text. If this work were to use the methodology previously used in a theology of religions or comparative religions, then there is a serious risk that Islam and the 99 Most Beautiful Names of Allah would appear as a sort of ‘poor neighbour’ to the academic riches of the names of God in Judaism and Christianity. Here the methods of comparative theology would seem to be able to circumvent this successfully, without doing disservice

to the vast amounts of excellent biblical scholarship that can inform and aid our study. Indeed, by thoroughly embracing the notion that a religion can learn and be inspired from working with comparative theology, it could be hoped that academic scholarship in the area of names of the divine in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam would increase. A benefit that would surely be felt by scholars interested in any or all of these three religions.

Approach

This work will survey the designations used in the sacred texts of these three religions in turn. The faiths shall be dealt with in 'chronological' order; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and separately by chapter. The final chapter shall bring together some of the findings by using the methods of comparative theology to ascertain whether a common language among the three faiths may be found.

Chapter 2

Names and Naming

The Importance of Names and Naming

The discussion of the importance of names, especially in relation to names used in sacred texts, is a complex one. In modern society and in our day-to-day lives, names are such an integral part of our thinking and our communication with one another that their use is scarcely noticed, much less their importance. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the naming process as well as how names are used in communication. Pre-empting the criticism that how humans name each other is wholly different to how we name a deity, it may be argued that the divine names (or designations to use a more general term) are fundamentally an extension of how humans use names. Names for the deity are used primarily within literature (i.e. sacred texts) in addition to communicating the notion of divinity or the divine from person to person. The thinking behind names or designations given to a divine entity is similar, if not identical, to how humans use names in communication with one another.

When the social anthropologist Anthony Cohen notes the ‘very different kinds of significance which naming has in different societies and cultures’,¹ this should be taken as a caution regarding the complexity involved in a study of names and naming, whether in the purely earthly realm or with divine names. Even within one society the process of naming can differ among small groups, such as families, or in a temporal sense among generations. A simple modern illustration of this is the common practice in many Western societies of naming a child after a parent or grandparent. Irish families tend to name a firstborn child after a parent; in particular, in families of Irish immigrants, often a boy is given the first name of his father or his grandfather.² In the United States, the practice of giving a male child the identical name to his father is commonplace, with the distinction made between the two by calling the father ‘senior’ and the child ‘junior’.³ Arab fathers take the name of their first child with the prefix ‘the father of . . .’ or ‘*abu*’. Muslim names are normally made up of a proper name followed by a *naṣab*, a name that refers to an ancestor, usually in the form of *ibn* (son) or *bint* (daughter) and the name of the father, then of the grandfather,

and so on for as many generations as deemed necessary.⁴ In the general practice of naming in the Islamic world, names are seen to define the object or person, and so it follows that the more important or sacred an object, person, or place is, the more names that are given to describe it. This is seen in the various names that are used to denote the Qur'an. Among those found in the text itself are *al-furqan* ('discernment' or 'criterion'), *al-huda* ('the guide'), *dhikrallah* ('the remembrance of God'), *al-hikmah* ('the wisdom'), and *kalamallah* ('the word of God'). An additional term is *al-kitāb* (the book), though it is also used in the Arabic language to refer to sacred texts from other religions, such as the Torah and the Gospels. The term *mus'haf* (written work) is used regularly to refer to specific Qur'anic manuscripts, but is also used in the Qur'an to identify earlier revealed books. Placed in a wider cultural realm, there are wide variations to these practices. For example, the custom of firstborn sons taking their father's first name as a memorial name and using it as their first name upon his death is not confined to a particular religion or society.⁵

The process of naming, therefore, must be acknowledged as an inherently complex one and it requires a degree of anthropological and sociological understanding in order to comprehend fully the possibilities of its communications. There must also be acknowledgement of not only the social realm in which the names are used but also the fact that even in historical situations there will be external influences and cultures that will inspire names and naming.

Ward Goodenough concludes in his study of names and naming that names communicate ideas of the self and relationships with others.⁶ Goodenough's anthropological approach to the process of naming is beneficial to include in this study as his work examines the customary practice in anthropology of naming and identity. This is the assumption of an isomorphism (the identity of form and of operations between two or more groups) between the conclusion of a particular anthropological reading and the means by which the people named, made sense of, and gave meaning to their existence and self-knowledge – their experience of being named. Therefore, if naming is a way of asserting and maintaining control of something, then it follows that any study of naming has tended to be an illustration of the controlling ways where people have produced images and cultures from their own thinking and from this developed a sense of 'selves'.

Naming: The Human Perspective

The idea of human names is sociologically and anthropologically universal. A name is normally seen as a proper noun, or a word or phrase 'constituting the individual designation by which a particular person or thing is known, referred to or addressed.'⁷ A 'common name' is a name for a plant or animal in the native language of its environment, often describing the item's appearance.⁸ For example, 'daisy' may describe several unrelated plants with small white flowers

in different parts of the world. There are millions of possible objects that can be described in science, too many to create common names for every one. A ‘personal name’ is a proper name attached to a person, such as a given name or a family name.⁹ Frederick Mathewson Denny defines the phenomenon of naming very precisely as being ‘central to human symbolic and communicative processes. To be human is the name, and to be named, and thereby to possess full being and the ability to relate to the world in meaningful ways.’¹⁰

The Philosophical Approach to Names

Proper names operate in a similar way to common nouns in many natural languages (or a person’s native language). Philosophers have thus often treated the two as similar in meaning. In the late nineteenth century, the mathematical philosopher Gottlob Frege contended that several difficult features of both names and nouns could be resolved if the two aspects to the meaning of a name (and, by extension, other nouns) were recognized.¹¹ The first, a ‘sense’, is equivalent to a type of description and the second is a ‘referent’. Frege does not give a precise characterization of the category of ‘proper names’.¹² Rather, in keeping with the idea of ‘sense’, the sense of *dog* might be ‘domestic canine mammal’, and the referent would be all the dogs in this world. Proper names would then be special cases of nouns with only one referent: the sense of *Dickens* might be ‘the author of *Hard Times*’, while its referent would be the one person, Charles Dickens himself.

Bertrand Russell rejected Frege’s thinking and instead maintained that ‘true’ names must never be equal to a description.¹³ Nonetheless, he accepted that most of the ‘names’ in English were actually correspondent to descriptions, particularly definite descriptions or descriptions that only apply to one object. If any real names existed, they were almost certainly more like ‘this’ and ‘that’. This belief is more practically interpreted as the observation that there are two different functions nouns can serve – namely, describing (and perhaps indirectly referring) and referring (directly, without description) – and that all or almost all names in the English language really do the former. This position came to be known as ‘descriptivism’ with respect to singular terms, and was prominent through much of twentieth-century analytic philosophy.¹⁴

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* sets out his theory of language – namely, that language provides a way of coping with what one might call ‘everyday purposes’, and it works well within that context. However, when everyday language attempts to explain something beyond what it is capable of, problems tend to arise. Primarily, this is what is known as the ‘say/show distinction’:¹⁵ that which can be said can also be shown but there is that which can only be shown, not said. In other words, that which can only be shown ‘we must pass over in silence’. At the core of Wittgenstein’s philosophy, for this work at least, is the idea that

the individual words in language name objects – sentences are combinations of such names. – In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.¹⁶

Essentially, what Wittgenstein wishes to emphasize is that one may associate the use of a word with the word's referring to an object but the kind of reference is already agreed.¹⁷ He also reiterates throughout his work the connection between the reference of a name and its bearer. When the bearer of a personal proper name dies the name does not lose its reference. This has repercussions for reading the sacred texts and the modern-day practice of memorial names, where a person takes or gives a name in remembrance of someone who has died. The name lives on.

In 1970, Saul Kripke gave a series of lectures arguing against descriptivism or 'private language', and maintaining, among other things, that names are inflexible designators or expressions that refer to their objects independently of any properties those objects have.¹⁸ Unquestionably, descriptions are often used to select references, to explain to others what object is being talked about, by reference to some property or characteristic that both parties agree it has; but it does not follow that any of these characteristics represent the meaning of the name. Kripke's work led to the development of various versions of the causal theory of reference, which, in various forms, claims that our words mean what they do not because of descriptions that are associated with them but because of the causal history of our acquisition of that name in our vocabulary.

The Function of a Name

A human name essentially has two functions in Western culture. The first is to distinguish one person from another. Shakespeare famously wrote:

‘What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet.’¹⁹

In the same way that if each human were to be given a number, this number would serve the same purpose as a name: to tell us apart from one another and in terms of oral communication, to denote ourselves as an entity to others. The second function of the name has the opposite task from distinguishing ourselves from others; that is, to form an association with a familial group, a community, or a lineage. A clear example of this is in northern European languages where the patronymic was indicated by adding the father's given name to *-son* and *-dotter* in Sweden, *-son* and *-datter* in Danish and Norwegian. The importance of this association can be seen in the tradition of females taking their husband's family name on marriage as a designation of joining a new family unit.

Linguistic scholars who have studied proper names normally stress that such names have referential, denotative meaning, but no connotative meaning. In our circle of people we are familiar with, we know who is meant by ‘Jessica’ or ‘Roderick’ as the names have a reference value. We also know whom we are speaking about using the terms ‘Mrs Smith’, ‘the minister for finance’, and ‘the president’ if the context we are communicating in is taken into account. For example, Barack Obama would be ‘the President’ if we were American, or if we were a journalist writing a piece on US politics. To change the context is to change the referential meaning of a name. This straightforward example is well worth keeping in mind when the sacred texts are examined. The context from which the text is based needs to be appreciated otherwise we run the risk of failing to deduce the meaning of the name, either inaccurately or failing to realize it at all.

Ordinarily, there is no special significance placed on the names themselves. Some may choose to name their children after a family member or a person they admire. Some may choose to create their own name, usually by altering the spelling of an existing name or amalgamating two or even three names. The names themselves are very rarely significant in themselves; the referent makes them important. Only those who study onomastics or etymology would have an interest in the word that is the signifier.

Naming the Divine

The exercise of examining the divine designations is naturally quite complex, though not as difficult as commentators such as Herbert Chanan Brichto might presume. Chanan Brichto sees the ‘problem’ of examining the names as ‘so complex that movements toward the solution may be impeded, distorted, or even blocked by its formulation in the singular.’²⁰ Admittedly, the task is large as both literal and metaphorical terminology is dealt with.²¹

A Christian Approach

A more recent philosophical report on the use of divine names in the particular setting of Christian dialogue is useful to introduce at this point. Carlo Huber follows the lines of the philosophical methods known in linguistic analysis and phenomenology to address the theological problem of ‘the meaningfulness and reasonability of that which Christians say about God.’²² Huber identifies ‘three distinct linguistic levels: the human, the religious, the Christian.’²³ The human level refers to the significance for the ‘lay’ community. The religious level has consequences for the transcendent significance and finally the significance that is particular to the Christian experience. Huber’s work is critical as it is another layer of context to recognize when analysing the divine designations. This

designation is one that is present outside of the text itself and is connected more correctly with the reader and their response to the text as well as the meaning of designation for a wider community. With the level of the ‘lay’ significance, Huber highlights how the religious meaning is introduced only indirectly into human language.²⁴ He discusses the important point that must be included in this study; namely, that there are negative as well as positive implications. This is relevant in particular with familial terms such as ‘father’ but may also hold true for expressions such as ‘king’ or ‘judge’. In relation to the religious transcendent meaning, Huber stresses that ‘the meaning of a phrase to be used in speaking about God must be capable of being gradually stretched to infinity.’²⁵ In this instance, infinity is a sense of the everlasting property of the name and the name cannot be taken away once it is designated. It also signifies the fact that the name designates an absolute. If God is termed the father, for example, he is *the* father, above all others. In terms of the attributes of God, Huber intends them to be seen in ‘a logical sense . . . as any *predicate* (function) that can be united with the subject “God”.’²⁶ Huber also emphasizes the need to use our own human language when we speak of God. These words already have a meaning, through their everyday use. Huber calls the change that they undergo when used as a designation for God ‘specific shading’ and ultimately the ‘*non-religious significance* of a word constitutes the *model* for it [*sic*] use in speaking about God’.²⁷ The terms used for God must have three characteristics:²⁸

- 1 A *positive* connotation, by which Huber means that it must express a meaning of a moral, social, or economic order. Terms that are not positive must be in the negative; simply put, they should be of the form ‘God is not evil’.
- 2 ‘a horizontally analogical meaning’ at the human or ‘lay’ level of significance where only expressions that can be used analogically in dialogue that is not religious can be used as designations for God.
- 3 There must be *graduations* of significance already existing at the level of human use. This is associated with the notion that the meaning of the word must be able to exist and to be understood regardless of the generation in which it is being used.

A Judaic Approach

It is worth noting that in Hebrew the situation is changed somewhat and there is one more characteristic of a name – that is, a name may denote some feature considered fundamental to what is designated. For example, the root meaning of a given Hebrew word is often apparent, no matter how the word is inflected. Therefore, in the majority of cases, Israelite proper names were fully comprehensible to the Israelites. In the ancient world in general, a name ‘was not merely a convenient collocation of sounds by which a person, place

or thing could be identified; rather a name expressed something of the very essence of that which was being named.²⁹ Moreover, they included more than simple reference content. Normally these names would have had a connotative meaning and it is easy to divide them into their linguistic component parts and as a result to settle on their meaning, such as ‘Isaiah’ would have been fully understandable to Israelites as ‘the Lord saves’. This is also applicable to Hebrew divine names. The result of this is that any attempt to determine their linguistic derivation and etymology is well founded, and will allow for a thorough examination of the name. In addition, it is a logical belief that the etymology of a divine name would have had clear associative potential for the people of Israel and would be necessary in disclosing the true essence of the person to whom the name referred.

There has been a considerable amount of written work based on the significance of names and naming in the Hebrew Bible. As Wesley Fuerst prompts the reader, it is important to remember that ‘how Israel conceived of and addressed God, and how God was conceived of and addressed in the Old Testament, are two quite distinct questions.’³⁰ Discerning the meanings of names in the Bible, much like counting them, is difficult. The meanings of names are sometimes doubtful or contested. Occasionally the text itself provides more than one meaning for a name. Alternatively, more often, no meaning at all is provided, forcing us to depend on our knowledge of biblical languages, as well as their cognates, for derivation of a name’s meaning. In addition, a certain name may have originally had a specific allusion attached to it that is now lost, or it may have had none at all. Given these difficulties, caution must be taken in examining the names in the biblical context. Although precise details cannot always be provided, general patterns and trends can be identified with some conviction. In general, it is seen that ‘in biblical thought a name is not a mere label of identification.’³¹ 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, nature, or destiny of the name’s bearer.’³²

The actual term ‘name’ deserves some examination as it occurs 643 times in the Hebrew Bible.³³ The common Hebrew term for ‘name’ is the noun שֵׁם (*shem*). The derivation of שֵׁם, which is an ancient term, is uncertain and obscure. It is linked with the root ‘to be high’, and hence has the primary meaning of ‘monument’ or ‘memorial’ (e.g. Isa. 55.13).³⁴ This would imply the sense of ‘majesty’ and ‘excellence’ (Ps. 54.1). Another possible derivation is from the root שָׂם, ‘to brand or to mark’, in which case the original meaning would be ‘sign’ or ‘token’. The term is also translated ‘renown’ and ‘well-known’ in various English Bible translations – for example, ‘renown’ in Gen. 6.4 (NRSV) and Num. 16.2 (KJV).

A lesser-used term is the noun זָכַר (literally ‘remembrance’ or ‘memorial’), derived from the verb זָכַר ‘to remember’. It is translated ‘name’ in Pss. 30.4; 97.12; 102.12; Hos. 12.5. It is used as a parallel to שֵׁם in Exod. 3.15; Job 18.17;

Ps. 135.13; Prov. 10.7; Isa. 26.8 (in the ASV it is rendered ‘thy memorial name’).

With so much importance placed on the giving of a name, the study of onomastics, or the science of names, should be included at this point. This branch of social science covers a wide range of names such as personal, place, brand, pet, yacht, and team. Within the Bible, onomastics, though it is rarely termed as such, concentrates on place names, personal names (both given and family names), and the divine designations. Through this research a vast amount of work on the science of onomastics can be found, but very little on this discipline is actually applied as such to the Bible, much less the Hebrew Bible.

There is a consensus among onomatologists that proper names can be derived, both semantically and morphologically, from an appellative (or common noun) or some other ‘per-individualizing’ ground form.³⁵ Initially the proper name and the ground form from which it is derived are homophones. The range of their use, however, is markedly different. Any appellative has both a content and an area of employment. The more precise the semantic content of the word, the more reserved its use is. Since a proper name has an exceedingly rich content, its range of applicability is reduced to a minimum.

In English, names are usually associated with nouns, both common and proper. A common noun is one that does not state the name of a specific person, place, and so forth. In English, a common noun begins with a lower-case letter. These nouns are sometimes termed substantive. A proper noun is one that states the name of a specific person, and so forth. In English, this type of noun is capitalized. Nouns generally have the same function in Biblical Hebrew as they do in English. Since capitalization is not a phenomenon in Biblical Hebrew, common and proper nouns are not distinguished in writing. This is relatively simple and there is little argument with those names or titles that are designated by a noun. Those titles that are formed using an adjective or a verb usually cause disagreement among commentators and as such deserve significant consideration.

An important point, which many commentators do not focus on, is that ‘knowledge of the name facilitates community’³⁶ and if the name of a person or deity is known they may be summoned or ‘invoked’. In this context, awareness of the name indicates a level of influence over the person, then the person’s name also has corresponding effect and can be used for both good and evil objectives. John Sawyer also notes that ‘there is often a perceived connection between bearing a name and existing.’³⁷ He refers to the ancient Sumerian creation epic *Enuma elish* – in particular, the opening words of the first tablet: ‘When on high the heaven had not been named, Firm ground below has not been called by name.’³⁸ He sees the term ‘named’ as representing the creation of the heavens and the earth. Sawyer infers that the process of naming, especially in terms of naming newborns and children, ensures ‘their very existence as well as their identity’.³⁹

In the Hebrew Bible, as well as in other traditions, the name of the deity is believed to have special significance. First, it is important to remember that in relation to the name of God the people of Israel probably ‘did not think in any

fundamentally different way than in respect to *human* personal names.⁴⁰ A second point to take into account is that the Israelites would have been heavily influenced by neighbouring cultures and societies as well as by other religions in how they chose names to designate their deity.

Martin Rose highlights how Israel's God could be referred to by using a number of 'names, titles, and epithets in the Hebrew Bible.'⁴¹ Some of the designations are used in both the generic and the specific sense. Others are used only as the personal name for Israel's God. Most of these terms were also used by the Canaanites in reference to their pagan gods. This is not surprising as the early Israelites 'spoke the language of Canaan' (Isa. 19.18). The designations are significant as indicators of the developments in the course of Israel's religious history as expressions of concepts of the divine held by the ancient Israelites. They cannot be referred to as original attributes of the Israelite worship of God; rather, both as a collective unit and individually, they reflect the history of the dialogue between the faith in God in the Hebrew Bible and the surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures.

Othmar Keel describes how these early Israelites would have also borrowed from surrounding cultures their 'conceptions of the cosmic system, the institutions of temple and kingship, and numerous cultic forms.'⁴² Even though the Israelites would naturally have put their own 'stamp' on these traditionally held views and adapted them for their own language and religious viewpoints, Keel is keen to point out that they have their own experiences and, consequently, concepts of God, which they would have brought to this new setting.

An Islamic Approach

The naming system for the deity of the Islamic religion is considerably more structured than that of Judaism or Christianity. In even a precursory read of the Qur'an, much of the text appears to be a list of divine names, which, as there appears to be no explanation for the meaning of the names or their relevance to the text, would be easy to ignore or glance over. James Winston Morris captures their significance as manifold names that are central to the Qur'an and are 'a central topic and inspiration in all subsequent traditions of Islamic theology and spirituality.'⁴³

The names of the divine, normally numbered 99 as the Prophet Muhammad proclaimed:

To God belongs 99 names, 100 minus 1,
anyone who memorizes them will enter Paradise;
He (God) is odd (odd number, he is the Only one),
and He loves odd numbers (such as 99).⁴⁴

The names are divided into two categories: the names of the Essence (*adh-dhāt*),

such as *Allāh*, and the names of the Qualities (*aṣ-ṣifāt*), such as *ar-Raḥīm*. The names altogether are typically referred to as the Most Beautiful Names (or the Most Beautiful of Names) from the Qur'an: 'The most beautiful names belong to God' (7.180). The names consist of those that have been revealed directly in the Qur'an; others are derived indirectly from certain passages in the Qur'an, and others are traditional but not derived from the Qur'an. They are also termed the 'attributes of God' (or 'attributes of Allah') or, in recent times, 'praises of God' (or 'praises of Allah').⁴⁵

Limits of Language

'Nothing in the world – no kin, no animal (bull!), no constellation of stars – can adequately embody Yahweh.'⁴⁶ Frequently the texts of the Hebrew Bible raise objections to any ideas that God can be comprehended fully through images of him as father, king, judge, and so forth. The Hebrew Bible is a collection of texts that are written by humans for communication to humans. The texts may be inspired but that does not diminish the limitations that humans will have in expressing their thinking and representations of the divine. Describing God is similar to recounting a colour to a blind person. Other senses can be elaborated on; 'green' may be associated with the feel and taste of fresh shoots but it cannot be described accurately as it is a concept that is unique to each person and a result of their lived experience. Humans have limits in the use of language in describing something that is not physically concrete and not visually experienced. No human possesses anything that could be seen even remotely as a universal language, and even within our own language we have a limited vocabulary and are technically inadequate in our use of this vocabulary. For example, the poet Seamus Heaney may have more success in describing the colour green, but the portrayal and explanation would still be particular to him and his experience. How would a Bedouin tribesman who lived a nomadic life in a desert describe green? The same difficulty would be present in a writer who lived in a republic with a democratically elected government – for example, the United States – describing their god as a king. With intelligence, there is also the conviction among humans that 'we have the unwitting conviction that if something is there, we should see it that is something is explained, we should understand it.'⁴⁷ This inversely follows that if something cannot be understood, then its significance tends to be diminished.

Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism may be generally termed as the attribution of human characteristics and qualities to non-human beings, objects, natural, or supernatural phenomena.⁴⁸ This limitation of language gives rise to the problem of

anthropomorphism, applying to God the meaning of words as they apply to us, as we are the only beings of whom we have first-hand knowledge. Bowker notes, ‘anthropomorphism is a necessary consequence of the inadequacies of human language in relation to God, and that religion is a constant refinement of that anthropomorphic necessity.’⁴⁹ This is trying to understand the deity as if the deity were patterned on us rather than the other way around. In the Hebrew Bible there is the prevailing idea that humans are made in the image of God as Gen. 1.27 states, ‘so God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.’ In the same way as we can find out something about the artist by looking at their paintings, by understanding the essence of humanity we can try to form a clearer idea of God. God is therefore not anthropomorphic; rather, as human beings, we are theomorphic. When we consider the elements in human nature that make us distinct from animals then we can begin to develop a remote insight into God. In fact, the Hebrew Bible never speaks of God without attributing human traits to him. There is scarcely any anthropomorphism in the Hebrew Bible that cannot be paralleled in other Semitic literature. The gods of other ancient Semitic groups were personifications of natural forces or social realities to which human features and behaviour were attributed.⁵⁰

In the New Testament, it is Paul who makes reference to the idea of man as having resemblance to the deity, in particular in 1 Cor. 11.7: ‘For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man.’ The image is clearly one that focuses on the male rather than all of humanity and it would appear that the text references the physical similarity between God and a male human. Holbrook notes this notion is in contrast to the universalism portrayed in the Hebrew Bible, where, in Gen. 1.27, humanity is to include both the male and the female.⁵¹

Anthropomorphism is also a problem in Islam as the Qur’an equivocally teaches that there is nothing that equals God and that nothing or no one is like him (Qur’an 42.11; 112.4). In contrast, it also describes God as having a face, hands, and eyes as he speaks and sits upon a throne (Qur’an 55.17; 38.75; 54.14; 2.153; 20.5; 2.26). The Islamic religious concept of *tanzīh*, which is derived from the Arabic meaning ‘remove’, literally means ‘to declare something pure and free of something else’⁵² and declares that the deity is incompatible with humans. The thought states that the attributes of the deity are not to be identified with the being of the deity, as God cannot be associated with the flaws and deficiencies of human beings. We must have some idea of what the deity is like, otherwise the deity would have to be rendered unknowable; the ideas, titles, names, and epithets that are associated with the deities must be seen as essentially human and, therefore, limited in their capabilities. Divine designations that are seen as conveying *tanzīh* are the Names of Essence, such as Holy, Glorified, Independent, and so forth.

Another perspective is the idea of *tashbīh*, a concept that infers closeness, or comparability. As Chittick states in his work on Ibn Al-Arabi, a Sufi who

embraces both *tanzīh* and *tashbīh*, *tashbīh* 'signifies declaring or affirming that something is similar to something else; to compare, to liken.'⁵³ This would mean that it is possible to compare the deity to some degree with that which the deity has created and the attributes of the divine express this. The divine names of Allah associated with *tashbīh* are those that indicate nearness, closeness, and mercy: Compassionate, Merciful, Desiring, Forgiver, Creator, and Loving.

Chapter 3

Divine Designations in the Hebrew Bible

Introduction

As previously stated, it is an almost impossible task to include all the literature in Judaism that could be seen as ‘sacred’ in this study. In order, therefore, to include as much of the designations as possible, this section will look at a broad overview of the Tanakh or the Hebrew Bible (and exclude texts such as the Mishnah and the Talmud). A thorough look at the text of the Hebrew Bible should, therefore, give us a sufficient amount of examples of names of God, including their meaning and the context in which they are used, to apply successfully the methods of comparative theology to the results.

Selecting the Names

There is such an array of designations used to describe the deity in the Hebrew Bible that, again, the scope of this work limits the inclusion of them all. Rather than apply a stringent selection criteria for the names that are to be included, names that are frequently used (such as the Tetragrammaton and *Elohim*), names that have interesting backgrounds and uses, and names that feature in different types of literature (e.g. narrative and poetry) have been selected. This selection method has been used in order to get an overall view of the names in the text.

After the names have been selected, the method of approach to analysing their use is one that takes into account the abundance of academic work that has been conducted on the etymological background¹ to the names, their use in particular contexts, and exegetical work. While this work in terms of the names used in the Hebrew Bible is much larger than that of the names used in the New Testament and the Qur’an, this should not be a reason to exclude it. It is important to stress that a balance needs to be struck with the perspective of comparative theology; the examination of these names is not purely etymological or solely based on the meaning of the Hebrew root of a term. As James

Barr stated in his work *The Semantics of Biblical Language*,² the meaning of a term is more fluid than its ‘history’. Language and terminology can only ‘work’ in the semantic setting of the sentence and of the larger literary unit. This is particularly important when using the lens of comparative theology to view the names as the faith context of the person using the methodology (and, naturally, those who are reading the results) is taken into account.³

The Tetragrammaton (יהוה)⁴

Meaning and Use

The Tetragrammaton⁵ appears as the most likely place to start an examination of the divine designations in the Hebrew Bible, as it is the most frequently used designation within the text. The Tetragrammaton or יהוה is viewed usually as the ‘proper name’ for the God of Israel and is used over 6000 times⁶ in the Hebrew Bible, including citations in verses where the term is used more than once or where it is used in combination with other divine titles such as *Elohim*. The term serves to distinguish God from the gods of other nations.⁷ The original pronunciation is uncertain as this was lost from Jewish tradition some time in the Middle Ages⁸ but the pronunciation *Yahweh* has been recovered in modern times. This is mainly due to inference from its contracted forms in compound names, as confirmed by testimony such as that of Clement of Alexandria to its transliteration as Ιαουέ. The term often appears as ‘YHWH’ in languages that use a Roman lettering system,⁹ but may also appear as ὁ Κύριος or ‘I am who I am’, or *qui est*. Thomas Aquinas argues that *qui est*, the Vulgate’s translation of the term, is the most appropriate ‘*maxime proprium*’ name for God.¹⁰ Similarly, the Greek vocative κύριε found its way into one part of the Latin Mass,¹¹ but various inflections of the word *dominus* were more commonly employed. This ‘hybrid’ nature of the divine name provides a forewarning of the difficulties that are to be encountered when undertaking its translation.

Meaning of the Name

The exact meaning or, indeed, definition of the term is unclear and the various explanations that have been presented are too numerous to cite here. The text of Exod. 3.13-14 cannot be taken as an explanation:

But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (NRSV)

The text is extremely difficult to translate as the Hebrew Bible has the name in the first person, ‘אֲנִי הוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוָה’. The LXX¹² renders the name as ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν

(I am the one who is) and the Vulgate as *ego sum qui sum*.

Paul Haupt, in his work ‘Der Name Jahwe’ in 1909, was the first commentator to suggest that the formula was originally in the third person and read *yhw̄h* ‘*āšer yhw̄h*.¹³ Most modern scholars would connect the term with the verb *hāwâ*, the archaic form of the verb ‘to be’; linking this with the wide semantic range that can be carried by the verb, there is a large degree of ambiguity with the translation of the term (i.e. ‘to be’, ‘to become’, ‘to happen’, and so forth). William Albright insists that ‘YHWH’ is from the causative conjunction of this verb and means, ‘he causes to be’. Albright sees that the name ‘which occurs as a place name or tribal name in a list of settlements in southern or eastern Palestine from the thirteenth century B.C.’,¹⁴ can only be derived from the verbal stem *היה* ‘to fall, become, come into existence’. Albright states how he and Freedman highlighted that the name is a fragment of a longer name that translates as ‘he who brings into being whatever comes into being’. The name explained thus identifies YHWH very clearly as the Creator.

Frank Moore Cross has a variation on Albright’s thesis, as he thinks of ‘YHWH’ as part of a liturgical title *El*, e.g. *YHWH Sabaoth*, ‘El who brings into being the hosts.’¹⁵ On the other hand, if some explanation similar to the translations of the LXX and the Vulgate is accepted and more emphasis is placed on existence, then the name signifies that YHWH is the one who certainly ‘is’, or ‘*elohim*’.

The use of the designation ‘YHWH’ in the Bible shows no recognition of the etymology of the term, and there is no indication in the Hebrew Bible of a theology being built around the meaning of the name. Nevertheless, these theories on the etymology of the term ‘YHWH’ are deceptive; even if the original meaning of the name is definitively identified, there is still no assurance that the Israelites understood the name correctly.

Within the Context of the Covenant

‘The name is not a name like *Elohim*, which expresses God on the side of His being, as essential, manifold power; it is a word that expresses rather relation-*Elohim* in relation to Israel is *Jahweh*.’¹⁶ Raymond Abba proposes an interesting idea in relation to the significance of the divine name within the context of the covenant. According to Abba, the name expresses the covenant relationship of God with his people, Israel.¹⁷ Within the covenant, ‘name’ is the impression of the continuance of the relationship, as the use of the imperfect tense expresses a kind of stability or immovability. The everlasting position of YHWH is in direct contrast to the tentativeness of the people of Israel. Abba identifies YHWH as the covenant God with no suggestion of pantheism.¹⁸ YHWH works through the natural order, revealing power and glory, but is never identified with it. As YHWH is the Creator, he is distinct and separate from this natural order. YHWH is also perceived of as an effective presence, an idea that is developed with the knowledge that is embodied in the divine designation (name) of an entity that

is both personal and dynamic. Transcendence as well as immanence is implied. YHWH repeatedly ‘visits’ his people both in judgement and in salvation.

The Divine Name as a Form of Self-Revelation

In the theology of the name of God, the revelation of the name YHWH to Israel through Moses represented a new and fuller revelation of the personal reality of YHWH. This is reflected in the exodus traditions where the name of YHWH is associated with the origin of the covenant. The people of Israel know God by this name and no further qualification or definition is needed. By this time, he is proclaimed as the personal divine being who has revealed himself to Israel, who has vindicated himself to Israel by the saving acts of the exodus, and has established a covenantal relationship with the people he has created. The distinctive name יהוה indicates that he is a personal being whose essence and attributes can be shared by no one else.

Within Abba’s proposal is the important idea that the Tetragrammaton has a revelatory significance. The name of God primarily means his revealed nature and character.¹⁹ The God of the people of Israel is the one who is known for what he is (as the living God) and by what he does (in terms of creating, saving, redeeming, and so forth). The imperfect tense of the verb היה is normally used to express an action. This action illustrates how YHWH is present in history, manifesting himself to humankind, and especially to his people, Israel. It is through his manifestations that YHWH becomes known, with each appearance, some more detail of his character and plan is revealed.

Abba does not dwell on the significance of ‘calling’ the name of God and thus rendering him present. This aspect of the divine name is quite complex and it is worthy of separate consideration as it has huge implications for not only the understanding of the oral traditions behind the written text but also the final form of the text. As demonstrated in his work *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament*, Oskar Grether highlights the fact that we can only name what we know. The self-revelation of God is declared in the Tetragrammaton, and the Tetragrammaton is the name of the revealed God or *deus revelatus*.²⁰

Pronouncing the Tetragrammaton

Observant Jews do not pronounce the Tetragrammaton as the name is considered too sacred to be used, including in prayer and through reading sacred texts.²¹ There is nothing in the Torah to prohibit the saying of the name but even in ancient times, during the time of the First Temple in Jerusalem, the name was only pronounced once a year by the high priest on Yom Kippur. When the temple was destroyed, the name was no longer pronounced. Jews and those who wish to show respect will read the name as *Adonai* (‘my lord’) or *ha shem* (literally ‘The Name’) as in the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible, the Tetragrammaton

was pointed with the vowels of *Adonai*.²² A Jew will not even casually write the name of God, not because it is prohibited but because, in writing down the name, it may give rise to disrespectful pronunciation by another person. In respect of these views, this text always uses the form YHWH for the name of God.

Adonai (אֲדֹנָי) Adon (אֲדֹן)

Meaning and Use

The translations for the term *Adonai* are varied among different versions of the Hebrew Bible. Commonly, the term is translated as Lord, master, or owner. Briefly, in an etymological sense, the phrase is actually quite easy to render as the Ugaritic *adn* means ‘lord’ or ‘father’ and the Akkadian *adannu* carries a similar meaning, ‘mighty’.

Second Samuel 3.4, where David’s son born to Haggith is named *Adonijah* or ‘my lord is YHWH’), is the oldest instance that can be dated with confidence where Israel made use of the notion of *Adonai*. It is credible that the people of Israel had already named their heavenly or human lord *Adonai* in an earlier stage – for example, Gen. 42.10.²³ In some instances the king is called *Adonai* and, in Jer. 22.18 and 34.5, ‘Alas Lord’ appears as a lament over the dead king. *Adonai* also usually refers to males. Sarah used it in reference to her husband in Gen. 18.12, Abraham used it in speaking to three visitors in Gen. 19.2, and his servant frequently called his master by this term in Gen. 24. The term is used to refer to the king of Egypt, who was called by this title in Gen. 40.1, and in 42.10 where the brothers of Joseph, not knowing who he was, address him as ‘my lord’ and refer to themselves as ‘your servants’ in relationship to him. Ruth used it to refer to Boaz before they were married (Ruth 2.13). Hannah addressed Eli the priest by this term in 1 Sam. 1.15. Saul’s servants also called him by the title (1 Sam. 16.16). Likewise, officers of a lower rank than the king, such as Joab, had this designation (2 Sam. 11.9). In 1 Kgs 16.24 there is the distinctive interpretation of ‘owner’ for Shemar, who was the owner of the hill of Samaria. Elijah the prophet bore the title ‘lord’ (1 Kgs 18.7).

Nevertheless, there are many sections of text, chiefly in the book of Psalms, where these terms, which are the only ones to apply to males, refer to YHWH. Deuteronomy 10.17 and Ps. 136.3 both use the singular and plural in the construction ‘Lord of lords’. It is also noteworthy that several personal names comprise the constituent אֲדֹנָי – for example, *Adoni-bezek* (Judg. 1.5), *Adonizedek* (Josh. 10.1), *Adonijah* (1 Kgs 1.8; 2 Chron. 17.8; Neh. 10.17), *Adonikam* (Ezra 2.13), and *Adoniram* (1 Kgs 4.6).

When *Adonai* is cited in the distinctive plural form, with a first common singular pronominal suffix, it usually refers to YHWH. It frequently emerges in this form in the Hebrew Bible, predominantly in the book of Psalms, the book of Lamentations, and the Latter Prophets. Just as *Elohim* is plural in Hebrew,

Adonai may also be seen as an intensive plural or a plural of majesty. The suffix is rarely translated (e.g. Gen. 18.3; Isa. 21.8; Ps. 16.2).

The use of the term in reference to YHWH is often strongly associated with religious practices. This is usually a result of the fact that it was used by individuals or groups of people in Israel to speak about YHWH as the superior, as lord, or to refer to him as the 'lord' equivalent to earthly (real or fictional) servant–lord relationships. In contrast to, for example, *melek* or king, the word is a simple phrase of respect that would have been used by a servant in dialogue with any of their superiors.

The use of *Adonai* also appears as a primitive but standard divine designation – for example, in the formal title 'the Lord YHWH' in the pilgrimage legislation (Exod. 23.17 and 34.23). It is also seen in the formula *הָאֲדֹנָי הַיְהוָה יְצַבְאוֹת* (translated as 'the Sovereign, the LORD of hosts' in NRSV) that is used several times by Isaiah, which probably stems from Jerusalem tradition (Isa. 1.24; 3.1; 10.16, 33; 19.4). It was also used by neighbouring religious communities to refer to gods they felt were more important. Israel was (at least in a terminological sense) described as the 'servant' of YHWH, since the work of Deutero-Isaiah.²⁴

El (אֵל) God

Meaning and Use

The question of the relationship between the biblical use of *El* and the Semitic concepts of *El* has received much attention, particularly since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts,²⁵ which have established the fact that the term *El* was used in reference to a personal god and not merely as a generic term in the ancient Semitic world.²⁶ It is also the most widely distributed name among Semitic-speaking peoples for the deity, occurring in some form in every Semitic language except Ethiopic. Marvin Pope, in his study of the term in the Ugaritic, notes that it is the most frequently occurring name for the deity in proper names throughout the ancient Semitic world.²⁷ It is found throughout the Hebrew Bible, but most frequently in the book of Job and the book of Psalms. In the book of Job, the term is treated by Job and his friends as the common term for the true God and its use there, unlike other parts of the Hebrew Bible, far outnumbers the occurrence of *Elohim*. The term rarely features in the historical books and is not found in Leviticus.

The etymology of the word is obscure.²⁸ It is frequently combined with nouns or adjectives in order to express particular attributes or phases of YHWH – for example, '*El* *'elyôn*, '*El-Ro'i*, and so forth. Like *Elohim*, *El* can be employed in reference to an 'alien god' (Deut. 32.12; Mal. 2.11) or a 'strange god' (Pss. 44.21; 81.10). It can also have the plural form – for example, 'heavenly beings' in Exod. 15.11. Moreover, *El*, not *Elohim*, is used when YHWH is contrasted with the people, (Num. 23.19; Isa. 31.3; Ezek. 28.9; Hos. 11.9; Job 25.4).

Andrew Davidson has observed the pronounced tendency in Scripture to accompany *El* with epithets. Indeed, as the word as used in biblical texts is studied, it must be concluded that it is usually qualified by words or descriptions that further define it. This leads Davidson to conclude that these qualifications both elevate the concept of *El* in Scripture and distinguish the term as used biblically from others who might be so named.²⁹

El is often used in terms of denoting God's greatness or superiority over all other gods) such as 'the great El' (Jer. 32.18; Ps. 77.13, 95.3); 'El doing wonders' (Ps. 77.14); 'God of the gods', (Dan. 11.36). There are also the designations relating to El's position: 'El of heaven' (Ps. 136.26); 'El that is above' (Job 31.28); 'El most high' (Gen. 14.18-19, 20, 22; Ps. 78.35). Again, as a precaution against overfamiliarity with God because of the use of a common Semitic term, God is described as 'El who hides himself' (i.e. known only by self-revelation, e.g. Isa. 45.15).

Elohim (אֱלֹהִים)

Meaning and Use

The Hebrew Bible uses three related words for 'God' – namely, '*el*', '*ʿēlôah*', and '*ʿēlohim* (*El*, *Eloah*, and *Elohim*).³⁰ In general, the words are usually translated as 'God' and usually are treated as having the same meaning. For example, in Pss. 29.1 and 89.6 (89.7 in Hebrew), the phrase is literally translated from the Hebrew as 'sons of the gods'. In the RSV and NRSV translations it is 'heavenly beings'; in the KJV, 'sons of the mighty'; and in the JPS, 'divine beings'. In Exod. 34.14 the term 'other god' is used. Psalm 18.31, 'For who is God except YHWH?' is similar to 2 Sam. 22.32. Exodus 15.11 has 'Who is like you, YHWH, among the gods?' Psalm 86.8 expresses the same thought in 'There is none like you among the gods, Lord.' In Deut. 32.17 and 21, the phrase 'no god' is found. No clear rule for the use of these words can be recognized in the Hebrew Bible, but *El* occurs mainly in poetic and archaic texts.

Of the 57 occurrences of *Eloah*, 41 are found in the book of Job, predominantly in the dialogue where Job and his companions, who are not Israelites and therefore do not know the God of Israel, exclusively use designations for God other than YHWH. The form *Elohim* occurs approximately 2570 times in the Hebrew Bible, with both the plural ('gods') and the singular ('a god', 'God') meaning. Grammatically, the form אֱלֹהִים contains the plural ending *-îm*.³¹ The function of *Elohim* as a true plural ('gods') is reflected in several biblical texts (e.g. Exod. 12.12, 'all the gods of Egypt'). Freedman remarked on how, until the tenth century, the term was used as a plural for the 'gods' and from the middle of the tenth century onwards 'its predominant use was as a designation of God.'³² In this function, *Elohim* can be preceded by a definite article ('the gods', e.g. Exod. 18.11). In Hebrew, *Elohim* can be accompanied by plural adjectives – for instance, the phrase 'other gods' occurs very frequently in Deuteronomy. It may

also be used with plural verbal forms – for example, Ps. 97.7: ‘all gods bow down before him’.

