A Nazarene reading of the Quran

Challenging the Standard Islamic Narrative

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A conversation with Jay Smith

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A “prophet”...

...revealed the Quran to ignorant pagans

Thus, a whole new religion developed

A religion pretending to be the return to the “primordial religion”, correcting the Jewish and Christian deviances

... paving the way for the Arab conquest and the rise of the caliphal empire
The Standard Islamic Narrative (SIN) has imposed its reading of the Quran; we are forced into its interpretation and its concepts without even realizing we abide by them.

- God’s word
- A unique “prophet”
- A timeline (610-632)
- The Hijaz
- A pagan environment
- This book is the “Quran” mentioned in the quranic text
- An ancient shrine
- Mecca & Medina
- An ancient pilgrimage

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Yet, obviously, the SIN does not make sense in many ways: logic, history, geography, etc.

Why is there no mention to the major events of the 7th. c.?

Why is there absolutely no trace of any active Arab paganism in the 7th. c.?

Why does Mecca not fit the SIN description?

What was the real place of Abraham? Mecca, according to the SIN, or Jerusalem, according to the Islamic prophets Moses, David, John the Baptist, Jesus...?

Why are Christians called Nazarenes (nasara) and not masihiyun?

How come the “Christian” (Nazarenes) could be allies of the Jews in the 7th. c.?

How could the nasara / Nazarenes be both the closest & the enemies of the Believers?

Why is there no trace of Christianity in the Hijaz while Muhammad’s wife cousin (and so his wife and in-law?) is described as a “Christian” (Nazarene, and also a former Jew)?
New Quranic studies and the finding of ancient sources point to Christian and Jewish influences – particularly the influence of a group being described as “Jewish”

Persians and Jews took over Jerusalem in 614, with the help of Arab allies and auxiliaries; there was an attempt to rebuild the Temple

Jerusalem was taken by the Arabs around 638-640; they were guided by “Jews” and rebuilt the Temple

Ka'b al