One of the more prominent features of the Hebrew Bible is the use of this plural form in order to designate the one true God of Israel. There are two principle ideas with this characteristic. Critics such as Bernhard Anderson view this as a plural of majesty or *pluralis amplitudinis* as equivalent to ‘deity’ or ‘godhead’,³³ as *Elohim* includes all gods; the fullness of deity is comprehended in him. This ‘plural of majesty’, according to Anderson, did not first arise in Israelite tradition because of the identification of *Elohim* with YHWH or the gradual development from the polytheistic thinking of the ancestors of Israel to monotheism. On the contrary, this is an ancient pre-Israelite expression, which was used in Babylonia and Canaan even with a singular verb. Anderson gives the example how the Akkadians used the plural word *ilanu* ‘gods’ in homage to a particular god, such as the moon god Sin, to express the worshipper’s view that he is the highest or greatest God, in whom the entire Pantheon is represented.³⁴ Walther Eichrodt uses this same example to demonstrate how the employment of *Elohim* was not the result of a slow process or a gradual unification of the local deities whereby polytheism was eventually overcome.³⁵

Conversely, Rose focuses more on the latter aspect explored by Anderson. He sees the ‘plural of majesty’ as ‘an intensification and eventually as an absolutization’.³⁶ In this sense YHWH is ‘God of gods’, ‘The highest God’, ‘quintessence of all divine powers’, ‘the only God who represents the divine in a comprehensive and absolute way.’³⁷ Within this sense, Rose sees the term *Elohim* as representing a replacement for the name of YHWH as demonstrated in the Priestly source of Gen. 1.1: ‘In the beginning *‘elohim* created the heavens and the earth.’ In this sense, the term *Elohim* is used in a systematic way instead of the divine name YHWH in one part of the Psalter (Pss. 42–83); therefore, as Rose points out, it is known as the ‘Elohistic Psalter’.³⁸

Etymological Studies

There is no commonly accepted etymological explanation of the meaning of the term *Elohim*.³⁹ The majority of scholars connect the term with לֵא , meaning ‘power’, or ‘strength’, and it is likely that power was the fundamental and essential nature of the deity in the ancient Semitic world. Even if this were the most credible explanation, ‘power’ is not reflected in the Hebrew usage of the term. The Hebrew language demonstrates several adjectival uses of the term *Elohim* in which a person or thing is said to be identical with, or belonging to, *Elohim*. These ascriptions elevate the designated entity higher than the normal level of humanity and situate it on an almost ‘superhuman’ level because in some way, such as in its power or size, it surpasses what is regarded as normal. According to McKenzie, with ancient Semitic language there was no division of the gods from other ‘superhuman’ beings; in this way in the Bible when YHWH

is termed *Elohim*, he is raised above even this ‘superhuman’ world to a level that belongs to him alone.⁴⁰

In summary, *Elohim* as a designation of YHWH characterized him as the absolute God. This use of *Elohim* is restricted to certain parts of the Hebrew Bible, especially the Pentateuch Elohistic and Priestly sources, and the Elohistic portions of the book of Psalms. On the one hand, *Elohim* is used conceptually as a substitute for the name of God (YHWH). On the other, this classification concurs with a monotheistic concept that only when there is one God and when he is recognized as the only God is it significant to represent this particular God as the absolute God, *Elohim*.

***Shaddai* (Almighty) (יְדַיִשׁ)**

Meaning and Use

According to the Elohistic and Priestly sources, the divine name YHWH was not known before Moses and *Shaddai* is the name by which the patriarchs invoke God in the Priestly source. As a divine designation, *Shaddai* is used approximately 48 times in the Hebrew Bible. In several versions it is not translated and simply transliterated, but in the KJV, it is translated as the ‘Almighty’, a rendition that has been used in most modern translations. It appears most often in patriarchal literature, the book of Job in particular, where it is used by the majority of the characters in the drama. *Shaddai* is one of several compound divine designations that begin with *El* and this preface is used seven times in the Hebrew Bible: Gen. 17.1; 28.3; 35.11; 43.14; Exod. 6.3, and Ezek. 10.5.

The translation ‘Almighty’ goes back at least to the LXX, which translates the term in about one-third of cases (and outside the Torah) as παντοκράτωρ, which means ‘all-powerful’, or ‘to terrify’, signifying the God who is manifested by the fear of his mighty acts. ‘The Storm God’, from the Hebrew ‘to pour out’, has been suggested,⁴¹ but is improbable.⁴² Its use in patriarchal times highlights a development over slack Semitic conceptions to the strict monotheistic idea of almightiness, and is in agreement with the early idea of deity as a God of dread, or even awe. Its monotheistic nature is in accord with its use in the time of Abraham and this is reflected in its translation in the Vulgate, *omnipotens*. More recently, these previous proposals have been all but discarded and new ones have replaced them. One of the more acceptable ideas is that the phrase is to be associated with the Pi’el Hebrew verb שָׁחַח ‘to destroy’, consequently ‘my destroyer’. Another option that is probably the most widely accepted in modern times is that *Shaddai* is to be connected with the Akkadian word *šadu* or ‘mountain’. Therefore, *El Shaddai* would translate into something similar to ‘God/*El* of the mountain’, or God’s home or building. The ending *-ay* is to be appreciated as an adjectival suffix (and consequently the translation ‘of the . . .’).

As *El Shaddai*, YHWH manifested himself to the patriarchs (Exod. 6.3), particularly to Abraham in Gen. 17.1; to Isaac in Gen. 28.3; and to Jacob in

Gen. 35.11; 43.14; 48.3. The context for the majority of these references is the covenant – more accurately, the demand for compliance and faithfulness on the part of the people toward their God. It is noteworthy that the faithful people do not look towards natural phenomena (the hills) for assurance but to the God of these hills, *El* of the mountain (Ps. 121.1-2).

Moore Cross observes that the designation ‘is not firmly fixed in cultic aetiology’⁴³ but does highlight Gen. 48.3 as an example of how the Priestly source attaches the name to Bethel. Albright has shown that the name derives from northern Mesopotamian roots and came to Canaan with the ancestors of the Israelites as a patriarchal family god. He translates the term as ‘mountaineer’.⁴⁴ Bernhard Anderson translates the term as ‘The Mountain One’, or an exalted deity who lives on a mountain. He indicates points of similarity between *Shaddai* and the Canaanite god *El*, but notes that theological differences in the nature of Israel’s God and the covenant relationship called for fundamentally different responses in worship and morality.⁴⁵ Roland De Vaux points to the enhanced qualities of YHWH worship at cult sites formally used for worshipping *El* and highlights how the characteristics of the god *El* would have transferred to *Shaddai* – namely, that he was the ‘one and only God, author and guarantor of the promises made to their race.’⁴⁶

YHWH (Lord) of Hosts (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) (*YHWH Sabaoth*) *Meaning and Use*

An interesting aspect of the phrase ‘Lord of hosts’ is that any academic conversation on it has failed to determine whether the expression is a divine name, title, or epithet, and the discussion, as will be illustrated, still centres on the translation and meaning of the term. The translation preferred in this work is *YHWH Sabaoth*. Modern research on the term is limited and is normally only conducted in exegetical work of a larger text. Choon Seow sees the phrase as ‘one of the most enigmatic divine names in the Hebrew Bible’.⁴⁷ Bernhard Anderson categorizes it as ‘a special epithet for the God of Israel’.⁴⁸ Blenkinsopp hesitates when settling on a term, using both ‘epithet’ and ‘title’ in his discussion of its use in Proto-Isaiah and terms it a ‘divine appellative’.⁴⁹

Initially it is helpful to survey the notion of the ‘hosts’ in the phrase ‘the hosts of heaven’ as this is the most likely origin of the phrase. The term in the singular as in Job 14.14 or the plural form would be primarily seen in the military sense as depicting an army or a group of soldiers, a meaning that would be consistent with its Semitic etymology from Akkadian, Old South Arabic, Ethiopic, and Ugaritic languages.⁵⁰

The term in its plural form occurs some 286 times in the Hebrew Bible, the majority of these (269)⁵¹ in reference to YHWH. It is used to designate both human and divine armies, as well as celestial bodies. While detailed, it is interesting to note the distribution of the title throughout the Hebrew Bible.

Book	Occurrences of 'hosts'
1 Samuel	5
2 Samuel	6
1 Kings	3
2 Kings	1
1 Chronicles	3
Isaiah (Proto and Deutero)	60
Jeremiah	81
Hosea	1
Amos	6
Micah	1
Nahum	2
Habakkuk	1
Zephaniah	2
Haggai	12
Zechariah	46
Malachi	24
Psalms	15

As can be seen from this table, the term also has interesting associations with prophetic literature in general. The implication of the name *YHWH Sabaoth* is discernable in its conspicuously uneven distribution in the Hebrew Bible. It does not appear at any stage in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Trito-Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, or 2 Chronicles. A major conceptual background for Hebrew prophecy was formed by the idea of the prophet as the messenger for YHWH (Hag. 1.13; Mal. 3.1) as he had been privy to the council of YHWH (Jer. 23.18; Amos 3.7). For the prophets in general, *YHWH Sabaoth* was envisaged as the leader of both the earthly and the heavenly armies, the director of the affairs of history (both earthly and heavenly histories) through the announcement of his divine judgement, given either by prophetic or heavenly messengers.

In the text of the prophetic books (especially Isaiah and Jeremiah), *YHWH Sabaoth* was the God of Israel (Isa. 5.16, 24; 21.10; 44.6), the one who gathered and commanded the heavenly armies (13.4; 34.4; 45.12). The mysterious nature that is normally associated with the phrase could perhaps be because of the LXX rendering of the term, as is evident in the New Testament in Rom. 9.29: 'And as Isaiah predicted, "If κύριος Σαβαώθ (Lord of Hosts) had not left survivors to us, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah.'" The passage in Romans is a quotation from Isa. 1.9; the LXX did not translate but transliterated the Hebrew.

The noun קָדְשׁ is used in a variety of ways including warfare, an army (earthly or celestial), luminaries of the sky, and creation in general.⁵² The majority of texts are military, in both context and tone, and several instances are connected with a holy war (Exod. 12.41). Gerhard von Rad states, ‘the old tradition of the holy war once again had found a powerful speaker in Isaiah of the eighth century.’⁵³ In Ps. 148.1-5, the heavenly hosts are ordered to praise YHWH from their lofty position: ‘Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host.’ The expression first appears in association with the central sanctuary at Shiloh where the ark of the covenant was located. Given the military connotations of the root (meaning to wage war with) and the use of the ark as a war paladium,⁵⁴ it appears likely that the phrase was first used at Shiloh in association with the ark. In this era, the ark would have been known by its full title, ‘the ark of YHWH *Sabaoth* who sits enthroned above the cherubim’ (1 Sam. 4.4; 2 Sam. 6.2; 1 Chron. 13.6; Isa. 37.16).

Moore Cross discusses the origin of the phrase YHWH *Sabaoth* in this area in some depth, putting forward the idea that it would have been originally used to describe the divine warrior in Israel. He sees it as an ‘archaic epithet’ that finds its original setting ‘in the liturgical setting of the ark’.⁵⁵ He draws much of his argument from the work of Benjamin Wambacq, *L'épithète divine Jahvé Seba'ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*. While the work is over 60 years old, it remains one of the most exhaustive studies of the term YHWH *Sabaoth* in the Hebrew- and Greek-language Bibles. After surveying the different interpretations of YHWH *Sabaoth*, such as the purely military God of the Armies of Israel or the more celestial God of the Stars or God of the Angels, Wambacq offers his own interpretation: ‘A l'époque de Samuel et de David, Jahvé Seba'ôt était le Dieu protecteur de la nation.’⁵⁶ From the time of Samuel to King David, the expression emphasized the fact that YHWH was the divine protector of this people. Amos stressed the fact that this same protector would also destroy his people due to their intransigence, and changed the weight of the designation from Israel to the universe (heaven and earth). This same divine protector of Israel is also designated by the prophets as the master of the universe, lord of all the earth and all heavenly forces. Therefore, there is a distinct change in the way in which the term was used, a change that may be explained by the adjustment in nature of the prophetic movement in Israel. Wambacq dismisses the theory that the term was connected with the ark of the covenant, a decision that is criticized by later commentators such as William Albright⁵⁷ and Frank Moore Cross, mainly in relation to the methodology that Wambacq uses in his exegesis to reach his hypothesis.

YHWH Sabaoth as King

The Ugaritic texts portray *El* as a king in the divine council, surrounded by the minor gods. This is much the same view that is held of YHWH *Sabaoth*. In Isaiah's call vision of ch. 6, the prophet sees YHWH enthroned in the

palace or temple, presented as the triumphant king in the heavenly court. The prophet declares, ‘My eyes have seen the King, *YHWH Sabaoth*’ (6.5). It is productive to compare this call vision with that of the prophet Micaiah in 1 Kgs 22.19 where he reports seeing ‘YHWH sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him to the right and to the left of him.’ The royal imagery is unmistakable, but here, as in Isaiah, the military significance of *YHWH Sabaoth* is evident. In both cases, war with Aram was imminent. This is also the case in Ps. 89.5-11. Once again, the royal character of *YHWH Sabaoth* is combined with a military figure. The king of the heavens is encircled by his heavenly host. He is clearly crowned by virtue of his defeat of chaos in heavenly combat. Images of *El* and Baal are combined with this representation of YHWH as the God who has been enthroned as the heavenly king, but he is also the brave warrior who defeated the ‘raging waters’ of the sea (Ps. 89.9).

Creator (בּוֹרֵא)

Etymological Studies

The root of the designation ‘Creator’ has the fundamental meaning ‘to create’. It differs from בָּרַע, ‘to fashion’, in that the latter primarily emphasizes the shaping of an object while the former emphasizes the initiation of the object. The question of the meaning is complicated by its connotation in the Pi’el of ‘cut down’ (e.g. Ezek. 23.47). This meaning may also be found in the use of the word in Ezek. 21.19, where it does not necessarily signify carving a signpost, but simply the act of cutting down a branch or sapling as a marker. If this meaning attests to the concrete form of the qal, the word may have meant ‘to form’ or ‘to fashion’ in the sense of carving or cutting out. However, the Pi’el form may represent an entirely different root. Helmer Ringgren in the *TDOT* supports the notion that there is one root with the basic meaning of ‘to separate’ or ‘to divide’.⁵⁸ This explanation accounts for the usages of the Pi’el, but is not sufficient to account for the nuances in meaning that are encountered in the qal form. Since the word is used in such a distinctive sense in the qal form, it is best to consider the meaning of the root solely based on custom to avoid a misrepresentation of the term.

The word is used in the qal tense only of YHWH’s activity and is therefore essentially a theological term. This distinctive use of the word is especially appropriate to the concept of creation by divine word. The root denotes the concept of ‘initiating something new’ in a number of passages. Wonders that had never been seen before are described by this word (Exod. 34.10), and Jeremiah uses the term to depict a fundamental change that will take place in the natural order (Jer. 31.22). The Psalmist prayed that YHWH would create in him a clean or pure heart (Ps. 51.10) and coupled this with the appeal that YHWH would give them a new spirit (see also Num. 16.30; Isa. 4.5; 65.18). The word also

possesses the meaning of ‘bringing into existence’ in several passages (Isa. 43.1; Ezek. 21.30; 28.13, 15).

It is not surprising that this term, with its distinctive emphases, is used most frequently to describe the creation of the universe and the natural phenomena (Gen. 1.1, 21, 27; 2.3, and so forth). The uses of the term in this sense present a clearly defined theology. The magnitude of YHWH’s power is exemplified in creation. This has implications for the weak (Isa. 40.26; 40.27-31) and for the unfolding of YHWH’s purposes in history (Isa. 42.5; 45.12). Creation displays the majesty (Amos 4.13), orderliness (Isa. 45.18), and sovereignty of YHWH (Ps. 89.12). In an anthropological sense, the common creation of humanity actually forms an appeal for unity in Mal. 2.10.

Creation in the Hebrew Bible

The notion of creation in the Hebrew Bible demonstrates two different yet interrelated connotations, and it is important to acknowledge both in a study of YHWH as Creator. Creation can refer to the primordial origin of our world, the beginning of history (as in *creatio ex nihilo*). Additionally, creation in the biblical sense can represent the continuing order and maintenance of the world (*creatio continua*). The creation accounts of the Priestly and Yahwist traditions (Gen. 1.1-2.3; 2.4b-25) are connected with the former,⁵⁹ as well as Wisdom literature’s account of cosmic creation in Prov. 8.22-31. Creation as a ‘work in progress’ or continuance is underlined in some of the Psalms (8, 19, and 33) and Job 38.12–41.34. These two dimensions of creation are inseparably connected. In one sense, the creation accounts that depict the period of creation of the world also have significance for how the world is structured and ordered. Conversely, sections of text that refer to the constant creative activity of YHWH in the world often have the original act of creation as their reference point.

Connected to the second meaning, a third consequence of creation is evident in biblical literature. Creation can indicate new or even future creation, or, indeed, the ‘consummation of history’.⁶⁰ The topic of the ‘new creation’ becomes significant among the exilic and postexilic prophets, Deutero-Isaiah included. YHWH’s ‘new beginning’ of history involves a new act of creation. In this way, the creation event as the beginning of history can anticipate the end of history. Typically, this is expressed as the end point of the primaeval creation. New creation in this form assumes obvious redemptive or soteriological features.⁶¹

Maker (עֹשֶׂה)

Meaning and Use

The Hebrew verb with the fundamental meaning of ‘to do’ or ‘to make’ is used in many expressions, usually with the same essential thought. Excluding the abundant incidences of the meaning ‘do’ or ‘make’ with a wide-ranging

significance, the term is frequently used with the sense of an ethical duty. The people of the covenant were often ordered to ‘do’ all that YHWH had commanded (e.g. Exod. 23.22; Lev. 19.37; Deut. 6.18).

The term is often used in particular expressions such as ‘make war’ (Gen. 14.2), ‘show faithfulness’ (Gen. 32.11), ‘deal kindly’ (Judg. 1.24), ‘do a senseless act’ (Deut. 22.21), ‘offer sacrifice’ (Exod. 10.25), ‘keep the Passover’ (Exod. 12.48), ‘execute vengeance’ (Judg. 11.36), among many others. When used in the sense of ‘make’, the emphasis is on the fashioning of the object (Gen. 8.6; 33.17; Exod. 25.10-11, 13, 17). The word also connotes the concepts ‘commit’, when used of wrong (Hos. 6.9), ‘to deal with one’ (Zech. 1.6), and ‘to follow’ with the meaning of following advice (2 Sam. 17.23).

When used as a referent to YHWH, the word frequently emphasizes his acts in the realm of history. These contexts lay emphasis on one of the more fundamental concepts of the theology of the Hebrew Bible – that is, that YHWH is not only transcendent but also he is immanent in history. What YHWH has done to the nations is a testimony to his intervention in history (Josh. 23.3). Solomon, in his memorial prayer, could implore YHWH to ‘act’ (1 Kgs 8.39). The word is sometimes used to depict the wonders and signs that are carried out by YHWH in the course of history (Josh. 24.17; Ps. 98.1; Isa. 25.1), once again demonstrating the prominence in the Hebrew Bible on the immanence of YHWH.

The elemental sense of the root פָּצַע is ‘to form’ or ‘to fashion’. While the word occurs in synonymous parallelism with פָּצַע ‘make’ and בָּרָא ‘create’ in a number of passages, its main stress is on the shaping or forming of the object concerned. As with numerous Hebrew terms of theological significance, the term may be used to denote human as well as divine activity. When used in its material sense, it is employed most often in the participial form meaning, ‘potter’ – that is, one who fashions (clay). The word is used in this form frequently in prophetic literature where ‘the potter’ provides an appropriate medium for the announcement of the prophetic message (Isa. 29.16; Jer. 18.2, 4, 6).

The theory of ‘fashioning’ is very much in evidence in Isa. 44.9-10, 12 where an idol is pictured in v. 12 as being ‘shaped’ by hammers. The same idea is evident in the use of the word in Ps. 94.20 where ‘wicked’ leaders use the law to invent or bring about misdemeanours. When used in relation to divine agency, the root refers most commonly to YHWH’s creative activity. It portrays the purpose of the divine potter as to form humans and animals from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2.7-8, 19). It occurs in association with בָּרָא ‘create’ and פָּצַע ‘make’ in passages that refer to the creation of the universe (Isa. 45.18), the earth itself (Jer. 33.2), and natural phenomena (Amos 4.13; Ps. 95.5). The word also occurs in the sense of YHWH developing something in his mind, forming a thought or idea. It is used to denote his intentions (2 Kgs 19.25; Isa. 37.26; 46.11; Ps. 139.16) as well as his current plans (Jer. 18.11).

The root is used with regard to the forming of the nation of Israel, in the sense of bringing it into existence. The book of Isaiah is the only text that uses

it in this manner and it always represents YHWH's activity (Isa. 43.1, 7, 21; 44.2, 21, 24). The participial form meaning, 'potter' is applied to YHWH in Isa. 64.7 where humanity is depicted as the work of his hand. When applied to the objects of YHWH's creative work, the emphasis of the word is on the forming or structuring of these phenomena. The word speaks to the manner of creation of these phenomena only insofar as the act of shaping or forming an object may also involve the introduction of that object.

This title for YHWH is of particular interest in this study, therefore, as it appears to emphatically highlight how it is the actions of YHWH by which he is identified and in turn named (in the sense of a title). When context of the uses of the term is examined, it is possible to see how they theologically aim to depict YHWH as the sole creator, who remains in control of nature and creation throughout human history. The Maker has a level of responsibility to that which has been created in terms of protection and guidance, particularly as the Maker has had such a close association with the creation process.

The Holy God (הַאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ)

Meaning and Use

In its present form, the expression 'the holy God' is exclusive to Isa. 5.16. The verse itself speaks of how YHWH reveals himself to his people. The term is used in parallel with *YHWH Sabaoth*. A good starting point for an examination of the text is Wildberger's work on the subject. He notes there are similar expressions elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible such as 'jealous God' (Exod. 20.5) and in Josh. 24.19 in parallel with 'the holy God'; 'a gracious God and merciful' (Jon. 4.2).⁶² Wildberger interestingly points out how the short form *El* is normally used when an 'attributive adjective' is to be used.⁶³ He defines the phrase as showing that YHWH will not allow those who oppose him to go unpunished. This apparently simple term seems to encompass a breadth of meaning. The fact that it does not appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible may lend itself to the argument that the term is a complex one, in both meaning and theological significance. Rather, it may be more appropriate to view the term as a straightforward statement that YHWH is *the* Holy God, above all others and answerable to no one. The prominent idea of holiness should also be seen in light of not only the text of Isaiah but also the predominant outlook of the Hebrew Bible, that the concept of 'Holy' was to set YHWH apart from other gods and to establish him as the sole and supreme creator. The term in 5.16 therefore simply states this. Proto-Isaiah was not given to overstating a belief or concept and his adaptation of the term in this situation should not be over-read; rather, it should be seen in its location as parallel to *YHWH Sabaoth* and as a statement in its own right.

The Holy One of Israel (קדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל)

Meaning and Use

The term ‘The Holy One of Israel’, while a relatively simple term to grasp in its association with YHWH – compared with, for example, *YHWH Sabaoth* – still proves to be worthy of discussion even though it seems to be mostly used in the book of Isaiah.⁶⁴

The majority of commentators term the phrase a ‘title’. Paul Redditt identifies it as a ‘title that appears primarily in Isaiah’ and as a ‘name that emphasizes the elements of God’s moral holiness and special relationship with the entire people of Israel.’⁶⁵ Mitchell Reddish also classifies the term as a title that emphasizes ‘God’s separateness, God’s otherness, God’s mystery.’⁶⁶

In prophetic literature, there was the tradition that ‘YHWH’s holy will and purpose were determinative for the existence and destiny of the holy people.’⁶⁷ Much of the prophetic literature demonstrates an influence from the cultic liturgies and songs that praise YHWH’s holy activity (Exodus 15), and the cultic laws (Exod. 19.5-6), both in their theologies and in their literary forms. The holiness of YHWH for the prophets is a personal holiness and is involved in the entire field of history as well as in the lives of his messengers, the prophets. It is against this background that Isaiah’s perception of YHWH’s holiness is to be understood. The detachment of the holy and the profane becomes visible in the contrast between the sin of humanity and the divine perfection of YHWH.⁶⁸ Yet holiness cannot simply be identified with the traditional idea of moral types: the ‘otherness’ of YHWH remains after the moral types are depleted (31.1). The holiness of YHWH is now seen as active; it is less a condition or state and more of an expression of his purpose and will. It becomes apparent in judgement and destruction (1.4-9; 5.13-16; 30.8-14), especially on the Day of YHWH (2.6-22). It is active in mercy and grace, in redemption and salvation (10.20-23; 12.6; 17.7-9; 29.19-21).

The book of Isaiah is noted by several commentators as being the text that defines the ideas of YHWH as ‘Holy’ to the greatest degree and also one that sees the notion of holiness as an absolute. J. J. M. Roberts goes as far as to see the term ‘the Holy One of Israel’ as ‘the Center of Isaianic Theology’.⁶⁹ Several other commentators look to the call vision in ch. 6 to elucidate the term and its origins.⁷⁰ Isaiah’s inaugural vision of YHWH as a king on his throne has a threefold proclamation of his holiness by the seraphim: ‘And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is YHWH Sabaoth.”’ Their exclamation ends with the affirmation that ‘the whole earth is full of his glory’ and this was visually impressed on Isaiah by his view of the elevated divine king, the overstatement of the image of the bottom of his robe appearing to fill the entire temple. The vision of the divine as a physical reality opens the prophet’s eyes to his sins and to the sins of his fellow Israelites. There is also an ethical element in the understanding of YHWH’s holiness throughout the book of Isaiah. As with Isaiah in ch. 6, in order to be associated with YHWH, in this case as preparation

for prophecy, sins must be purged first. It appears deliberate that cleansing takes place in Isaiah's vision by means of a burning coal from the altar. YHWH takes the initiative, but the cleansing takes place by fire.

Nevertheless, the willingness of YHWH to establish a relationship with humanity is an important aspect of the understanding of YHWH's holiness as depicted in the text. Despite YHWH's awesome majesty, his righteousness, his universal rule, YHWH is not just the Holy One but the Holy One of Israel. This point, repeatedly made by Isaiah, is not articulated clearly in the inaugural vision, but is probably presupposed by the setting of that vision in the temple. The glory of YHWH moves beyond the confines of Jerusalem and the temple, filling the entire world, but YHWH himself is still enthroned there in the building, the city, and with the people he has chosen. Baruch Levine sees that, for Isaiah, 'it is righteousness that sanctifies the holy God (5:16).'⁷¹ Deutero-Isaiah conceives of God's holiness as active in the realm of history as a redemptive power. The 'Holy One of Israel' is therefore the redeemer of Israel (41.14; 47.4; 54.15). Divine holiness is thus conceived less as a state of being than as an expression of the fulfilment of divine purpose. It manifests itself in divine judgement and destruction (1.4-9; 5.13) as well as in divine mercy and salvation (10.20-23; 12.6; 17.7-9).

King (מֶלֶךְ)

Meaning and Use

This designation, when examined in both the verb and the noun state, is generally taken to mean 'to possess', 'to reign', inasmuch as the possessor is also 'lord' and 'ruler'. If, as has been suggested, the root idea of 'king' were 'counsellor' and not 'ruler',⁷² then the growth of the monarchical role and power would be because of intellectual superiority rather than physical ability. Since the first form of monarchy was that of a 'city-state', the role of a king may have evolved from that of the chief, elder, or the intellectual head of the tribe.

It is generally recognized that from the commencement of Israel's existence as a nation, it was a religious and moral community, a theocratic commonwealth, where YHWH was the ruler. The theocracy was not a hierarchy and it is difficult to identify it with any modern type of political organization. It was rather something in addition to the existing system of government, and therefore something that existed independently from any political association. It did not succeed the tribal society of Israel, but it supplied the centralizing authority and established the nation of Israel. Instead of a deep-seated political core, the bond of the shared allegiance to YHWH, or the widespread faith in the God of Israel, kept the tribes together. The idea that YHWH was Israel's king was deeply rooted in the cultural mindset and was the motive for a sincere patriotism throughout the nation (Exod. 15.18; 19.6; Judges 5). YHWH's kingship was enhanced by the laws he gave to Israel, by the fact that justice was administered

in his name (Exod. 22.28) and by his leadership of and his siding with Israel in its battles (Exod. 14.14; 15.3; Num. 21.14; 1 Sam. 18.17; 25.28).

One of the most notable aspects of kingship that exists even today in various societies is the perception of the deity as king, and the relationship of this heavenly king with the earthly monarch. Accordingly, the study of YHWH's kingship has important implications for understanding the notions of king and kingship in Israelite thinking. The source and nature of the idea of YHWH's kingship in Israel has been the cause of much discussion. From an early date, it was a matter of some disagreement as to whether or not the idea was a central characteristic of Israelite religion. References to YHWH as a king in the Pentateuch and early portions of the Deuteronomistic History (Exod. 15.18; Num. 23.21; Judg. 8.23; 1 Sam. 8.7; 10.19; 12.12) are particularly hard to date. It was a widespread concept throughout the ancient Near East that the god, or high god, was the king of the state. There was also the extensive belief that the idea of kingship pertaining to the deity was 'closely linked up with the idea of the Divine Warrior, who defeats the forces of chaos.'⁷³ This was a key constituent of royal ideologies, since it was taken that the king ruled as the earthly representative of his god. In general, it can be said that the earthly king's rule was simply a reflection of the heavenly king's rule. In prophetic literature, the idea of YHWH's kingship can be seen to echo that held by the book of Psalms, especially in terms of the enthronement psalms that deal with YHWH's succession of his royal throne and use of royal power over the divine council, creation, and Israel.

Mighty God (אֵל גִּבּוֹר), Mighty One of Jacob (אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל), Mighty One of Israel (אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל)

Meaning and Use

The term 'Mighty One of Jacob' is found only six times in the Hebrew Bible, in Gen. 49.24; Ps. 132.2, 5; Isa. 49.26; 60.16; and Sir. 51.12, whereas the term 'Mighty One of Israel' is found only once, in Isa. 1.24. The debate surrounding both terms is usually focused on the exact meaning of the term 'might' especially in terms of its association with the image of a bull. Normally the term 'Mighty One of Israel' is discussed after a close study of 'Mighty One of Jacob', but for the purposes of this work both will be discussed in tandem.

A helpful part of an investigation of the terms and their usages is a close study of their etymology. According to Kapelrud, the 'root *°abbar* appears in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Aramaic.'⁷⁴ The basic etymological meaning of this word (in Hebrew and other Semitic languages) is 'might' or 'strength'. In the Ugaritic language, the term can also be used to denote a strong animal, and is normally translated into English as 'bull' or 'buffalo'. In the earthly domain, the expression serves to designate war heroes – for example, those in Ps. 76.5: 'The stouthearted (mighty of spirit) were stripped of their spoil; they sank into sleep; none of the troops was able to lift a hand.' The term is in parallel with

the troops or 'mighty men'. The term was also associated with animals – for example, the pedigree stallions or steeds in Judg. 5.22; Jer. 8.16; 47.3; 50.11. The quality designated by the term is embodied in the strength of a bull.

Rose discusses the interesting association of the term with the cult, in particular with the Canaanite god Baal. He highlights how King Jeroboam I was not seeking to introduce any new divinity into Israel when he erected the figures of bulls in Dan and in Bethel (1 Kgs 12.26-30); rather, his act is to be understood as an attempt to give expression to an old northern Israelite tradition of YHWH as the Mighty One of Jacob (Gen. 49.24).⁷⁵ The representation of the Canaanite god Baal may not have been differentiated from that of the God of Israel. As a result, as the polemical divisions began against Baal, the problem maintaining the old term 'Mighty One of Jacob' but ensuring that the strength or might of a bull was disassociated from the character of YHWH, the God of Israel.

Attention is often drawn to the fact that within the Hebrew Bible there are two forms of the term, one with the *daghesh* (a point placed in a consonant in pointed writing in the Hebrew alphabet to indicate pronunciation) in the second radical and one without it. According to a common interpretation, this is an artificial difference that the Massoretes invented to avoid any misgiving that YHWH was to be identified with the bull in the phrases 'the Mighty One of Jacob' and 'the Mighty One of Israel'. The form without the *daghesh* occurs only six times in the Hebrew Bible: in the phrase 'the Mighty One of Jacob' in Gen. 49.24; Ps. 132.2, 5; Isa. 49.26; 60.16; and Sir. 51.12; and in the phrase 'the Mighty One of Israel' in Isa. 1.24. It is significant that the form with the *daghesh* occurs on some 17 other occasions, though with different meanings. The pointing without a *daghesh* in the middle consonant separates the term from the bull imagery of the northern Israelite cult, when it is used in relation to YHWH. The differentiation appears too deliberate not to conclude that an attempt had been made to avoid confusion with Baal.

With regard to the significance of the terms as divine designations, it is helpful to examine how the term 'the Mighty One of Jacob' is used in the Psalter. The book of Psalms mentions Jacob more than any other figure from Israel's history. The 34 occurrences of his name are more than double the total for Abraham, Isaac, and Moses. Psalm 132 is the only psalm in which the designation appears, though other psalms such as 20.2; 24.8; 46.8, 12; and so forth. use the term 'God of Jacob'. Artur Weiser views the use of this expression as an attempt to link the traditions of northern Israel with those of the south.⁷⁶ Ben Ollenburger argues that the phrase 'the Mighty One of Jacob' must have a particular connection with the Zion tradition and locates its origins in the ark tradition of Shiloh.⁷⁷ While his suggestion regarding the origins of this epithet may be hypothetical, it is clear that the phrase the 'Mighty One of Jacob' became associated with the temple in Jerusalem. According to Leslie Hoppe, the title never occurs with *El* or Baal, so its origins 'are probably Israelite and probably before the rise of the Davidic dynasty',⁷⁸ mainly because of the apparent lack of links between

Jacob and Judah's monarchy. Psalm 132 underscores the role of the Davidic dynasty in Israel's life. It traces divine support for that dynasty to David's relocation of the ark in Jerusalem and his determination to have a temple built to house the ark: 'I will not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for YHWH, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.' To secure their future, the kings of David's dynasty must be faithful to the Torah (132.12). YHWH will defeat David's enemies and will bless the entire nation from Zion.

In the book of Genesis, the term occurs in the poetical passage 49.24 where Jacob bestows his blessing on his son Joseph, 'So his bow remained supple, and his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the name of the shepherd, the rock of Israel.' The phrase is linked with references to 'God, your Father' in v. 25a and *El Shaddai* in v. 25b. This also echoes the preservation of another recollection of *El* as the god of Jacob⁷⁹ and emphasizes the deity's power to look after the patriarch.

It is important to note, in a discussion of the term in the book of Isaiah, the words of warning issued by Albrecht Alt to avoid the 'mania amongst modern scholars for seeing bulls everywhere'.⁸⁰ In the book of Isaiah, the unambiguous reference to YHWH using the designation the 'Mighty One of Jacob' indicates a reconciling of the tradition of the God of the patriarchs (originally the native tradition of the tribes of the future Northern Kingdom as seen in Gen. 49.24) with the YHWH cult of the ark in Jerusalem. The designation inevitably highlights the matter of power and strength, or forceful power, due to its associations with the 'bull'. This association would most likely have been known to the writer or compiler of the texts in the book of Isaiah. By utilizing the term 'the Mighty One of Jacob' the text reinforces the ideas of the other designations that have previously been connected with the ark, such as *YHWH Sabaoth*. The same theological outlook, that YHWH is the Lord of all and that he commands this power with the inescapable might of the great bull, is maintained. Nahum Sarna's theory that 'there is no warranty for the widespread belief that the dagheshed form ever conjured up in Hebrew the specific image of a bull'⁸¹ does not appear valid. The poetic imagery that is so prevalent in the Hebrew Bible would have made good use of such a positive link between the divine and earthly. The idea is then related to alerting the prophet's audience of the link between the God of the patriarchs, through the explicit reference to Jacob, and the prophetic message that the prophets are attempting to relay to them. The use of the term 'the Mighty One of Israel' solely in the book of Isaiah (1.24) is possibly a furthering of this idea to provide a link to the people of the time identifying themselves as Israel with the God of their ancestors. In 1.24, 'Therefore says the Lord (יהוה), YHWH Sabaoth, the Mighty One of Israel: Oh, I will pour out my wrath on my foes, and avenge myself on my enemies', the phrase is clearly linked with *Adonai* and *YHWH Sabaoth*.

Redeemer (לַדֹּשֵׁן)

Meaning and Use

The perception of ‘redemption’ in the Hebrew Bible takes its origins from the consideration of property and kinsman relations (Lev. 25.26; Ruth 4.4). Money is paid to buy back something that must be released or rescued according to law (Num. 3.51). From this source, the term ‘redemption’ is used throughout the Hebrew Bible with the general significance of deliverance. YHWH is the Redeemer of Israel with the implication that he is the deliverer of Israel (Deut. 9.26; 2 Sam. 7.23; 1 Chron. 17.21; Isa. 52.3). This notion of deliverance includes liberation from all forms of evil, from nationwide hardship (Isa. 52.9; 63.9), from plague (Ps. 78.35, 52), or from tragedy of any sort (Gen. 48.16; Num. 25.4, 9). Naturally, the wide-ranging thought concerning the association of Israel with YHWH was that YHWH had both a claim on Israel (Deut. 15.15) and an obligation towards its people (1 Chron. 17.21; Ps. 25.22). Israel belonged to YHWH, and he could become involved in the everyday lives of the Israelites, so that he could redeem them.

In its etymological sense, ‘redemption’ is generally perceived as the conventional translation of the literal derivative of the two Hebrew roots פדה and גאל. The root גאל ‘seems to be almost exclusively Hebrew.’⁸² The participle form of the qal has all but become a noun in its own right, though it may be accurately regarded simply as a form of the verb. The most important connotation of this root is the taking on of the role of a kinsman and therefore redeeming the family from difficulties. For example, a kinsman redeemer would buy back the forfeited inheritance for an Israelite who, for example, through poverty had sold his land or lost the land due to inheritance rights, as Boaz did for Ruth (Ruth 4.3-5). He would also hold land in tenure for a destitute kinsman until the year of jubilee, when it would revert to its original owner (Lev. 25.10, 13-16, 24-28).

Saviour (מוֹשִׁיעַ)

Meaning and Use

Many modern readers of the Bible would agree that one of the fundamental concepts of the Hebrew Bible is that ‘YHWH is the deliverer of his people.’ Nevertheless, the Israelites never seem to have felt that using a designation for YHWH that would encapsulate this feature of the covenantal relationship was necessary. The qal form of the verb is not used and the term would denote ‘save’ in the hip’il form. Even this participle is not often applied to YHWH, and the common concurrence is that it is used some 13 times. Generally, the term is related to YHWH’s liberation of a people or an individual from a dangerous or threatening situation, from which the person or people cannot save themselves. The situation in question may vary from governmental oppression, unfair charges, disaster associated with military crusades, or mental torture

and physical illness. The promise of salvation may include ‘assurance of divine protection and care, health, welfare, victory over enemies.’⁸³ The mediator of this salvation may be a human such as the monarch or a judge. Nevertheless, this agent is provided by YHWH, the one who ultimately saves.⁸⁴ This raises an interesting dimension to the study of the term when depicting YHWH. Many designations are clearly only used for denoting YHWH and his activities – for example, Creator, or Mighty One of Israel. Others can easily be identified from their context, ‘king’ being a good example of this, as it is relatively simple to ascertain from the context whether the title is referencing an earthly king or YHWH as the divine king.

In prophetic literature, YHWH’s salvation was anticipated into the future, a feature that was in contrast to the salvation depicted in earlier literature such as the Pentateuch. From the delivering of future promises to the patriarchs in the book of Genesis, the nature of salvation had an imminent nature, but the promises were never completely fulfilled. The restoration reinstated the importance of the temple, with all nations acknowledging the power of Israel. Nonetheless, Haggai and Malachi associate the restoration of the people to Israel and the reconstruction of the temple with an increase in frustration and disenchantment. As a result, YHWH’s saving actions became situated in a context with more clear-cut metaphors of salvation: where ‘the new heavens and a new earth’ are to be created and the ‘former things’ shall be forgotten (Isa. 65.17).

The Living God (אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים)

Meaning and Use

Hebrew Bible references to the ‘living God’ belong primarily to the oath formula of ‘by the life of YHWH/God’. The recurring form is חַיִּי־יְהוָה (occurring 41 times in total, with 30 uses in Judges and 2 Kings alone); also in Jer. 44.26; 2 Sam. 2.27; Job 27.2. ‘As I live’ occurs 23 times as a divine self-declaration (Num. 14.21, 28; Deut. 32.40; Isa. 49.18; Jer. 22.24; 46.18, and 16 times in Ezekiel).

If the oath formula is excluded, there are only 14 passages that portray YHWH as ‘the living God’ – for example, Deut. 5.26; 1 Sam. 17.26, 36; Jer. 10.10, 23.36. ‘YHWH lives’ is found in 2 Sam. 22.47 and again is echoed in Ps. 18.46. Interestingly, some of these passages are similar in content, particularly in texts from 1 Samuel and 2 Kings with diatribes against foreign adversaries who have insulted the God of Israel. The text of Jer. 10.10 is also evocative of these particular texts since it articulates a polemic against foreign gods. The comparison with foreign gods dominates Josh. 3.10 where the ‘living God of Israel’ will drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites.

The impression that the ‘living God’ is used in a hesitant manner is reinforced by the fact that the text of the Hebrew Bible does not mention life or ‘living’ as something that could be viewed as a divine attribute, normally due to YHWH’s

saving activity. The language of the Hebrew Bible is distinct from that of the other nations of the ancient Near East, which freely talk about the life and vitality of their various deities. Importance is placed on the actuality that YHWH gives life and has power over life, but not that he himself is involved in it. With YHWH as the focus, ‘life’ serves as the object of the following verbs. YHWH is the ‘fountain of life’ in Ps. 36.9; the fear of the Lord brings life in Prov. 19.23. One can ask him to grant life as in Ps. 21.4 and not to take away the life of the petitioner (Ps. 26.9). Repeatedly, the factitive and causative verbal stems are used in statements regarding YHWH. Of the 56 Piel passages, 26 have YHWH as the subject (including 19 in the book of Psalms). Of the 23 hip’il passages, YHWH appears as subject in only nine and never in the book of Psalms.

The God of Israel (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) / God of Jacob (אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב)

Meaning and Use

In the Hebrew Bible, the phrase linking God to the patriarchs occurs three times in the book of Exodus (3.6, 15; 4.5), where the term appears in the phrase ‘God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ There are also several instances of the term in the book of Psalms (20.1; 24.6; 46.7, 11; and so forth) and in prophetic literature in Isa. 2.3. Both terms ‘God of Jacob’ and ‘household of Jacob’ became popular in the Second Temple period.⁸⁵

God of Your Ancestor David (אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אֲבִיךָ)

Meaning and Use

This term only occurs twice in the Hebrew Bible, in 2 Kgs 20.5 and Isa. 38.5.

Blenkinsopp designates the author of 38.5 as a ‘historian’⁸⁶ because of the account of Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery, introduced by a vague temporal indication of ‘in those days’. He supposes that the ‘historian’ had drawn on narrative material that had originally been circulated orally and that profiled a prophet that was very different from the Isaiah of the diatribes and the threats of imminent disaster. Hezekiah is a man of prayer (37.14-20; 38.3). The language of his brief prayer when at the point of death is characteristically Deuteronomistic, as to be ‘wholeheartedly’ true to YHWH is a criterion by which kings are judged (1 Kgs 8.61; 11.4; 15.3, 14). It therefore suited the author’s idealized portrait of Hezekiah as a devout and just ruler after the manner of David. The term also highlights an awareness of the relationship that was believed to exist between YHWH and the Davidic dynasty, which forms a central feature in the explanation of why Jerusalem was saved in 701 BCE.⁸⁷

In relation to the account of this scene in 2 Kings 18, it is considerably longer in Kings than in Isaiah, comprising 37 verses. It is unclear as to whether any specific editorial intent exists in the Isaianic abbreviation. The shorter Isaiah account does not really intensify the speed of the divine response, but only shortens the portrayal of the reversal of the divine will with respect to Hezekiah.

Father (אב)

Meaning and Use

Many commentators such as Seitz⁸⁸ highlight the fact that the term ‘father’ is rarely used of YHWH in the Hebrew Bible with Pss. 68.5; 89.26; Isa. 9.6; 63.16; 64.8; Jer. 3.19; 31.9; Mal. 1.6; 2.10 appearing to be the only other usages of the term in this way. Seitz links the usages in the book of Isaiah with the widespread use of the term in the book of Genesis (though not necessarily as a term used in relation to YHWH). Several commentators address the idea that the term is used here in an anthropomorphic sense⁸⁹ and makes for ‘uncomfortable’ reading. Several commentators limit their arguments with the idea of father as someone who bears children and complicate matters further by discussing the use of the term in this instance with the use of the epithets of ‘husband’ and ‘mother’.⁹⁰ These arguments bypass the fundamental reason that the term was used in this instance and in 64.8. The name is not stridently theological in the sense that it does not reveal a huge amount about the character of the prophet’s God, but it does provide a valuable link with or anchor in the historical past. It also succeeds in painting an image that surpasses the historical fathers and gives hope (and comfort) to the listeners.

Rock (צור)

Meaning and Use

The term ‘rock’ is a purely metaphorical divine designation and its meaning of the term is very much connected with the idea of YHWH as a foundation and solid anchor for his people and their worship, and it is occasionally translated as ‘mountain’. In the Hebrew Bible in general, some of the most striking and beautiful imagery is based upon rocks.

- 1 They are a symbol of God: ‘YHWH is my rock, and my fortress’ (2 Sam. 22.2; Pss. 18.2; 71.3); ‘God, the rock of my salvation’ (2 Sam. 22.47); ‘my God the rock of my refuge’ (Ps. 94.22); ‘the rock of your strength’ (Isa. 17.10); ‘Lead me to the rock that is higher than I’ (Ps. 61.2); repeated in the Song of Moses (Deut. 32.3, 4, 18, 30, 31).
- 2 Rocks are also a refuge, both figuratively and literally (Jer. 48.28; Song 2.14); ‘The rocks are a refuge for the conies’ (Ps. 104.18). Many

travellers in Palestine have felt refreshed in ‘the shade of a great rock in a weary land’ (Isa. 32.2). A very different idea is expressed in Isa. 8.14: ‘And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence.’

- 3 A rock can also be seen as a symbol of hardness and solidity (Jer. 5.3; compare with the image of flint in Isa. 50.7). Therefore, the breaking of the rock exemplifies the power of God (Jer. 23.29).
- 4 The rock is also a symbol of that which endures: ‘Oh that they . . . were engraved on a rock forever!’ (Job 19.23, 24). A rock was an appropriate place for offering a sacrifice (Judg. 6.20; 13.19). A rock provides a solid foundation, protection, and security.

Much of the Hebrew Bible imagery in this regard has the desert as its backdrop. The sight of a rock in a barren, sun-parched wilderness lifted the spirits of the hot and weary traveller. The princes of the righteous king in Isa. 32.2 will be ‘like the shade of a great rock in a weary land’. The hunted, whether animal or human, could find a hiding place in the rocks (1 Sam. 13.56; Ps. 104.18). Isaiah reveals a horrifying picture of people trying to hide from YHWH among the rocks in Isa. 2.10, 19, 21.⁹¹

Ideally, a rock formed a sound foundation much like a fortress or refuge as in Isa. 28.16: ‘[A] foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.’ In this instance, inspiration for 2.10 seems more likely to have come from the book of Psalms, where the term is used more frequently in a variety of contexts to depict divine comfort and salvation (18.46; 31.2; 89.26). The contrast to the unchanging strength and stability of the God of Israel is made with the seasonal changes experienced by plants; they are affected by seasonal and climatic changes and, in a similar way, the gods of the Adonis cult are transient and short-lived. This is in direct contrast with the might of a rock that can offer shelter and refuge to a group of people, a place where they can feel safe and secure. They are protected by the knowledge that the rock is unchanging and will withstand the depredation of the passing of time. The Israelites had experienced God as utterly dependable, a safe and secure refuge.

Chapter 4

Divine Designations in the New Testament

Introduction

The first step in assessing the names of God in the New Testament for the purposes of comparative theology is to limit the texts that are to be surveyed. For the purposes of this work, the names used to refer to God in the four Gospels will be examined, principally to create a framework that may be used for future work in the remaining texts of the New Testament canons.

A primary concern at this stage of the work is to assess who is the referent in terms of the names, titles, and epithets used in the New Testament – in other words, what biblical characters may be called divine. In the Hebrew Bible, it is usually only in rare instances that it is difficult to ascertain whether the character that the text is referring to is divine or not. In the New Testament, the character of Jesus is in retrospect, viewed by many as a divine being. In fact, ‘the heart of the New Testament message is the proclamation of what God has accomplished through Jesus Christ.’¹ It is important to establish a clear distinction between Jesus as a literary figure in the text of the four Gospels – that is, a figure who can enter into conversation (whether by direct speech or through inferred communication) with God. God as a character in the New Testament is starkly different to that of the Hebrew Bible. Here God is physically present through Jesus, as the Son of God.

The preaching of Jesus was of course centred on God, but a doctrine of God is not the ‘thematic center in the New Testament’,² nor in the preaching of the early Christians that forms its backdrop. Jesus did not set out to instil a new idea of God to the people he preached to ‘but to make it clearer who the god of Israel, the creator, ruler of the world . . . is-not in his metaphysical aseity (there is no question of that), but in his significance for the individual.’³ Nonetheless, this doctrine of God (or theology) may still be understood as the most crucial conjecture of the New Testament, as statements concerning God construct a template of the fundamental message that is proposed in the New Testament, in particular in the Gospels. It influences what is stated about Jesus and gives structure to the main foundations of the Christian religion, such as

the formation of the institution of the Church and the salvation of its followers. The essential insight into God in the New Testament is clearly a continuation of the theology of the Hebrew Bible. The concept of God in the Hebrew Bible and the relationship that is sustained with his people is continued into the texts of the New Testament but they are not placed in a Christian context.

Boring notes that the names used in the text of the New Testament that refer to God are reflective of the fact that the texts were written within the context of a culture where Greek was the predominant language. The terms and tradition that influence the language of the text are from the Hebrew Bible, and have been mediated through the LXX.⁴ Boring also raises the important point that, in the New Testament period, Jews respected the Tetragrammaton by using ‘periphrastic’ or indirect ways of speaking about God.⁵ The Jewish Jesus would naturally have been familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures as the authors of the New Testament would have been. The allusions to and quotations of the passages from the Hebrew Bible, in particular prophetic literature, easily highlights this. Even from a precursory glance at the texts of the Gospels, it is clear that Jesus did not have a problem with using the word ‘God’ or θεός. However, in the majority of his reported speech, he appears to have followed the practice of the time and spoke of the actions and deeds of God by the means of circumlocutions.⁶ A circumlocution (or periphrase) is ‘a figure of speech that, rather than locating exactly, talks around.’⁷ While in the English language this may seem a complicated and convoluted method of describing something, often with an abstract notion such as divinity, a circumlocution can actually be beneficial as an explanation, once its characteristics are wholly understood. A good way of understanding the use of circumlocution in a more positive sense is to think of dictionary entries; the seemingly complicated language used to explain a word actually simplifies the process of understanding what the word means.

In looking at the difference between the New Testament and what was discussed in the previous chapter in relation to one ‘official’ name for God, there is no ‘proper name’ for God, as with the Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew Bible, and as such it is clear that the texts of the New Testament do not simply carry on methods of the tradition of speaking about God. There is of course no one reason for this deviation.⁸ When looking at the texts of the New Testament (and here all canons are included), in a simple comparison with the amount of names that are used in the Hebrew Bible for the deity, the New Testament is quite reserved in the language it uses for God.

God as a Character in the New Testament

When approaching the research for this topic, as a biblical theologian whose work is primarily concerned with the study of the Hebrew Bible, for reasons of coherence throughout this work, I initially approached the study of how God is portrayed in the New Testament in the same way as with a study in the Hebrew

Bible. It became immediately apparent that the theology of the Hebrew Bible or the presentation of YHWH is inherently different to that of the theology of the New Testament. While there is of course the understanding that Christian commentators and biblical scholars will naturally approach the text from a Christocentric viewpoint,⁹ there is a dearth of literature and commentary on the image or character of God in the Gospels or, indeed, the New Testament as a whole. Nils Dahl noted in his work ‘The neglected factor in New Testament theology’ that the neglected factor was ‘any comprehensive or penetrating study of the theme “God in the New Testament”’.¹⁰ Dahl makes the important distinction between a theological study of the New Testament and an ‘introduction’ to the New Testament, but is quite emphatic in his criticism of the ‘neglect of the doctrine of God’¹¹ by New Testament scholars. He sees this as having been caused by the conditioning of ‘the history of the discipline and of Christian theology in general.’¹² Galot observes in relation to the Trinity, ‘the theology of God the father is far less developed than the theology of Christ and the theology of the Holy Spirit.’¹³ Leander Keck focuses on the fact that the ‘understanding’ of the theology of God as been a ‘neglected factor’¹⁴ while Thompson goes as far as to state that god has ‘largely been ignored’ in respect of the content of New Testament theology.¹⁵

In looking for a cause for this shortage of focus on God in studies on the New Testament, it is interesting to look at Donahue’s 1982 article on the ‘neglected factor’ in the theology of the Gospel of Mark.¹⁶ Here he discusses Dahl’s contribution to the debate on ‘God language’ in all of the New Testament, not solely through the Gospel of Mark. Combining both Dahl’s and Donahue’s causes we find that the principal reasons for the omission are:

- 1 The rise of Christocentrism in theology since Albrecht Ritschl (1822–89). Ritschl held that Jesus’ divinity was best understood as expressing ‘revelational-value’ of Christ for the community that trusts him as God.
- 2 The suspicion of metaphysical language – that is, speaking of things that are not physical in form.
- 3 Emphasis on specifically Christian elements in the New Testament ‘with the corresponding view that the concept of God in the Old Testament as interpreted by late Judaism, is taken for granted, along with a great diversity in the New Testament itself in language about God.’¹⁷

‘Theology’ of the New Testament focuses on the divinity of Jesus in the main part and any mention of God is only in relation to a discussion of the Trinity or omit it completely.¹⁸ For example, Walter Kasper’s *The God of Jesus Christ*¹⁹ would seem a likely resource going by the title alone. The book is divided into three parts: the God question today, the God of Jesus Christ, and the Trinitarian mystery of God. The text ‘is not limited to the presentation of biblical data, but continues to draw on the contextual resources of patristic, medieval, Reformation, modern, and contemporary thought.’²⁰ Even though Kasper

refrains from using any abstract characterizations of God in the text, he ‘all too easily loses sight of a proper Jewish estimate of Jesus in order to arrive at the divinity implied on the intimate disclosure of the Son revealing his Father.’²¹ This criticism of Kasper by Milavec can be all too easily applied to many of the texts that are concerned with a discussion of both Jesus and his Father.

In opposition to this viewpoint is Hurtado’s opinion that ‘[t]he Gospels are narratives about Jesus, but his whole significance rests on the claim that God is the source of Jesus’ authority, the one whose kingdom he truly proclaims. That is, though the Gospels are undeniably Christological narratives, they are also deeply God-centred.’²²

Bultmann goes as far as to say, in his work *Theology of the New Testament*, that although it appears that Jesus’ idea of God does not essentially differ from the view presented in the Hebrew Bible, ‘God had retreated far off into the distance.’²³ God is not seen as the ‘walking’ and ‘talking’ character of the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 3.8-9). Rather, Jesus is depicted as representative of the divine on earth, fully human but also divine, who mediates God’s message to both individuals and the people.

Hurtado highlights that God ‘is not often directly mentioned as actor in Gospel scenes, but those where God is the actor are of major significance for the larger narratives.’²⁴ The Synoptic accounts of the baptism of Jesus and the Transfiguration are crucial and function to confirm with an authoritative air to the readers of the text that Jesus is, indeed, the Son of God. In both of these scenes (which are unique to the Synoptic Gospels), the words uttered by God are in stark contrast to any criticisms of or doubts about Jesus that are voiced by any of the other characters in the texts. Here God functions as the supreme authority and, in literary critical terms, at least his praising of Jesus is seen as reliable.

Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) and Naming God

An interesting essay to include at this point in the discussion is Paul Ricoeur’s essay ‘Naming God’.²⁵ Ricoeur was a French philosopher best known for combining phenomenological description with hermeneutic interpretation. In the process of his reworking of modern hermeneutics, Ricoeur has recognized that the naming of God poses special challenges for biblical exegesis, theological interpretation, and ethics. In this essay, Ricoeur discusses the means by which God’s name acts as a ‘limit expression’ in a number of different discursive genres within Scripture. In the narrative of a confession, for example, God is named as the one addressed and this act breaks the narrative of confession and brings it into a ‘polyphonic’ relationship with the prophetic (and other) voices in the biblical text.²⁶ By carrying the different genres to their limits, God’s name brings the various discourses into conjunction and conversation with one another, ‘creating what Ricoeur terms an enriched and multivalent “poetic” reference.’²⁷ The polyphonic naming of God creates possibilities within and for each genre

that it did not contain in isolation, thereby expanding the imaginative possibilities for interpretative agency. For Ricoeur, humanity discovers new ways of life in and through interpretation of this polyphonic and poetic reference. Here 'reference' is not an ostensive relation of text to the thing named, but rather the opening of a world for the reader *through* the text.

What is also useful to this discussion is Ricoeur's assertion that as Jesus Christ preaches about the kingdom of *God* and calls *to God* on the Cross²⁸ and as the Resurrection is an act of God 'homologous to that of the Exodus'²⁹ then a '[C]hristology without God seems to me as unthinkable as Israel without Jahweh.'³⁰

Ricoeur also establishes that if we accept that God has made himself known in Jesus Christ, we must also name the God of Jesus. For Ricoeur, 'Jesus's humanity is not thinkable as different from his vision with God. Jesus of Nazareth cannot be understood apart from god, apart from his God, who is also the God of Moses and the prophets.'³¹

Gender-Neutral Language and God of the New Testament

An observer realizes how much of a complex problem the issue of gender-specific language in relation to 'God Talk' has become when they refer to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the section on 'The Revelation of God as Trinity', which states, 'We ought therefore to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: he is God. He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their origin and standard: no one is father as God is Father.'³² Emphatically stating that God is neither male nor female and then using the male personal pronoun four times in two sentences highlights how the issue has not only not been resolved but also the debate still causes confusion.

Jan Linn's discussion of the Christian use of 'language about God used in the church is male-dominant'³³ is a useful starting point in a discussion of gender-specific and gender-neutral terminology associated with God in the New Testament. The idea of calling God 'Father' has caused discomfort in varying degrees to modern biblical scholars and commentators, one of the extreme cases being Mary Daly who put forward the notion that '[i]f God is male, the male is God.'³⁴ Linn is typical of biblical critics who would see a Christian's religious and theological understanding better served 'if the church leaders were more careful with language'³⁵ – that is, if there was a more widespread use of gender-neutral terms (e.g. humankind) or gender-specific terminology to include feminine images, especially feminine images of God such as 'mother'. While making somewhat generalized statements about translation and liturgical use of biblical texts on the one hand, Linn champions the notion that gender-neutral terms are theologically incorrect as they 'undermine the personal nature'³⁶ of

God. This idea forms the undercurrent of many of the more recent writings on the naming of God by the personal pronoun 'he'. Simply stated, it does not matter whether we (engaged as individuals or as the community of the church) refer to our image of God as 'he' or 'she' or even 'it', once we understand the limits of our human language. Also how by associating a term with the deity, whether one of our choosing or one that has been in popular use for an extended period of time, we are only setting out our own understanding of the deity, rather than putting a name on a characteristic or trait that the deity possesses. Our terminology is to benefit our own understanding, rather than to simplify the idea of a deity. With this in mind, terming the deity or God 'mother' or 'father' is not to do disservice to the deity if we realize that the terms have limitations and do not survey the entire of the deity. This cannot be done as God is neither male nor female, but if it helps us as humans to grasp the concept of the deity and to aid our personal relationship then this should be seen as a positive. No one portrait of God is the 'correct' image as 'biblical imagery for God . . . is metaphorical or analogical and is based on conditioned human experience.'³⁷

By calling God the father of Jesus, as depicted in the New Testament, 'he' we are not setting up a pedagogical learning instrument to perpetuate an image of God as a dominating patriarch. Rather, we are asserting our personal relationship with the image of the deity as created by ourselves, our imaginations, how we receive religious instruction (whether in the family unit or through religious institutions), and through our cultural and social influences. Our language is used to refer to two images of God: the literary depiction in the New Testament, which is unavoidably masculine, and our own personal image of God that we use in prayer life. When discussing an image of the divine in conjunction with the names associated with a divine figure it is essential to differentiate between the two and to be considerate of the positions.³⁸

The idea that we are made in the image and likeness of God arises from Gen. 1.26: 'Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness"'; and 1.27: 'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.' However, if we think about this logically, then God cannot look like a man and a woman. What age is the person whose image he mirrors in his creation? What colour is their skin tone? What length and colour is their hair? Have they a physical disability? All of these traits distinguish humans from one another but of course are not our defining characteristic. In the same way, God is not attempting to paint a portrait of essence when humanity was created. Rather, God is beyond gender or, indeed, comprises both.

Is Jesus God?

This study does not pertain to be a systematic theologian's survey of the writings of the New Testament. The focus is predominately on the text of the

Gospels, their literary nature, and how this presents a particular viewpoint of God (insofar as this may be termed a ‘theology’), rather than attempting to construct a Christological reading of the texts in question. Naturally, the Trinitarian tradition will colour a reading of the Gospels, though we must be aware of the different extent that this doctrine influences readers of the Christian faith and of other religions. The amalgamation of ‘reading into the text’ of the idea of the Trinity is often the cause of much confusion to readers of the text, especially those who are engaging in a close reading of the biblical text for the first time. With this in mind, it is essential in a work that is concerned with fostering an understanding among three faiths to try to make clear the Trinitarian understanding of the characters in the New Testament.

The Trinity in Christianity

The Trinity has long been considered the main declaration of the Christian concept of God.³⁹ The Christian doctrine of the Trinity teaches the unity of the father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three distinct persons in one ‘godhead’.⁴⁰ God is the Triune God, existing as three persons (Greek *hypostases*), God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, one God in three persons. Each of the persons is understood as having the one identical nature or ‘essence’, not simply similar natures. The mystery of the Trinity is how you can have three divine persons but not three gods. Christians do not perceive the Trinity as three gods, but as three distinct but not separate persons in one God.

Like other terms expressing fundamental concepts, such as monotheism, the term ‘trinity’ is not found in the Bible. The doctrine developed from the biblical language used in the New Testament passages such as the baptismal formula in Matt. 28.19. It took substantially its present form by the end of the fourth century as a result of controversies in which some theologians, when speaking of God, used terms such as ‘person’, ‘nature’, ‘essence’, and ‘substance’ in a way that the Church authorities of the time considered to be flawed. These terms had never been used by the Apostolic Fathers.

God as ‘Father’

Overview of Gospels

- **Mark:** For the purposes of this study, we will take the commonly accepted theory that the Gospel of Mark is the first Gospel; with this in mind, the references to God in this Gospel narrative are especially important in a historical sense. God is termed as Father only in the sayings of Jesus (e.g. 8.38; 11.25; 13.32; 14.36).
- **Matthew:** Among the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew uses the term

‘father’ for God most frequently (approximately 44 times) and it is the only Synoptic Gospel that refers to God as *pater* nearly as often as *theos*. Matthew’s text usually refers to God indirectly.⁴¹

- **Luke:** Carroll notes that the Gospel of Luke (and Acts) does not follow Dahl’s trend of ‘neglecting’ God as both texts have ‘a decidedly theocentric narrative’.⁴² There is not the same emphasis on God as a ‘father’ as in Matthew in the Gospel of Luke. Here the text prefers the use of *theos*, as God is clearly depicted as the architect of a redemptive plan whose unfolding Luke narrates through the use of a two-volume literary structure in the text. In terms of ‘Father’, as it is Jesus who usually engages the term when speaking about God the term is more frequent in the Gospel than in Acts. In fact, the term only appears in Acts three times (1.4; 1.7; 2.33) and two of these are reports of the risen Jesus. It is interesting that the first time that Jesus uses the term is in the temple, in 2.49 (He said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’). Luke 1.32 states that Jesus will be called ‘Son of the Most High’ and 2.29 is the next instance in the Gospel where a familial relationship (outside the human family of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus) is used. In the text of the Gospel of Luke, therefore, it would appear that, rather than revealing his identity as the son of God, Jesus’ baptism confirms what has already been stated. The disciples at the Transfiguration seem to underline this in 9.35: ‘Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!”’.
- **John:** The Gospel of John engages a more frequent used of *pater* (approximately 109 times), more than twice that of any other Gospel. Hurtado observes, ‘in John the title plays a polemical role not associated with the term in the other Gospels.’⁴³

Many commentators on the Gospels will speak of the bond of Jesus with God in the same way that they will refer to the link between Jesus and the Father. In this way, the terms ‘God’ and ‘Father’ are often used interchangeably and synonymously.

Θεός Theos

Murray J. Harris

As previously discussed, there exists a very limited amount of literature concerning the character and portrayal of God in the New Testament. With this in mind, a change in methodology is required at this point. Rather than confine this study to a survey of texts that deal primarily with God, we must begin with texts that concern themselves with Christology and the designations associated with Jesus in the New Testament and, from these findings, deduce what designations refer to God.

One of the most detailed studies of Christological designations in recent years is Murray Harris's *Jesus as God: The New Testament use of Theos in reference to Jesus*. In this work, Harris concludes that only seven of the 1315 uses of $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ in the New Testament refer to Jesus.⁴⁴ It is 'certain' that Jn 1.1 and Jn 20.28 refer to Jesus while it is 'very probable' that Rom. 9.5, Tit. 2.13, Heb. 1.8, and 2 Peter refer to Jesus and 'probable' that Jn 1.18 does.⁴⁵ Harris also regards the use of $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ in Acts 20.28, Heb. 1.9, and 1 Jn 5.20 as 'possible, but not likely' references to Jesus.⁴⁶ Harris shows that whereas the New Testament teaches the essential deity of Jesus and at times declares *de facto* 'Jesus is (\acute{o}) $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ in no instance does the New Testament state that (\acute{o}) $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ is Jesus'. Harris also notes that Jesus is never called 'father' or 'lord God', nor is the God ever named 'the Father of God'.⁴⁷ Harris accounts for the infrequent use of $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ as a descriptive title for Jesus in several ways:

- 1 to maintain the distinction between the Son and the father
- 2 to emphasize the subordination of the Son to the Father
- 3 to avoid the charge of ditheism or polytheism from opponents, and
- 4 to safeguard the humanity of Jesus against Gnostic detractors.⁴⁸

$\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ is the 'normal'⁴⁹ word for God and it is one of the most commonly used terms of the New Testament. The study of the etymology of a designation is normally considered a good starting point for a discussion of the use and distribution of the designation as it gives us a clear understanding of what the term can mean in various contexts. However, with $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, 'the etymology of the Gk. word has not yet been clarified; the only thing that is certain is that it was originally a title'⁵⁰ and 'the question of the etym. of $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ has never been solved.'⁵¹ It is the most common term for God used in the New Testament⁵² and is used over 4000 times in the LXX as the translation for the Hebrew term *Elohim*. The word is also used in the LXX to designate pagan gods, just as it was the typical term for the gods of the Greeks and Romans of the New Testament era. Although the New Testament writers sometimes use 'god' for pagan gods (1 Cor. 8.5) and on rare occasions apparently apply it in a Christological sense to Jesus (Jn 20.28), the vast majority of cases refer to the God who has been revealed in the history of Israel and in the New Testament in the person of Jesus.

The term tells us nothing of the Greek concept of God and its original use as a predicative term is broad and varied. Homer used both the plural οἱ θεοὶ and the indefinite singular *theos* (ἰθς).⁵³ In this use, Homer may be taken to be referring to the divine being and the works of the divine in general. Sometimes the referent is a particular god, or sometimes Zeus, the head of the pantheon of gods. The Greek concept of God is essentially a polytheistic so the use of $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ does not instantly assert a monotheistic outlook in a text; 'it rather expresses what is felt to be the unity of the religious world in spite of its multiplicity.'⁵⁴

The definitive $\acute{o} \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ refers to the one God of Israel and $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ without the article appears to be always appellative. In individual sections of the Pentateuch,

θεός is often used for YHWH – for example, Exodus 16 (5 times), Exodus 19 (10 times), Numbers 22 (11 or 12 times). In the nominative, the term is used usually with the article (exceptions such as Jn 8.54 appear to be for syntactical reasons).

Abba

αββα is the Greek transliteration⁵⁵ of the Aramaic term meaning ‘father’.⁵⁶ The NRSV follows the widespread tendency to preserve the Aramaic transliteration and uses the term in the English translation of the three occurrences in the New Testament where the Greek interpretation is subjoined to it.⁵⁷ Instead of the definite article that the Hebrew uses before the word, the Chaldee or Aramaic adds a syllable to the end, producing thus the emphatic or definitive form. It is used to express a vocative case, as can be seen in the occurrences in the Gospels: Mk 14.36 (‘He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”’); Rom. 8.15 (‘For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!”’); and Gal. 4.6 (‘And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”’). It may seem problematic if the transliterated form actually corresponds to another word in the receptor language and therefore prove to be an obstacle for a proper comprehension of the term or, indeed, the verse where it features. Normally there is no point in translating the term αββα, as the resulting expression would merely read ‘Father, Father’. Accordingly, in many languages where the combination of ‘Abba, Father’ exists in a text, the translation is simply reduced to ‘Father’. It should be noted that all English translations capitalize the ‘F’ of the term rendering the term as a title or a proper name.

‘Father’ is without a term that is used without reflection by the majority of groups that use the texts of the New Testament as their sacred texts. In modern commentary on the subject, the term is usually discussed in reference to the masculine image it portrays and the negative implications for this. The form *abba* originates from family speech. It was used as an address form by children to their father, and as a respectful address to older men. In the time after Jesus it entirely replaces the usual form of address ‘*abi*’ (‘my father’) and ‘*aba*’ (*status emphaticus*).⁵⁸ From the Jewish prayers many forms of address of God as Father are found, but not *abba*. Therefore, the choice of this as a form of address by Jesus is striking.

Joachim Jeremias (1900–79)

As Fitzmyer notes, ‘the so-called abba problem has been the subject of no little recent debate because of the research of Joachim Jeremias and reaction to it.’⁵⁹

The overall view of Jeremias, a German Lutheran scholar, with regard to the use of the term *abba* by Jesus was that his use of the term was unique and would have been almost shocking to other Jews. Also that, by using the word, Jesus was articulating self-awareness of his uniqueness as the Son of God, which he then conveyed to his disciples. Jeremias also makes the literary-historical claim that before Jesus, Jews did not refer to God as *abba*. On the whole, this is unconfirmed and, from the findings of the majority of commentators on this subject, unlikely. Jeremias expressed this view in much of his work, particularly in *The Prayers of Jesus*: ‘We can say quite definitely that there is *no analogy at all* in the whole literature of Jewish prayer for God being addressed as Abba. This assertion applies not only to fixed liturgical prayer, but also to free prayer, of which many examples have been handed down to us in Talmudic literature.’⁶⁰ This has been particularly problematic to Jewish scholars who ‘have seen the Gospels’ use of “father” as an address for God as testimony to the Jewish character of Jesus’ teaching and have rightly resisted Jeremias’s conclusions.’⁶¹ His opinions are now seen as a rather extreme view. The term is not unique and it seems unlikely that one single term could bear so much theological weight. The term is of course *distinctive* and certainly makes an impression, or, rather, would have made an impression on its original audience but it is now so commonly used as a term and image to describe God that it has become almost clichéd.

Jeremias’ idea was immediately challenged by several other scholars, such as James Barr, who published an article entitled ‘Abba Isn’t “Daddy”’. This article was primarily concerned with a philological methodology. In general, Barr’s objections⁶² to Jeremias’ theory may be summed up by three key points. First, the argument is based on a very outmoded and broadly rejected perception of etymology that endeavours to obtain the contemporary or current meaning of a word (e.g. the meaning of a word in the New Testament or the Gospels) on the strength of its history (now termed the ‘etymological fallacy’ or ‘illegitimate totality transfer’⁶³). Second, making inferences regarding the meaning of a word based exclusively on how it sounds is just as uncertain, and has no evidence to back it up. As Porter notes, we cannot assume that ‘pa’ and ‘ma’ came from childish babble for parents.⁶⁴ Barr stresses that the statements of the followers of Jesus do not bring to light any evidence of their reactions (in a negative or positive sense) with regard to how Jesus addresses God. He also notes (quite convincingly) that the Greek texts of the Gospels never use the Greek *papas* or *pappas* (Greek terms that are normally translated into modern parlance as ‘Dad’ or ‘Daddy’); rather, the more formal (*ho*) *pater* is usually applied as they are ‘quite unsuitable for biblical style.’⁶⁵ Also the examples of Aramaic that Jeremias uses are far too late to be of any help in shedding light on the occurrences in the New Testament. Barr asserts that, since Jeremias accepts the fact that the phrase ‘Our Father who is in heaven’ existed in the first century CE, his ‘strenuous’ declaration that to address God as the Father was rare, loses all significance.⁶⁶ Jeremias’ claim that *abba* has a vocative function is also addressed by Barr,

who notes that in the three New Testament verses where the term is used, and where it is followed by its Greek translation, the term is always rendered in the nominative, preceded by the definitive article (*ho pater*) and not the Greek vocative *pater*.⁶⁷

Norman Perrin notes in his reflections on Jeremias' work that the reason for the avoidance of *abba* in 'address to the god in the ancient Jewish piety' was that this form of the word said by an infant when first learning to speak to their (biological/familial) father. Aramaic (unlike English) does not have an onomatopoeic term that can be easily taught to children, or learned through repetition of easy-to-master sounds (e.g. 'Dadda' and so forth in English⁶⁸) and then a quite different root for the formal term. In Aramaic, the root *ab* has to serve for both. Therefore, the ancient Jews maintained the dignity of god, 'insofar as they addressed him as Father at all, by scrupulously avoiding the particular form of the word used by children.'⁶⁹

Commentators such as Bermejo take Jeremias' viewpoint to rather extreme levels: 'This way of addressing Yahweh as *Abba* was absolutely shocking. Thousands of Old Testament prayers have been preserved to this day, yet in none of them – absolutely *none* – do we come across the expression addressed to God.'⁷⁰ Hahn agrees with this premise, as he perceives that the use of the term *abba* would have been unimaginable in the language of prayer in contemporary Judaism.⁷¹

Marcus does soften the often rather aggressive disputing of Jeremias' work by noting that no one has discovered a pre-Christian text where someone addresses God as *abba* and therefore there may have been something distinctive in Jesus' use of the term of address.⁷² In Jeremias' defence, he did admit the idea that the term *abba* was derived from childish chatter was 'a piece of inadmissible naivety.'⁷³

Does *abba* Mean Daddy?

Every language has a familiar or 'pet' name or term of endearment for parents. The term used in linguistics for a 'pet name' is *hypocorism*,⁷⁴ especially a term that contains a diminutive suffix. When colloquialisms and geographical and social variants are introduced, even within one particular language, the recognizable terms for addressing a father figure are many and varied. English-speaking cultures tend to see the use of pet names for an adult as somewhat childish; even though you could continue to call your father the name you called him when you first learned to speak, well into adulthood. The frequent idea that is often perpetuated about the term *abba* is that it means 'Daddy' and when Jesus used the term in prayer, he was using it in the same sense that children address their parents, especially in English-speaking cultures. This notion more than likely stems from the popular reaction that Jeremias' work received and is still the accepted translation of the term.

Matthew 6.9-14 *‘Pray then in this way: Our Father (Πάτερ ἡμῶν) in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father (ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος) will also forgive you.’* (NRSV)

Show most Christians the text of this verse and ask them what it reminds them of – they will almost certainly say ‘The Our Father’ or ‘The Lord’s Prayer.’⁷⁵ The prayer is so familiar to most that it runs the risk of becoming something that people do not reflect on. In this way, the terms used, such as ‘Father’, become almost a cliché and do not bear any particular meaning to the listener or the reader, especially as the prayer is normally taught to young children with little explanation of what the words mean.⁷⁶

The use of ‘name’ here is very much linked in with the Hebrew Bible use of the term and its theological connotations. Knowing the name of God would be equivalent to fulfilling the obligations of the covenant were between the Israelites and their God, YHWH, as ancient Israelite covenant were solemnly sworn by invoking the name of God. Knowing the name and speaking it was to invoke the covenant and all that this sacred and eternal relationship stood for. In this prayer, the break in rhythm (as *abba* stands alone) clashes with the two-beat rhythm and demands a pause after it.⁷⁷ This highlights what weight lies upon this form of address.

Kingsbury notes that as ‘Jesus alone is “the Son of God”’ and because of this he speaks of God as ‘my Father’ or with an eye to the disciples as ‘our Father’. The Lord’s Prayer is no exception to this because ‘our Father’ are the words the disciples as a group are to utter when they approach or pray to God.⁷⁸ The fact that Jesus addresses God in everyday language, language that is simple and direct, demonstrates how close and familiar his relationship is with God, his father. Luz notes in his commentary that this understanding of God was not ‘un-Jewish’⁷⁹ but, rather, constituted a special understanding.

It is interesting here to compare the treatment of this verse in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. The opening of Matthew’s section is longer and this may give rise to the idea that it was composed after Luke’s simple ‘Father’. However, Nolland surmises that Luke’s take on the opening statement ‘is likely to be a secondary confirming of the mode of address to Jesus’ own normal manner of addressing God’⁸⁰ and the reference to God as ‘your Father’ in v. 8, puts the prayer into the context of God’s existing ‘paternal commitment’.⁸¹

Jesus does not feel it necessary (or, rather, the authors of the text do not deem it crucial to the proceedings) to highlight whether or not the prayer is a personal one. In this sense, it is not a personal or communal prayer in the vein of the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible, but in the sense of a prayer that communicates the personal thoughts and ideas of Jesus, his own petitions and needs that he wishes to present to God. We do not need to be explicitly told this as the text of Matthew makes it immediately evident that this is a prayer on behalf of a group

with the use of the plural possessive term ‘Our Father’. The language used by Jesus is typical of Jewish prayer⁸² and it is clear, from the context that the term is used in, that it is normal for him to use the term; he does not explain the term or reason for its use. For Jesus and the author of the Gospel of Matthew, ‘Father’ is not a general term for the divine, but it was used to depict Jesus’ own relationship with God.

Matthew 11.25-27 *‘At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father (πάτερ), Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father (ὁ πατήρ), for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father (του πατρός); and no one knows the Son except the Father (ὁ πατήρ), and no one knows the Father (τὸν πατέρα) except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.’* (NRSV)

Any discussion of v. 27 must also take into account the high incidence of sayings in which Jesus refers to ‘my father’ or ‘the Father’, making the term a catchword throughout the text.

The *vai* of v. 26 may, indeed, represent an ‘amen’ in the source form.⁸³ It begins the section in a very positive form, and appears to reiterate the actions of ‘hiding’ and ‘revealing’ in v. 25. It seems as if the use of the term ‘Father’ in this verse at least works as a ‘link’ or a transition between the three verses. The repetition of the term in v. 27 reads as a crescendo built on from v. 25 and builds to underline the importance of both the role of God in the events being cited and more emphatically the role of Jesus as the Son of God. The term ‘Father’ may be a linguistic link in an orally recited prayer, but, in a theological sense in this context, it serves as a link between the ‘Father’ in the heavens or the divine character and Jesus, the ‘Son’ who is the earthly being. By so clearly establishing this link, in both an oral (read the text aloud) and a literary way, the author of the text undoubtedly links Jesus with the divine.

Verse 27 is an unusual logion (saying attributed to Jesus) that has its closest parallels in the Gospel of John.⁸⁴ The verse also raises attention, as between v. 27a and b there is a shift from the first to the third person. The text looks forward to 28.18-20,⁸⁵ where God gives all power on earth and in heaven to his son, but Jesus reveals this. The command clearly no longer originates with God, or is even mediated through his son; rather, it is Jesus who is in ‘command’ and can issue instructions. However, God and Jesus are not separate entities who now work independently of each other; rather, ‘in the Son and his revelation God himself is at work.’⁸⁶ The statement in v. 27 claims through use of these personal terms an exclusive and mutual knowledge between God and Jesus.⁸⁷ The author of the Gospel instils the designation ‘my Son’ (as in the Son of God) with a quality that others do not have.⁸⁸ It shows the exclusive filial relationship existing between God and Jesus.

Matthew 26.39 *‘And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father (πάτερ μου), if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”’* (NRSV)

By throwing himself down on the ground, Jesus shows how he is in distress and carrying out an act of supplication. The text infers that he has his face to the ground, or at least hidden from view, a common motif in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 17.3, 17; Num. 14.5; 2 Sam 9.6; 1 Kgs 18.39). This mirrors the actions of the disciples in 17.3. The drinking from a cup is also a sign of one's fate being destined by God, as seen in much of the Hebrew Bible where it can be seen as a punishment or undergoing a suffering⁸⁹ (Isa. 51.17, 22; Ps. 11.6; Jer. 25.15-16; 49.12, and so forth). Matthew reports the entire of Jesus' prayer in direct address, rendering Mark's Aramaic *abba* with the poignant and personal 'my father' by an omniscient narrator who knows and sees all.

In reference to the earlier discussion of the historical evidence of the use of the term 'my father' in relation to its use in the Gospels, Nolland makes an interesting point in highlighting how 'rare and striking' the use of 'my father' is in this instance. He notes that the use of 'my father' in Joseph's address to God in 4Q373 fragment 1 16 disproves Jeremias' claim that 'my father' was never used in ancient Palestinian Judaism as an address to God.⁹⁰

Reader-Response

One aspect of the use of the term 'Father' in reference to God in the New Testament that must be taken into consideration is the idea of reader-response theory to its use. Here we must consider what 'response' or mental reaction the original audience of the text would have had to the use of the term and from this debate whether or not this was a deliberate mental 'flag' that the authors or subsequent redactors of the text wished to include. In the case of the use of 'father' (in whichever grammatical variant it appears), it would seem that the term is so frequently used in all of the texts of the Gospels in particular, that its inclusion is deliberate. Interestingly, unlike most divine designations that would seem to be rather 'un-ordinary', such as 'Lord', 'the Most High', or much of the designation used in the Hebrew Bible, the term 'father' does not immediately 'remind' the listener or reader of the divine realm or of a social situation or status outside of their own context. Albright and Mann noted that with the use of the term 'father in heaven' or 'your heavenly Father' in Matt. 6.9-14, the original audience would have 'been reminded of the other titles used of God in the Old Testament, King, Husband, etc.'⁹¹ I would tend to disagree with this theory as with 'father' the response, whether negative or positive and regardless of the historical context (whether the original or a modern audience), will always be personal. Whether you have a relationship or not with your father, every human has a biological father⁹² and therefore has a personal referent to the term 'father'. This of course does not mean that anyone who ever hears the biblical use of 'father' or 'son' in describing the relationship between God and Jesus will immediately assume that Jesus is the biological son of the divine father. Rather, the term is used in such a wide variety of contexts to attempt (and any use of a

designation can only be classed as an attempt) at explaining or illustrating the complexities of the divine ‘character’ or of the relationship between the divine God and the wholly human (yet divine) son Jesus. Here the term is personal and in my opinion linked with the evolving idea of the covenantal relationship with God and the people. The covenant in the Hebrew Bible was explained as an indestructible link between God and the Israelites, that try as the people might to displease YHWH and turn away from his laws and teachings (as depicted in prophetic literature), the bond of the covenant was unbreakable and was a fact of eternal existence. In the New Testament this idea of the covenant still stands. Some may argue that in Jesus there existed a new covenant. However, in the context of reading the texts of the New Testament, in particular the Gospels, we must remember that the idea of the covenant, which was so integral to the Hebrew Bible, would not have been dismissed easily by the evangelists, the authors, or the redactors of the texts. This holds true either in terms of it being such an ingrained feature of their thinking or a central tenant of the thinking and belief system of their audience that could not be dismissed or ignored. Rather than be dismissed, the idea needed to be restructured to include the teachings of Jesus. In keeping with the idea of an unbreakable link of the covenant, the idea of ‘father’ is also unbreakable. Your biological father is always your father; it is a fact of nature that no court, scientific test, or dispute can reject, in the same way that the covenantal bond is unbreakable. In a modern setting (and one must assume ancient, though less illustrated, examples exist), the idea that while you may have a biological father, he may not play any part in your life, you may never have known him or he may be deceased and another male may have taken this role. The relationship between a father and his children (when biological or not and in the same scope whether male or female) is an intensely strong one and certainly emotive. It would seem to be these two aspects that the original authors and redactors would wish to bring to the fore by the use of the term ‘father’ for God as well of course as the sociological and anthropological aspects of the term that are peculiar to first-century Christianity.

A brief addressing of the idea of negative aspects of ‘father’ in God Talk is necessary here. It is essential, especially in religious education and instruction of younger children, to take into account their experience of a ‘father’ in their lives.⁹³ Henri van den Bussche explains this very well:

Let us admit that for many Christians the image of God the Father is that of a kind, white bearded old man living beyond the clouds who looks kindly on mean, or at least is not ill-disposed towards those who behave themselves. Were this the great good news of the gospel, Jesus should not have given himself so much trouble, for it would be, in reality, an immense step backward in relation to the Old Testament.⁹⁴

Looking at the image in this light does make us (re)question our idea of God as presented through the New Testament and makes obvious the fact that, for

many readers of the Gospels, they ‘read back’ into the text their own, often idealized image of God. They often overlook the negative connotations some readers of the text could take from the names. If an aspect of a biblical text is difficult or makes for uncomfortable reading, then we should not gloss over or ignore it; rather, readers should question why this name or image does not sit well with them and attempt to reconcile this idea with the theological viewpoint of the sacred text in question.

Galatians 4.6 ‘*And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”*’ (NRSV)

In a purely grammatical sense, the nominative is used here (seemingly in place of a vocative) with the article in order to create a sort of emphatic vocative as with Lk. 8.54.⁹⁵ Betz notes that in a form-critical sense, the phrase ‘Abba Father’ is here an ‘acclamation’ of the form.⁹⁶ In this verse it is the Spirit who calls God *abba*⁹⁷ and, as Grassi notes, is ‘(probably) [the] earliest reference to Abba in the New Testament.’⁹⁸ It would appear that Paul wishes to highlight how the Spirit is a powerful presence in the hearts of the Galatians, in terms of both the deepening of their relationship with God and giving them the power to ‘cry out’ or declare their religion and their significant relationship with God.⁹⁹ Cole depicts the use of the term as ‘one of the Aramaic “fossils” in the New Testament’,¹⁰⁰ which, even though Cole does go on to side with Jeremias’ theory as the term being ‘the very word used by Christ in prayer’,¹⁰¹ does encapsulate the majority of ideas behind the commentaries on the text.

Paul tends to characterize the interest of the Galatians in Jewish law as a return to oppression, comparable with their situation as pagans in vv. 8–11 and in vv. 1–7. Here Paul links the bequest metaphor to an apocalyptic story of redemption. The contrast here is not just between compliance or subjection to the Law and the liberty of sons; the earlier situation of Christians was comparable with that of chosen heirs (4.1) who, like slaves, are really under deference to their elders until they ‘come of age’ (4.2–3), when they obtain all the privileges of children. These privileges are not those of complete freedom but of following and showing obedience only to the Father. By the relationship to Jesus in faith and through their baptismal rites (3.26–27), they become the heirs of God (3.29). Martyn notes that Paul draws on baptismal traditions to take the Galatians back to the moment of their own baptisms.¹⁰² Here the words of the baptismal rite announce that they have been included into Jesus, God’s son (3.27), and God’s own ‘family’ as God’s sons (or children) in 3.26. This essentially means that they become conscientious co-owners along with Jesus.¹⁰³ Though the term is not directly used here, obedience is implied in the declarations that they are to follow the direction of the Spirit as they are not confined and ordered about by the ‘flesh’ (5.16–25). Additionally, along with the hereditary customs of the time, as long as the father was alive his son was a co-owner of his father’s property, but was still expected to be in obedience to his father. In a Christian reading of the text, the statement ‘*abba*, Father’ becomes the believer’s own statement of baptismal commitment to follow the example

set by Jesus in his complete obedience to his own Father.

While it is an old text, Lightfoot's work on the origins of the use of the two terms, *Abba* and Father, used together deserves some consideration here, especially as his work has underlined much of the subsequent scholarship on the issue.¹⁰⁴ Lightfoot sees the term as having originated with the Hellenistic Jews who he perceives would naturally have held fast to the original terminology that was made sacred in their prayer life (*abba*). This was then added to the correspondence in the Greek language that would have been commonly spoken in that era. Alternatively, it may have originated among Palestinian Jews after they had become accustomed to the Greek language. In the case of Gal. 4.6, Lightfoot notes that the term is 'simply an expression of importunate entreaty'¹⁰⁵ which illustrates in a straightforward manner the natural method of repetition of a word or idea (in different forms) in order to either call attention to it. Betz sides with the idea that the term reflects the 'bilingual character' of the early Church followers¹⁰⁶ and this theory deserves some deliberation.

If we consider how even a modern audience reads a text that contains two languages, a more considered viewpoint of this seldom-used formula can be gleaned. In the first instance, if you are composing an article or a paper to be presented in a written format to a group of people one tends to try to explain any words or phrases that might not be immediately understood by the potential audience. This is usually done with parentheses and is normally quite short. The explanation does not need to confuse or complicate the notion and is quite often only a word in length. This is also the case if there is an occurrence of two or, indeed, more languages in a document or text. Often if a 'foreign' word is used (e.g. *abba*), the English or equivalent word will be placed in parentheses to serve as a translation or explanation (e.g. (Father)). When this is read aloud, the text in parentheses is read as if it 'flows' from the original term; there is no way of highlighting for those who do not see the written word that the text is an explanation, or at its very essence a repetition of the word that precedes it. For those who do not understand the word in the first instance, how can they tell that the second term is no different? Hence, for anyone reading the phrase '*abba*, father', unless they know in advance that father is the translation of the Greek, then it sounds as if there are two distinct terms being used.

Returning to the original context of the text of Gal. 4.6, where Greek may not have been familiar to all the audience, but the idea of many names being used together to describe or title a deity or leader was, then, in common use, it is easy to see how the two words could be judged as so distinct. The three uses of the term are not, as some have suggested, careless repetition or the need to place emphasis but a means of explaining more thoroughly the theological concept of god as a father figure. While that may appear quite a subtle difference in uses, when studying the use of designations in different texts, especially in terms of a possible grouping, such subtleties are worth examination. Marcus sees the term *abba* as important enough a term and idea to translate into Greek, but also to be *transmitted* in the original Aramaic.¹⁰⁷

Romans 8.15 *‘For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!”’* (NRSV)

There is a problem with the punctuation of this verse as the last six Greek words of verse 15 could go with the preceding text (as in KJV and REB). The NIV separates the sentence. In general, it is seen more in relation to what precedes that to what follows, as in the NRSV. It is not a huge issue for an exegetical work on the text but it is worth highlighting, if only to aid a better understanding of the different English translations. In v. 15, which adopts the literary language of enslavement (though it seems to be a step too far to read the context as being that of an exodus¹⁰⁸) the author plays on the meaning of πνεῦμα (*pneuma* or spirit).¹⁰⁹ The early Christians have received the Spirit of Jesus (or of God), but this is not the ‘spirit’ in the sense of a disposition or mentality that a slave would have. When animated by God’s Spirit, Christians cannot possibly have the outlook of a person who is enslaved, as the Spirit will set them free. The use of the idea of ‘adoption’ (ὀιοθεσίας *huiothesia*) seems strange, especially when it is taken into account that the society of the time (regardless of what religion) did not engage in the process of adoption¹¹⁰ and the term is not used in the LXX. The term is used in relation to Israel in 9.4 where it is chosen by God (Exod. 4.22; Isa. 1.2; Jer. 3.19) and it would appear that Paul has ‘borrowed’ the word from Hellenistic legal language and applied it to the Christians. It indicates that the Christian who has been baptized as a follower of Jesus has also been taken into the ‘family’ of God and has a status within this grouping. The status held by the Christian in this family is in contrast to the lack of status and social standing of a slave. The slave would have been seen in this culture as a possession of the household and is actually on the level of a son, someone who is held in high regard and is an integral and important part of the family community. It is interesting that when Fitzmyer highlights how *abba* is ‘unattested in the Old Testament’¹¹¹ he refers to how passages such as Deut. 14.1 (‘You are children of the LORD your God. You must not lacerate yourselves or shave your forelocks for the dead’) do not express the same idea of ‘fatherhood’. Rather these passages articulate the ‘corporate relationship of Israel to God’¹¹² that is expressed in the verses highlighted previously in terms of adoption, in opposition to that of the conscientious individual Jew or Israelite.

What can we learn about the designation from its use in the context of Romans 4? Johnson uses Jeremias’ theory to back up his notion that ‘For Paul to employ, without any warning this *Aramaic* expression in a letter to a Greek-speaking community implies that he considered this (baptismal?) tradition to be sufficiently common that he could so casually allude to it.’¹¹³ As in Gal. 4.6, the theme of obedience is stressed indirectly by the reference to God sending his Son (8.3) and by underlining the need to follow the Spirit rather than the flesh (8.5-14). Christians are also heirs of God (8.17) but they are co-heirs in this instance with Jesus. In contrast to the text of Gal. 4.6 the direct obedience theme with the word obedient or obedience is repeatedly mentioned.¹¹⁴ It is

the obedience here of Jesus,¹¹⁵ in contrast to the disobedience of Adam (Rom. 5.19) that has brought righteousness to everyone. Christians are therefore called to be obedient to this faith (1.5; 16.26) and to the obedience of righteousness and justice (6.16) and to obey the teachings they have received (6.17). Both these reference in ch. 6 are framed within the context of the baptismal teaching contained in 6.1-23, which would form a link with the larger context examined in Gal. 4.6. It is clear, however, that though Paul believes that it is by the Spirit that the Christians will learn to call God the Father, through this they are the children of God (as in the NEB translation).

N. T. Wright suggests that as the term *abba* was used in Mk 14.26 this would lead to the presumption that the term was used by people (not just Jesus) many other times and would have been a commonly known and used designation. He notes, 'Paul's addressees were basically Greek speakers, even in Rome, where a sizeable portion of the population spoke Greek rather than Latin; but this Aramaic term was clearly known as a regular form of address to God.'¹¹⁶

The use of the term *abba* here is clearly an intimate prayer that is 'reinterpreted' along with other key phrases from Gal. 4.6-7. Tobin makes note that the roots of the ideas of sonship and inheritance are found in Jewish sacred texts, the basis for them was reinterpreted by Paul and other early Christians.¹¹⁷ In Gal. 4.6, the conjunction *hoti* can be interpreted as 'because' and then adoptive sonship would be the basis for the unwarranted sending of the Spirit. In Rom. 8.14-17, as a wider context, the verses appear to propose that the gift of Jesus the Son of God constitutes a Christian sonship.

Barrett proposes another explanation for the use of the term – namely, that Paul may be referring to 'Spirit-inspired prayers'¹¹⁸ as in 1 Cor. 14.15.¹¹⁹ He supports this claim by the use of the 'violent word' 'cry out'.¹²⁰ It is interesting to survey briefly the myriad of opinions on the phrase 'cry out'. Shantz views it very much as a cry of ecstasy¹²¹ while others reject this claim. Grassi sees it as a 'cry of obedience'.¹²² Obeng perceives the phrase as a short prayer, but not 'a glossolalic utterance'.¹²³ Fitzmyer observes that the reason that Christians use the phrase '*abba*, father' is because 'the Spirit so enables them and cries with them.'¹²⁴

Mark 14.36 *He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.'* (NRSV)

The Gospel of Mark is the only Gospel that records Jesus' utterance of the term *abba* when praying to God. It is not the only instance where the text records the precise Aramaic expression used by Jesus as this is also cited in Mk 5.41, 7.34, and 15.34.¹²⁵ In comparison with the other Gospels, Matthew is the only evangelist to adopt this literary device; he does so only about Jesus' appeal on the Cross (Matt. 27.46).

The context of 14.36 is Gethsemane (only the Gospel of John says it is a garden), where Jesus is in crisis and speaks directly to God in prayer. Two references to Jesus' prayer in indirect speech (in vv. 35 and 39) frame the words of the personal prayer in v. 36. As Perkins notes, previously in the Gospel, there

were ‘brief notices’ that Jesus was leaving his group and retreating to pray alone. In this instance, ‘the repetition of this prayer scene fixes the solemnity of the moment in the reader’s mind.’¹²⁶ Here Jesus must be obedient to God and the events that he knows are to happen in the future. ‘He will die of a tortuous death on a cross’ and, as he possesses human emotions, he is overcome with terror and anguish. Jesus will not use any divine power during the lead-up to his death, however; his character is very much established here as fully human and our attention is drawn to his human consciousness¹²⁷ as he prays to his father for the strength to complete this journey. When he prays, it is clear that the prayer is private and sincere; it is not a prayer that Jesus recites without thinking, or that is formulaic. Rather, when he prays ‘*abba*, Father’ he asks if the cup may pass from him, or that the events that he knows will cause him pain and suffering can be stopped. Even so, he affirms his dedication to his father and to God’s will, knowing that God controls his fate. While there may be concerns with the use of the term *abba* in Galatians and Romans as to whether the term is a ‘cry’ or ‘acclamation’, here the context and emotion behind the expression is very clear. The use of *abba* in this instance has the meaning of ‘father’, in the sense that it is one part of a relationship, the other participant being an obedient and devoted son.

While exegesis of the text is important it is also essential to address the often-raised issue of whether or not there is any significance to the use of the terms here as we cannot tell if they were actually uttered by Jesus or not. If we imagine the scene depicted by the text, Jesus has left the group and presumably gone some distance away for solitude to pray. There is no report of anyone eavesdropping or Jesus reporting what he said to any member of his group, on his return or at a subsequent time, so we must presume that the omniscient narrator has imagined what has happened during Jesus’ absence. Hooker observes that it would have been normal for Jesus to use a prayer formula to teach the disciples.¹²⁸ This theory would fit in with the idea of the narrator needing information on what Jesus might have said in his own prayer, and would have taken the examples of what he had taught his followers as the most likely phraseology to have been used in the circumstances. However, it would have been equally plausible if the early Christian community had assigned words and phrases to Jesus that they themselves had begun to use (whether they had ‘invented’ the terms themselves or whether they had adopted them from other religious parlance.)

D’Angelo makes an interesting observation that ‘the connection of *abba* with the spirit in the Pauline texts may shed some light on Mark.’¹²⁹ She includes Fitzmyer’s discussion of the use of foreign terms in texts concerning miracles, where they appear as magical terms, although she dismisses the idea that they have this dimension in Mk 14.36.¹³⁰ She surmises that this is actually a possibility as the author of the Gospel of Mark does use Aramaic terms in the miracle narratives (e.g. Mk 5.41; 7.34) and in the context of the two prayers of Jesus in Mk 14.36 and 15.34. D’Angelo states, ‘If Mark was written in Syria, Aramaic words would not necessarily be unintelligible to everyone’, with the inclusion of

a translation suggesting that they still have foreign associations and would not be commonly used. 'Is it not possible that the foreignness of "*abba!* Father!" is a sign of its spiritual power?'¹³¹

Mark 8.38 *'Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'* (NRSV)

The Q¹³² form of this saying appears to have been 'whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven.' (Matt. 10.33; Lk. 12.9). Another form is found in Lk. 9.26. The verse in general requires careful reading as the syntax can be quite confusing on an initial reading as it is not very clear if the *Son of Man* and 'he comes' and 'his Father' are the same figure. The general theme of this verse within its immediate context appears to be one of 'glory' that links the humanity with god the Father through the intermediary of Jesus that is portrayed in both militant and messianic language. The glory depicted is in the biblical idea of the magnificence and kingship of God, as represented by creation (in both the act and the result). Hooker observes that the expression 'in the glory of his Father' is 'unusual'¹³³ as it combines the ideas of Son of man and Son of God. She then surmises that the phrase 'of his Father' was a later addition to the text, possibly to form a link with 9.7.¹³⁴ Marcus comments that the verse appears to be 'a forecast of ultimate victory for God, Jesus and his follower.'¹³⁵ The Son of Man's coming will be at the Eschaton (end of time), and the verse corresponds to the impending authority of God that appears in 9.1. The verse is generally negative in its view; there is no statement of future reward for the followers of Jesus.

Mark 13.32 *'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.'* (NRSV)

This verse does not feature in the Gospel of Luke but the Greek of both the Matthean and Markan texts are virtually identical. This text introduces a second parable with a new perspective. No one knows when these things will happen; you must be on constant alert. Many commentators assert that v. 32 contradicts what is stated in v. 30. The authenticity of the verse has been debated, which makes the inclusion of the term 'father' interesting. Perkins comments, 'verse 32 is an independent saying that also rejects the possibility that any human being knows God's plan for the coming of the end of time.'¹³⁶ Mann highlights the fact that in terms of the use of the term 'son' for Jesus, 'this is the only use of the title in absolute terms in Mark' and shows the dependence of the text on Matthew. This is not in keeping with the messianic secret¹³⁷ theme in Mark. There are many explanations for this, ranging from an indication that Jesus has limited knowledge of what God had planned for him, to Jesus appearing to shy away from ultimately declaring his divinity and here it appears that Jesus, as the Son, is almost subordinate to the Father. He is certainly not privy to all the information that God has. Anderson states, 'it is quite possible that these words could have been ascribed to him by a Church that had at its disposal no saying of Jesus defining the time of the end or wanted to offer an explanation

for the delay of the parousia'.¹³⁸ Marcus counterpoints this by noting, 'it seems more likely that Jesus did think of himself as in some special sense, God's Son but nonetheless recognized that he did not possess any special insight into the exact date of the end.'¹³⁹

Mark 11.25 *'Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.'* (NRSV)

This verse appears in the context of a story about a fig tree that symbolizes God's judgement on the unfruitful Israel. Verses 23-25 form an appendage on faith and prayer. The connection between the two does seem a little artificial, however, and is based on an understanding by the early Church of the cursing of the fig tree as representative not of the judgement of God but of the phenomenal power of Jesus' own faith. Verse 25 introduces a theme that is more familiar to Matthew's text of the Sermon on the Mount (namely, forgiveness); both God forgiving his followers and followers forgiving each other. The verse and the saying contained within it are probably originally independent. Mann notes that in the second part of the verse, the Greek is 'verbally identical with Matthew 6:14.'¹⁴⁰ This is particularly significant as this is the only occurrence of Mark using the possessive 'your Father'. Coupled with the use of the term τὰ παραπτώματα for trespasses or 'wrongs', this verse would appear to be a clear indication of the Markan dependence on his Matthean source.

Many commentators refer to the fact that this verse does remind the listener or reader of the Lord's Prayer or, as Marcus goes as far as saying, 'sounds like a condensation of parts of the Lord's Prayer, especially in its Matthean version.'¹⁴¹ Anderson is less emphatic, noting that 'the last clause of verse 25 does not necessarily reflect a knowledge of the Lord's Prayer, but it does reveal the influence of Matthew 6:14.'¹⁴²

What is particularly noteworthy for our investigations is that Jesus appears to instruct the disciples to look upon God as their father. The idea is very direct and cannot be taken as a suggestion; God is indeed their (your) father and is resident in heaven. While this image of God may appear to be distant, he is in heaven and there is no question of his entering into physical contact with his people. This notion is not in keeping with the Jewish idea of God as depicted in the Hebrew Bible where YHWH has entered into a much closer relationship or covenant with his people. The book of Genesis depicts God walking and talking with humanity in the Garden of Eden and this anthropomorphic idea is carried throughout a selection of texts. God always appears in the Hebrew Bible as being fully capable of interacting with the Israelites and their day-to-day lives. The concerns voiced by the prophets show how he takes an interest in the seemingly mundane features of the peoples' everyday lives, prayer, fasting, religious observance, their family relationships and geographical politics, and relationships with foreign countries. To a modern-day reader this appears to be an odd concept; surely, God has more important things to deal with (wars, famine, sin, and so forth) than the mundane minutiae of humanity. This was the relationship

envisaged by the Israelites as deities had always played a part in every aspect of a person's life in the historical and cultural contexts of the Israelite history. A good example of this would have been the gods of the Ancient Egyptians, a culture that heavily influenced the people of biblical times. Ancient Egyptians had gods to look after a seemingly endless array of concerns and aspects of human life.¹⁴³ The New Testament idea of God as resident in heaven is also in contrast to the Jewish idea of his dwelling place on earth being in the temple or a mythical mountain. While at first it appears that there is a stark opposition between the two images, the idea is 'softened' somewhat in the text under discussion. First, there is the obvious link between God and his people that has been made physical by the birth of Jesus as fully human. All of the Gospels make sure to highlight how there is no greater bond between the deity and his followers than the deity choosing to send his son as not just an intermediary but also a concrete link (Jn 3.16-21 as only one of many examples). There is also the issue of the almost renewed relationship as depicted by the early Christians. When the text of Jn 3.16-21, for example, is examined closely, the only negative slant to the text is the mention of the wrongdoings or 'trespasses' of humanity. The text even goes as far as to state that *if* 'you have anything against anyone'. It is not in the same vein as the language of the prophetic literature, where the prophets almost presumed and generalized wrongdoings by the entire Israelite population who followed (to whatever lapsed degree) YHWH. The language is of forgiveness and there is no prerequisite placed on forgiveness from God, only that the followers of God may forgive their fellow human beings. Many modern-day Christians see language, imagery, and themes like this as indirect opposition to that which is found in the Hebrew Bible and consequently 'prefer' the teachings and descriptions of the New Testament. They can hardly be blamed, as who would prefer the seemingly harsh language, directions, and foreboding of the prophets, when you could align yourself to the more 'user-friendly' ideal of a father figure. This figure is depicted as one who does not appear to anger easily (and, if he did, keeps a safe distance in heaven) and only requires a 'like-for-like' action on behalf of his followers. He does not demand extra allegiance or actions that appear to be difficult. Human nature, as with water, will usually select the path of least resistance.

Luke 10.21-22 *'At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'* (NRSV)

Culpepper emphatically states that 'this is Q material . . . but the use of the terms "Father" and "Son" have a distinctly Johannine ring.'¹⁴⁴ It is not possible to prove a direct literary link or even dependence, but there is similarity in the thought and the language of both parts of text where there is a shared terminology

with regard to antithetical couples (father–Son, hidden–revealed, wise and intelligent infants). They are antithetical in the sense that, although the two sayings share a common vocabulary, the second statement clearly moves significantly beyond the first. The importance of these verses is highlighted by Fitzmyer’s comment that the uniqueness of the relationship between Jesus and God can be proved by a close examination of the prayer of praise in Lk. 10.21-22.¹⁴⁵ Verse 23 makes clear that the audience of vv. 21 and 22 are the disciples of Jesus. Marshall remarks, ‘Jesus addresses the Father in a prayerful expression of rejoicing and praise because it has been his will to reveal things hidden from the wise to the disciples.’¹⁴⁶ Previously in this chapter, the disciples have been fortunate to view Jesus using his power to cast out a demon and in 10.28-36 they view the Transfiguration and the power of God and Jesus that is visible in that scene. Nevertheless, it is important to note that what information or signs that have been revealed to the disciples have come directly from God, depicted as the Father, and has been mediated through the Son. Jesus, the Son of God the Father, is the only person who can reveal God to the people.

Throughout much of the commentary on this section, the union and the nature of the text have been much debated. There are two clear parts to the text in that verse 21b is in the form of a prayer and describes the revelation of ‘these things’ by the Father to the ‘simple’. There is no reference to the position of Jesus in it. Verse 22 is a statement by Jesus that speaks of the authority that is given by the Father and his Son that, as previously stated, means that it is only through the Son that the Father can be revealed. Bultmann contends that the two adages here were originally separate statements, the first having an Aramaic background and the second one reflecting the ideas of Hellenistic mysticism.¹⁴⁷ In contrast to this opinion, Hoffmann holds the view that the two sayings are actually in parallel to each other. The first part addresses the idea of revelation by Jesus and as the parallelism would hinder the idea of two distinct sources for the two sayings, the disparities would exclude the idea of their original unity. Consequently, Hoffmann would conclude that the second saying exists as a commentary on the first in order to make the first more comprehensible to a general audience.¹⁴⁸

With v. 21, in both the gospels of Matthew and Luke, the verse starts with a temporal expression, aiding the chronology of the narrative. This is a characteristic of each of the evangelists’ writing styles. For the author of the Gospel of Luke, it refers back to the revelation of divine authority and command witnessed in ch. 10. In v. 22, Jesus adopts the position of the Son of God and asserts that he has an exclusive connection or relationship with him, with the idea underlined once more that it is only Jesus who can mediate the knowledge of God and his divine power.

Luke 11.13 *‘If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!’* (NRSV)

The larger context of v. 13 is Lk. 11.1-13, which forms a unit of instruction on prayer. The disciples have asked Jesus for a lesson prayer and in response,

instead of teaching them the text of a prayer, he instructs them on the character of whom they pray to. A ‘text critical’ reading of the terms ‘the heavenly father’ is taken not to be certain¹⁴⁹ and can be variously rendered as ‘the Father from heaven’ (NAB) or ‘your heavenly Father’ (NLT and NIV), which could be influenced by the parallel in Matt. 7.11. The notes on the NRSV state, ‘other ancient authorities read *the Father give the Holy Spirit from heaven.*’ The text of Luke has ‘Holy Spirit’¹⁵⁰ in place of the good gifts in Matt. 7.11.¹⁵¹ In this verse, the author appears to wish to highlight how the Holy Spirit is actually the best and most valuable gift that anyone can receive. The attribute ‘heavenly’ characterizes the Father as dwelling in heaven and, as Marshall notes, creates a contrast with the human fathers who are referenced in the earlier part of the text.¹⁵² If an earthly father will give his offspring good things, it makes sense that the heavenly father will give much more. Culpepper notes that in the Matthean version of this verse, the text ‘draws the more obvious parallel’¹⁵³ in contrast with earthly evil actions, the heavenly Father will give good things. Luke, on the other hand, moves away from this literary technique in order to highlight the future work of the Holy Spirit – this would have been an important component for the members of the early Christian Church.

Luke 22.29 *[A]nd I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom.* (NRSV)

The wider context of this verse in ch. 22 is the second part of the discourse that takes place at the celebration of the Passover (Last Supper) in the context of Jesus commenting on the disciples and the positions that they will hold in his kingdom. This is the first time in the Gospel of Luke that we hear of Jesus’ own kingship. The ‘kingdom’ is the reward that Jesus bestows on his apostles for their dedication to him – ‘they will share his regal glory’.¹⁵⁴ This is based on the absolution of Jesus by God, as what Jesus will do for them is an echo or re-patterning of what God will do for him. There is no parallel of this verse in the Gospel of Mark and only the latter part of v. 30 resembles Matt. 16.28. It is noteworthy that the argument here is characteristic of the Johannine formulation ‘as the Father . . . me, so I . . . you’.¹⁵⁵

John 5.19 *Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.”* (NRSV)

The context of this verse is Jesus’ first lengthy dispute with the Jewish authorities (the ‘them’ of the verse who form the direct audience of the piece). This sets the scene for several more of these disputes in chs 6–10 by setting out here the themes that will be treated in those chapters. The larger context of v. 19 is vv. 19-30 where the ‘central concern is the relationship between God and Jesus.’¹⁵⁶ In fact, eight of the twelve verses (19-23, 26-27, 30) concentrate on this relationship and, thus, the identity and character of Jesus. O’Donnell observes that the word ‘Father’ is a key phrase here in v. 19-30 (used seven times) where it ‘emphasizes the major themes.’¹⁵⁷ It is clear that the Fourth Gospel understands that a clearer picture of who Jesus is many be gained from

examining the relationship between Jesus and God. In the process of carrying out this examination the character of God is investigated, which is why this verse in particular is beneficial to our work.

O'Donnell describes v. 19 as using 'concentric pattern of four parallel verses that shift the focus from the Son to the Father and back.'¹⁵⁸ The initial phrase of v. 19, 'Jesus said to them', formulates the words that follow as a response to the anger demonstrated by Jesus in v. 18. There is a twofold concern here: Jesus was not honouring the Sabbath and was positioning himself on an equal footing with God in v. 18 where he calls God 'my father'. Verse 19 begins to deal with these issues by demonstrating how the work of Jesus is actually entirely dependent on the will of God. Verses 19-20a echo the sentiments of Num. 15.28¹⁵⁹ where an intermediary is involved in the forgiveness of a sinner by YHWH and here the Gospel shows how Jesus is unable to carry out any action unless it is directly modelled on the plan of God. He also teaches that all his deeds and actions are done in obedience to God,¹⁶⁰ a fact that makes a suitable starting point for the text that follows as, by v. 20, Jesus has established that his authority comes from the Father and that in the future, he will carry out even greater acts.

Dodd observes that the passage is a 'true parable'¹⁶¹ that illustrates the apprentice relationship of a father and his son that was prevalent in the cultural context of Jesus' time on earth. Brown comments, 'if this was originally a parabolic saying, the articles reflect the generic references found in parabolic style.'¹⁶² It is of course possible that Jesus employed this parable as a method of introduction to broader types of relationships between a father and his son, which the text will then expand explicitly about God and Jesus.

John 17.21 *'[T]hat they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.'* (NRSV)

In the preceding context of this verse – namely, v. 7-19¹⁶³ – Jesus prays for those who took on his work in the world. Here, in v. 21, he expands the group of people for whom he prays by including those who come to follow God through the work taken on by others – that is, the believers of the future or 'the faithful of the second generation'.¹⁶⁴ His prayer is that 'the future believers may all be one'.¹⁶⁵ This unity will be based on unity with God and will be reflected in Jesus' unity with his Father. Verses 17.21-23 have been frequently employed in discourse of an ecumenical nature with the assumption that it refers to the unity of a church or churches. Brown notes that for Roman Catholics, in particular, 'that they all may be one' is 'the ecumenical slogan'.¹⁶⁶

In v. 21, the community 'will experience oneness because they share in the mutuality and reciprocity of the Father/Son relationship'.¹⁶⁷ Jesus' words concerning the community's 'oneness' in his prayers do not exist in isolation from his affirmation of the unity of the father and the son (see 17.11, 21-23). The 'oneness sayings' therefore impart an image for the theological foundation of the character of the community, which is theirs by virtue of the relationship of God and Jesus. 'There is no "one" for the community without the "we" of the

Father and Son.¹⁶⁸ ‘Through his revelation to them, and through their revelation to others, Jesus opens up the possibility of sharing in oneness or communion of love that exists between him and the Father.’¹⁶⁹

Culpepper notes that this verse has two principal aims: to highlight the redemptive plans that exist in future for believers and the future missionary activity of the followers of the Church and the early Church itself.¹⁷⁰ The focus is very much on a future, universal mission, where the world will be full of believers, thanks to the dedicated work that stems from the followers of Jesus.

Lindars makes the interesting observation that ‘this is the only petition on behalf of the Church.’¹⁷¹ This idea appears to be stressed quite emphatically at this point apart from v. 11; the idea was not broached in the previous prayer for the disciples. It would therefore seem to be a crucial issue for the writer of the Gospel, where unity is the key and disunity is the denial of a relationship with and faith in God. ‘The grounds on which Jesus has made all the petitions in this chapter have been the analogy between his own relation to the Father and the Church’s relation to himself. So his unity with the Father must be reflected in the life of the Church.’¹⁷²

John 20.17 *‘Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”’* (NRSV)

Verse 17 contains the first commands of the risen Jesus. He is directly addressing Mary Magdalene outside the tomb.¹⁷³ The majority of commentators on the verse would side with O’Day’s view that this piece attempts ‘to give narrative shape to a theological reality.’¹⁷⁴ When Jesus returns to his father in heaven, he makes it possible for his disciples have a relationship with God, sharing his bond with them. This is underlined by the use of the expressions ‘my Father and your Father’ and ‘my God and your God’. Previously the only possessive term used would have been ‘my Father’ or simply ‘the Father’; now the focus is on ‘*your* Father’. This synonymous phraseology confirms that relationship that the disciples (and therefore all followers of Jesus and the early Church) are as close as Jesus’ relationship to God. With this phrasing, Jesus is repeating in his own words the undertaking of the prologue (1.12: ‘But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God’).¹⁷⁵ Brown notes that there is a similarity between v. 17 and the phrase ‘God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ of Rom. 15.6 and 2 Cor. 1.3, and so forth. He notes that, in v. 28, Thomas calls Jesus ‘God’¹⁷⁶ but the text of the Gospel of John also has Jesus referring to his Father as ‘God’. Brown suggests that this may be a hint of various stages in the development of Christology.¹⁷⁷

Some Conclusions of ‘Father’ and *Abbai*

The initial difference that we see with the designations Father and *abba* for God in the texts of the Gospels and Paul is that the way in which the terms have been

interpreted has less to do with their context and their origin than with their reception and interpretation through history. The terms are often translated or interpreted (in both the academic and personal-prayer senses) with a personal slant and, without the process of reader-response being taken into account, the meaning and significance of the name is not immediately fully understood. This is different from the way in which the majority of designations in the Hebrew Bible are translated and, more important, understood by different audiences, including in a modern setting. How Christians ‘use’ the names of God is therefore quite different from how a Jew would ‘use’ the name of YHWH. There is always the underlying Trinitarian aspect of naming the divine to take into account and the response in the reader or hearer to a paternal term in relation to the divine – there is usually a response of linking God with his Son, Jesus. The names used throughout Judaism tend to set YHWH apart as unique from other deities and it is important to note this major difference in theological outlook when using the methods of comparative theology.

Other Designations

(a) *Living Father*

In the Gospel of John, God is referred to 113 times as Father, and three times the term is qualified by an adjective: 6.57¹⁷⁸ (living Father); 17.11¹⁷⁹ (Holy Father); and 17.25¹⁸⁰ (Righteous Father).¹⁸¹ The phrase ‘living Father’ would seem to recall the phrase of the Hebrew Bible ‘living God’ (which occurs 15 times in the Hebrew Bible and 13 times in the New Testament). In general, in the Hebrew Bible, the phrase the ‘living God’ is normally contrasted with false gods and idols of the people who have no life and cannot give life to the people who worship them (Jer. 2.13). In the text of the Gospel of John, the adjective ‘living’ modifies a noun in two other phrases.¹⁸² In 4.10-11, the term refers to Jesus as the ‘living water’ (4.14) and again in 7.38. In John 6.51 Jesus states that he is ‘the living bread that came down from heaven.’ It is then not against the grain of Johannine phraseology to have God described as the ‘living Father’ who has sent Jesus to earth. God is immortal. YHWH in the Hebrew Bible is seen as someone who cannot be vanquished. In the New Testament, the idea of God leans more towards the notion that he is the giver of life, especially within a Christological context, and emphasizes God’s dominion over life and death, especially in terms of the life and death of humanity.

(b) *Saviour*

Luke 1.47 ‘[A]nd my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour’. (NRSV)

The term ‘Saviour’ (σωτήρ) is only used in three other occurrences in the Gospels (excluding Acts). In Lk. 1.69 and 2.11 the reference is to the past and is usually associated with David in reference to describing Jesus. In Jn 4.42 the

association is with Jesus. In investigating the use of the term here, it is therefore necessary to take this verse in the larger context of the Magnificat (1.46-55), a song of praise from Mary in response to the oracles delivered previously by Elizabeth. Both the annunciations (revelation by an angelic figure of the conception of a child) of John and Jesus appear to follow the model of communication from angels in the Hebrew Bible and the Magnificat would seem to be evidently inspired by the song of Hannah in 1 Sam. 2.1-10. Both begin with a couplet that praises God and it is here God is termed 'Saviour'. The phrase 'God is my Saviour' is paralleled with 'Lord' of v. 46, showing that the *kyrios* of v. 46 is the God (YHWH) who bestows the blessing on Mary. Christian readings of this text will usually connect the term 'Saviour' predominantly to Jesus, as Jesus died on the Cross to save his people from their sins, thus this action brings about the designation 'Saviour'. So why is God being termed Saviour here? If we take the larger context and what we know of the designations used in the Hebrew Bible into account, Mary is noticeably using terminology that she, as a Jew, would have been familiar with from doxologies used in her own sacred texts. The other designations used are 'Mighty One' (μεγάλα ό) and 'Lord' (κύριος). Terms such as 'servant' and 'fear' are all common in the Hebrew Bible. The word 'generations' is used three times; the first is in the sense of the future, but the second and third in a sense of continuity, which in the Hebrew sense, backed up by the alter reference to Abraham, will have a link with the past. The use of the term would seem to show how Mary's statement that 'the Mighty One has done great things for me' may be explained not merely as the intercession of God's in her life, but in her heritage and her legacy as a Jewish woman who values the covenantal relationship with her God. The use of the phrase 'holy is his name' in such a jubilant context would seem to mirror this.

Several modern commentators associate the idea of 'Saviour' with the image of someone (usually in a position of power) 'rescuing' or 'saving' those who are impoverished, oppressed, and/or marginalized.¹⁸³ This would not have been the initial reaction of the original audience, whose primary recollection would have been the exodus event, rather than a link with a redemptive history as Culpepper would seem to suggest. As this designation is in the context that unmistakably takes inspiration from the Hebrew Bible, it would seem a stretch to consider that the idea of 'god as Saviour' is highlighting or, indeed, pre-empting the role of Jesus as Saviour (whether saving the sick in his performance of miracles or on the larger scale of his death and resurrection). The statement 'God is my Saviour' is not a Christological certainty, and, instead of being reflective of the New Testament theology, it draws on the theological thought expressed in the Hebrew Bible and is stated by a follower of this ideology.

Verse 48 would appear to be an insertion on the part of the author or redactor. How was Mary to know that she would be 'blessed' in the future? This statement is not in keeping with how she is depicted in the rest of Luke and

the other Gospels where she is never ‘all-seeing’ and ‘all-knowing’ character. For example, in Lk. 2.33 when Jesus has been presented at the temple, Mary and Joseph are depicted as being ‘amazed’ or ‘marvelling’ at what is being said about their son, but they do not question why and there is no statement that these utterances may be linked with future events.

(c) *The Lord Your God*

Luke 4.8 *‘Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”* (NRSV)

The phrase ‘the Lord your God’ is also used in the Gospel of Luke in 4.7, and in the same context in the parallels of Matt. 4.7; 4.10. The phrase is also used in Lk. 10.12, which is paralleled in Matt. 22.37 and Mk 12.30.

In Lk. 4.8 as part of the larger temptation scene, the use of the phrase ‘it is written’ by Jesus is clearly indicating that the phrase that follows is a quotation from the Jewish Scriptures. It is not a direct quotation of Deut. 6.13 (and also Deut. 10.20) as the Lukan text alters the term for ‘worship’ (προσκυνέω) to the same word used in the proposition of Satan in v. 7. The term (μόνος) or ‘only’ is added in the second part of the verse, apparently for emphasis. Deuteronomy is usually termed the ‘Shema’, the philosophy of thought or confession of faith that forms the core of Judaism’s belief system.

In Lk. 4.12¹⁸⁴ and the corresponding text in Matt. 4.7¹⁸⁵ the first thing that strikes the reader is who is the ‘your’ of the text (the Lord your God)? The quotation here is from Deut. 6.16: ‘Do not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.’ As the text is clear that ‘Jesus answered him’, it would appear evident that, from the syntax at least, Jesus is directly addressing Satan and inferring that ‘the Lord’ is ‘his’ (your) God. Why then is a reference made at this point to a text from the Hebrew Bible? It would appear that Satan is familiar with the Jewish Scriptures as Jesus does not give reference or context to his quotations, yet his response seems to prohibit any argument from Satan. A distinct possibility is that Jesus is using a quotation from a text that is inherently part of the Jewish religious outlook and law (as text forms part of the Shema) in a dialogue with Satan. The aim is to highlight how if Satan can be silenced in an argument or debate by being reminded of this premise, then surely Jesus’ audience should not need reminding of the teachings contained in it. This tool is used by the prophets to remind the Israelites of the Mosaic Law that they should follow.

(d) *Lord of Heaven and Earth*

Luke 10.21 *‘At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.”* (NRSV)

Matthew 11.25 *‘At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants”’.* (NRSV)

Jesus appears in this instance of a prayer of thanksgiving to be using the language normally associated with Jewish prayer. Luz notes that apart from a few minor examples, ‘there are no exact parallels’.¹⁸⁶ It is evident from the contexts above that the title of ‘Lord of heaven and earth’ is linked with the idea of God as creator of all things, a theological statement in the theology of God that is made very evident in the Hebrew Bible. In both instances, the name is used in parallel with ‘Father’ as a further explanation of the sense of creation that is linked with the idea of Father. Importantly for looking at the 99 Most Beautiful Names of Allah in the next chapter, by linking these two designations the image of a deity who creates is made clear. God is the only creator of the heavens and the earth as made clear by the term ‘Lord’ and the process of creation is not a one-off event. The responsibilities that are associated with being a father of a child or in the sense put forward in the Hebrew Bible of the duty of the patriarchs with the establishment of the tribe of Israel are evident here. The process of creation is followed by care and supervision from a deity who takes his role as seriously as a devoted father.

(e) Master

Luke 2.29 *‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word’.* (NRSV)

Luke 2.29 is located within the broader context of the birth narrative ending and the theme of how the law of God is fulfilled through the birth of Jesus is dominant. The verse itself comes in the context of Simeon’s blessing (25-35). The blessing of the child in 29-32 is traditionally known as the *Nunc Dimittis*.¹⁸⁷ It appears that this doxology has less to do with the birth of Jesus and more to do with the praising of God for the fulfilment of promises such as the apparent birth of the Messiah and the comforting of the people of Israel.

Simeon is not necessarily about to die as many commentators on the text have asserted,¹⁸⁸ though the notion that a patriarch may be allowed to die ‘in peace’ having seen the fulfilment of the promises of YHWH is frequent throughout the Pentateuch (Abraham in Gen. 15.15 and Jacob in Gen. 46.30, for example). Rather, it is more likely that he has been appointed as someone whose sole duty is to act as watchman for the coming of the Messiah as promised in the Jewish Scriptures. His ‘appointer’ or employer is YHWH and he is plainly a devoted and loyal ‘employee’ or follower of YHWH. Thus, now that the child he holds has been established as fulfilment of the messianic promises in the Hebrew Bible, his job criteria have been realized and his situation is no longer tenable, he may be discharged from his duties. This does not have the negative connotations in the idea of forced retirement or unemployment; rather, there is a sense that Simeon is contented.

There may be negative implications or associations with the idea of the term 'Master' but this would tend to come from the modern ideas of dominance and slavery. Here the idea is more associated with respect and devotion. Essentially the term is linked with the idea of the head of a household, someone charged with the running of a community who makes the key decisions and influences control over the life and well-being of those contained within it. In short, this cannot be termed a unique theological New Testament designation. The textual link is very much with the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish Scriptures. Simeon is unmistakably Jewish, not a follower of Jesus, so his ideas and theological outlook are shaped not by the teachings of the early Church and its followers but by the thoughts expressed in the Hebrew Bible.

(f) God of Israel

Matthew 15.31 *'so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.'* (NRSV)

Luz notes that this 'liturgical phrase' would have been familiar to Matthew's original audience¹⁸⁹ as it is very similar to the language of the Psalms, particularly 41.14; 72.18; and 106.48. Luke 1.68 has Zechariah's statement that 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.' There is much debate among interpreters on the extent and origin of the context of this verse in a hymn of praise (v. 68-75, possibly to include 78-79). The popular opinion is that this text was composed by Jews who had converted to Christianity in the style of prayer that they were most familiar with, or that it is a direct quotation from an unrecorded Jewish psalm or other doxology. The language of v. 68-75 certainly is very covenantal, containing a substantial amount of phraseology from the Hebrew Bible.

(g) Blessed One and 'Power'

Mark 14.61-62 *'But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus said, "I am"; and "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power," and "coming with the clouds of heaven."'* (NRSV)

Some biblical versions capitalize the term 'Power', such as the NRSV, ESV, NAB, and NJB (the KJV leaves the designation with a lower-case 'p'; the NIV translates the term as 'Mighty One'). Many commentators see the term as a substitution for the designation YHWH or as a means of ensuring that the name of God is not pronounced. Here the two terms are in parallel and are located in the larger context of a judgement oracle. The high priest is the one who calls God the 'Blessed One' and Jesus responds using the term 'Power'. Both are divine attributes, though admittedly are not the normal proxies for the Tetragrammaton. It is most likely that the text has created them (as opposed to

having ‘borrowed’ them) as Brown seems to suggest. Brown’s work on the two designations is worthy of note here.¹⁹⁰ Culpepper notes that the term ‘power’ is a ‘circumlocution for God that does not occur in contemporaneous Jewish writings . . . and appeals to the power of the Lord to vindicate the righteous servant.’¹⁹¹

Conclusion

The names of God in the New Testament, in particular the names evident in the Gospels and the writings of Paul, are first not an easily calculable category, as the Christocentric nature of these sacred texts means that it is not always possible to ascertain the referent of the designation, whether it is God or Jesus. When examining the different names used throughout the texts, it becomes immediately apparent that the majority of the names used in relation to the divine are actually direct quotations from or allusions to the divine designations used in the Hebrew Bible. These aside, the names that are particular to the texts of the Gospels and Paul show a certain degree of theological intent in that they appear to serve to ‘back up’ what has been made theologically apparent in the text. The theology of God in the Gospels is principally conveyed through Jesus. The names are also linked with enhancing or highlighting the relationship between Jesus and God and the dynamics between them. This particular theological slant will be necessary to keep in mind when comparing the names of the three faiths.

Chapter 5

Divine Designations in the Qur'an

Introduction

Initially in an examination of the divine designations as purporting to the Islamic religion our task appears infinitely easier than that concerning Judaism and Christianity. Throughout the history of Islamic thought, the designations attributed to Allah have had a central role. There are traditionally taken to be 99 'names' for the deity in Islam; this number consists of names that are directly revealed in the Qur'an, derived indirectly from certain texts in the Qur'an, and others that are traditional (but not necessarily derived from Qur'anic texts). They are often termed the Most Beautiful (of) Names as the Qur'an states in 7.179: 'To him belong the most beautiful names.' While the important point about this list of designations is not the numerical accuracy of the collection, it is essential to consider how the total of 99 is reached in order to avoid confusion. There is a *ḥadīth* (oral narratives that recount the Prophet Muhammad's life, particularly his actions and deeds) that states, 'To God belongs 99 names, 100 minus 1, anyone who memorizes them will enter Paradise', which led to a traditional numbering, though many lists, for the most part, are limited to 99 entries. For ease of reference, I have tabled the 99 Most Beautiful Names, highlighting some examples of their use in the Qur'an and the various English translations for them.

Number	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation	Use in the Qur'an (Not necessarily direct quotation)
1	الرحمن	Ar-Rahmān	<i>The All-Beneficent, The Most Merciful, The Compassionate, The Most Gracious</i>	Beginning of every chapter except one, and in numerous other places.
2	الرحيم	Ar-Rahīm	<i>The Most Merciful, The Most Merciful in Actions</i>	Beginning of every chapter except one, and in numerous other places
3	المالك	Al-Malik	<i>The Absolute Ruler, The Sovereign, The Ultimate King</i>	20.114, 23.116, 59.23, 62.1, 114.2
4	القدوس	Al-Quddūs	<i>The Most Holy, The Pure One</i>	59.23, 62.1
5	السلام	As-Salām	<i>The All-Peaceful, The Peace and Blessing, The Source of Peace, The Most Perfect, The Singular</i>	59.23
6	المؤمن	Al-Mu'mim	<i>The Inspirer of Faith, The Self-Affirming, The Granter of Security, Guardian of Faith</i>	59.23
7	المهيمن	Al-Muhaymin	<i>The Guardian, The Preserver, The Overseeing Protector</i>	59.23
8	العزيز	Al-Azīz	<i>The Almighty, The Self-Sufficient, The Most Honorable, The Victorious, The Mighty</i>	3.6, 4.158, 9.40, 9.71, 48.7, 59.23, 61.1
9	الجبار	Al-Jabbār	<i>The Despot, The Irresistible, The Compeller, The Most Lofty (High)</i>	59.23

Number	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation	Use in the Qur'an (Not necessarily direct quotation)
10	المتكبر	Al-Mutakabbir	<i>The Proud, The Arrogant, The Haughty, The Greatest, The Majestic, Supreme in Greatness</i>	59.23
11	الخالق	Al-Khāliq	<i>The Creator</i>	6.102, 13.16, 39.62, 40.62, 59.24
12	البارئ	Al-Bāri'	<i>The Maker (of Order), The Rightful</i>	59.24
13	المصور	Al-Musawwir	<i>The Fashioner of Forms, The Shaper of Beauty, The Bestower of Form</i>	59.24
14	الغفار	Al-Ghaffār	<i>The Forgiving, The Ever-Forgiving</i>	20.82, 38.66, 39.5, 40.42, 71.10
15	القهار	Al-Qahhār	<i>The Subduer, The All-Compelling Subduer</i>	13.16, 14.48, 38.65, 39.4, 40.16
16	الوهاب	Al-Wahhāb	<i>The Giver of All, The Bestower</i>	3.8, 38.9, 38.35
17	الرزاق	Ar-Razzāq	<i>The Sustainer, The Ever-Providing, The Provider</i>	51.58
18	الفتاح	Al-Fattāh	<i>The Opener, The Victory Giver, The Judge</i>	34.26
19	العليم	Al-'Alīm	<i>The Knower of All, The All-Knowing, The Omniscient</i>	2.158, 3.92, 4.35, 24.41, 33.40, 35.38, 57.6
20	القابض	Al-Qābid	<i>The Constrictor, The Restrainer, The Straightener, The Withholder</i>	2.245
21	الباسط	Al-Bāsit	<i>The Reliever, The Extender (Expander)</i>	2.245
22	الخالق	Al-Khāfid	<i>The Abaser (Debaser)</i>	95.5
23	الرافع	Ar-Rāfi'	<i>The Exalter</i>	58.11, 6.83

Number	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation	Use in the Qur'an (Not necessarily direct quotation)
24	المعز	Al-Mu'izz	<i>The Giver (Bestower) of Honours</i>	3.26
25	المذل	Al-Mu'dhell	<i>The Giver of Dishonour, Humiliator</i>	3.26
26	السميع	As-Samī	<i>The All-Hearing, The Hearer of All</i>	2.127, 2.137, 2.256, 8.17, 49.1
27	البصير	Al-Basīr	<i>The All-Seeing, The Seer of All</i>	4.58, 17.1, 42.11, 42.27, 57.4, 67.19
28	الحكم	Al-Hakam	<i>The Judge, The Arbitrator</i>	22.69
29	العدل	Al-'Adl	<i>The (Utterly) Just</i>	6.115
30	اللطيف	Al-Latīf	<i>The Subtle One, The Gentle, The Subtly Kind, The Knower of Subtleties</i>	6.103, 22.63, 31.16, 33.34, 67.14
31	الخبير	Al-Khabīr	<i>The All-Aware</i>	6.18, 17.30, 49.13, 59.18, 63.11
32	الرحيم	Al-Halīm	<i>The Forebearing, The Indulgent</i>	2.225, 2.235, 17.44, 22.59, 35.41
33	العظيم	Al-'Azīm	<i>The Magnificent, The Infinite, The Incomparably Great</i>	2.255, 42.4, 56.96
34	الغفور	Al-Ghafūr	<i>The All-Forgiving, The Hider of Faults</i>	2.173, 8.69, 16.110, 41.32, 60.7
35	الشكور	Al-Shakūr	<i>The Grateful, The Rewarder of Thankfulness, The Appreciative</i>	35.30, 35.34, 42.23, 64.17
36	العلي	Al-'Aliyy	<i>The Sublimely Exalted, the Highest, The Most High</i>	2.255, 4.34, 31.30, 42.4, 42.51
37	الكبير	Al-Kabīr	<i>The Great (Greatest)</i>	13.9, 22.62, 31.30, 34.23, 40.12
38	الحفيظ	Al-Hafīz	<i>The Preserver</i>	11.57, 34.21, 42.6
39	المقيت	Al-Muqīt	<i>The Nourisher, The Sustainer</i>	4.85

Number	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation	Use in the Qur'an (Not necessarily direct quotation)
40	الرحيب	Al-Hasīb	<i>The Bringer of Judgement, The Accounter, The Reckoner</i>	4.6, 4.86, 33.39
41	الجليل	Al-Jalīl	<i>The Majestic, The Mighty, The Revered, The Sublime</i>	55.27, 39.14, 7.143
42	الكريم	Al-Karīm	<i>The Bountiful, The Generous</i>	27.40, 82.6
43	الرقيب	Ar-Raqīb	<i>The Watchful</i>	4.1, 5.117
44	المجيب	Al-Mujīb	<i>The Responsive, The Answerer, The Responder to Prayer</i>	11.61
45	الواسع	Al-Wāsi'	<i>The Vast, The All-Encompassing, The All-Comprehending</i>	2.115, 2.261, 2.268, 3.73, 5.54
46	الحكيم	Al-Hakīm	<i>The (Perfectly) Wise</i>	2.129, 2.260, 31.27, 46.2, 57.1, 66.2
47	الودود	Al-Wadūd	<i>The Loving (One)</i>	11.90, 85.14
48	المجيد	Al-Majīd	<i>The All-Glorious, The Majestic One, The Most Glorious</i>	11.73
49	الباعث	Al-Bā'ith	<i>The Resurrector, The Raiser of the Dead</i>	4.70, 4.166, 22.7, 41.53, 48.28
50	الشهيد	Ash-Shahīd	<i>The Witness</i>	4.166, 22.17, 41.53, 48.28
51	الحق	Al-Haqq	<i>The Truth, The Real</i>	6.62, 22.6, 23.116, 24.25, 31.30
52	الوكيل	Al-Wakīl	<i>The (Ultimate) Trustee, The Dependable, The Disposer of Affairs</i>	3.173, 4.171, 28.28, 33.3, 73.9
53	القوى	Al-Qawwiyy	<i>The Possessor of (All) Strength, The (Most) Strong</i>	22.40, 22.74, 42.19, 57.25, 58.21

Number	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation	Use in the Qur'an (Not necessarily direct quotation)
54	المتين	Al-Matīn	<i>The Forceful One, The Firm One, The Steadfast</i>	51.58
55	الولى	Al-Waliyy	<i>The Protecting Friend, Patron and Helper, The Governor</i>	3.68, 4.45, 7.196, 42.28, 45.19
56	الحميد	Al-Hamīd	<i>The Praised One, The All-Praiseworthy</i>	14.1, 14.8, 31.12, 31.26, 41.42
57	المحصى	Al-Muhsi	<i>The Appraiser, The Accounter, The Reckoner</i>	72.28, 78.29, 82.10-12
58	المبدئ	Al-Mubdi'	<i>The Producer, The Originator, The Initiator of All</i>	10.4, 10.34, 27.64, 29.19, 85.13
59	المعيد	Al-Mu'īd	<i>The Restorer (to Life), The Reinstater Who Brings Back All</i>	10.4, 10.34, 27.64, 29.19, 85.13
60	المحيى	Al-Muhyi	<i>The Giver of Life</i>	3.156, 7.158, 15.23, 30.50, 57.2
61	المميت	Al-Mumīt	<i>The Taker of Life, The Bringer of Death, The Destroyer</i>	3.156, 7.158, 15.23, 57.2
62	الحي	Al-Hayy	<i>The Ever-Living One</i>	2.255, 3.2, 20.111, 25.58, 40.65
63	القيوم	Al-Qayyūm	<i>The Self-Subsisting, The Provider of All, The Self-Existing One, The Self-Existing By Whom All Subsist</i>	2.255, 3.2, 20.111
64	الواجد	Al-Wājid	<i>The Unfailing, The Perceiver, The Finder, The Self-Sufficient</i>	38.44

Number	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation	Use in the Qur'an (Not necessarily direct quotation)
65	المجيد	Al-Mājid	<i>The Glorious, The Illustrious, The Magnificent, The Glorified</i>	85.15, 11.73,
66	الواحد	Al-Wāhid	<i>The (Only) One, The Indivisible</i>	2.163, 5.73, 9.31, 18.110, 37.4
67	الاحد	Al-'Ahad	<i>The One, The Unique</i>	112.1
68	الصمد	As-Samad	<i>The Satisfier of All Needs, The Eternal, The Everlasting, The Uncaused Cause of All Being</i>	112.2
69	القادر	Al-Qādir	<i>The All-Able, The All-Powerful, The Omnipotent</i>	6.65, 36.81, 46.33, 75.40, 86.8
70	المقتدر	Al-Muqtadir	<i>The All-Determiner, The Dominant, The Creator of All Power, The Powerful</i>	18.45, 54.42, 54.55
71	المقدم	Al-Muqaddim	<i>The Expediter, He Who Brings Forward</i>	16.61, 17.34,
72	المؤخر	Al-Mu'akhhir	<i>The Delayer, He Who Puts Far Away</i>	71.4
73	الأول	Al-'Awwal	<i>The First (Alpha)</i>	57.3
74	الأخر	Al-'Akhir	<i>The Last (Omega)</i>	57.3
75	الظاهر	Az-Zāhir	<i>The Manifest (One), The All-Victorious</i>	57.3
76	الباطن	Al-Bātin	<i>The Hidden (One), The All-Encompassing</i>	57.3

Number	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation	Use in the Qur'an (Not necessarily direct quotation)
77	الوالي	Al-Wāli	<i>The Protecting Friend, The Patron, The Governor</i>	13.11, 22.7
78	المرتعالي	Al-Mutā'ali	<i>The Supreme One, The Self-Exalted, The Most Exalted</i>	13.9
79	البر	Al-Barr	<i>The Doer of Good, The Benign, The Most Kind and Righteous, The Source of All Goodness</i>	52.28
80	التواب	At-Tawwāb	<i>The Guide to Repentance, The Ever-Returning, Ever-Relenting, The Granter and Acceptor of Repentance</i>	2.37, 2.128, 4.64, 49.12, 110.3
81	المنتقم	Al-Muntaqim	<i>The Avenger, The Lord of Retribution</i>	32.22, 43.41, 44.16
82	العفو	Al-Afuww	<i>The Forgiver, The Pardoner, The Effacer of Sins</i>	4.99, 4.149, 22.60
83	الرؤوف	Ar-Ra'ūf	<i>The Clement, The Compassionate, The All-Pitying</i>	3.30, 9.117, 57.9, 59.10
84	مالك الملك	Mālik-ul-Mulk	<i>The Owner of All (Sovereignty)</i>	3.26
85	الجلال والإكرام	Dhū-l-Jalāli wa-l-'ikrām	<i>The Lord of Majesty and Generosity</i>	55.27, 55.78
86	المقسط	Al-Muqṣiṭ	<i>The Equitable (One), The Requirer</i>	7.29, 3.18
87	الجامع	Al-Jāmi	<i>The Gatherer, The Unifier</i>	3.9

Number	Arabic	Transliteration	Translation	Use in the Qur'an (Not necessarily direct quotation)
88	الغني	Al-Ghaniyy	<i>The All-Rich, The Independent, The Rich One, The All-Sufficient</i>	2.263, 3.97, 39.7, 47.38, 57.24
89	المغني	Al-Mughni	<i>The Enricher, The Emancipator</i>	9.28
90	المانع	Al-Māni'	<i>The Withholder, The Preventer of Harm, The Shielder, the Defender</i>	67.21
91	الضار	Ad-Dārr	<i>The Creator of the Harmful, The Distressor, The Harmer, The Afflictor</i>	6.17
92	النافع	An-Nāfi	<i>The Creator of Good, The Benefactor, The Propitious, The Useful</i>	30.37
93	النور	An-Nūr	<i>The Light, The One Who Creates the Light of Belief in the Hearts of All the Believers</i>	24.35
94	الهادي	Al-Hādi	<i>The Guide</i>	25.31
95	البديع	Al-Badī	<i>The Incomparable, The Originator</i>	2.117, 6.101
96	الباقي	Al-Bāqi	<i>The Everlasting One, The Ever-Enduring and Immutable</i>	55.27
97	الوارث	Al-Wāriṭh	<i>The Ultimate Inheritor, The Heir, The Inheritor of All</i>	15.23
98	الرشيد	Ar-Rashīd	<i>The Guide, Infallible Teacher and Knower, The Righteous Teacher</i>	2.256
99	الصبور	As-Sabur	<i>The Patient (One), The Timeless</i>	2.153, 3.200, 103.3

Categorizing the Names

There are several methods engaged in listing the names. Some such as Glassé's list the terms according to the Arabic alphabet (e.g. *al-Awwal*→*al-Wahhāb*)¹ but often, particularly outside of academic works, they can be listed as they appear chronologically in the Qur'an. The name *Allāh* (often called the supreme name or *al-ism al-'azam*) stands alone and is not usually included in the 99 (it is often termed the 100th name).

The names are divided into categories in the list. First, into two: the Names of the Essence (*adh-dhāt*) and the Names of the Qualities (*as-sifat*). This second group may be divided further into the Names of Mercy/Beauty and the Names of Rigour/Majesty. Muslim scholars have developed various categories for the divine names.

The Qur'an

'The Koran'² as it is often referred to in English is the translation of القرآن or *al-qur'ān*. Its literal meaning is 'the reading' or 'the recitation' and it is the holy, sacred text of the Islamic religion. The Qur'an is also commonly referred to in Arabic as the *al-mushaf* (or collection of pages/book), *al-furqān* (the discrimination between truth and reality), *al-Kitāb* (the Book), or *adh-dhikr* (the Remembrance). Formally, many Muslims would refer to the Qur'an as *al-qurān al-karīm* (the Noble/Gracious Qur'an) or *al-qur'ān al-majīd* (the Glorious Qur'an).

The Qur'an is divided into 114 chapters and each individual chapter is called a *Surah*. Each *Surah* is composed of verses with an individual verse termed an *āyah* (the literal meaning of this term is a 'sign'). Several of the *ayas* finish with a pairing of names apparently to call attention to pertinent attributes to the topics raised within the text of the *aya*. The *Surahs* vary in length from three to 286 *āyat* and are organized whereby the largest comes first and the following *Surahs* are then ordered in decreasing size. The first *Surah* is an exception to this; it is a short prayer commonly called 'the Opening' (*al-Fātiha*). The Qur'an is divided into 30 sections or *ajzā'* for regular reading. Each *juz'* is divided into two *aḥzāb*, one of which is read as a morning prayer and the other as an evening prayer. It is quite easy to identify these divisions in the margins of most modern publications of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an was sent down or revealed to the Prophet Muhammad when he was meditating in the cave of Hira during the holy month of Ramadan in 610 CE. In one of the last nights of the month, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and delivered the first revelation (the first five verses of Sura 96). There were no further revelations for two years, at this point Muhammad received assurances that the message was from Allah, and the revelations continued without interruption until the death of the Prophet in 632 CE. Incomplete collections of

the Qur'an were made during the lifetime of the Prophet by those who were close to him. The absolute, authoritative version was finished under guidance of the third caliph (leader of the believers of Islam), Uthman, within 20 years after the death of Muhammad.³

'The early message of the highly oracular Qur'an centers on the theme of God's coming judgement of humankind at the end of the world.'⁴ Allah is depicted as holy, majestic, all-powerful, and just – therefore, worthy of praise and worship. The theme of ethical monotheism is particularly prevalent, just as it is in Judaism and Christianity. The Islamic religion displays a strong sense of a covenant with God and Allah, as depicted in the Qur'an, and is both forgiving and filled with compassion. These characteristics, however, are not substitutes for the strong sense of justice that is integral to the temperament of Allah. This justice is not a set of rules or guidelines to be strictly adhered to; rather, this sense of justice is a personal one. As Denny states, 'unlike the Hindu and Buddhist *karma*, in Islam, God's divine justice is subject to forgiveness and erasure in a relationship with humans that is both mutual and spontaneous.'⁵

It is interesting to note, for the purposes of this study, that the text of the Qur'an tends to view both Jews and Christians as *ahl al-kitāb* (people of the book). Although followers of these two religions have valid texts that were inspired by God, over time they have ceased to agree on the message and teachings to be gained from it. This also highlights the important aspect of the Islamic view of the Qur'an that is vital in a study of the divine designations. A core and fundamental belief of the Islamic faith is that the entire Qur'an has been divinely revealed and that all of the text has been authored by Allah. The text of the Qur'an is the written version of the actual speech of Allah and as a result 'is eternal and uncreated in its essence and sense.'⁶ In short, the Qur'an came from Allah, was delivered by the intermediary (the angel Gabriel), and was heard and received by the Prophet Muhammad.

It is essential to make abundantly clear the importance placed on the Qur'an in the life of a Muslim. Several scholars have compared the place and reverence for the Qur'an to a Muslim with Jesus in the life of a Christian.⁷ Christians believe that Jesus is the 'Word made Flesh' (Jn 1.14) or God's word that has, as the result of a profound divine miracle, come down to the world and transcends both humankind and human history. With Islam, the same holds true of the Qur'an. In the same way that Christianity may be said to be 'Christocentric', Islam is 'book-centred'.

Recitation

Muslims do not have sacraments as in Christian life; rather, they see the daily recitation of the Qur'an on the same level of importance, as this is where Allah's presence is made evident.⁸ The Prophet Muhammad was instructed on the importance of revelation and this tradition was continued. Those who do not

have experience of Muslim cultures, particularly in the West, are often surprised at the sound of the recitation of the Qur'an. We tend to associate recitation with reading poetry, rather than the melodic qualities you hear when the text is recited or 'chanted'. Various styles of recitation exist, from some that are very slow and deliberate, almost hypnotic, through to the more harmonious and emotional variants. The idea that the Qur'an does not allow for translation does not sit well with most followers of Judaism and Christianity. Normally when one listens to the recitation of the Qur'anic texts, it becomes clear, first, how beautiful the text sounds and, second, how it would not sound as 'complete' when translated and recited in any language other than Arabic.

To highlight the sacred nature of the text, the practice of reading or reciting the Qur'an always begins with the declaration 'In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful'. This phrase is written at the start of each Sura, except Sura 9. The reading or recitation ends with the phrase 'The Almighty has spoken the truth.'⁹

The Qur'an is very much part of the everyday life of a Muslim,¹⁰ in terms of both the religious and the secular. Verses from the Qur'an are read at the birth of a child, when they are being named, and at the ceremony of circumcision where this traditional practice is still carried out. It is part of the funeral rite and marriage rite. Meetings in Muslim countries, as well as speeches, will normally start with a recitation of some Qur'anic verses. Adams correctly comments, 'in short, the Qur'an is invariably associated with the crucial occasions of Muslim life in an immediate way through the recitation of the revealed words.'¹¹

Memorization

Many Muslims make the effort to memorize the entire Qur'an. This practice reveals a new dimension to the English phrase of 'to learn something off by heart'. An individual who has succeeded in memorizing the entire Qur'an is called a *ḥāfiẓ*, which literally means someone who keeps or guards the Qur'an in his or her heart.

Translation

Traditionally, the Qur'an was not translated into any other language from the Classical Arabic it was originally written in, for the simple reason that the words originally delivered to the Prophet Muhammad were in Arabic. 'Any other words are simply not the Qur'an: they may convey its literal meaning, but they lack the divine aura of the original.'¹² It is usually surmised that as early as the ninth century CE, translations in languages other than Arabic began to be made, so that the text of the Qur'an could be made more readily available to those who did not speak or read Arabic. In fact, the majority of Muslims in

the modern world do not have Arabic as a language.¹³ Usually translations for distribution in Arabic-speaking countries take the form of an interlinear version and are printed so that the Arabic Qur'anic text is given greater prominence. While the translation of the text may be deemed necessary for those without an understanding of Classical Arabic to understand what they are reading or reciting, translations must always be embarked on in a sensitive manner. The very act of translating the Qur'an from Arabic is interpreting it.¹⁴

Translation into English

In deciding which English translation of the Qur'an to use in this work, some practicalities must be considered. First, it is necessary to consult at least one English translation, as this work does not presume a readership with sufficient Classical Arabic to have references solely from the Qur'an. Second, in a discussion of the divine designations it will be necessary to translate and comment on them in English – therefore, an English translation will be useful. There are over 40 English translations of the Qur'an. The major difference between these and English translation, of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament is that translations of the Qur'an are normally written by one person or a very small group of contributors. There has yet to be a large-scale effort as for the Hebrew Bible and New Testament.¹⁵ One of the most important distinctions among them is the type of referencing they use. It is usually easy to look up a Sura but numerous diverse techniques are utilized. Pickthall¹⁶ and Yusuf Ali¹⁷ used two different Indian systems, which makes their numbering vary from other editions – for example, the standard Egyptian edition.

Theology in Islam

This work takes the idea of theology to be the study of God (as a divine being). A good example of how this idea is used in the Islamic faith context is Ayoub's definition of theology in Islam (*'ilm al-kalām* or 'science of speech' as in theological discourse in English) as it is 'the science of the knowledge of God's existence and attributes as well as his relationship to the universe in general and humankind in particular. It is a discourse about God, his attributes, and his teleological acts of creation and nurturing of all things.'¹⁸

God

The fact that God is one being and is unique forms the first article of the *shahadah* (*shahāda*, the Islamic 'confession of faith'): 'There is no deity/god but God and Muhammad is God's Messenger' (37.35, 4). Four of the Five

Pillars of Islam, communal prayer, the paying of alms, the fast of Ramadan, and the Hajj pilgrimage are usually seen as affording understanding to those of the Islamic faith and a sense of unison to both the local and the worldwide faith communities. The most important of the Five Pillars is the *shahadah* and is often viewed as the aggregate of all Islamic theology and teachings. The statement of the *shahadah* highlights the acknowledgement of the rather more intricate theological doctrine termed the *tawhid*. This literally means ‘making one’, which does sound as if it is identical to the monotheism of Judaism and Christianity and it does of course mean that there is only one God, but it also means that ‘God is Oneness’. Aslan aptly describes the doctrine, ‘God is Unity: wholly indivisible, entirely unique, and utterly undefinable. God resembles nothing in either essence or attributes.’¹⁹

This aspect of Islamic belief is vitally important to consider when studying the divine designations in the Qur’an as, because of this core belief there is none of the same literary aspect of comparison that is present in Judaism and Christianity. There is no need to compare God with anything or anyone for those who follow the Islamic faith. The very existence of God means that nothing can be associated with God. *Tawhid* is essentially that God cannot be described in human terms and by human language. God is beyond any scope of a human’s knowledge. Linked with this is the doctrine of *mukha afa*, which literally means ‘absolute difference’; God is therefore ‘absolutely’ different from humankind.²⁰ The language used, therefore, in the Qur’an in relation to God is allegorical in nature and uses symbolic vocabulary to attempt to describe God.

Interpreting the Qur’an

There are two different methods used to interpret the Qur’an. The first, *tafsir*, is concerned with the literal meaning of the text and looks to the context and the chronology of the text. It often focuses on the ‘rules’ demonstrated in the text and how the text of the Qur’an instructs a Muslim how to live an upstanding way of life. The second, *ta’wil*, focuses on the mysterious aspects of the text and is more mystical. A tension does exist between the two methodologies. The traditional view of the Qur’an that saw the Qur’an as uncreated, eternal, and the direct words of God made the idea of examining any original intent or historical context of the text or its collection as unnecessary.

99 Most Beautiful Names *Asma ul Husna*

The traditional list of the 99 Most Beautiful Names of Allah are not necessarily terms that are given directly as ‘name’ to Allah in the text of the Qur’an or elsewhere; rather, they are the attributes of Allah that are found in the text of the Qur’an. The phrase *Asma ul Husna* is constructed with the term ‘asma’, which

is the plural of 'name', and 'Husna', which is the superlative of beautiful or, simply, 'Most Beautiful'. The Qur'an does not give a specific list of the names; rather, they are lists that have been gathered by various traditions with very little difference among them. If there are divergences, these are only usually one or two names. The list is usually seen as a tool to remember the glory of Allah and to keep this glory in the memory of Allah. There is very little critical commentary on the list and little historical record of its origins. Most modern work (in a variety of languages) focuses on the common activity of reciting the names, often using a string of beads.

Allah

Allah is the literal translation of the word God and for Muslims this is the divine name that most indicated the oneness of God. The term has no plural form and it can only be used in reference to God – no person can take this name and it is not included in any human names. The only way humans can be related to the name is in the sense of being called '*Abd-Allah* or the servant of God. The root of the term is *al-ilah* or 'the God'. The generic Arabic term for deities is *lah* (with the plural '*aliha*'). The name Allah is used in the Qur'an 2697 times.²¹

The 99 Most Beautiful Names of Allah

1. *Ar-Rahmān (The All Beneficent)*

The initial *aya* of *al-Fatiha* sets out that the two terms *al-Rahmān* and *al-rahim* refer only to Allah and are employed largely in the text in reference to Allah. The root of the two terms is *rahm*, which is normally translated as 'womb' or 'origin'. *Al-Rahman* is usually translated into English as 'The Almighty' or 'compassionate'. The term is usually used in conjunction with the term *al-rahim* within the Qur'anic text.

The term is most frequently used in Sura 19, where it is cited 16 times. Elsewhere, apart from its use in the superscriptions of the Suras, it appears 56 times. In 19.18, Mary (Maryam) requests protection from *al-Rahmān* to defend her from what she believes is an intruder in her room but who is in fact the archangel Gabriel (Jibril). In 19.45 Ibrahim speaks to his father who is a worshipper of idols and does not believe in Allah. 'I fear you could be struck with the wrath of *al-Rahmān* and Satan would be your guide.'

In 19.85-96, the term is used repeatedly. The text condemns the worship of idols by Christians and emphatically states that *al-Rahmān* does not share power with anybody or anything else, or that Allah does not procreate. Allah is the only Creator and Allah has created everything. The text here uses the imagery of mountains, the heavens, and the earth as all respecting the supreme power of Allah, known as being powerful but also merciful.

2. *Ar-Rahīm (The Most Merciful)*

The name *al-Rahim* is normally translated as ‘all-merciful’ and is cited in the Qur’an in relation to Allah 114 times.²² While it does seem to be a repetition of the name *al-Rahmān* in terms of the idea that Allah is compassionate or merciful, if the background to the two words is examined, it would appear that *al-rahim* is a native Arabic word that fits a known nominal pattern; *al-Rahmān* is a loan word to the language with quite a substantial etymological background and therefore would have a distinct meaning.²³ If the two names are placed together in a sentence (for example, 2.163; 41.2), the meaning of the conjunction would appear to be that of Allah as being powerful and having the ultimate authority to bestow this mercy and compassion.

3. *Al-Malik (The Absolute Ruler)*

The title of ‘King’ is used of Allah here in the absolute sense as it is used with the definite article. Allah will not be on a par with the earthly kings; rather, he is *the* king, the king of kings. The Arabic name for men, *Abdelmelik*, conveys the meaning of the divine title for Muslims – the meaning is ‘the server (of Allah) the king’. The king in this essence is someone who rules over his followers, who governs and commands respect.

4. *Al-Quddūs (The Most Holy)*

This is often translated as ‘the most pure’ showing an understanding of the fact that Allah is free from faults or defects. As an attribute of Allah, it shows the holiness that Allah possesses as a divine being set apart from humanity and from the sin that all humans possess. Muslims tend to link this designation with the idea of Allah as Creator – as the Creator is the Supreme Being, then the Creator must be the ‘most holy’. The term *Quddūs* is associated with the Arabic root *Qadusa*, which carries the meaning ‘to be pure, holy, and spotless’, according to the Qur’an. Thus, in reference to Allah, this name is viewed as a pure being above all being; pure consciousness above all consciousness; pure life above all that is living. When studying the various reflections on this name or attribute, one tends to get the sense of negativity in association with the term – namely, that the name is linked with an idea of what Allah *is not* (i.e. tainted, sinful, with blame, and so forth). While this thinking is unavoidable in any explanation of the term, it does not capture the essential nature of the term: that Allah cannot actually be linked with attributes (whether positive or negative). No human can conceive an attribute or even group of attributes that can encompass the divine. Allah does not bear any resemblance (either by attribute or action) to any human and the name *Al-Quddūs* bears testament to this. No human is perfect; everyone has imperfection and as such it is only Allah who is the ‘Most Holy’ or ‘Most Pure’.

5. *As-Salām (The All-Peaceful)*

This divine name emphatically sees Allah as the source of peace and harmony. The Qur'an teaches that Allah will send a *salām* (or peace or a blessing) to those who reach heaven (Surah Ya Sin 57). In this text, Allah is depicted as rewarding those who are faithful with the security of heaven, where there will be peace and protection for eternity. Here Allah will save the faithful from all dangers. The name is linked with the ideas presented by *Al-Quddūs* but here the focus is more on future events, on both earth and in the afterlife. Peace is something that Allah will deliver in the future, a gift to strive towards and act accordingly in life to be rewarded with peace. This peace will be eternal, just as Allah is.

6. *Al-Mu'min (The Inspirer of Faith)*

The core of the meaning of this name is that Allah is the source of security, stability, and safety. Those who seek refuge with Allah, who are followers of Allah in faith, are given protection and comfort. Faith is seen by many as the greatest gift that Allah has bestowed on humanity, as there is no fear in the heart of a true believer of Allah as the faith they have secures them from harm and from those who pose a threat to them. Often contemplations on the name state that it is Allah that illuminates the heart with faith, or the illuminator of light in our hearts, and this goes some way to encapsulating the trust that is inherent between Allah and those who follow him that is illustrated in this name.

7. *Al-Muhaymin (The Guardian)*

This term may be translated to promote the notion that Allah bears witness to all actions of humanity, in the sense of overseeing and protecting all that they say and do. Linguistically, the term has several meanings and is also understood to be *Mu'aymin*, where the *ha* (ه) is read as a *hamza* (أ). The term *Mu'aymin* means the one who offers peace and security. Allah watches all actions though not in the negative sense of a 'Big Brother'. The verbal form of the term is used in the sense of a bird covering and therefore protecting her chick from danger. While this does not help in the theological sense of the term, this explanation serves to highlight how Allah is the Guardian, not in the way of a military peacekeeper but as a carer who looks out for the interests of those under protection. The name is only used once in the Qur'an, in 59.23, but the sense of the term is not particular to here. In 4.1 Allah is described as the one who 'ever watches over you' and in 10.46 Allah is depicted as being witness to all that the people do.

8. *Al-Azīz (The Almighty)*

This name for Allah shows the significance of Allah as the holder of all power – there is no one (deity or human) who has as much power as Allah has.

9. *Al-Jabbār (The Despot)*

While most translations into English of *Al-Jabbār* would initially appear to have a rather negative connotation in a Jewish or Christian mindset, when the context of the use of the name is examined, its use shows instead that Allah is able to act with force and strength against those who act against Allah's will. There is nothing in the world that Allah does not have control over and, if need be, Allah has the ability as *Al-Jabbār* to compel humans to follow his will. This might seem rather forceful, but as Allah's will is the only true path and surely the best (or, indeed, only option worth considering), it is a positive action that Allah has the ability to make people follow this path. There is also the association of the name with the more familiar 'Mighty' or 'most High'. This translation may be better understood by looking at the term *jabbarah*, which is usually translated as very high, or too high to reach (for example, you might hide a gift somewhere that is *jabborah*, so that it cannot be found and ruin the surprise). This notion of the attribute of Allah conveyed in the name *Al-Jabbār* is therefore of the idea that Allah is uniquely positioned higher than any other deity or person.

10. *Al-Mutakabbir (The Proud)*

Muslims normally see the name *Al-Mutakabbir* as being illustrative of how Allah is the one who makes apparent greatness in everything and in every way. *Al-Mutakabbir* possesses rights and privileges that others do not and, as such, is much superior to any created thing. *Mutakabbir* is an emphatic verbal form of a term that is usually associated with using a privileged position and qualities. This may initially seem to be negative; humanity normally holds a dim view of those who do not use an advantageous position for the good and benefit of others. Read in the context of the Qur'an and Islamic theology in general, it is not to be arrogant but merely Allah acknowledging his position of greatness and that his path or way is the correct one to follow. This position may be described by Muslims as 'the Truth'.

Another aspect of this name or attribute is that it may be translated as 'the Majestic' or 'the Majestic One'. This is linked to the idea of *Al-Malik* in the sense of a king-ruler but it also adds to our understanding of *Al-Mutakabbir* as the Allah who must be respected and followed as one would follow an earthly king. This is someone who is to be trusted and wise in his governance and, as such, his method of rule and way of judgement and governance is superior. It is worth noting that Islamic thinking does not compare Allah to anything, in the sense that Allah cannot be 'greater' than any thing or anyone; rather, Allah is incomparable.

11. *Al-Khāliq (The Creator)*

This term is typically translated as the one who creates everything from nothing. Linked with this notion is the idea that the Creator is the one who creates all things with the knowledge of what will happen to them. Linked with the name *Al-Khāliq* are the names *Al-Bāri'* (no. 12, translated as The Rightful or The Maker of Order), *Al-Musawwir* (no. 13, translated as The Fashioner of Forms or The Shaper of Beauty). The names are not synonymous in Muslim thinking, such that all three point to the act of creation. In fact, within Islamic consideration, the process of creation is more detailed. If everything is to come from nothing, a plan must first be formulated (*Al-Muqtadir*, no. 70, translated as The Creator of all power), the plan must be carried out as a process (*Al-Bāri'*, no. 12), and, finally, that which is created must be formed or fashioned (*Al-Musawwir*, no. 13).

12. *Al-Bāri' (The Maker of Order)*

The idea of making order would presuppose that before the order, there existed either nothing or chaos. This idea of Allah as Creator is very much linked with the notion of Allah as *Al-Khāliq* (no. 11). The verbal form of this word that is used in everyday Arabic speech would be best translated as 'to whittle', as in carving a point on a stick or a pencil with a blade. Something that was dull and useless now has form and, as a result, has a purpose and use. There is also the association with the term *Bara'a* that would be translated as 'Creator' in the sense of forming or creating something where nothing previously existed. In this sense, Allah is seen as the only instigator in the creation of the world as we humans perceive it. How else could the world have existed if Allah did not create it? He was the only thing to exist and therefore the only entity that could have brought about our existence. Interestingly Muslims do not believe that Allah would need to have rested on the seventh day of creation, as Christians and Jews understand the story of creation. Resting would be seen as human limitation because of fatigue that could not be associated with Allah (see 2.255).

13. *Al-Musawwir (The Fashioner of Forms)*

This name is also associated with *Al-Khāliq* (no. 11) and *Al-Bāri'* (no. 12). The idea of fashioning a form is also variously understood as shaping beauty or creation. Islam belief sees that creation is not a one-off event but, rather, a continuous motion where things are created and grown, and development of humanity and nature, for example, are continuing. *Al-Musawwir* is therefore the one who is able to give what has been created a distinct and recognizable form. The Qur'an notes this in 40.64: 'It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape – and made your shapes beautiful, – and has provided for you Sustenance, of things pure and good.'

14. *Al-Ghaffār (The Forgiving)*

This name describes Allah as the one who has the power and ability to, first, know of our sins, even those not in a public forum; second, to acknowledge the remorse of those who have sinned; and finally (and, indeed, most important) forgives the sins. This is not a one-off action, confined then to a historical situation, but an ongoing event. When followers of Allah are forgiven, they are also blessed with having received forgiveness; as such they are free from the guilt and confusion associated with sin and are set free to live in peace. Allah does not wait until a follower sins to forgive; Allah also possesses the capability to turn a bad, evil, or sinful deed into something positive, and such is Allah's power and control over human actions.

15. *Al-Qahhār (The Subduer)*

The essence of this name is that Allah has the perfect power (perfect over and above the limited human idea of perfection) and cannot be restricted in his actions. It is also translated variously as 'The Ever-Dominating', 'The Conqueror', and 'The Prevailer'. This term may initially seem quite severe in relation to Allah, almost giving a dark side to his character, but when examined in the contexts that the term is used in, most principally in relation to the act of creation and Allah's relationship with what has been created by him, the terms appear to be more informative. The use of the name in the Qur'anic texts depicts an image of a deity who reigns over the entire created world (animal, human, nature, and so forth) and as such can overcome anything that a human may perceive as an obstacle. Allah will reign in victory over anyone who dares to oppose him and as such no human (or, indeed, no other supposed deity) will be able to oppose his will. Allah is the master, having conquered and subdued all.

16. *Al-Wahhāb (The Giver of All)*

The nuances of this name can be more readily understood if the text of 3.8 is examined where the Abdullah Y. Ali translation renders the verse as 'Our Lord!' (they say), 'Let not our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from Thine own Presence; for Thou art the Grantor of bounties without measure.' The term is usually associated in the reader's mind with the proper noun *hibah* and the verb *yahib*, where someone gifts or donates something to another and does not expect anything in return (for example, in giving a donation to a charity). All gifts that are bestowed by Allah are done in this way; Allah has the ability and resources to give many blessings and good fortune to those who follow him but will never expect anything in return. In this manner, his manner can be equated with the human adage of his generosity being boundless. Allah could not possibly be selfish as he is always the one who initiates the giving of a gift – his followers do not even have to request such.

17. *Ar-Razzāq (The Sustainer)*

The idea behind the name *Ar-Razzāq* is that Allah is the one who provides things that are useful to those who choose to follow him. In 51.58 it states, 'For Allah is He Who gives (all) Sustenance,- Lord of Power,- Steadfast (for ever).' The Arabic for rain is *rizq* and this closely associated word may be crucial to fully comprehending the idea of the name in the text of the Qur'an. The provider of rain, *al-Raziq* is obviously an entity that can sustain life, as water is crucial to endurance of both humans and nature. As *Ar-Razzāq* is seen as a superlative form of *al-Raziq* and as such can only be associated with Allah. In this instance then the 'sustainer' not only 'sustains' the body with water or food, which of course is only temporary, but also provides enduring spiritual sustenance.

18. *Al-Fattāh (The Opener)*

The Opener is the one who 'opens' and makes evident the solution to all problems and makes the lives of those who follow him easier. Humanity can often become caught in a deadlock situation – whether on global, personal, or familial levels – and, due to our limitations as humans, it often appears as impossible to reach resolution or to move beyond the obstacle. The *Al-Fattāh* is the one who can 'open' this human deadlock and make the truth known. As the one who controls all earthly affairs, Allah has the ability to simplify the complicated (6.59). On a different level, Allah as *Al-Fattāh* allows us to open our hearts and our spiritual selves to growth and development of knowledge of Allah.

19. *Al-'Alīm (The Knower of All)*

Al-'Alīm possesses knowledge of all things not just in an earthly or heavenly realm that a human can only imagine but also in areas of knowledge that a human cannot possibly conceive of. The knowledge of Allah also concerns the future. As Allah was present at the beginning of time as humanity measures it, and is aware of humanity's every thought, *Al-'Alīm* is also aware of what will happen in the future. This name does much to remind the followers of Allah that, although he values them as precious to him, they are not in any way comparable with any of his attributes and the depth of his abilities and knowledge cannot be comprehended by humanity. The name is also associated with knowing the truth. The ways and dictums of Allah are the only correct and true path through life and it would serve his followers well to serve them. It is also important for people to remember that nothing can escape from the scope of the knowledge of Allah for it includes everything and nothing, no human secret or thought can be hidden from him. While this may give some people the idea that Allah is a type of 'Big Brother' who watches and supervises our every move, approving and disapproving of our daily actions, the Islamic belief is in fact much more comforting. *Al-'Alīm* is the one who is aware of and

understands all our innermost worries and concerns. Nothing can happen to us that he is not privy to. A true and spiritual reflection on the saying ‘a problem shared is a problem halved’. How can a human concern or worry be perturbing if Allah is there to share and help with our pain?

20. *Al-Qābid (The Constrictor)*

The basic sense of *Al-Qābid* is the one who take a hold of something, constricting or restricting it as he sees fit. The idea of to grip tightly, to restrain, or to withhold is also associated with this term and essentially implies a forceful method of taking control of something. This name does give a rather negative view; as such, it is usually used in conjunction with another term so that Allah may not be conceived of in negative terms. Usually it is associated with *Al-Bāsīt* (no. 21) to give the sense of *al-Qābid wal-Bāsīt* or the One Who Withholds and Enlarges Sustenance. In this sense, therefore, the underlying theme of so many of the names of Allah is brought to the fore; namely, the reciprocity that is involved, whether between Allah and his followers or, in this case, the ‘give-and-take’ element of the attributes of Allah.

21. *Al-Bāsīt (The Reliever)*

In a linguistic sense, the term *Al-Bāsīt* refers to the one who stretches out his hand in a gesture of goodwill (as in a pat on the back or to shake someone’s hand) or to cause physical harm by a show of strength. In this sense it may seem, as with *Al-Qābid* (no. 20), that there is a possibility of negative thoughts associated with Allah doing harm. Rather, we should think of an image of a powerful force, but one that is used for good. Not all acts of destruction have to have only negative connections; a simple example in human terms would be the tearing down of a ramshackle building in order to build a new, safe, and comfortable family home. In the same way, Allah has the strength to face up to those who cause worry and heartache to those who follow him, but this is done in the protective sense. Allah’s show of strength is for the benefit of others. The term *Al-Bāsīt* is always to be used in conjunction with *Al-Qābid* (no. 20) as together they give the truer picture of Allah as the one who possesses both might and wisdom and uses the two in perfect union and harmony.

22. *Al-Khāfid (The Abaser)*

The simple explanation of the name *Al-Khāfid* is the one who brings something down or diminishes it. In this sense it is usually recommended that the term is used in conjunction with *Ar-Rāfi* (no. 23). This name also denotes the one who has the ability and means by which to humiliate tyrants and tormentors. *Al-Khāfid* is the one who, in modern parlance, ‘takes people down a peg or two’ if they are arrogant.

23. *Ar-Rāfi'* (The Exalter)

The philosophy behind this name is that Allah is the one (and the only one) who can raise humans and humankind together to a more exalted position. With this lifting up, followers of Allah enjoy a status that is higher than those who do not enjoy the divinity of Allah. In a more general sense, those who obey Allah will be raised up to living lives that are better – in the sense of happier and more fulfilling – than the lives of people who choose not to worship Allah. Even your earthly reputation is lifted by the belief in and worship of Allah.

24. *Al-Mu'izz* (The Giver)

This name may also be translated into English as 'The One Who Gives Honour' or 'The One Who Honours', in the sense that Allah is the one who bestows high regard to whomever he chooses and, as a result, Allah cannot be degraded. There is also the idea associated with the use of this name that Allah is the one who has the ability to give strength, honour, and power. In a linguistic sense, it is useful to note for comparison with the Jewish names for Allah that the term *ma'azza* is derived from the verb *yu'izz*, which means strength and might, or the idea of potency, and in this sense the name is sometimes translated into English as 'The Mighty'.

25. *Al-Mu'dhell* (The Giver of Dishonour)

This term is seen as the reverse of *Al-Mu'izz* (no. 24). It is sometimes translated as 'The Humiliator' and as such echoes the sentiments of *Al-Mu'izz*. It is a very powerful attribute in the sense that it is normally associated with an extreme baseness or low level. While it may be seen as something negative, its inclusion here would actually add to the very rounded character of Allah that is displayed in the recitation and knowledge of the 99 attributes. The wisdom and knowledge of Allah means that Allah not only has the power and ability to create positive situations and occurrences in the lives of those who follow him but also he has the capacity and wisdom to create situations that are low and contemptible and will degrade humanity. If Allah has the ability to do this, then he controls these situations and as such has the authority to ensure that these situations are not the norm in the lives of those who believe in him.

26. *As-Samī* (The All-Hearing)

Allah is the one who can hear all things that are uttered. It would seem that this name is one of the more simpler to understand on initial reading but it is essential to comprehend that Allah does not need an aural faculty to 'hear' what is being spoken, shouted, or sung by humankind. There is no anthropomorphic quality to this name, as by Allah's stance as the divine being he does not

require ears or, indeed, any instrument or organ to ‘hear’. It is as if Allah senses the very conception of an idea or thought, which does not need to be articulated to be ‘known’ by Allah. Allah also accepts every word and idea that he hears; he does not have to agree with it, but he does pay attention to every idea, secret, or prayer that he hears and treats everything and everyone equally. There is no right ‘timing’ for being heard by Allah either; some of the translations of the term are rendered as ‘The Ever-Hearing’ or ‘The Ever-Listening’ and this allows the idea that Allah is ready and willing to listen to supplications at any time. There is also no need for explanation: *As-Samī* comprehends all languages and statements he hears.

27. *Al-Basīr (The All-Seeing)*

As with *As-Samī* (no. 26), there is no need for Allah to have eyes or an instrument for viewing when he is able to see all things that occur in the world. Allah has insight into all things: those that are in clear view, carried out with deliberate intent, and those things that remain hidden, whether out of a need for secrecy or things that remain undiscovered or ignored by human eyes. He sees and comprehends both the internal and the external aspects of all humans. Allah understands everything that he sees and has the ability to see every detail. As might be explained in human thinking, Allah sees the entire picture.

28. *Al-Hakam (The Judge)*

Allah as Ruler of the earthly realm is entitled to judge those he rules. This judgement and ruling is carried out using his endless wisdom and knowledge. He is the only true judge and as such will always serve justice in every situation, no matter how complex it may appear to humanity. When *Al-Hakam* has passed judgement, his ruling and decree cannot be overturned or put forward to another court or person for continued judgement; Allah’s word and thoughts are final and binding. There should be no need to quibble with them as no other judgement could compare with the accuracy and fairness of that delivered by *Al-Hakam*. Allah can also act as the ultimate arbitrator, a mediator and go-between for humans who cannot possess the wisdom and insight to resolve their disputes. In these cases, the rule and ruling of Allah will set right the conflict situation. It is noteworthy that this attribute tends to be completely ignored by those who would argue that the deity of the Islamic religion is harsh and would invite conflict and violence among his followers and those of other religions.

29. *Al-`Adl (The Just)*

One of the more simple and straightforward definitions I have heard for this name is that it means that Allah is allowed to do whatever he wishes as he will always act in a just and righteous manner towards those he engages with. Allah

rectifies any problems and will always act in an impartial manner, succeeding in delivering absolute justice. His ability to do this comes from his knowledge of the past, of how humans act in the present, and of the future.

30. *Al-Latīf (The Subtle One)*

If a reader of the 99 names of Allah were to read the majority of names that are associated with powerful and far-ranging actions, it would seem likely, therefore, that Allah could boast of his good actions and deeds for his people and ensure that all his good work was witnessed by all. The name *Al-Latīf* contends against this misconception by highlighting how Allah is always subtle and discreet in his actions. He does not want reward or honour from those he helps but it is his compassion and love for his people that guide him. His actions are, indeed, so subtle that often those whose aid he comes to do not even realize that they are being helped.

31. *Al-Khabīr (The All-Aware)*

Essentially this name refers to the fact that Allah knows everything that is in the realm of humanity and everything that remains outside of human understanding. No knowledge is gained in humanity without Allah's influence and presence. Allah is aware of and has knowledge of the very essence of everything, no matter how complicated or intricate the matter may seem to a human being. It is necessary to distinguish between *Al-Khabīr* and *Al-'Alīm* (no. 19), as *Al-Khabīr* emphasizes the idea that the knowledge that is possessed is only known to one being – in this case Allah. To all others, humanity included, it remains hidden. In 6.103, it is noted of Allah, 'To him belongeth all that dwelleth (or lurketh) in the night and the day. For he is the one who heareth and knoweth all things.'

32. *Al-Halīm (The Forebearing)*

The name *Al-Halīm* is derived from the Arabic *hilm*, which is associated with taking time and care to complete a task. With this idea in mind, the name *Al-Halīm* shows how Allah takes care and demonstrates astute awareness with all his interactions with humanity. Allah acts with clemency. In particular, Allah will overlook the sins of his followers and will help them to overcome their shortcomings. This is done to the extent of paying no attention to any failings. Allah looks to the positive characteristics and indulges those who worship, as a parent might with a child.

33. *Al-'Azīm (The Magnificent)*

This name is superlative in form and can be simply translated as 'The Greatest One'. It is not to be seen as Allah being greater than anyone or anything on

earth, or, indeed, anything that has been created. Rather, the incomparability of Allah is reiterated with this name; the ‘greatness’ of Allah is so immense and vast that it does not conform to any limits, and in fact cannot be comprehended by a human.

34. *Al-Ghafūr (The All-Forgiving)*

The imagery associated with this name comes from the words associated in the minds of listeners with the Arabic for a veil or covering, *ghafr*. In keeping with this word association, Allah possesses the ability to cover or discreetly hide the sins of those who follow him. In this way, it is obvious that Allah will always know of a person’s sin, no matter what the perceived size of the sin is, but he is always quick to overlook the sins of people who are genuinely remorseful for their thoughts or actions. Allah is continually depicted as merciful through many of the names that are associated with him and because of this the idea of mercy will always be close to the forgiveness of sins by Allah. The idea of ‘all-forgiving’ also allows for the notion that Allah will not just agree to forgive a person once, or will only allow a ‘one strike and you’re out’ approach to forgiveness; Allah is all-forgiving and therefore open to the merciful act of forgiveness for all sins for all time.

35. *Al-Shakūr (The Grateful)*

To elaborate on the English translation of the ‘grateful’, it would seem that Allah in this instance is thankful and appreciative for the loyalty shown by his followers. He is also aware of and grateful to the service that the followers demonstrate, as a master would be thankful for the loyal service given to him by the servants of his household. This means that the loyal followers will be rewarded, as the reciprocity of the relationship between Allah and the people is important. These rewards are only obtainable in the afterlife, but it would make sense that those who remain loyal to Allah during their lifetime will be rewarded with the loving relationship that inevitably results. The Qur’an suggests that the loyalty given by the followers need only be small and that the reward will be multiplied by Allah in return (64.17).

36. *Al-’Aliyy (The Sublimely Exalted)*

The name *Al-’Aliyy* acknowledges the high status that Allah inhabits and the lofty status that his followers give him in their minds and hearts. The name also adds more to the idea that we as human beings cannot ever truly explain Allah or envisage what he is like in a physical manifestation or in character because of his high position; he is literally ‘above’ human comprehension – his status reaches that of a perfection that is unknown in human terms. There is also the sense that Allah resides in a position so far above that of humanity that he is

beyond the earthly realm and the sins and troubles that are associated with dwelling here and being human.

37. *Al-Kabīr (The Great)*

The translation of *Al-Kabīr* is relatively simple: Allah is the greatest to the absolute point. He is greater than anyone, to the extent that he should not be compared with anything in the area of knowledge and comprehension of humanity as the attributes and qualities that Allah possesses are far beyond those that could be envisaged by a mortal. In line with being 'the greatest', Allah has a unique sense of perfection and as such his followers should respect this and should not seek to compare Allah with anything or anybody. Muslims should not try to be like Allah, they can never even conceive of what this might entail; rather, they should see Allah as the supreme Great deity and from this, treat his teachings with the respect that this deserves.

38. *Al-Hafīz (The Preserver)*

The preservation in the translation of this name is essentially the preservation of the existence of humanity. Allah safeguards the future of humanity and the earth that he created. In this way Allah knows every detail of existence and is aware of the changes that it undergoes on a daily basis, through natural causes or through the direct intervention of humanity (whether the result is a negative one, such as pollution, or positive, such as planting trees, for example). This awareness allows Allah to be seen in the sense of a guardian or the one who protects creation, as in *Al-Muḥaymin* (no. 7).

39. *Al-Muqīt (The Nourisher)*

The idea of the attribute of Allah that lies behind the name *Al-Muqīt* is very much linked with the preceding *Al-Hafīz* (no. 38, The Preserver). In order to protect and preserve that which Allah has created, he must nourish it and provide ways for both nature and humans to sustain them. On a simple level, this is linked with things such as air and water that are essential for plant life to flourish, but there is also the dimension of the spiritual nourishment that following Allah allows those of the Muslim faith. With the giving of nourishment and sustenance comes the strength and ability to live your life as Allah would wish.

40. *Al-Hasīb (The Bringer of Judgement)*

The idea of judgement can only too often be viewed as something negative in a human sense. Judgement usually means that a ruling must come down in favour of one person or group at the expense of another. There would seem to

be a losing side, or someone proved incorrect, in a judgement. This can be seen in the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels to a certain extent – for example, in the prophetic literature of Amos who sees Allah as judging the nations and passing out punishment to those he has judged as transgressing. In the sense of *Al-Hasīb*, however, the sense is more that Allah is the ‘reckoner’ or, in modern terms, the one who is to be reckoned with. Everything that is honourable in the world is to be referred to Allah and he is the one who brings them to account. Allah as the one who brings judgement may also be seen as the one who knows every deed (good or bad) that his followers undertake and as such keeps a record of them. He does not necessarily pass judgement on these actions and thoughts but has the ability to bring people to account over them. It is necessary for followers of Allah to keep this in mind in their everyday lives and to take this into account when making decisions.

41. *Al-Jalīl* (The Majestic)

The essential connotation of the name *Al-Jalīl* is that the possessor of the name is majestic, bestowed with honour and greatness. While many may respond to the name with the idea that Allah is a king, the Islamic thought and theological outlook would distance itself from the promotion of this image as to see Allah as a majestic king would be to bestow upon him an earthly role (even one that may be traditionally connected with the deity) and as such is inconceivable, for Allah is too great in stature to be associated with a role or social position that a human could occupy. This image and idea does no justice to the supreme greatness and dignity that Allah enjoys. The name is sometimes translated into English as ‘The Glorious’. This is more in keeping with the thought that in the shadow of the glory of Allah no human being can be seen as great and, with this in mind, thoughts and worship should be only directed at Allah, not at other gods or any material attractions that may distract humanity.

42. *Al-Karīm* (The Bountiful)

This name is also translated as ‘The One Who is Generous’ in the sense of material goods and wealth but also of spiritual help and guidance for those who follow Allah yet still experience difficulties and suffering in their lives. This act of generosity is also an act that does not cease. Allah has always been generous and there are neither time limits nor restrictions on the generosity shown by Allah; he gives eternally. The gifts that Allah bestows are always of the highest order.

43. *Ar-Raqīb* (The Watchful)

This name is simply translated as the one who is always watchful and alert, ready to witness any human act. Rather than the idea of ‘spying’ on humanity

in some kind of underhand or devious way, Allah observes all thoughts, actions, and feelings. Nothing is hidden from his gaze and he will spring to the aid of anyone who requires it. Allah's care of those he has created does not work within 'office hours' or only when a follower turns to him in need; instead, Allah is in a sense a step ahead of human reaction, always ready to interact with human lives, even if we are not immediately aware of the situation that calls for this intercession. There is also the sense that Allah holds the role of a type of watchman or guard. This is an insufficient comparison of his relationship with humanity with that of a human job, but this contrast does help us to understand the notion that we are protected by God's watchful eye, and should not feel under harsh scrutiny as we live our lives – rather, we should feel secure and protected.

44. *Al-Mujīb (The Responsive)*

The responsive one is the one who answers the prayers and praise of those who follow and worship him. These pleas and requests are always answered and responded to; in fact, Allah will overturn every obstacle and difficulty in answering the call of those who follow him and will allow nothing to stand in his way.

45. *Al-Wāsi' (The Vast)*

Al-Wāsi' is the one who is vast and without limits. Allah does not have limits in terms of his greatness or his abilities and attributes. This results in Allah himself having a profusion of means; his expanse encompasses all of creation in a tender and embracing manner and is all-giving to creation. Allah's power, mercy, generosity, and knowledge are without boundaries and stretch far beyond the comprehension or understanding of that which is known on earth. As Allah's capabilities and knowledge are limitless, it makes sense that he must act without help or assistance – in a sense, independently.

46. *Al-Hakīm (The Perfectly Wise)*

This name is in the superlative form and as such Allah is the one who is the wisest and the most knowing in terms of knowledge of what is right and wrong. Allah possesses all wisdom. In fact, the wisdom that Allah has is such that it is sufficient to prevent humans from committing sin or error. The sense of 'perfectly' gives us the sense that Allah is without flaw or error and as such is in a position to judge the merit of that which he has created. The wisdom is of the past, the present, and the future, and is not measurable within the scope of human understanding.

47. *Al-Wadūd (The Loving One)*

Allah is the one who loves all his followers, regardless of their actions or their worship of him. He is also the source of all love on earth and is beloved of all. Allah deserves the affection of his followers and their unwavering love. The term is linked with the Arabic *wudd*, meaning love and friendship, and as such Allah's love is true love that does not require unceasing loyalty to function. Allah's love does not stop and start according to the fluctuation of the love of those who worship him; rather, he acknowledges the faults of humanity and shows his love for humanity by attempting to make his knowledge and wisdom clear to humanity. *Al-Wadūd* loves a person more than anyone else could possibly conceive of loving them, whether in the sense of a friend, a family member, or a spouse. Humans cannot adequately ascertain the extent of Allah's love for those he created; rather, they must feel safe and protected with this unwavering security and blessing.

48. *Al-Majīd (The All-Glorious)*

This name is in the superlative form and is the one whose actions are glorious, noble, honourable, and generous. *Al-Majīd* should be seen as the most perfect example of what is good and honourable as well as glorious. Allah has immense status and is the only one who should be praised and worshipped, as his actions are more glorious and more benevolent than anyone else. Again, as with many of the Beautiful Names, there is the sense that no one can possibly compare with Allah and that, whatever he does or whichever attribute those who worship him come to associate with him, he will not just encompass the attribute totally but he will far exceed our understanding of it. This term is associated with the name *Al-Mājid* (no. 65), which is also translated as 'The Glorious'.

49. *Al-Bā'ith (The Resurrector)*

This name can be translated as having several distinct meanings; it is often understood as the one who resurrects those who are dead but it is also often translated with the sense of reviving humanity. In a linguistic sense it is linked with the Arabic *ba'ith*, which means something that stimulates or sends someone to carry out a particular action. The term *ba'ith* also means army and as such there is the meaning of 'commissioning' associated with the term, as Allah commissioned messengers or prophets and has commissioned all those who follow him to lead lives according to how Allah would see fit.

Allah has the ability to raise people from the dead, a skill that no human can possess, and as such Allah has the power over creation – he has the ability to close the circle from creation to death and begin the cycle again.

50. *Ash-Shahīd (The Witness)*

The meaning of this name is linked with the idea of *Ar-Raqīb* (no. 43) where Allah is always directly present and continuously observes all that occurs on earth. Nothing is hidden from Allah as he is able to see what is in direct view and that which is hidden. From this observation comes knowledge of everything that occurs on earth.

51. *Al-Haqq (The Truth)*

This name is often translated as ‘The Real’ and in this sense it relates to the fact that Allah is real and has an existence in the human understanding. The existence and divinity of Allah have been proven. Allah is in fact the only reality and, in turn, the only truth. As Allah is the epitome of wisdom and justice, as well as truth, all his actions are conducted with these attributes and gifts to the fore. All truth is revealed by Allah; he is the only source of truth and his followers should only seek the truth from him, not from any earthly source.

52. *Al-Wakīl (The Ultimate Trustee)*

Allah is the one who has the ability to be guardian and overseer of all people and actions on earth. He can be trusted in every interaction and his decisions and actions need never be questioned; it is always possible to place complete faith and trust in Allah. Allah is in charge of everything and his followers will lead happier and more fulfilling lives if they entrust their daily lives and actions to Allah and his guidelines for living. This does not mean that Muslims can be complacent or lazy; rather, they must live to the best of their ability and trust the remaining to Allah.

53. *Al-Qawwiyy (The Possessor of All Strength)*

Allah is supremely strong and exhibits strength that does not demonstrate limits or boundaries. Allah has the endurance to help and guide humanity forever. He does not get tired or weary but can maintain the protection and guardianship of his people for as long as it is required. In the Arabic language, the synonym for this term would be ‘weakness’, a trait that Allah is so far removed from that the two cannot be put together. Associating this name with Allah reinforces this idea. Allah is not weak in terms of either physical or mental strength and also does not display weakness in the idea of being tempted or lacking resolve to carry out a plan or action.

54. *Al-Matīn (The Forceful One)*

The translation of this name as ‘The Forceful One’ often gives the misconception that Allah forces his views or opinions on those who choose to follow him.

Other translations of the term follow more in line with the idea of something that is steadfast and unyielding. Allah does not change his opinion or his mind. All his plans and ideas are carefully formulated and are therefore executed with precision and always to success. Allah will not grow bored or tired of his relationship with his followers, his relationship is a long-term one, and his love for his people is steadfast and unceasing. The name is always used with *Al-Qawwiyy* (no. 53) and both give the same sense of a God who is constant and can be relied on in any situation, given his loyalty to his people who follow his teachings. Allah can also overcome any obstacle or difficulty; no problem can make him back down or turn away from those who show him devotion.

55. *Al-Waliyy (The Protecting Friend)*

This name is also variously translated as ‘The Protective Ruler’ and ‘The Friendly Lord’. Combining the views of this name as demonstrated by these variations, it shows that Allah is essentially the helpful ruler and master of everything. He takes on and, indeed, far surpasses the earthly roles of planner, governor, and ruler. He is also one who helps those who follow him. His role is not to be seen as distant ruler and controller, but rather within the closer relationship of friendship. Allah is approachable and supportive as well as being ‘close by’ in terms of being readily available to listen to and assist those who request his aid. He is an ally in terms of trouble and continuously offers support and guidance to those who view him as their protecting friend. The term is linked in translation and explanation with *Al-Wāli* (no. 77, normally also translated as ‘The Protecting Friend’).

56. *Al-Hamīd (The Praised One)*

It is not enough to say that Allah is worthy of praise – this instruction is not compatible with the viewpoint put forward by the 99 Most Beautiful Names as a whole. Allah is of course worthy of prayers and thankful praise and should be glorified and worshipped. Instead, Allah is the one who *has* been praised and should be endlessly praised and worshipped by the very fact and existence of all that has been created by him. There is also the inherent message in this name that Allah is the only one who should be praised and adored. No other person or thing comes close to Allah’s glory and therefore is in no way worthy of praise.

57. *Al-Muhsi (The Reckoner)*

This term is associated with *Al-Hasīb* (no. 40) and in this sense is the one who is aware and has knowledge of all things, irrespective of how small and insignificant they may appear. He also comprehends everything that he reckons and is aware of everything, not just that which humanity sees. Allah does not

have fleeting knowledge of these details; rather, it is as if he takes note of them and records them, like an accountant taking note of figures in accounts.

58. *Al-Mubdi'* (The Producer)

The name *Al-Mubdi'* (often translated as 'The Starter') is usually associated with the name *Al-Mu'īd* (no. 59) and the *ḥadīth* normally uses both together. Allah is the one who produces creation. Allah started and initiated the act of creation and is still involved in it, as creation is not a 'one-off' action. Some texts translate the term into English as 'The Beginner' but it is important not to associate this attribute with the idea that Allah is uninitiated or unskilled; the act of creation was Allah putting the 'beginning' on the world, which, as it was created by Allah, was perfection from the beginning.

59. *Al-Mu'īd* (The Restorer)

The name *Al-Mu'īd* should be examined in relation to *Al-Mubdi'* (no. 58) as both are used in conjunction with each other. Allah is the one who restores and repeats the process of creation. Creation is constantly being renewed, revived, and repeated by Allah. Aside from the nature imagery and the physical renewal that would understandably be associated with this name, there is the sense that, in following Allah, the spiritual aspects of a person can also be continuously restored and replenished.

60. *Al-Muhyi* (The Giver of Life)

Linked with the idea of creation, and the original giving of life, Allah is the one who can renew life. There is the aspect that Allah has the power to give life back to those who are medically dead, but more relevant to the spiritual life of those who recite and learn the 99 Most Beautiful Names is the idea that Allah can revitalize and restore the spiritual verve in those who follow him and live their lives in accordance with Allah's guidance.

61. *Al-Mumīt* (The Taker of Life)

Al-Mumīt needs to be taken into account and understood in relation to the preceding name, *Al-Muhyi* (no. 60). It is not part of the 99 Most Beautiful names in order to frighten people or give the impression that Allah murders or is solely responsible for death and the taking of life. Instead, it shows that Allah is very much in control of the lives of his followers; he is present and in control at the point of their birth and entry to their world, a world that he has created, and is present at their death and exit from the world that they know. Humans should not be afraid of dying and death as it is not an unknown event with frightening consequences – how can it be if Allah is in control and oversees the events?

62. *Al-Hayy (The Ever-Living One)*

Allah exists and, bringing his existence into the language and limited understanding of humanity, it is possible to say that he ‘lives’. This life is not that of a human as he is ‘The Ever-Living One’, one who exists forever, beyond the notion of human longevity or eternity. Allah is self-sustaining and does not need anyone or anything to maintain his life. He also is the one who sustains the lives of those whom he has created. All life comes, therefore, from Allah and he brings about and maintains life by the enduring act of creation.

63. *Al-Qayyūm (The Self-Subsisting)*

The very nature of Allah is to exist and he does not have to rely on anything or anyone for this existence. This name can be seen as being paired for effect, emphasis, and understanding with *Al-Hayy* (no. 62) and the two are normally used together (for example, 2.255; 3.2; 20.111). The meaning of *Al-Qayyūm*, while it does have connotations with a life that is everlasting, also underlines the idea that Allah does not rely on anything to provide this life. The two terms are complimentary.

64. *Al-Wājid (The Unfailing)*

Allah never fails in any action or plan that he undertakes. He possesses all knowledge and he knows everything. He does not have any limitations or failings; there is no part of his being or essence that is weak or less than perfect. Allah is capable of anything and remains, as the absolute divine being, as referenced in this name, as an entity that remains far beyond the comprehension and understanding of mortals.

65. *Al-Mājid (The Glorious)*

Allah is the one who is the supreme example of what it is to be generous and good. All his deeds and actions are glorious and worthy of worship and devotion. This name is linked with *Al-Majīd* (no. 48) but in this instance the meaning is more an example of the independence of Allah and is often used in conjunction with *Al-Wāhid* (no. 66) to confirm the independent nature of Allah. Only Allah can be glorified and he does not have to rely on anyone to carry out his plans and actions.

66. *Al-Wāhid (The Only One)*

The translation of this term from Arabic is often associated with the idea of creation, in that Allah was the only one present at the act of creation, and is the only one involved in the ongoing process of creation. Allah is the only, and indeed

supreme, deity, as he accomplishes his magnificent deeds with no assistance. The name is usually used with *Al-Mājid* (no. 65) and is focused on highlighting the uniqueness and autonomy of Allah. This of course is linked with the idea of *Tahweed*, whereby Muslims recognize the unity of God as one being and is the only one who has power over and intercession in the lives of those he has created.

67. *Al-'Ahad (The One)*

This name also underlines the Islamic principle of *Tahweed* where Allah has no partner or assistant as he does not require him or her – he does not need help or aid and is the absolute deity. Allah works alone as he possesses qualities that are far beyond those that are held by humanity; in fact, Allah should not be compared with anyone or anything else as he and the qualities he possesses cannot be comprehended by human beings, and as such Allah's greatness will not be done any justice.

68. *As-Samad (The Satisfier of All Needs)*

Allah satisfies the needs of those who follow him, not necessarily with the result that the person in need might prefer or request, but with the result that Allah sees as the most fair and suitable. Allah can be depended upon and has the ability to satisfy every need – as such, Allah is the only one that his followers should turn to if they are in need.

69. *Al-Qādir (The All-Able)*

Allah is capable of carrying out any task. He has the power and ability to do anything, even beyond the imagination of humanity. He is also able to establish what will occur in the future, as well as being responsible for the past and for the here and now. Without the interaction of Allah, nothing can happen; nothing happens without his knowledge and support.

70. *Al-Muqtadir (The All-Determiner)*

This name essentially means that Allah has the ability (and associated power) to decide the result of all matters; Allah decides the outcome of everything. This name is a superlative form of *Al-Qādir* (no. 69) and augments the ideas underlying that term. Allah controls everything in the world as he has created every living thing there.

71. *Al-Muqaddim (The Expediter)*

Allah is the one with the authority to move events or people forward, to promote or advance events or even ideas. He will advance those who follow his

guidance and teachings and do their best to live their lives as he sees fit. There is the understanding with the term that things – or, indeed, people – are placed in their correct and natural order, where those whom Allah prefers and sees as living better lives, or as more deserving than others, will be rewarded.

72. *Al-Mu'akhkhir (The Delayer)*

This name is the opposite of *Al-Muqaddim* (no. 71). It is part of a series of opposites and shows how Allah is the epitome of all attributes and his abilities and qualities range across the entire 'scale' – from advancement to cessation, in this case, and life and death, as has been seen previously. There is also the idea associated with this term that Allah can delay the progression of those who oppress those who choose to follow him or carry out evil or ungenerous deeds on earth. The term is not explicitly used in the Qur'an, though the essence of the understanding of the term is made clear.

73. *Al-'Awwal (The First)*

Allah has existed since before creation and before the beginning of time as calculated by humanity. Allah existed before anything or anyone else did and as such ranks far above all that which he has created. Even in a modern world, Allah exists at the beginning of everything those that follow him undertake; for example, no plan is formulated without the guidance of Allah and no journey should be undertaken without acknowledging that it is Allah who guides and Allah who keeps those who travel safe. There is also the sense here that Allah acts independently – he does not need anyone to help carry out an action or do so on his behalf.

74. *Al-'Akhir (The Last)*

This name is usually coupled with *Al-'Awwal* (no. 73) so Allah is both the First and the Last – namely, at either end of the spectrum and in control of all in between. Here the idea is presented that Allah will remain after all of creation is gone; in fact, he is the conclusion to life as humanity knows it and beyond Allah there is nothing. As a result of this, Muslims should be reminded that Allah should be the first they turn to when they are in need, as Allah will then be the last recourse for, in turning to Allah in petition, you may be assured that your needs will be fulfilled.

75. *Az-Zāhir (The Manifest One)*

The amazing work and deeds of Allah are manifest or visible to all in creation as Allah has manifest and brought about creation. Allah is of course above creation but the fact that he created the world and all that exists in it means that Allah is made visible through creation.

76. *Al-Bātin (The Hidden One)*

Even though Allah gifted the human he created with five senses, none of these is sufficient in order to perceive Allah as he remains hidden from view, from touch, from smell, from taste, and from hearing. There is also the sense with this name that Allah is the one who knows all that humans try to keep hidden. Allah does not need the five senses (or even a 'sixth') to know a person's feelings, hidden emotions, and thoughts.

77. *Al-Wāli (The Protecting Friend)*

The translation and understanding of this term is associated with that of *Al-Waliyy* (no. 55, also usually translated as 'The Protecting Friend'). *Al-Wāli* in this instance underlines the idea that Allah is the only planner and governor of all created things. Though this role may seem to be undertaken by a stern and distant ruler, Allah is instead supportive and helpful in his role, friendly and approachable to everyone. Also implicit in this is the fact that it is Allah who owns everything, which stands to reason as it was he who created everything. He manages what he has created and what he owns. He manages all the affairs and everything occurs only according to his judgement. With this again comes the notion that Allah exists alone; he does not require assistance or help with overseeing creation.

78. *Al-Mutā'ali (The Supreme One)*

Allah is the one who is exalted above anything else in creation and is exalted to a higher position than anything or anybody else. For this reason, the term is often associated with *Al-'Alīyy* (no. 36). *Al-Mutā'ali* is the one who is above all else and cannot be compared with anyone or anything. Allah cannot of course be accurately conceived of by humans as his existence is far beyond the limits of imagination possessed by humans.

79. *Al-Barr (The Doer of Good)*

This name depicts the one who is abundant in goodness and kindness. Allah is always gracious and kind and is involved in all acts that are instigated by these traits or that bring about these positive results. Allah is also the one who bestows gifts that may be seen as being positive or good. The goodness and positivity referred to by this name are also to be associated both with material good, such as good health and prosperity, and with the spiritual 'good' or well-being of a follower of Allah.

80. *At-Tawwāb (The Guide to Repentance)*

Allah is the one who is always ready and willing to accept wholeheartedly the repentance of his followers and is always waiting for this to happen. As part of this action, *At-Tawwāb* will turn and guide humanity towards this process of repentance and eventually back to the goodness that was expressed in the preceding name, *Al-Barr* (no. 79). Once someone has approached Allah in a state of willing repentance then Allah is ready and willing to forgive.

81. *Al-Muntaqim (The Avenger)*

Allah will always disapprove of those who commit cruel or sinful actions, and, rather than disapprove from a distance, Allah will be the one who steps in and shows those who follow him what they are doing wrong and, most important, what they can do to correct their behaviour and seek forgiveness. Allah is the epitome of the avenger and as such humans do not need to seek revenge on others, as Allah will be the one to judge our behaviour and correct the action or thinking if required.

82. *Al-Afuww (The Forgiver)*

Al-Afuww is the one who has the power to eradicate all traces of sin or wrongdoing by forgiving the sins of those who seek forgiveness and mercy. If a person is to approach Allah in a humble and contrite state and seek forgiveness, then the idea of ‘forgiving and forgetting’ will be taken to the extreme, as no trace of the wrongdoing will remain and the follower of Allah will not be left with a tainted reputation.

83. *Ar-Ra’ūf (The Clement)*

This name is translated literally as the one who can ward off all evils and shows endless mercy and tenderness to all. All Allah’s actions are undertaken with compassion and affection. Because of this, no one should be in fear of Allah or approach him with trepidation, as they will always be met with the utmost kindness.

84. *Mālik-ul-Mulk (The Owner of All)*

This name is very much associated with the idea of ruling over a group of people or a land, but it does not allocate the earthly role of a king to Allah, as this would not begin to do him justice. Rather, Allah is the owner of all earthly kingdoms, lands, and people, even if they have their own system of self-rule and governance. Allah’s power and authority to rule have no limits and far surpass the attributes and characteristics of an excellent earthly king or other ruler. The

reason for this is that Allah has created all these lands and people and as such has complete dominance over them.

85. *Dhū-l-Jalāli wa-l-'ikrām* (The Lord of Majesty and Generosity)

This name refers to the one who is the Lord of all generosity and reward and as such is the most valued, honoured, and respected. Allah is therefore 'all-greatness' as he possesses all glory and honour and can bestow these as blessings on those who follow him

86. *Al-Muqsit* (The Equitable One)

Al-Muqsit is the one who will lead humanity to harmony and justice and move them away from paths that will lead to injustices. Allah is the one who brings about this justice through accord and balance and therefore is impartial and just. Allah is the one who is fair and even-handed in all his decisions and actions, and treats everyone fairly.

87. *Al-Jāmi* (The Gatherer)

This name refers to the actions of Allah that reconcile and reunite those that have been dispersed, whether through their own actions – for example, an argument – or those who have distanced themselves from Allah through their wrongdoings and actions. This name also refers to the idea that Allah is capable of linking people through history. He is not present more or less at a certain period of history; rather, his relationship with those that he has created will be maintained throughout time and, because of this, all people, regardless of their place in history, can be linked through their relationship with and worship of Allah.

88. *Al-Ghaniyy* (The All-Rich)

The foundation of the translation of this name is independence through the possession of self-sufficiency. This name makes explicit the underlying theme in many of the names – namely, that Allah does not rely on anyone or anything to assist him in his role as God. Allah is the one who is therefore self-sufficient without need for anything and is, indeed, transcendent of any needs that humans may have. The reason for this is that Allah is entirely satisfied and free from need or wants and can be completely independent. Linked with this is the idea that, even though Allah acts as an independent entity, he is not distant from those who worship him – in fact he is the one who is needed by all who follow him and depend on him.

89. *Al-Mughni (The Enricher)*

Allah is the one who has the ability and inclination to provide all that is needed to the people who choose to follow and worship him. The provisions that Allah makes, however, are not the bare necessities required by humanity to merely function; instead, Allah enriches all that he has created and will give wealth abundantly to all those who approach him. This wealth is not just through material riches and abundance but also through spiritual wealth and well-being.

90. *Al-Māni' (The Withholder)*

Allah is the one who withholds harm from those who follow him and guards them from situations that may bring about harm (harm in both the spiritual and the physical senses). Allah also has the power to prevent or withhold objectionable deeds and has the power to prevent people from harming one another.

91. *Ad-Dārr (The Creator of the Harmful)*

The fact that Allah has the ability to create that which has the potential to create harm does not mean that this name is necessarily negative; rather, followers of Allah should take comfort from the fact that as Allah has created harm, he also has power and authority over it and can control who suffers. Allah will of course use his wisdom and insight to use force if it is necessary to do so – for example, to correct bad behaviour. Indeed, situations that humans perceive of as being harmful may not always be this negative, as Allah is in control and may be using the situation to bring about productive change for good. The name *Ad-Dārr* is usually used with *An-Nāfi* (no. 92) as the pairing establishes a balance and harmony between harm and good.

92. *An-Nāfi (The Creator of Good)*

Allah is the one who creates and has control over all good deeds and actions and continuously blesses all that he has created. All needs and wants are fulfilled through the intervention of Allah. This name is usually used with *Ad-Dārr* (no. 91) as it serves as the extreme opposite of this name, showing how Allah is in control of both sides of scale from good to bad.

93. *An-Nūr (The Light)*

Allah is the divine light that illuminates the earth through his presence with wisdom and spiritual light. This light clarifies and reveals what is hidden or what may cause fear. Allah will make his presence known to those who follow him through creation.

94. *Al-Hādi (The Guide)*

This name follows on from the theme expressed in the name *An-Nūr* (no. 93) where Allah is the light. With *Al-Hādi* Allah will use this light to guide his followers and those who worship him through what they would perceive as darkness and times where they seek clarity and reassurance. Allah will always show humanity the correct path to follow and will guide them along this. Prophets and messengers have also been sent by Allah to try to guide humanity and allow them knowledge of the wonderful aspects of Allah's rule. With this in mind, human beings should be assured that they need only seek guidance through Allah as no other source of light, information, or truth can compare to that of Allah.

95. *Al-Badī (The Incomparable)*

This name underlines the important aspects that lie at the root of many of the 99 Most Beautiful Names – that is, that Allah cannot be compared with any other thing or person. The name is often translated with an emphasis on creation – for example, 'The Originator'. This places the focus on the act of creation, which has no precedent and it cannot be copied. There is nothing similar to creation and as such Allah is the supreme creator and cannot be compared with anything else. Doing this does a disservice to the awesome act of creation and to Allah.

96. *Al-Bāqi (The Everlasting One)*

Allah has always existed and there will be no end to his existence. Even thinking in these terms means that we have to perceive of Allah in terms of human existence, which can only go an insignificant way to explaining how far Allah's existence stretches and the far-reaching effects of this. Allah has no beginning and no end and exists outside of the human concept of time. As Allah will exist long after creation has gone and, indeed, has an existence far superior to that of humanity, this name serves to highlight how humanity and Allah cannot even begin to be compared.

97. *Al-Wārith (The Ultimate Inheritor)*

Allah is the one and, indeed, only one who will remain after all of creation ceases to exist. Everything under the scope of humanity will ultimately return to him after it ceases to exist. In this way, we do not actually own or possess anything here on earth. In the end all will return to Allah, who is the true owner of all human possessions.

98. *Ar-Rashīd (The Guide)*

Allah will always point the correct and right way or path for those who follow him to take throughout their lives. He is the guide throughout everyone's lives and will oversee the eventual return of humanity and creation to him as expressed through the name that is usually linked with *Ar-Rashīd*, *Al-Wāriṭh* (no. 97).

99. *As-Sabur (The Patient One)*

Allah is never hurried or impatient either with the process of creation or with the activities of those who follow him. Instead, as Allah operates out of the realm of human time, Allah is tolerant and enduring. None of his actions are hasty, as he knows that each action and deed will have its own proper time and place in order for it to be accomplished or for the correct outcome to be brought about. Humanity would do well to remember this when they succumb to the temptation of impatience, especially when attempting to second-guess the intervention (or seeming lack of intervention) by Allah in their lives. Only *As-Sabur* knows the true and correct 'timetable' of our lives and of the grander plan of creation.

Conclusion

It is immediately striking that there is much less academic scholarship written on the 99 Most Beautiful Names than is written on the divine designations in Judaism and Christianity. This underlines the mode of thinking behind the use of the names – namely, that they are used more in a prayer or spiritual situation than any grounding for Islamic theological outlook. However, this should not be taken as a negative aspect of the names, as previously discussed. Rather, the idea that these names are meaningful and have a spiritual aspect for those who recite them would mean that the image and idea of the deity gives us a very clear idea of what an adherent of the Islamic faith believes the attributes of their deity and, therefore, the theology of the deity to be.

While some of the images brought forth by the 99 Most Beautiful Names would seem violent and against the grain of what most Christians and Jews would view their deity, when the names are examined in their context, and with their meaning explained, this is not the case. The names are usually grouped, often in pairs that show the entire extent of Allah's power and influence over creation, humanity, and the earth. Once the genre of the writing as almost poetic and prayerful is understood, then the names become more meaningful and certainly more easily understood to those who may not be familiar with the names or the theological ideas behind them.

Chapter 6

Comparative Theologies and the Names of God

Introduction

What this final section does *not* aim to do is to simply compare and contrast the names of God from the three different faiths that have been studied. As discussed previously, the idea of comparing and contrasting a theme or portion of a religion with a theme or portion of another religion's belief system owes much to the study of comparative religions. This methodology is not helpful when focusing on the theologies contained in sacred texts as this process will inevitably result in one terminology being used where one religion and its sacred texts are seen as 'better' or 'worse' than another. By using this method, it is hoped that the results of the search will be presented and understood in a linear rather than a vertical way – namely, that one religion and the texts that it sees as sacred will not be seen as superior or inferior. It is also vital to keep in mind that an underlying position of comparative theology is that the method allows the beliefs (or unbelief) of those who undertake the exercise to be included in the research, and even alluded to, during the task and the results. In this way, the benefits of using comparative theology as a method can be twofold. In the first instance, there is the notion that the field of academic study can benefit – in this instance, the fields that would use the names of God. The second benefit is that those who undertake the study should be able to take some benefit to their understanding of their own religious perspective. In this chapter, I shall evaluate the extent to which the study brings about these two benefits, as well as the limitations of the method and the cautions that should be heeded with its use.

Benefit for the Field of Academic Study of the Sacred Texts

Many practitioners of comparative theology use, and recommend using, the methods employed by comparative theology to help address a particular theological 'problem' that they wish to examine – for example, the image

of God or the nature of the divine. Simply put, even though comparative theology does not lay claim to possessing a foolproof way of answering these theological questions or problems, the techniques involved in its practice do give a theologian the chance to ‘step outside the box’ of their own thoughts and teachings and to see how other religions and faiths deal with the question. It is important to note that we are not seeking answers from the other religions we examine. For example, a Roman Catholic theologian would not get far in seeking a clear definition of the Trinity or transubstantiation from within the teachings of Islam but would gain insight by examining what is unfamiliar and appears strange and at variance with one’s own beliefs. It is often from moving away from the familiar and seeing how others deal with a problem that, even if we do not see a clear solution or answer to the question or problem, we can see it from a fresh and, it is to be hoped, inspiring angle.

Benefit for a Religious Understanding of the Text

One of the most important results of comparative theology and its use in the general study of world religions and faiths is that it allows those who utilize its methods, and study the findings from these, to become more aware and develop a deeper understanding of their own religion. This is normally gained through new perspectives or a deeper or clearer understanding of the problem or questions that began their use of comparative theology.

One of the more common questions (and I would deliberately define the action as a question, rather than a criticism) posed of my work is if it is acceptable¹ for a faithful member of one religion to study in any great depth the beliefs, doctrines, and faith practices of another religion. The focus of concern would generally be concentrated on the idea that the beliefs and practices of another religion may contain ‘truth’ or that there is a validity and benefit for both the person and their own faith and faith development of studying and appreciating the practices and teachings of another religion. I often find that many people are embarrassed when posing the question, almost as if they are confessing a deep-seated belief in an urban legend. They know that, in a pluralistic world, it is necessary to understand and accept other faiths and their validity to a particular group, but there appears to be an underlying idea that this acceptance in some way diminishes one’s own faith or does a disservice to it. While it is obviously not the wish of any religious tradition that by studying another religion a person undergoes a conversion, this is certainly not the case in the main. In fact, the methods of comparative theology would hold that one’s own faith is increased in depth and in understanding by the process of examining another religion. Where in the process this understanding is gained from is, I would argue, one of the more beneficial aspects of using comparative theology to examine the names of God.

One of the key questions for anyone setting out to engage in the process of interreligious dialogue is whether a religion or faith is to be defined by how it

differs from your own set of beliefs or by what the similarities are.² Initially in my work I was of the opinion that it would be more beneficial to focus on the similarities, as this would be where people could become comfortable with the notion of the 'other' in their own faith perspectives. As stated initially, people tend to fear the unknown of that which they do not understand and it would seem, therefore, the most logical to seek some form of commonality, in order to dispel the fear. For example, the results of the study point to the idea that the deity is seen as the ultimate creator of humanity and the world by all three of the religions.

The Deity as Creator

Here is a simple and clear idea that can easily start as a foundation for a common language in order for adherents of the three religions to begin to discuss more complex theological beliefs and arguments. Humans, particularly in my own Irish context, feel comfortable finding a 'common ground', something that two people who were previously strangers can relate to and begin to form a dialogue and relationship on. In an Irish context, as an illustrative example, the commonality normally comes from a shared origin. In such a small country, it is usually quite easy to establish a common geographical context between two people from different areas; it is quite common when meeting someone for the first time to inquire where they are from and then establish commonalities, such as people in the area both people know. This leads to a sense of shared history and space, and the fear of the 'other' is diminished. A shared background gives way to a shared identity and moves to sharing experience. The same process is present in interreligious dialogue, though admittedly at a much slower pace. The need to find the common seems almost spontaneous and is often the first goal of the interreligious dialogue. In using comparative theology, however, the focus does not have to remain solely on the commonalities, beliefs, and practices that are shared. As comparative theology begins from the point of acknowledging one's own beliefs, it is also possible to look for the divergences and dissimilarities between your own faith and that of the other religions that are being studied. I would argue that it is within these disparities that the second of the benefits of using comparative theology can be seen, as it is in reflecting on the differences (and why they are different) that a fuller comprehension and understanding of one's own faith may be answered or, at the very least, addressed. For an example of this, it is useful to turn to the idea of Creator in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

It is clear that the Hebrew Bible uses the designation 'Creator' (or 'Maker', depending on translation) more than either the Gospels or the Qur'an. While the focus here is not on the numerical repetition of the term, it is interesting that in comparison with the texts of the four Gospels, the Hebrew Bible would appear to go to more effort to highlight the deity as a creator (even leaving the

texts of Genesis aside). It can safely be surmised that the idea of God as the creator of the world and humanity was an established theological concept by the formation of the gospel texts. Due to the Christocentric nature of the Gospels, the emphasis on God, the character in the Gospels depicted as the Father of Jesus, the focus simply does not need to be on (re-)educating the early Christian community on the concept of God as the creator of the world. The Hebrew Bible underlies and explains this idea by the designation *bara* (Creator/Maker) and as the community would have been familiar with the idea, there would be no pedagogical or theological reason for overemphasizing the point to the detriment of a focus on the character of Jesus.

In comparing the two theologies, therefore, there are many similarities. God is the only creator, the sole presence at the beginning of the world and humanity. God has the power of what has been created, a fact attested to many times in the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 15 being one of my favourite instances). In the Gospels it is Jesus who demonstrates this power in a physical way, such as walking on water (Matt. 14.22-33; Mk 6.45-52; Jn 6.14-21) or calming a storm (Mk 4.35-40).

The Gospels do tend to follow the same teaching as that of the Hebrew Bible in seeing God (in a broad understanding) as the creator of all things from nothing and has made human beings in the image of God. The Synoptic Gospels do not directly address the idea of creation or God as Creator, the Gospel of John makes it clear that it follows the traditional view that God was solely present at the start point of creation ('in the beginning'). The idea of God as 'living God' would also lend itself to the idea of God as Creator and many of the contexts where it is used highlight the monotheistic teaching of God as Creator.³

Combining the two faiths' idea of creation, therefore, the idea of God that is presented in the use of the name 'Creator' is one that God has an ordered control over earthly events. The creation of the heavens and earth is well organized and efficient; no time is wasted and God knows exactly what his creation – whether the earth itself, the animals, or humans – will need to survive. God does not have to consult a team of project managers or experts in the field of construction; God alone can take on this venture, and does not need the assistance of others, an underlining of the monotheistic belief system of both religious outlooks.⁴ The idea of continuing creation highlights for the reader of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament that God's power, evident in the original act of creation, is ongoing; it never wanes, and God can be counted on as a stable and continuous presence in the lives of the faithful.

In terms of Islam, the idea of creation and the deity, Allah, as Creator can be seen in some of the 99 Most Beautiful Names – for example, *Al-Quddūs* (The Most Holy), *Al-Khāliq* (The Creator), and *Al-Bāri'* (Maker of Order). From the analysis of these names and the theological instruction contained in the Qur'an, it can be summarized that although the three are not the same in Muslim theology, they all point to a single act of creation. This would be in line with the theology and teaching of Judaism and Christianity but, as previously

seen, the process of creation in Islamic thinking is much more detailed and the three names can be seen as pointing to the three key 'stages' of the act of creation. Allah planned creation, which can be seen as creating 'all power' (a term that is consistent in all three faiths), the plan was then undertaken as a process, and, finally, what Allah had 'created' then had to be 'formed' or 'fashioned' in a skilful manner, akin to the images of God as a potter in the Hebrew Bible (Isa. 64.8). The three names also indicate the inherent Islamic view that Allah must be involved in the continuous creation of the world as, if this were not the case, the world would cease to exist without Allah's supervision.⁵

Incorporating the three ideas of 'Creator' in the three faiths, therefore, it is quite simple to see the similarities in ideas. Even a cursory glance sees that the Creator acts alone, has created everything (nature and human), has used a thought-out plan for the process (whether creation is brought about in seven days or by an alternative method, it is clear that creation is not something that happens in a disorganized manner), and has brought about creation from nothing. Nothing existed before the deity-creator decided it would. These 'common' ideas bring about a starting point to begin to view our own religious outlook in a different light as well as the religious beliefs of other religions. With the Creator, one aspect of creation that Christians tend not to focus on is the idea of 'power'. This is in the sense of the power that God has to display in order to bring about creation and order and also that God retains power and dominance over that which has been created. These ideas are an inherent part of a Christian theology of God but are not given as much attention as, say, the magnificence of what has been created (e.g. in spectacular areas of nature). While there is no one reason for this, or, indeed, any particular cynical agenda behind this, it would seem plausible that the character of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels would be an underlying reason why the focus is not on power and dominance. Christians tend to view God as a Father or a kindly, forgiving deity, and the idea that this deity would hold power and could possibly hold dominance over them would not fit in with their own personal (prayer) images of God. The idea of power and dominance also has a rather negative portrayal in modern media and politics. We give thanks if we live in a democratic society and if we have a voice and a say in how our country and political system is run. The idea that one being could dominate our lives and have the power of life, death, and existence seems something frightening that we could not have control over. This for the majority of modern Christians is not how they would perceive their deity. The idea of God as powerful or dominant is therefore left to one side as it seems more difficult for modern Christians to reconcile with their own view of God.

By extending the survey of the names of God in the three faiths, it is interesting to look at the Islamic view of God as Creator, and the divergences between the Christian and Islamic views. There are two main areas of interest for our work here: the idea of Allah as powerful and dominant and the thought that Allah did not rest on the seventh day.

There is no doubt that Muslims see Allah as a powerful Creator that holds a dominant stance over that which has been created. Yet there is no general belief that this is a negative thing. In fact the idea that Allah has control over creation (including humanity, whether Muslim or not) is very comforting to the Muslims. How can you worry about the future or the harm that may befall you if your creator is so powerful that he is able to create existence in the first instance and is your protector? The idea that this power is used for protection is underlined by the Islamic idea that Allah bothered to create humanity in the first place. Logically, it would be nonsense to go to so much effort for something that would not be safeguarded. The placing of the three Beautiful Names in the list of 99 is interesting too in this regard. As the 99 names are usually paired or in groups – not in order to put a classification on them, but to highlight similarities or to elucidate the meaning of a name by grouping it with an opposite or similar name – it is interesting that the three ‘creation names’ are linked names that are associated with protection and care. For example, the names are followed with *Al-Ghaffār*, *Al-Qahhār*, *Al-Wahhāb*, and *Ar-Razzāq* (the Forgiving, the Subduer, the Giver of All, and the Sustainer). These four names show how the ‘creation names’ are linked with the idea of creation as an ongoing process in which Allah has control, though it is not to the detriment of creation that he has this role – rather, they are secure and safe in the knowledge that Allah will provide.

This insight can inform our Christian reluctance to portray God as powerful. Perhaps it would serve our image of God if we were to see God as a deity that possessed the ‘one-off’ power to create humanity and nature, but God’s power and control over this creation is something that underpins the idea of creation as a continuous process. God has control and is dominant over what has been created and this is something to be celebrated. In a world where increasingly creation is under threat, from war and famine and in an environmental sense from climate change and natural disasters, it would serve Christianity well to see that if God has created these things and we serve and worship him, then nurturing creation should be a prime activity of living a Christian life. We are essentially in a dominant and controlling position over nature and the environment, but we realize that there is responsibility with this position, to care and protect. We should inform our role and actions in this regard with the image of God portrayed in the name ‘Creator’ or ‘Maker’. Just as God controls nature and creation, as made apparent in the Islamic idea of Creator, God makes provision for its continuous care and betterment.

In terms of the differences among the three images of the deity as Creator, and how they might inform a Christian theology of God, it is interesting to look at how the idea of the deity ‘resting’ on the seventh day is only present in the Jewish and Christian understandings of the process of creation. To reiterate, Muslims do not believe that the deity could possibly have rested as this would be to demonstrate a weakness (i.e. fatigue from exertion). The Islamic view of the deity is that Allah is set apart and unique from all of humanity. Allah

cannot even be described as perfect or flawless, as these are human ideas of the divine and no human can ever adequately understand or appreciate the extent of the greatness of the deity. Even to term the deity ‘without fault’ would be to put him within the limitations of human imagination, something that Allah surpasses. How can we mere humans decide what is perfect and imperfect? Allah therefore cannot have rested, as there would have been no need for him to do so. Allah does not show fatigue or weakness like a human does. Before I studied the Islamic ideas of the process of creation, the idea of God resting on the seventh day of creation in my Christian reading of the Hebrew texts had not been something that struck me as odd or at variance to my idea of God gleaned from other texts. When I work on the text in class, my students and I tend to focus on the idea of the division of the entire act of creation into seven sections and how this structured and ordered account differs from the more poetical and lyrical account. I can find no Christian commentary or work that spends any great amount of time examining what exactly the theological implications are of this anthropomorphic image of God for the theology of God. Once I had explored the Islamic idea, I began to reflect on my Christian experience and, thinking on the image, I began to try to picture how exactly the authors of the text (orally or in its written form) wished to portray God as ‘resting’, and how the image has been explained and taught through time. As in my context at least, reference is made to the image in conjunction with the need to keep Sunday or the Sabbath as a day of rest and religious reflection (as opposed to the growing practice of working or shopping on the day). The idea therefore of God ‘kicking back’ and resting are difficult to reconcile with what has been traditionally an image that does not warrant a great degree of attention. It has been hard to rid my mind of the picture of God lying on a sofa idly flicking through television channels. However, it has served to remind me that I, as well as commentators on the text or image, need to reflect more assiduously on this image of God and the problems that such a readily accepted anthropomorphic imagining of God might cause.

By using the process of comparative theology to investigate this image, the Muslim idea that the deity is powerful and controlling does not seem alien and strange to a Christian. The same would apply to a Jew but, as the centre of comparative theology is the influence on one’s own faith from conducting the study, this work shall focus primarily on the Christian viewpoint. The Christian can learn more about their own idea of God and how they image or imagine God by reflecting on both the similarities and the differences in the image among the three faiths. It is my belief that we are ‘forced’ in some (positive) way to reflect on our own image and beliefs by engaging in the process. Essentially, this is due to the shift in focus from one particular angle – that is, the accepted view that God rested on the seventh day of creation to looking from an Islamic point of view as to *why* we believe this. There is never a question of us having to change or alter our beliefs in any way; rather, we see them anew and in a newly inspired way.

The Deity as Father

To illustrate further this notion, it is useful to take a second example from the names that have been previously examined, in this case the name or title of 'Father' as applied to the divine. The method of examining the use of this name in the three faiths using comparative theology is different in this case to that of 'Creator/Maker' as the name does not appear in the 99 Most Beautiful Names or, indeed, any Islamic theology of God, and is used in two differing ways in the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels. With this progression in mind, it should be even more apparent in this example that it is in the differences and divergences of the theologies where the real benefits of comparative theology are to be seen.

To summarize briefly the idea of 'father' in the New Testament, the names of 'Father' and 'Abba' are used by Jesus in reference to God. The theology of the God that this presents us with is one that highlights the close relationship between the two characters as presented in the Gospels that can be seen as the foundation for the later development of a Trinitarian theology. The two terms are used in the sense of an older, wiser figure who guides and offers comfort to the 'son' and, due to the assurance of their bond (as depicted in such father-son terms), the father will always look after the son and the son will always hold the father in a position of respect. While this idea of God has pervaded throughout tradition, it is interesting that the idea of a patriarchal figure (as in Father or Elder of a family or tribe who may not be biologically the father of all members of a group, but will assume the role of father, as protector and source of wisdom) is not highlighted more by the Christian theology of God. It is safe to suppose that this has come about because the idea of patriarchs or male elders is not prevalent in every culture and society, particularly in modern times. God as Father is for Christians, therefore, a benevolent deity who seeks to nurture and care for humanity as if they were his own children. For the most part this has been unquestioned in Christian thought, to the extent that this image of God is used extensively in religious education in order to attempt to explain the relationship between God and Jesus. Very rarely is the idea discussed that this image may not be particularly pedagogically helpful. For example, those children (and, indeed, this is the case for adults too) who do not know their biological father, possibly as a result of bereavement of marital breakdown. Even more concerning is the idea that children are taught to understand God through the image of a Father may have a negative male role model in their lives, an absent father or one who is abusive to them or their mother. How then are Christians to reconcile the idea of God as father in these instances?

To look at Judaism, in the Hebrew Bible there are only two instances of a direct use of the term 'Father' in relation to addressing YHWH (Isa. 64.8 and Deut. 32.6). The term is used widely in the book of Genesis but there refers to the patriarchs and the historical ancestry of the people of Israel, rather than a biological father figure. In the two uses of the term, the theology of God that is explored by its use is one that offers comfort. YHWH is linked to the past

heroes and forefathers of the audience of the text and with this bond comfort and a sense of hope is given to the people. There appears to be little to link the name with the idea of a biological father or with any sexual imagery. Although it is clearly anthropomorphic, its use would seem to be more about the creation of an image than of a theological statement.

In the Islamic view, Allah cannot be conceived of as being a Father as this is a human role and no human attributes can be associated with Allah as he is above and set apart from all of humanity. There is also the thinking that to be a Father one must biologically and genetically have fathered a child and therefore must have engaged in sexual intercourse. This idea is ludicrous to associate with Allah and jars heavily with Islamic theology and teaching.

To take this to the idea of Christianity and the view of God as Father it does seem initially that it would be preferable to take the focus from the idea of God as Father, particularly in the sense of teaching children. This is not only to protect the sensitivities of the child but to enhance the image and theology of God that we teach. Even to consider the ideas behind the exclusion of the term in the 99 Most Beautiful Names brings fresh light to the image for Christians and makes us (again in a positive sense) rethink our approach to its use and our understanding of the image in both our sacred texts and our faith lives. It is important to emphasize that a rethinking or a reshaping of a thought does not necessarily mean a radical changing of ideas. In the sense of looking at the idea of 'father' it can lead the Christian to become more aware of this moniker that is consistently used in prayer life, in education, and in liturgy, often without explanation or reflection. In considering the Muslim idea of excluding anthropomorphism from religious ideology and from the theology of God, a Christian does not have to disagree with the practice or viewpoint, or, indeed, hold any opinion about the validity of it in one way or another. Rather, the idea should be to benefit from using Islamic thoughts and in this case the 99 Most Beautiful Names as an alternative platform from which to scrutinize our own Christian theology of God.

The same follows in a different sense when we look to the texts of the Hebrew Bible that use 'Father' as a name for the deity. There the term is only used twice and neither occurrence is located in a narrative where the context is that of the family unit or, indeed, the community. Rather, the name gives a link with the past. What Christians can take from this study is the idea that the name is one that inspires hope and comfort from those who understand the role of the father in the Hebrew Bible. God is as stable and constant a figure as the generations who have lived before us – our own ancestors. The name and the image it evokes should be one of longstanding service and history, rather than on the focus of one individual – for example, our own father. While this may be suitable and effective, it can be problematic, as discussed previously. Taking into account the Islamic teaching that Allah cannot be confined by one name (or even the sum of the 99), it seems foolish to try to explain or teach about God or the theology of God with such a strong focus on God as Father. God cannot

be equated with the qualities of one individual; even the attributes of several generations will not do justice to the deity. Instead, we should use the name and image as a starting point for own reflections, considering the negatives as well as the positives in our own paternal relationships and seeing God as a constant through these areas of our lives.

Conclusion

As demonstrated by the brief examples given, the divine designations of names for the deity in the three faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are an excellent practical application of the developing methods of comparative theology. By using this method, the significance of the names to a particular (religious) group may still be taken into account, even though an academic exercise is being undertaken. The methodology is clear and unambiguous enough to be applied to such a large range of texts where the names occur. This is important after taking into consideration the different language the sacred texts are written in (both historic and different modern-day translations) as well as the issue of the translation of the Qur'an. The method allows for this diversity as well as for an appreciation of the different names and the texts in which they feature by those who might not have much experience with the names of the religion they are particular to.

Without doubt, however, the principal success of this exercise is that, by using comparative theology to study the different designations, one can learn more about one's own religion, and not have to put aside the principals and beliefs of one's own faith in order to do this. As the names featured here are often used in prayer, it is important to keep in mind that often it is the prayer mindset of an adherent of a particular faith that influences the theology of a name. For example, from what a Christian may take from the exercise, 'Father' would not be a theological term if it was not taken as an important part of Jesus' prayer life and, as a result, the prayer life of Christians. By appreciating this, we can understand the terms much better. This follows very well when considering the 99 Most Beautiful Names of Allah. Often the names are seen as presenting a violent and aggressive image of the deity that in turn feeds into the idea that many modern non-Muslims have of the Islamic faith: that it is a violent and harsh religion, where followers can undertake sadistic actions with the apparent backing of Allah. This misinformation is completely dismissed when the 99 Most Beautiful Names are examined in detail and the resulting image of Allah of a loving, caring, and watchful deity is seen to be not that distant from the image of YHWH or the Christian God.

In terms of interfaith dialogue, therefore, this commonality, as well as appreciation of the differences among the three Abrahamic faiths, is where, first a diminishing of the suspicion that may exist between adherents may be achieved. Second, the idea of 'common language' or a language can be found

where further theological ideas and discussions can be based. By seeing that the theology of the deity in the three faiths has some common areas (such as 'Creator') then this can be a starting block for developing discussions on universal matters such as a concern for the environment and its protection. Within the differences (for example, the anthropomorphism with names such as 'father') comes the learning experience and the questioning and understanding of one's own faith that will, it is to be hoped, see a language outside of the one used to teach and explain theological ideas to one's own peers being developed. From this a mutual understanding and cooperation may be developed.

This page intentionally left blank

Notes

Notes to Chapter One: Interfaith Dialogue and Comparative Theology

- 1 Thomas F. Banchoff, *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism* (Oxford; New York, 2007), especially Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, 'Uneven Secularization in the United States and Western Europe', 31–58.
- 2 Jeffrey Winters, 'Why we fear the unknown', *Psychology Today*, May (2002), www.psychologytoday.com/magazine/archive/2002/05 (accessed 15 January 2011).
- 3 Professor of Catholic Thought and Interreligious Dialogue at Temple University, at the CIRCLE National conference in April 2010 as reported by Joshua Stanton, 'Seismic shift in seminary education', *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue* 3 (2010), www.irdialogue.org/articles/seismic-shift-in-seminary-education-by-joshua-stanton/ (accessed 14 January 2011).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 For more on the idea of 'trialogue' see Leonard Swidler, 'Islam and the trialogue of Abrahamic religions', *Cross Currents* 42 (1992): 444–52, and Leonard J. Swidler, Khalid Duran, and Reuven Firestone, *Triologue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Dialogue* (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007).
- 6 Richard Schebera, 'Comparative theology: a new method of interreligious dialogue', *Dialogue and Alliance* 17 (2003): 7–18, 10.
- 7 www.comparativetheology.org/?page_id=49 (accessed 14 May 2010).
- 8 Stephen J. Duffy, 'A theology of the religions and/or a comparative theology?', *Horizons* 26 (1999): 105–15, 105.
- 9 Mathew N. Schmalz, 'Tradition and transgression in the comparative theology of Francis X. Clooney, S.J.', *Religious Studies Review* 29 (2003): 130–36, 131. See this article and Norbert Hintersteiner, 'Intercultural and interreligious (un)translatability and the comparative theology project', in Norbert Hintersteiner, ed., *Naming and Thinking God in Europe Today: Theology in Global Dialogue* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007), 465–91 especially 475–88 on Clooney's work.

- 10 Samuel J. Youngs, 'The frontier of comparative theology', *Journal of Comparative Theology*, March (2010), 1–10.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 12 Hintersteiner, 'Intercultural and interreligious (un)translatability and the comparative theology project', 468–93, 480–81.
- 13 For more on St Anselm's definition of theology, see Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991), especially 2–7.
- 14 Francis X. Clooney, *Hindu God, Christian God: How Reason Helps Break Down the Boundaries between Religions* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7.
- 15 For a broader examination of theology as the study of God, there are few better places to start than Alister E. McGrath, *Theology: The Basics* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), in particular vii. McGrath notes that in order to study theology successfully, you must be open to the idea that different people and different religions have their own, unique ideas of what 'God' is.
- 16 A good overview of biblical theology can be found Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology: A Proposal* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002).
- 17 Robert Morgan, 'Biblical theology', in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden (London; Philadelphia: SCM Press; Trinity Press International, 1990), 86–9, 87.
- 18 Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Carlisle, PA; East Peoria: Banner of Truth Trust; printed in the USA by Versa Press, 2007).
- 19 Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 58.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 59.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 60.
- 22 Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Qur'an Translation: Discourse, Texture and Exegesis* (Culture and Civilisation in the Middle East. Richmond: Curzon, 2001), 35–61.
- 23 For example, 'Creator', though this shall be discussed in much more depth in subsequent chapters.
- 24 Wayne A. Meeks and Jouette M. Bassler, *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1993).
- 25 Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, and Michael A. Fishbane, eds, *The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- 26 *The HarperCollins Study Quran*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (San Francisco: Harper One, forthcoming 2011).

Notes to Chapter Two: Names and Naming

- 1 Anthony P. Cohen, 'Naming', in Brian Reilly, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics* 5:2674.

- 2 Reginald Byron, *Irish America* (Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 135–40.
- 3 See Stephen E. Levick, *Clone Being: Exploring the Psychological and Social Dimensions* (Lanham, MD; Oxford: AltaMira Press; Oxford Publicity Partnership, 2004), 139–44. This book focuses primarily on psychological and sociological theory and research concerning cloning; the author pays close attention to the psychological aspects of naming, in what he terms the ‘Namesake model’.
- 4 Cyril Glassé, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001), ‘Name’, 339.
- 5 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 36.
- 6 Ward Goodenough, ‘Personal names and modes of address in two oceanic societies’, in Melford Spiro and A. Irving Hallowell eds, *Context and Meaning in Cultural Anthropology* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1965), 275.
- 7 *Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Edition, s.v. ‘Name’ Online: www.oed.com (accessed 12 November 2010).
- 8 Robert Ornduff, Phyllis M. Faber, and Todd Keeler-Wolf, *Introduction to California Plant Life* (California Natural History Guides, 69. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 17–21.
- 9 *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics, Media, and Communications*, ed., Marcel Dansei (Toronto Studies in Semiotics. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), s.v. ‘Name’, 155.
- 10 Frederick Mathewson Denny, ‘Names and naming’, in Mircea Eliade, and Charles J. Adams, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 10:300.
- 11 Hans Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* (London: Boston & Henley; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 159.
- 12 Michael Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (London: Duckworth, 1973), 54.
- 13 Michael Beary, ‘Russell and Frege’, in Nicholas Griffin, *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell* (Cambridge: University Press, c2003), 166.
- 14 Tyler Burge, *Origins of Objectivity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 143–44.
- 15 Hans D. Sluga, and David G. Stern, *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 91–2.
- 16 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Anscombe; Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 2e.
- 17 Fergus Kerr, *Theology After Wittgenstein* (2nd ed.; London: SPCK, 1997), 70.
- 18 Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 1.
- 19 William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, (ed. Brian Gibbons; London; New York: Routledge, 1991), II, ii, 43–4. Many editions of this work replace ‘word’ with ‘name’ in this line. The majority of scholars prefer to rely on the Second Quarto rendition that reads ‘word’.

- 20 Herbert Chanan Brichto, *The Names of God: Poetic Readings in Biblical Beginnings* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.
- 21 John Gabel et al., eds, *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction* (4th ed.; New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 313.
- 22 Carlo Huber, *Speaking of God* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000), 1.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 57.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 59.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 60.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 49.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 50.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 50.
- 29 Karla Bohmbach, 'Names and naming', in David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, eds, *EDB* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 944.
- 30 Wesley Fuerst, 'How Israel conceived of and addressed God', in *Our Naming of God: Problems and Prospects of God-Talk Today* (ed. Carl Braaten; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, c1989), 61.
- 31 Abba, 'Name', *IDB* 3:500.
- 32 Karla Bohmbach, 'Names and naming in the biblical world', in Carol Meyers ed., *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000).
- 33 In the NRSV edition. The term 'name' occurs 939 times if all English translations of the Hebrew Bible are taken into consideration.
- 34 Abba, 'Name', 501.
- 35 Scott C. Layton, *Archaic Features of Canaanite Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, 1990), 1.
- 36 Adam S. van der Woude, 'אֵשׁ שֵׁם name', in Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds, *TLO* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997) 3:1351.
- 37 John Sawyer, 'Names: religious beliefs', in Brian Reilly, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics* 5:2672.
- 38 'The Creation Epic', translated by E. A. Speiser (*ANET*, 61).
- 39 Sawyer, 'Names: religious beliefs', *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*, 5:2672.
- 40 Martin Rose, 'Names of God in the Old Testament', *ABD* 4:1002. Emphasis Rose's.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 1001.
- 42 Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. Timothy Hallet; New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1978), 178.
- 43 James Winston Morris, 'Encountering the Qur'an: contexts and approaches', in Vincent J. Cornell, ed., *Voices of Islam* (Praeger Perspectives. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 90.

- 44 Sahih Bukhari, vol. 8, no. 419, as referenced in Samat Talib and Brigitte Françoise Bresson, *The 99 Most Eminent Names of Allah* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors, 2001), vii.
- 45 The increased use of the internet by younger generations, particularly of Muslims who do not reside in traditionally Muslim countries, has led to an increase in the use of the term ‘the praises of Allah’, which is widely used in blogs and discussion boards. Interestingly, many of the uses of the term are connected with queries from young Muslims regarding how to pray with a *misbaha*, a string of prayer beads traditionally used to guide the recitation of the 99 divine names.
- 46 Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 178.
- 47 William O’Malley, *God: The Oldest Question* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2000), 13.
- 48 For a more detailed and philosophical approach to the definition of anthropomorphism and the deity see Stewart Guthrie, *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 62–90.
- 49 John Bowker, ‘Anthropomorphism’, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 74.
- 50 Edwin Yamauchi, ‘Anthropomorphism in ancient religions’, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 125 (1968): 29–44, especially 30.
- 51 Clyde A. Holbrook, *The Iconoclastic Deity: Biblical Images of God* (Lewisburg; London; Cranbury, NJ: Bucknell University Press; Associated University Presses, 1984), 110.
- 52 Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon House, 1994), 71.
- 53 William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn Al-‘Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 69.

Notes to Chapter Three: Divine Designations in the Hebrew Bible

- 1 An excellent general overview of etymology and its usefulness is Anatoly Liberman, *Word Origins – and How We Know Them: Etymology for Everyone* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), especially 1–6.
- 2 James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 107–60.
- 3 See also John F. A. Sawyer, ‘Root-meanings in Hebrew,’ *Journal of Semitic Studies* 12 (1967): 37–50.
- 4 As knowledge of biblical languages or Classical Arabic is not presumed, the pointed text has been used where it is deemed helpful and the transliterated term used where possible throughout this book.
- 5 The term ‘Tetragrammaton’ is a Greek term that means ‘four-letter word’ and refers to the traditional way of writing the name of God – YHWH.
- 6 This is of course an approximation based on searches using the computer program ‘Bibleworks’ as well as references to texts that concur with this number, including Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* (Oxford; New York: Oxford

- University Press, 1995), 545, and Watson E. Mills and Roger Aubrey Bullard, *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990), 889.
- 7 T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (London: Black, 1899), s.v. 'Divine names', by George Buchanan Gray, 3:3320.
 - 8 David Noel Freedman et al., 'יהוה' YHWH', *TDOT* 5:500.
 - 9 David Cunningham, 'On translating the divine name', *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 424.
 - 10 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q.13, a.11.
 - 11 *Kyrie Eleison* (Lord have Mercy). The words occur at the very start of the Roman Catholic Mass and at the very end with the words of dismissal by the priest.
 - 12 The Septuagint (LXX) or the Koine Greek version of the Hebrew Bible that was translated in the second and third centuries BCE in Alexandria. For more information see Jennifer M. Dines and Michael A. Knibb, *The Septuagint* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), especially 1–2.
 - 13 Paul Haupt, 'Der Name Jahwe', *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 12 (1909), columns 211–14. See also: John McKenzie, 'Aspects of Old Testament theology', in *NJBC*, Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, eds, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 1286.
 - 14 William Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (2nd ed.; New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1957), 15.
 - 15 Frank Moore Cross, 'Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs', *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962): 256.
 - 16 Andrew Bruce Davidson and S. D. F. Salmond, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1904 [1907]), 56.
 - 17 Raymond Abba, 'The divine name YHWH', *JBL* 80 (1961), 326. See Isa. 52.6: 'Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I.'
 - 18 *Ibid.*, 327.
 - 19 George Arthur Buttrick ed., *IDB* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), s.v. 'Name', by Raymond Abba, 3:502.
 - 20 Oskar Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 64; Giessen: A Töpelmann, 1934), 9, and Geoffrey H. Parke-Taylor, *YHWH: The Divine Name in the Bible* (Waterloo: ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1975), 11.
 - 21 For a more detailed discussion see Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 544–47.
 - 22 Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (New York, NY: James Clarke, 2002), 188.
 - 23 Otto Eissfeldt, "ādôn", *TDOT* 1:61.
 - 24 Ernst Jenni, "ādôn' lord", *TLOT* 1:26.
 - 25 N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Biblical Seminar, 53. London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); for example, 364.

- 26 Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 135
- 27 Marvin Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, VTSup 2 (1955): 1.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 19.
- 29 Davidson and Salmond, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, 61.
- 30 G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, *TDOT* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), s.v. 'אלהים' *'elohim*', by Helmer Ringgren, 1:185.
- 31 Martin Rose, 'Names of God in the Old Testament', *ABD* 4:1006.
- 32 David Noel Freedman, 'Divine names and titles in early Hebrew poetry', in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God, Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (eds, Frank Moore Cross et al.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 55.
- 33 George Arthur Buttrick, *IDB* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), s.v. 'God, names of', by Bernhard Anderson, 2:413.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 413.
- 35 Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 185.
- 36 Rose, 'Names of God in the Old Testament', 1006.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 1006.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 1006.
- 39 McKenzie, 'Aspects of Old Testament theology', 1285.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 1286.
- 41 Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 52–60
- 42 Thomas B. Dozeman, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI; Edinburgh: Eerdmans, 2009), 165.
- 43 Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 47.
- 44 William Albright, 'The names of Shaddai and Abram', *JBL* 54 (1935): 192–3.
- 45 Bernhard Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (4th ed.; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1986), 43.
- 46 Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (trans. John McHugh; 2nd ed.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), 294.
- 47 Choon Seow, 'Hosts, Lord of', *ABD* 3:304.
- 48 Bernhard Anderson, 'Lord of Hosts', *IDB* 3:151.
- 49 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 108.
- 50 E. Theodore Mullan, Jr., 'Hosts, host of heaven', *ABD* 3:301.
- 51 This is my own account based on reading of the text and use of 'BibleWorks'. I do not present the figure and the figures in the table of distribution as concrete fact but as a close approximation.
- 52 See Roger Whybray, *The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah XL 13–14: A Study of the Sources of the Theology of Deutero-Isaiah* (SOTSMS, vol. 1; London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 42–4 for a more detailed overview.

- 53 Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (ed. and trans., Marva Dawn; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 107.
- 54 John Wood, *Perspectives on War in the Bible* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1998), 20.
- 55 Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew*, 65.
- 56 My translation 'In the era of Samuel and David, YHWH *Sabaoth* was the God-Protector of the nation'. Benjamin Wambacq, *L'épithète divine Jahvé Seba'ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique* (Bruges: Desclée, De Brouwer, 1947), 200.
- 57 William Albright, review of Benjamin Wambacq, *L'épithète divine Jahvé Seb a'ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*, *JBL* 67 (1948): 377–81.
- 58 Helmer Ringgren, 'אֱלֹהֵי בָרָא', *TDOT* 2:245.
- 59 James McKeown, *Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008, 269. Genesis does not contain a developed sense of *creatio ex nihilo* as it was not the focus of the text but the later doctrine would have grown from this account.
- 60 William Brown, 'Creation', *EDB*, 293.
- 61 Phillip Harner, 'Creation faith in Deutero-Isaiah', *VT* 17 (1969): 298.
- 62 Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*. Translated by Thomas Trapp. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991. Translation of *Jesaja 1-12*. (Biblischer Kommentar, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 205.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 206.
- 64 It is almost evenly distributed between Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah with 12 instances of the term in Proto-Isaiah and 22 in Deutero-Isaiah) and its occurrences in Trito-Isaiah (60.9 and 60.14) seem to be easily explained.
- 65 Paul Redditt, 'Holy One of Israel', *EDB*, 600.
- 66 Mitchell Reddish, 'Holy One of Israel', *ABD* 3:258.
- 67 James Muilenburg, 'Holiness', *IDB* 2:621.
- 68 For more on the traditional view of the concept of 'holiness' in a moral sphere see Walther Eichrodt, 'On prophet and covenant: observations on the exegesis of Isaiah', in *Proclamation and Presence: Essays in Honor of Gwynne Henton Davies* (eds, John Durham and J. R. Porter; London: SCM Press, 1970), 169–72.
- 69 J. J. M. Roberts, 'Isaiah in Old Testament theology', *Int* 36 (1982): 131.
- 70 Hugh G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 41.
- 71 Baruch Levine and Eliezer Schweid, 'Kedushah', *EncJud* 10:868.
- 72 William Albright, 'Some Canaanite-Phoenician sources of Hebrew wisdom', in M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas, eds, *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (VTSup 3; Brill: Leiden, 1969), 15.
- 73 Tryggve Mettinger, 'In search of the hidden structure: YHWH as king in Isaiah 40–55', in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (eds, Craig Broyles and Craig Evans; vol. 1; Leiden, New York: Köln, Brill, 1997), 144.
- 74 Arvid Kapelrud, 'אֱבִיר, אֱבִיר', *TDOT* 1:42.
- 75 Rose, 'Names of God in the Old Testament', 1055.
- 76 Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 780.

- 77 Ben Ollenburger, *Zion, the City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 41–2.
- 78 Leslie Hoppe, *The Holy City: Jerusalem in the Theology of the Old Testament* (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2000), 35.
- 79 John McLaughlin, ‘God in the Old Testament, names of’, *EDB*, 513.
- 80 Albrecht Alt, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (trans. R. A. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 26.
- 81 Nahum Sarna, ‘The divine title ‘abhir ya’aqoBh’, *Studies in Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2000), 7.
- 82 Helmer Ringgren, ‘גָּאֵל *gā’al*; גֹּעַל *gō’ēl*; גֵּעֻלָּה *ge’ullāh*’, *TDOT* 2:350.
- 83 Phillip Harner, ‘The salvation oracle in Second Isaiah’, *JBL* 88 (1969): 418.
- 84 Gary Light, ‘Salvation, Save, Savior’, *EDB*, 1154.
- 85 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 191.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 484.
- 87 Clements, *Isaiah 1–39* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Erdmans, 1980), 290.
- 88 Seitz, ‘The Book of Isaiah 40–66’, in Leander Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 527.
- 89 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 55–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 262.
- 90 Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 393.
- 91 Leland Ryken et al., eds., ‘Rock’, *DBI*, 733.

Notes to Chapter Four: Divine Designations in the New Testament

- 1 Jouette Bassler, ‘God in the New Testament’, *ABD* 2:1049–55.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 1049.
- 3 Hans Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 99.
- 4 M. Eugene Boring, ‘Names of God in the New Testament’, in *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 684–5.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 685.
- 6 Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: Volume One, the Proclamation of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 9.
- 7 Gail Ramshaw, *Liturgical Language: Keeping It Metaphoric, Making It Inclusive* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 36. It is often described as an ambiguous or roundabout figure of speech or, more simply, using many words and phrases to describe something that is generally perceived as quite simple.
- 8 Edgar Krentz, ‘God in the New Testament’, in *Our Naming of God: Problems and Prospects of God-Talk Today*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 78–9 for details on the factors that may have influenced this.
- 9 See Bob Robinson, *Christians Meeting Hindus: An Analysis and Theological Critique of the Hindu-Christian Encounter in India* (Regnum Studies in Mission.

- Oxford: Regnum Books International 2004), 240–6 for more on the problems of a purely Christocentric reading of the Gospels in comparative theology.
- 10 Nils Alstrup Dahl and Donald Juel, *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 153–63 at page 154. Originally published as Nils Dahl, ‘The neglected factor in New Testament theology’, *Reflection* 73 (1975): 5–8, 5.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, 154.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, 155.
 - 13 Jean Galot, *Abba, Father, We Long to See Your Face: Theological Insights into the First Person of the Trinity* (New York: Alba House, 1992), 31.
 - 14 Leander Keck, ‘Toward the renewal of New Testament Christology’, *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986): 362–77, 363.
 - 15 Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 1.
 - 16 John Donahue, ‘A neglected factor in the theology of Mark’, *JBL* 101 (1982): 563–94. This article was presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in 1980 at the Markan Seminar.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, 564.
 - 18 Nils Dahl notes that, in particular, Bultmann and Oscar Cullmann have failed to address the issue of God in the New Testament, notable in these instances as both works were so influential on New Testament studies.
 - 19 Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*. Translated by Matt J. O’Connell. London: SCM Press, 1984. Originally published as *Der Gott Jesu Christi* (Das Glaubensbekenntnis Der Kirche, 1. Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1982).
 - 20 Ben Meyer, ‘The God of Jesus Christ’, review of *Cardinal God of Jesus Christ*, by Walter Kasper, *CBQ* 49 (April 1987): 343.
 - 21 Aaron Milavec, ‘The God of Jesus Christ’, review of *Cardinal God of Jesus Christ*, by Walter Kasper, *Int* 41, no. 2 (April 1987): 214.
 - 22 Larry Hurtado, ‘God’, in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed., Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 270.
 - 23 Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2007), 272.
 - 24 ‘Hurtado, “God”, 272.’
 - 25 Paul Ricoeur, ‘Naming God’, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 34 (1979): 215–27 originally printed as Paul Ricoeur, ‘Nommer Dieu’, *Études théologiques et religieuses* 52 (1977): 489–508, and reprinted in Paul Ricoeur and Mark I. Wallace, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 217–35.
 - 26 Ricoeur, ‘Naming God’, 225, 228–30.
 - 27 William W. Young, *The Politics of Praise: Naming God and Friendship in Aquinas and Derrida* (Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies. Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 16.

- 28 Matt. 27:46: “‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ – that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (NRSV).
- 29 Ricoeur, ‘Naming God’, 224.
- 30 Ibid., 224. ‘Dès lors une christologie sans Dieu me paraît aussi impensable qu’Israël sans Yahwéh’.
- 31 Ibid., 224.
- 32 www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P17.HTM (accessed 19 October 2010).
- 33 Jan Linn, *How to Be an Open-Minded Christian Without Losing Your Faith* (St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002), 51.
- 34 Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 19. An alternative reading, ‘Since God is male, the male is God’ is found in Mary Daly, ‘The qualitative leap beyond patriarchal religion’, *Quest (Women and Spirituality)* 1 (1974): 21.
- 35 Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, 51.
- 36 Ibid., 51.
- 37 Ruth C. Duck and Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Praising God: The Trinity in Christian Worship* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 15.
- 38 In every classroom situation where I find sufficient time, I ask my students to sketch, orally describe, or write about their visual representation of ‘God’. I have taught a very wide range of ages, from very young children, to those who have retired and returned to learning, so this exercise encompasses a wide age range. While many depict ‘God’ in abstract terms (a cloud being particularly popular), the majority describe what I have termed the ‘Werther’s Original[®] God’ after the representation of a kindly grandfather in an advertisement for a brand of old-fashioned butterscotch toffees. The image is of an elderly, Caucasian gentleman with bushy facial hair and a kindly smile, typically dressed in a tunic and sandals. A more elderly version of Jesus as depicted in Catholic Sacred Heart imagery. While discussion on the origin of these images always provides useful thought-provoking material for class discussion, it is noteworthy that with the hundreds of students who have engaged with this exercise, no two people have ever had the same image. The general outline may be the same but there will always be clear differences.
- 39 Claude Welch, ‘Trinity’ in *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*, ed. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 499–500.
- 40 A simple, concise yet informative general piece on the Trinity is Samuel Wells, ‘Trinity’, in John Bowden, *Christianity: The Complete Guide* (London: Continuum, 2005), 1207–14.
- 41 Géza Vermès, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (London: SCM Press, 1993), 157.
- 42 John Carroll, ‘The God of Israel and the salvation of the nations’, in *The Forgotten God: Perspectives in Biblical Theology; Essays in Honor of Paul J. Achtemeier on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier, A. Andrew Das, and Frank J. Matera (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 91.
- 43 Hurtado, ‘God’, 270.

- 44 Hurtado notes that *theos* is used 48 times in Mark, 51 in Matthew, 122 in Luke (not including Acts), and 73 times in John. *Ibid.*, 270.
- 45 Raymond E. Brown, ‘Does the New Testament call Jesus God?’, *Theological Studies* 26 (1965): 545–73, esp. 561–65 with regard to texts where Jesus is called God.
- 46 Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 271.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 275.
- 48 David Capes, ‘Jesus as God: The New Testament use of *theos* in reference to Jesus’, review of *Jesus as God*, by Murray J. Harris, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39 (1996): 685–6.
- 49 Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 3:92.
- 50 J. Schneider, Colin Brown and J. Stafford Wright, ‘*θεός*’ in Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 66.
- 51 Gerhard Kittel et al., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:67.
- 52 Naturally scholars differ on how many times the term *θεός* is used in the New Testament.
- 53 Homer II. 13. 729 *Theos* and II 4 320 *Theoi*
- 54 Gerhard Kittel et al., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:67.
- 55 S. Vernon McCasland, ‘“Abba, Father”’, *JBL* 72 (1953): 79–91, especially 80 for overview of the efforts made to translate the term in various Bible versions.
- 56 See Joseph Fitzmyer, ‘“Abba” and Jesus’ relation to God’, in *A Cause De L’evangile: Études Sur Les Synoptiques Et Les Actes Offertes Au P. Jacques Dupont, O.S.B. À L’occasion De Son 70. Anniversaire* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), 16 for excellent overview and details of the philological aspects of the term.
- 57 John Ashton, ‘Abba’, *ABD* 1: 7.
- 58 Augustine Stock, *The Method and Message of Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 101.
- 59 Fitzmyer, ‘“Abba” and Jesus’ relation to God’, 15–16.
- 60 Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1976), 57. Italics are Jeremias’.
- 61 Mary Rose D’Angelo, ‘“Abba” and “Father”: imperial theology and the Jesus traditions’, *JBL* 111 (1992): 613. Géza Vermès, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 39–42.
- 62 James Barr, ‘“Abba” Isn’t “Daddy”’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988): 38. For the purposes of balance, there are several commentators who support Jeremias’ views to varying degrees. James Rimbach, ‘God-talk or baby-talk: more on “Abba”’, *Currents in Theology and Mission* 13 (1986): 232–5 is one of the better examples.
- 63 The term was originally coined by James Barr in *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 218.
- 64 Stanley E. Porter, *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice* (Studies in Biblical Greek, vol. 6. New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 61.

- 65 Barr, “‘Abba’ Isn’t ‘Daddy’”, 38.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 45.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 68 For more detailed work on how children pick up a language, see Deborah Levine Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 116. William O’Grady, *How Children Learn Language* (Cambridge Approaches to Linguistics. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9–12.
- 69 Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 41.
- 70 Luis M. Bermejo, *Abba, My Dad!* (Anand, Gujarat: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2001), 146. Emphasis Bermejo’s.
- 71 Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology; Their History in Early Christianity* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1969), 307.
- 72 Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 978. Brown also covers this in Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave; A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1994) 1:173.
- 73 Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, Trans. John Bowden, (Studies in Biblical Theology, 2nd ser., no. 6. London: SCM Press, 1967), 63.
- 74 David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics & Phonetics* (The Language Library. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 222.
- 75 Roman Catholics in particular refer to the prayer as ‘The Our Father’, most likely due to the translation of the Latin *Pater Noster*. For an exhaustive and definitive study of the prayer in various language and dialects, there is no more thorough resource than www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/ (accessed 19 October 2010), which has 1662 examples of the prayer in various languages and dialects.
- 76 One suspects that the child who thought for several years that God was a baker baking us ‘our daily bread’ was not alone.
- 77 Augustine Stock, *The Method and Message of Matthew*, 101.
- 78 Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 53.
- 79 Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*, trans. Wilhelm C. Linss (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 376.
- 80 John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI; Bletchley: W. B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 283.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 285.
- 82 Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 133–4.
- 83 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 471.
- 84 Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, trans. Helmut Koester (Hermeneia. Minneapolis; Bristol: Fortress Press; Alban, 2001), 158.
- 85 ‘And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (NRSV).

- 86 Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 169.
- 87 M. Eguene Boring, ‘The Gospel of Matthew: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 275.
- 88 Stock, *The Method and Message of Matthew*, 191.
- 89 Michael Mullins, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2007), 563.
- 90 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 340, footnote 501. For the English translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) fragment see Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 225.
- 91 William Foxwell Albright and Christopher Stephen Mann, *Matthew* (TAB, 26. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 75.
- 92 This is the case even if this is brought to the base level of a ‘sperm donor’ for the means of conception.
- 93 One often gets the impression that the writers of the New Testament are wholly distanced from what we may assume is a natural relationship with a father, which includes arguments and disagreements. In a modern-day classroom, one must presume that not all children have a positive male role model in their lives, to say nothing of a positive father figure. Children may have suffered the tragedy of the death of a father; their father may have abandoned the family home, or may be an abusive figure, to both children and their mother. Blindly trying to teach children about a ‘loving father’ may do more harm than good in their blossoming theological understanding.
- 94 Henri van den Bussche, *Understanding the Lord’s Prayer*, trans. Charles Schaldenbrand (London: Sheed & Ward, 1964), 36.
- 95 Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations* (London: Macmillan, 1866), 167.
- 96 Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia, a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 210.
- 97 Richard Hays, ‘The Letter to the Galatians: introduction, commentary and reflections’, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 285.
- 98 Joseph Grassi, ‘Abba, Father’, *The Bible Today* 21 (1983): 321.
- 99 Allen Mawhinney, ‘God as Father: two popular theories reconsidered’, *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 31 (1988): 185.
- 100 R. A. Cole, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 117.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 117.
- 102 J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (TAB, 33a. New York: Doubleday, 1997), 391.
- 103 Grassi, ‘Abba, Father’, 321.

- 104 Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, 167 and following. A more recent edition of the text that may be more accessible is Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations* (J. B. Lightfoot's Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993).
- 105 Ibid. (1866), 167.
- 106 Betz, *Galatians*, 211.
- 107 Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 977. Emphasis mine.
- 108 As suggested by N. T. Wright, 'The Letter to the Romans: introduction, commentary, and reflections', in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 593.
- 109 Joseph Fitzmyer, 'The letter to the Romans', *NJBC*, 853.
- 110 Timothy P. Jackson, *The Morality of Adoption: Social-Psychological, Theological, and Legal Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 190.
- 111 Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 498.
- 112 Ibid., 498. Italics Fitzmyer's.
- 113 Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Reading the New Testament Series. New York: Crossroad, 1997), 124.
- 114 Grassi, 'Abba, Father', 322.
- 115 Joseph Grassi, 'Abba, Father (Mark 14:36): another approach', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50 (1982): 455.
- 116 Wright, 'The Letter to the Romans', 593.
- 117 Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 287.
- 118 C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Black's New Testament Commentaries. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1971), 164.
- 119 'What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also.'
- 120 Ibid., 164.
- 121 Colleen Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 156–8.
- 122 Grassi, 'Abba, Father', 321.
- 123 E. A. Obeng, 'Abba, Father: the prayer of the sons of God', *Expository Times* 99, no. 12 (1988): 363–6, 365. Glossolalia is usually described as an ecstatic, usually unintelligible speech uttered in the worship services of any of several sects stressing emotionality and religious fervor-or more commonly termed as 'speaking in tongues'.
- 124 Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 501.
- 125 Mark 5.41: 'He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum", which means, "Little girl, get up!";', Mark 7.34: 'Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha", that is, "Be opened".', Mark 15.34: 'At three o'clock Jesus

- cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (NRSV).
- 126 PHEME PERKINS, ‘The Gospel of Mark: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 8:707.
- 127 C. S. MANN, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), 587.
- 128 MORNA D. HOOKER, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (A & C Black, 1991), 349.
- 129 MARY ROSE D’ANGELO, ‘Theology in Mark and Q: *Abba* and “Father” in context’, *Harvard Theological Review* 85, no. 2 (1992): 149–74, 160.
- 130 FITZMYER, “‘Abba’ and Jesus’ relation to God’, 31.
- 131 D’ANGELO, ‘Theology in Mark and Q: *Abba* and “Father” in context’, 160.
- 132 ‘Q’ is the hypothetical source for the material shared by Matthew and Luke but not present in Mark. For more detailed information on Q see PHEME PERKINS, *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 85–96. This text contains a good general overview of the subject and a good up-to-date bibliography.
- 133 HOOKER, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*, 210.
- 134 *Ibid.*, 210.
- 135 MARCUS, *Mark 8-16*, 628.
- 136 PERKINS, ‘The Gospel of Mark: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, 694.
- 137 MANN, *Mark*, 454. This is also termed the ‘Markan Secret’ due to its high occurrence in the Gospel of Mark. It refers to Jesus having demanded that his followers do not reveal to anyone that he is the Messiah.
- 138 HUGH ANDERSON, *The Gospel of Mark* (New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 301.
- 139 MARCUS, *Mark 8-16*, 914.
- 140 MANN, *Mark*, 454.
- 141 MARCUS, *Mark 8-16*, 787.
- 142 HUGH ANDERSON, *The Gospel of Mark*, 269.
- 143 ALAN WYNN SHORTER, *The Egyptian Gods: A Handbook* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 125–43 for a comprehensive list.
- 144 R. ALAN CULPEPPER, ‘The Gospel of Luke: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994) 9:224. See Jn 3:35; 13:3; 17:2.
- 145 FITZMYER, “‘Abba’ and Jesus’ relation to God’, 35.
- 146 I. HOWARD MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary, [3]. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 430.
- 147 RUDOLF KARL BULTMANN, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 171.
- 148 PAUL HOFFMANN, *Die Toten in Christus: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung zur paulinischen Eschatologie* (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, N.F. Bd. 2. Münster/Westf.: Aschendorff, 1966), 108.

- 149 Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X–XXIV): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (vol. 28A, AB. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), 915.
- 150 J. Lionel North, ‘Praying for a good spirit: text, context and meaning of Luke 11.13’, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28 (2005): 167–88.
- 151 Wilfrid J. Harrington, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: G. Chapman, 1968), 164.
- 152 Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 469.
- 153 Culpepper, ‘The Gospel of Luke: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, 238.
- 154 Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X–XXIV)*, 1418.
- 155 Jacques Guillet, ‘Luc 22, 29: Une formule Johannique dans L’évangile De Luc?’, *Recherches de science religieuse* 69 (1981): 113–22. See also Jn 15.9; 17.21; 20.21.
- 156 Gail O’Day, ‘The Gospel of John: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 588.
- 157 Tim O’Donnell, ‘Complementary eschatologies in John 5:19-30’, *CBQ* 70 (2008): 751.
- 158 *Ibid.*, 753.
- 159 ‘And the priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the one who commits an error, when it is unintentional, to make atonement for the person, who then shall be forgiven’ (NRSV).
- 160 Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1977), 221.
- 161 C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), 386, footnote 2. Dodd discusses this fully in C. H. Dodd, ‘Une parabole cachée dans Le Quatrième Évangile’, *Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 42 (1962): 107–15.
- 162 Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (I–XII): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (vol. 29. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 214.
- 163 For more detail on how v. 21 fits into the narrative framework of John 17 see David Alan Black, ‘On the style and significance of John 17’, *Criswell Theological Review* 3 (1988): 141–59, especially 143–47.
- 164 Patrick Chatelion Counet, *John, a Postmodern Gospel: Introduction to Deconstructive Exegesis Applied to the Fourth Gospel* (Biblical Interpretation Series, vol. 44. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 299.
- 165 R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (Interpreting Biblical Texts. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 221.
- 166 Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (XIII–XXI)* (vol. 29a, AB. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 775. Italics Brown’s. The phrase is the official motto of the Church of South India and the Latin phrase ‘*Ut Omnes Unum Sint*’ is the motto of the World Student Christian Federation.
- 167 O’Day, ‘The Gospel of John: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, 795.
- 168 *Ibid.*, 795.
- 169 Michael Mullins, *The Gospel of John*, 351.

- 170 Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 221.
- 171 Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 529.
- 172 *Ibid.*, 529.
- 173 For a summary of scholarly work on the phrase ‘Do not hold on to me’ see Kelli O’Brien, ‘Written that you may believe: John 20 and narrative rhetoric’, *CBQ* 67 (2005): 294.
- 174 O’Day, ‘The Gospel of John: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, 843.
- 175 Raymond E. Brown, ‘The Resurrection in John 20 – a series of diverse reactions’, *Worship* 64 (1990): 194–206, 200 and Mullins, *The Gospel of John*, 407.
- 176 ‘Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”’, Jn 20.28 (NRSV).
- 177 Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (XIII–XXI)*, 994.
- 178 John 6.57: ‘Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me’ (NRSV).
- 179 John 17.11: ‘And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.’
- 180 John 17.25: “‘Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me.’”
- 181 Gerald Janzen, ‘The scope of Jesus’s high priestly prayer in John 17’, *Encounter* 67 (2006): 15.
- 182 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 183 Culpepper, ‘The Gospel of Luke: introduction, commentary, and reflections’, 56.
- 184 ‘Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”’
- 185 ‘Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”’
- 186 Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 162, footnote 53.
- 187 Keith Fullerton Nickle, *Preaching the Gospel of Luke: Proclaiming God’s Royal Rule* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 28.
- 188 Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 124.
- 189 Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 344.
- 190 Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1:469–470 and 1:496–497.
- 191 R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007), 520.

Notes to Chapter Five: Divine Designations in the Qur’an

- 1 Cyril Glassé, ‘Divine names’, in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (rev. ed. London: Stacey International, 2001), 118–19.
- 2 For the purposes of this work, the term Qur’an will be used.
- 3 For more detailed information on the formation of Qur’an as we have it today, see

- John Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 117–224, especially 138–59.
- 4 Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 52.
 - 5 *Ibid.*, 53.
 - 6 Cyril Glassé, 'Koran' in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (Rev. ed. 1 vol. London: Stacey International, 2001), 267–8.
 - 7 Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 54, and Mahmoud Ayoub, *Islam: Faith and Practice* (Markham, ON: Open Press, 1989), 72.
 - 8 Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 48.
 - 9 Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and Style* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 7.
 - 10 Daniel W. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam* (2nd ed. Chichester, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 78.
 - 11 Charles Adams, 'Qur'an: the text and its history', *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 12:174.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, 174.
 - 13 Sarah Grey Thomason, *Language Contact* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2001), 2.
 - 14 For a more in-depth treatment of this issue, see Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Qur'an Translation: Discourse, Texture and Exegesis* (Culture and Civilisation in the Middle East. Richmond: Curzon, 2001).
 - 15 One exciting development in this area is *The HarperCollins Study Quran*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (San Francisco: Harper One, forthcoming 2011).
 - 16 Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (London: Al-Furqan Publications (Darul Furqan), 1930).
 - 17 Abdallah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge, MA: Hafner, 1983).
 - 18 Mahmoud Ayoub, *Islam: Faith and History* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2004), 159.
 - 19 Reza Aslan, *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York: Random House, 2005), 150.
 - 20 Harold A. Netland, *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, UK: W. B. Eerdmans; Apollos, 1991).
 - 21 Zeki Saritoprak, 'Allah', in Oliver Leaman ed., *The Quran: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 34.
 - 22 Oliver Leaman, 'Al-Rahman', in Oliver Leaman ed., *The Quran: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 527.
 - 23 Jonas C. Greenfield, 'From 'Lh Rbmn to Al-Rahman – the source of a divine epithet', in William M. Brinner et al., eds, *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication, and Interaction; Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 381.

Notes to Chapter Six: Comparative Theologies and the Names of God

- 1 Here again it is important to note that the range of terms used in the discussion of the method varies, on a spectrum from acceptable to detrimental or harmful.
- 2 Here I must acknowledge the participants in the Irish Peace Centres project on 'Do Theological Studies Contribute to Peace on the Island of Ireland?' (June 2010) for their contributions to this topic, specifically in the area of Catholicism and Protestantism in Ireland.
- 3 Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 7.
- 4 Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 5 Frithjof Schuon, *Understanding Islam* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963), 11.

Bibliography

- Abba, Raymond. 'The divine name YHWH'. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80 (1961): 320–8.
- Abdel Haleem, M. A. *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and Style*. London; New York: Tauris, 1999.
- Abdul-Raof, Hussein. *Qur'an Translation: Discourse, Texture and Exegesis*. Culture and Civilisation in the Middle East. Richmond: Curzon, 2001.
- Adams, Charles. 'Qur'an: the text and its history'. In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mircea Eliade and Charles J. Adams, vol. 12, 156–76. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
- Albright, William. 'The names of Shaddai and Abram'. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 54 (1935): 173–204.
- Albright, William. Review of Benjamin Wambacq, *L'épithète divine Jahvé Seb a'ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67 (1948): 377–81.
- Albright, William Foxwell. *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1957.
- Albright, William. 'Some Canaanite-Phoenician sources of Hebrew wisdom'. In *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, edited by M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas, 1–15. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 3. Brill: Leiden, 1969.
- Albright, William Foxwell, and C. S. Mann. *Matthew*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971.
- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. Brentwood, Cambridge, MA: Hafner, 1983.
- Alt, Albrecht. *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1966.
- Anderson, Bernhard W. *Understanding the Old Testament*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986.
- Anderson, Hugh. *The Gospel of Mark: Based on the Revised Standard Version*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981.

- Aslan, Reza. *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*. New York: Random House, 2005.
- Augustine, and James J. O'Donnell. *Confessions*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Ayoub, Mahmoud Mustapha. *Islam: Faith and Practice*. Markham, ON: Open Press, 1989.
- Ayoub, Mahmoud. *Islam: Faith and History*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2004.
- Banchoff, Thomas F. *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Barr, James. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Barr, James. "Abba" isn't "Daddy". *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988): 28–47.
- Barrett, C. K. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Black's New Testament Commentaries. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1971.
- Bauckham, Richard. *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999.
- Beary, Michael. 'Russell and Frege'. Ch. 4 in *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell*, edited by Nicholas Griffin, 128–70. Cambridge: University Press, 2003.
- Berlin, Adele, Marc Zvi Brettler, and Michael A. Fishbane. *The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Bermejo, Luis M. *Abba, My Dad!* Anand, Gujarat: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2001.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Hermeneia – a critical and historical commentary on the Bible. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
- Black, David Alan. 'On the style and significance of John 17'. *Criswell Theological Review* 3 (1988): 141–59.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 2003.
- Bohmbach, Karla. 'Names and naming in the biblical world'. In *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, edited by Carol Meyers, 33–39. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Bohmbach, Karla. 'Names and naming'. In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, 944–6. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000.
- Boring, M. Eugene. 'Names of God in the New Testament'. In *Harper's Bible*

- Dictionary*, edited by Paul J. Achtemeier, 684–6. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985.
- Boring, M. Eugene. ‘The Gospel of Matthew: introduction, commentary, and reflections’. In *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, edited by Leander Keck, vol. 8, 87–505. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Botterweck, G. Johannes, and Helmer Ringgren. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, 16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Bowker, John. ‘Anthropomorphism’. In *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, edited by John Bowker, 74. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Brichto, Herbert Chanan. *The Names of God: Poetic Readings in Biblical Beginnings*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Brown, Colin. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975.
- Brown, Daniel W. *A New Introduction to Islam*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Brown, Raymond E. ‘Does the New Testament call Jesus God?’, *Theological Studies* 26 (1965): 545–73.
- Brown, Raymond Edward. *The Gospel According to John (I–XII): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. The Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John (XIII–XXI)*. The Anchor Bible, 29A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985.
- Brown, Raymond E. ‘The Resurrection in John 20 – a series of diverse reactions’. *Worship* 64 (1990): 194–206.
- Brown, Raymond Edward. *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave; A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Bultmann, Rudolf Karl. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
- Bultmann, Rudolf Karl. *Theology of the New Testament*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007.
- Burge, Tyler. *Origins of Objectivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Burton, John. *The Collection of the Qur’ān*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Bussche, Henri van den, and Charles Schaldenbrand. *Understanding the Lord’s Prayer*. London: Sheed & Ward, 1964.
- Buttrick, George Arthur. *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia Identifying and Explaining All Proper Names and Significant Terms and Subjects in the Holy Scriptures, Including the Apocrypha, with Attention to Archaeological Discoveries and Researches into the Life and Faith of Ancient Times*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.

- Byron, Reginald. *Irish America*. Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Capes, David. 'Jesus as God: the New Testament use of theos in reference to Jesus'. Review of *Jesus as God*, by Murray J. Harris, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39 (1996): 685–6.
- Carroll, John. 'The God of Israel and the salvation of the nations: the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles'. In *The Forgotten God: Perspectives in Biblical Theology; Essays in Honor of Paul J. Achtemeier on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, edited by Paul J. Achtemeier, A. Andrew Das, and Frank J. Matera, 91–106. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Chatelion Counet, Patrick. *John, a Postmodern Gospel: Introduction to Deconstructive Exegesis Applied to the Fourth Gospel*. Biblical Interpretation Series, 44. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Cheyne, T. K., and J. Sutherland Black. *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. London: Black, 1899.
- Childs, Brevard S. *Biblical Theology: A Proposal*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.
- Chittick, William C. *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn Al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Clements, R. E. *Isaiah 1–39*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1980.
- Clooney, Francis X. *Hindu God, Christian God: How Reason Helps Break Down the Boundaries between Religions*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Clooney, Francis X. *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Cole, R. A. *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965.
- Conzelmann, Hans. *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
- Cross, Frank Moore. 'Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs'. *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962): 225–59.
- Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Crystal, David. *A Dictionary of Linguistics & Phonetics*. The Language Library. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003.
- Culpepper, R. Alan. 'The Gospel of Luke: introduction, commentary, and reflections'. In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, edited by Leander Keck, vol. 9, 1–490. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Culpepper, R. Alan. *The Gospel and Letters of John*. Interpreting Biblical texts. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

- Culpepper, R. Alan. *Mark*. Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007.
- Cunningham, David. 'On translating the divine name'. *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 415–44.
- Dahl, Nils. 'The neglected factor in New Testament theology'. *Reflection* 73 (1975): 5–8.
- Dahl, Nils Alstrup, and Donald Juel. *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.
- Daly, Mary. 'The qualitative leap beyond patriarchal religion'. *Quest (Women and Spirituality)* 1 (1974): 20–40.
- Danesi, Marcel. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics, Media, and Communications*. Toronto Studies in Semiotics. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- D'Angelo, Mary Rose. "'Abba" and "Father": imperial theology and the Jesus traditions'. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992): 611–30.
- D'Angelo, Mary Rose. 'Theology in Mark and Q: *Abba* and "Father" in context'. *Harvard Theological Review* 85, no. 2 (1992): 149–74.
- Davidson, A. B., and S. D. F. Salmond. *The Theology of the Old Testament*. The International Theological Library. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1904.
- De Vaux, Roland, and John McHugh. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968.
- Denny, Frederick Mathewson. *An Introduction to Islam*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006.
- Dines, Jennifer M., and Michael A. Knibb. *The Septuagint*. Understanding the Bible and its World. London: T&T Clark, 2004.
- Dodd, C. H. 'Une parabole cachée dans Le Quatrième Évangile'. *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 42 (1962): 107–15.
- Dodd, C. H. *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: University Press, 1963.
- Donahue, John. 'A neglected factor in the theology of Mark'. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982): 563–94.
- Dozeman, Thomas B. *Exodus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Duck, Ruth C., and Patricia Wilson-Kastner. *Praising God: The Trinity in Christian Worship*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- Duffy, Stephen J. 'A theology of the religions and/or a comparative theology?'. *Horizons* 26, no. 1 (1999): 105–15.
- Dummett, Michael A. E. *Frege: Philosophy of Language*. London: Duckworth, 1973.
- Eichrodt, Walther. *Theology of the Old Testament*. The Old Testament Library. London: SCM Press, 1961.
- Eichrodt, Walther. 'On prophet and covenant: observations on the exegesis of Isaiah'. Ch. 9 in *Proclamation and Presence: Essays in Honor of Gwynne*

- Henton Davies*, edited by John Durham and J. R. Porter, 167–88. London: SCM Press, 1970.
- Encyclopedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: Encyclopedia Judaica, 1972.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph. “‘Abba’ and Jesus’ relation to God’. In *A Cause De L’evangile: Études Sur Les Synoptiques Et Les Actes Offertes Au P. Jacques Dupont, O.S.B. À L’occasion De Son 70. Anniversaire*. Paris: Cerf, 1985.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Gospel According to Luke (X–XXIV): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. The Anchor Bible, 28–28A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph. ‘The Letter to the Romans’. In *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, 830–68. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993.
- Freedman, David Noel. ‘Divine names and titles in early Hebrew poetry’. In *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God; Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, edited by Frank Moore Cross, Werner E. Lemke, and Patrick D. Miller, 55–107. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979.
- Freedman, David Noel. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Fuerst, Wesley. ‘How Israel conceived of and addressed God’. In *Our Naming of God: Problems and Prospects of God-Talk Today*, edited by Carl Braaten, 61–74. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.
- Gabel, John B., and Charles B. Wheeler. *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Galot, Jean. *Abba, Father, We Long to See Your Face: Theological Insights into the First Person of the Trinity*. New York: Alba House, 1992.
- García Martínez, Florentino. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994.
- Geerhardus Vos. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*. Carlisle, PA; East Peoria: Banner of Truth Trust; printed in the USA by Versa Press, 2007).
- Gera, Deborah Levine. *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Glassé, Cyril. *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*. London: Stacey International, 1989.
- Glassé, Cyril. *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001.
- Goodenough, Ward. ‘Personal names and modes of address in two oceanic societies’. In *Context and Meaning in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by Melford E. Spiro and A. Irving Hallowell, 265–76. New York, NY: Free Press, 1965.

- Grassi, Joseph. 'Abba, Father (Mark 14:36): another approach'. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50 (1982): 449–58.
- Grassi, Joseph. 'Abba, Father'. *The Bible Today* 21 (1983): 320–4.
- Greenfield, Jonas C. 'From 'Lh Rhmn to Al-Rahman – the source of a divine epithet'. In *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication, and Interaction; Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner*, edited by William M. Brinner, Benjamin H. Hary, John L. Hayes, and Fred Astren, 381–94. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000.
- Grether, Oskar. *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament*. Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1934.
- Guillet, Jacques 'Luc 22, 29: Une formule Johannique dans L'évangile De Luc?', *Recherches de science religieuse* 69 (1981): 113–22.
- Guthrie, Stewart Elliott. *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Hahn, Ferdinand. *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*. New York: World Publishing Co., 1969.
- Harner, Phillip, 'Creation faith in Deutero-Isaiah'. *Vetus Testamentum* 17 (1969): 298–306.
- Harner, Phillip. 'The salvation oracle in Second Isaiah'. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 418–34.
- Harrington, Wilfrid J. *The Gospel According to St. Luke*. London: G. Chapman, 1968.
- Harris, Murray J. *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Haupt, Paul. 'Der Name Jahwe'. *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 12 (1909), columns 211–14.
- Hays, Richard. 'The Letter to the Galatians: introduction, commentary and reflections'. In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, edited by Leander Keck, vol. 10, 181–348. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Hintersteiner, Norbert. 'Intercultural and interreligious (un)translatability and the comparative theology project'. In *Naming and Thinking God in Europe Today: Theology in Global Dialogue*, edited by Norbert Hintersteiner, 465–91. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007.
- Hintersteiner, Norbert. ed. *Naming and Thinking God in Europe Today: Theology in Global Dialogue*. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007.
- Hoffmann, Paul. *Die Toten in Christus: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung zur paulinischen Eschatologie*. Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, N.F. Bd. 2. Münster (Westf.): Aschendorff, 1966.
- Holbrook, Clyde A. *The Iconoclastic Deity: Biblical Images of God*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1984.
- Hooker, Morna D. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*. London: A & C Black, 1991.

- Hoppe, Leslie J. *The Holy City: Jerusalem in the Theology of the Old Testament*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Hossein Nasr, Seyyed. ed. *The HarperCollins Study Quran*. San Francisco: Harper One, forthcoming.
- Huber, Carlo. *Speaking of God*. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, 24. Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000.
- Hurtado, Larry. 'God'. In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, 270–6. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Jackson, Timothy P. *The Morality of Adoption: Social-Psychological, Theological, and Legal Perspectives*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005.
- Jacobs, Louis. *The Jewish Religion: A Companion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Janzen, Gerald. 'The scope of Jesus's high priestly prayer in John 17'. *Encounter* 67 (2006): 1–26.
- Jeremias, Joachim. *New Testament Theology: Volume One, the Proclamation of Jesus*. London: SCM Press, 1971.
- Jeremias, Joachim. *The Prayers of Jesus*. Studies in Biblical Theology, 2nd series, no. 6. London: SCM Press, 1976.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Reading the New Testament Series. New York: Crossroad, 1997.
- Kasper, Walter. *Der Gott Jesu Christi*. Das Glaubensbekenntnis Der Kirche, 1. Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1982.
- Kasper, Walter. *The God of Jesus Christ*. (Das Glaubensbekenntnis Der Kirche, 1. Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1982.
- Keck, Leander. 'Toward the renewal of New Testament Christology'. *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986): 362–77.
- Keel, Othmar. *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1978.
- Kerr, Fergus. *Theology After Wittgenstein*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1997.
- Kingsbury, Jack Dean. *Matthew as Story*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.
- Kittel, Gerhard, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).
- Krentz, Edgar. 'God in the New Testament'. In *Our Naming of God: Problems and Prospects of God-Talk Today*, edited by Carl Braaten, 75–90. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.

- Kripke, Saul A. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982.
- Layton, Scott C. *Archaic Features of Canaanite Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible*. Harvard Semitic Monographs, no. 47. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990.
- Leaman, Oliver. *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Levick, Stephen E. *Clone Being: Exploring the Psychological and Social Dimensions*. Lanham, MD; Oxford: AltaMira Press; Oxford Publicity Partnership, 2004.
- Lieberman, Anatoly. *Word Origins – and How We Know Them: Etymology for Everyone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Lightfoot, Joseph Barber. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text, with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations*. London: Macmillan, 1866.
- Lightfoot, Joseph Barber. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.
- Lindars, Barnabas. *The Gospel of John*. New Century Bible. London: Oliphants, 1977.
- Linn, Jan. *How to Be an Open-Minded Christian Without Losing Your Faith*. St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002.
- Luz, Ulrich. *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990.
- Luz, Ulrich, and Helmut Koester. *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary*. Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
- Mann, C. S. *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986.
- Marcus, Joel. *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978.
- Martyn, J. Louis. *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Mathewson Denny, Frederick. 'Names and naming'. In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mircea Eliade and Charles J. Adams, vol. 10: 300–307. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
- Mawhinney, Allen. 'God as Father: two popular theories reconsidered'. *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 31 (1988): 181–9.
- McCasland, S. Vernon. "'Abba, Father'". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 72 (1953): 79–91.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Theology: The Basics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
- McKenzie, John. 'Aspects of Old Testament theology'. In *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, 1284–1315. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990.
- McKeown, James. *Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008.

- Meeks, Wayne A., and Jouette M. Bassler. *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Mettinger, Tryggve. 'In search of the hidden structure: YHWH as king in Isaiah 40–55'. In *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretative Tradition*, edited by Craig Broyles and Craig Evans, 143–54. Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997.
- Meyer, Ben. 'The God of Jesus Christ'. Review of *Cardinal God of Jesus Christ*, by Walter Kasper, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (April 1987): 343.
- Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991.
- Milavec, Aaron. 'The God of Jesus Christ'. Review of *Cardinal God of Jesus Christ*, by Walter Kasper, *Interpretation* 41, no. 2 (April 1987): 214.
- Mills, Watson E., and Roger Aubrey Bullard. *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990.
- Morgan, Robert. 'Biblical theology'. In *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, edited by R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, 86–9. London; Philadelphia: SCM Press; Trinity Press International, 1990.
- Morris, James Winston. 'Encountering the Qur'an: contexts and approaches.' Ch. 6 in *Voices of Islam*, edited by Vincent J. Cornell, 65–96. Praeger Perspectives. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2007.
- Mullins, Michael. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Dublin: Columba Press, 2003.
- Mullins, Michael. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary*. Dublin: Columba Press, 2007.
- Murata, Sachiko, and William C. Chittick. *The Vision of Islam*. Visions of reality. New York: Paragon House, 1994.
- Netland, Harold A. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991.
- Nickle, Keith Fullerton. *Preaching the Gospel of Luke: Proclaiming God's Royal Rule*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.
- Nolland, John. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005.
- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 'Uneven secularization in the United States and Western Europe'. Ch. 3 in *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*. Oxford; New York, 2007.
- North, J. Lionel. 'Praying for a good spirit: text, context and meaning of Luke 11.13'. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28 (2005): 167–88.
- Obeng, E. A. 'Abba, Father: the prayer of the sons of God'. *Expository Times* 99, no. 12 (1988): 363–6.
- O'Brien, Kelli. 'Written that you may believe: John 20 and narrative rhetoric'. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005): 284–302.
- O'Day, Gail. 'The Gospel of John: introduction, commentary, and

- reflections'. In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, edited by Leander Keck, vol. 9, 491–865. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- O'Donnell, James J. *Augustine 'Confessions' 1 Introduction and Text*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.
- O'Donnell, Tim. 'Complementary eschatologies in John 5:19-30'. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70 (2008): 750–65.
- O'Grady, William. *How Children Learn Language*. Cambridge Approaches to Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Ollenburger, Ben C. *Zion, the City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, 41. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987.
- O'Malley, William J. *God: The Oldest Question; A Fresh Look at Belief and Unbelief and Why the Choice Matters*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2000.
- Ornduff, Robert, Phyllis M. Faber, and Todd Keeler-Wolf. *Introduction to California Plant Life*. California Natural History Guides, 69. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2003.
- Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Edition, s.v. 'Name'. Available at: www.oed.com (accessed 19 July 2010).
- Parke-Taylor, Geoffrey H. *YHWH: The Divine Name in the Bible*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1975.
- Perkins, PHEME. 'The Gospel of Mark: introduction, commentary, and reflections'. In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, edited by Leander Keck, vol. 8, 507–733. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Perkins, PHEME. *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2007.
- Perrin, Norman. *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- Pickthall, Marmaduke. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. London: Al-Furqan Publications (Darul Furqan), 1930.
- Pope, Marvin H. *El in the Ugaritic Texts*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, 2. Leiden: Brill, 1955.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice*. Studies in Biblical Greek, 6. New York: Peter Lang, 1996.
- Pritchard, James B. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Rad, Gerhard von, and Marva J. Dawn. *Holy War in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991.
- Ramshaw, Gail. *Liturgical Language: Keeping It Metaphoric, Making It Inclusive*. Colleagueville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996.
- Reilly, Brian T. ed. *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*. 10 vols. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1999.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 'Nommer Dieu'. *Études théologiques et religieuses* 52 (1977): 489–508.

- Ricoeur, Paul. 'Naming God'. *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 34 (1979): 215–27.
- Ricoeur, Paul, and Mark I. Wallace. *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Rimbach, James. 'God-talk or baby-talk: more on "Abba"'. *Currents in Theology and Mission* 13 (1986): 232–5.
- Roberts, J. J. M., 'Isaiah in Old Testament theology'. *Interpretation* 36 (1982): 130–43.
- Robinson, Bob. *Christians Meeting Hindus: An Analysis and Theological Critique of the Hindu-Christian Encounter in India*. Regnum Studies in Mission. Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2004.
- Ryken, Leland, Jim Wilhoit, Tremper Longman, Colin Duriez, Douglas Penney, and Daniel G. Reid. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Samat, Talib, and Brigitte Françoise Bresson. *The 99 Most Eminent Names of Allah*. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors, 2001.
- Sarna, Nahum, *Studies in Biblical Interpretation*. JPS Scholar of Distinction Series. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2000.
- Sawyer, John F. A. 'Root-meanings in Hebrew'. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 12 (1967): 37–50.
- Schebera, Richard. 'Comparative theology: a new method of interreligious dialogue'. *Dialogue and Alliance* 17, no. 1 (2003): 7–18.
- Schimmel, Annemarie. *Islam: An Introduction*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.
- Schmalz, Mathew N. 'Tradition and transgression in the comparative theology of Francis X. Clooney, S.J.' *Religious Studies Review* 29, no. 1 (2003): 130–6.
- Schuon, Frithjof. *Understanding Islam*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1963.
- Seitz, Christopher R. 'The Book of Isaiah 40–66'. In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, edited by Leander Keck, vol. 6, 307–552. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Shakespeare, William, and Brian Gibbons. *Romeo and Juliet*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Shantz, Colleen. *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Shorter, Alan Wynn. *The Egyptian Gods: A Handbook*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Sluga, Hans D. *Gottlob Frege. The Arguments of the Philosophers*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Sluga, Hans D., and David G. Stern. *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

- Soulen, Richard N., and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. New York, NY: James Clarke, 2002.
- Stanton, Joshua. 'Seismic shift in seminary education'. *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue* 3 (20 April 2010). Available at: www.irdialogue.org/articles/seismic-shift-in-seminary-education-by-joshua-stanton/ (accessed 14 January 2011).
- Stifler, James M. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971.
- Stock, Augustine. *The Method and Message of Matthew*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994.
- Swartley, Willard M. *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2006.
- Swidler, Leonard. 'Islam and the triad of Abrahamic religions'. *Cross Currents* 42, no. 4 (1992): 444–52.
- Swidler, Leonard J., Khalid Duran, and Reuven Firestone, *Triadology: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Dialogue*. New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007.
- Thomason, Sarah Grey. *Language Contact*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2001.
- Thompson, Marianne Meye. *The God of the Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2001.
- Tobin, Thomas H. *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004.
- Van der Woude, Adam S. 'יְהוָה name'. In *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, edited by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, vol. 3, 1348–67, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.
- Vermès, Géza. *Jesus and the World of Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- Vermès, Géza. *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*. London: SCM Press, 1993.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1948.
- Wambacq, Benjamin. *L'épithète divine Jahvé Seba'ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*. Bruges: Desclée, De Brouwer, 1947.
- Weiser, Artur. *The Psalms: A Commentary*. London: SCM Press, 1962.
- Welch, Claude. 'Trinity'. In *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*, edited by Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, 499–500. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.
- Wells, Samuel. 'Trinity'. In *Christianity: The Complete Guide*, edited by John Bowden, 1207–14. London: Continuum, 2005.
- Westermann, Claus. *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary*. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969.
- Whybray, R. N. *The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah XL 13–14: A Study of the Sources of the Theology of Deutero-Isaiah*. Cambridge: University Press, 1971.

- Wildberger, Hans. *Isaiah 1-12*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Williamson, Hugh G. M. *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Winters, Jeffrey. 'Why we fear the unknown'. *Psychology Today*, May (2002). Available at: www.psychologytoday.com/magazine/archive/2002/05 (accessed 14 January 2011).
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Anscombe; Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
- Wood, John. *Perspectives on War in the Bible*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998.
- Wright, N. T. 'The Letter to the Romans: introduction, commentary, and reflections'. In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, edited by Leander Keck, vol. 10, 393–770. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Wyatt, N. *Religious Texts from Ugarit*. Biblical Seminar, 53. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- Yamauchi, Edwin. 'Anthropomorphism in ancient religions'. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 (1968): 29–44.
- Young, William W. *The Politics of Praise: Naming God and Friendship in Aquinas and Derrida*. Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.
- Youngs, Samuel J. 'The frontier of comparative theology'. *Journal of Comparative Theology* 1, no. 1 (March 2010): 1–10.

Index

- 99 (Most) Beautiful Names of Allah 7, 17, 78, 81, 90, 94–5, 105, 112–13, 121–2, 126, 128, 130–2
- Abraham 25, 29, 40, 44, 76, 78
- Abrahamic faiths 2, 132
- afterlife 97, 106
- Akkadia 25, 28–30
- al-kitāb* 10, 90–1
- ancient Near East 17, 44, 51
- anthropology 7, 9, 10, 34, 62
- anthropomorphism 18–19, 45, 69, 129–31, 133
- appellative 16, 30, 55
- Arabic (Classical) 5–6, 92–3, 139n. 4
- Aramaic 39, 56–8, 61, 63–7, 71
- ark (or the covenant) 32, 40–1
- Baal 33, 40
- Barr, James 22, 57–8
- biblical criticism 7
- biblical Hebrew 6, 16
- biblical theology 3–4, 6–7
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph 30, 44
- Canaan 17, 28, 30, 40, 43
- christocentricism 49, 80, 91, 126
- Christology 50, 53–5, 74–6
- circumlocution 48, 80
- Classical Arabic *see* Arabic (Classical)
- Clooney, Francis X., 3–6
- common language 1, 24, 4, 8, 125, 132
- communal prayer 59, 94
- comparative religions 6–7, 123
- comparative theology 3–8, 21, 22, 47, 75, 123–5, 129–30, 132
- creation 16, 32–6, 39, 52, 68, 78, 93, 99, 100, 107, 109–10, 113–14, 116–17, 120–2, 126–9, 131
- creator 20, 23, 33–4, 36, 43, 47, 78, 83, 87, 89, 95–6, 99, 120–1, 125–8, 130, 133
- Culpepper, R. Alan, 70, 72, 74, 76, 80
- death 10, 44, 67, 75–6, 86, 90–1, 110, 113, 116, 127
- descriptivism 11–12
- Deuteronomy (book of) 25, 28, 77
- diachronic reading 4, 6
- dialogue 1, 2, 4–8, 10–12, 14–15, 17–19, 22, 26, 28, 30, 32, 39, 44, 48–9, 51–3, 56, 58–60, 64–5, 68, 70, 78–9, 92–6, 104, 111, 114, 125, 132–3
- disciple 54, 57, 59, 61, 67, 69, 71–2, 74
- divine council 32, 39
- divine title 22, 96
- Egypt 25, 27, 70, 93
- Elohim* 21–3, 26–9, 55
- Enuma elish* 16
- epithet 17, 19, 27, 30, 32, 40, 45, 47
- etymology 7, 13, 15, 21, 23, 25–6, 28, 30, 33, 39, 42, 55, 57, 96

- Exodus (book of) 27, 44
 exodus (event) 24, 51, 65, 76
- father
 as a term for the deity 14, 18, 25, 41, 45,
 49–57, 59–75, 77–8, 95, 126–7, 130–3
 human 9, 14, 58, 62, 130–1
- fatigue 99, 128–9
- Five Pillars (of Islam) 93, 94
- forgiveness 20, 59, 69–70, 73, 83–4, 88, 91,
 100, 106, 118, 127–8
- Freedman, David Noel 23, 27
- Galatians (Paul's letter to the) 63, 67
- Genesis (book of) 41, 43, 45, 69, 130
- government 18, 38
- Greek (language) 6, 22, 32, 48, 53, 56, 57–8,
 64–6, 68–9
- hand (of the deity) 19, 36, 41, 102
- heaven 16, 27, 30, 32–3, 57, 59–61, 68–70,
 72, 74–5, 77–9, 97
- heavenly father 59, 61, 71–2
- holy 68, 76, 90, 91
 as part of a designation 19, 35, 37–8, 75,
 82, 96, 126
 Spirit 49, 53, 70–2, 77
 war 32
- Hurtado, Larry 50, 54
- imagery 33, 40–1, 45–6, 52, 70, 95, 106, 113,
 131, 145n. 38
- Isaiah (book of) 15, 26, 30–8, 41, 44–6
- Israel 14–17, 22–8, 30–2, 35, 37–44, 46–7,
 51, 55, 59, 62, 65, 69–70, 78–9, 130
- Jesus 4, 47–80, 91, 126–7, 130, 132
- Joachim, Jeremias 56–8, 61, 63, 65
- John (Gospel of) 54, 60, 65–6, 72–6, 126
- justice 38, 66, 91, 104–5, 108, 111, 115,
 118–19, 132
- king 14, 18, 25–6, 32–3, 37–40, 43, 46, 61,
 82, 96, 98, 108, 118
- language 1, 2, 4–8, 10–12, 14–15, 17–19,
 22, 26, 28, 30, 32, 39, 44, 48–9, 51–3, 56,
 58–60, 64–5, 68, 70, 78–9, 92–6, 104, 111,
 114, 125, 132–3
- linguistics 7, 13, 15, 58, 60, 97, 102–3, 111
- Lord of hosts 26, 30, 31
- Lord's Prayer *see* Our Father
- love 105, 110, 112
- Luke (Gospel of) 54, 59, 68, 70–2, 75–9
- Luz, Ulrich 59, 78, 79
- LXX *see* Septuagint
- maker 36, 83, 99, 125–6, 128, 130
- Mark (Gospel of) 49, 53, 61, 66–9, 71–2, 79
- Mary (mother of Jesus) 54, 76–7, 95
- Matthew (Gospel of) 53–4, 59–61, 66, 68–9,
 71, 78–9
- mercy (divine) 20, 37–8, 90, 96, 100, 106,
 109, 118
- metaphor 13, 43, 45, 52, 63
- metaphysics 47, 49
- Misbaha* 139n. 45
- Mishnah* 21
- monotheism 28, 53, 91, 94
- Moore Cross, Frank 23, 30, 32
- Moses 22, 24, 29, 40, 45, 51
- Mother (as a term for the deity) 45, 51–2,
 130, 148n. 93
- Muhammad *see* Prophet Muhammad
mus'haf 10
- narrative 21, 44, 50, 53–4, 67, 71, 74, 78, 81,
 131
- Onomastics 13, 16
- Our Father (Lord's Prayer) 57, 59–60, 417n.
 75
- parable 68, 73, 101
- pater* 54, 57–8
- Paul (Epistles) 19, 63, 65–7, 74, 80
- peace 78, 82, 97, 100
- pedagogy 52, 126, 130
- Pentateuch 29, 31, 39, 43, 55, 78

- personal name 11, 16–17, 25
 plural of majesty 26, 28
 pluralism 1, 3
 polyphonic naming 50–1
 polytheism 28, 55
 power (of the deity) 23, 28–9, 34, 38–9, 41, 44, 46, 60, 67, 71, 79–80, 87, 91, 95–7, 99–103, 105, 109–10, 113, 115, 118, 120, 122, 126–9
 prayer 24, 35, 44, 52, 57–9, 61, 63–4, 66–7, 69, 71–5, 78–9, 85, 90, 94, 104, 122, 127, 131–2
 proper names 9, 11–14, 16, 22, 26, 48, 56
 Prophet Muhammad 5, 81, 90–2
 Prophets
 Hebrew Bible 26, 31–2, 34, 37, 41, 51, 69–70, 77, 110
 Islam 121
 Psalms (book of) 35–6, 29, 31, 34, 39–40, 44, 46, 59, 79

 Q source 70, 150n. 132
 Qur'an 4–5, 7, 10, 17–19, 21, 82–91, 125–6, 132

 Ramadan 90, 94
 recitation (of the Qur'an) 90–2, 103
 revelation 24, 27, 51, 60, 71, 74, 76, 90–1
 Roman Catholic 73, 124
 Romans (Paul's letter to the) 65, 67

 salvation 24, 37–8, 43, 45–6, 48

 Satan 77, 95
 self-revelation 24, 27
 Semitic 19, 26–30, 39
 Septuagint 23, 29, 31, 48, 55, 65
 servant 25–6, 76, 78, 80, 95
 Shema 77
 sovereign 26, 34, 82, 88
 strength 28, 39–41, 45–6, 57, 67, 85, 98, 102–3, 107, 11
 superlative 95, 101, 105, 109–10, 115
 systematic theology 3–4, 6

Tafsir 94
 Talmud 21, 57
tashbih 19–20
Tawhid 94
 temple 17, 24, 33, 37–8, 40–1, 43–4, 54, 70, 77
 Tetragrammaton 21–2, 24–5, 48, 80
 theology of religions 7
 throne 19, 33, 37, 39
 Torah 10, 24, 29, 41
 trinity 2, 49, 51, 53, 75, 124, 130

 Ugarit 25–6, 30, 32, 39
 unity of God 115

 Vulgate 22–3, 29

 war 32–3, 35, 39, 128
 wisdom 5, 10, 34, 102–4, 109–11, 120, 130

 YHWH Sabaoth 23, 30–3, 36–7, 41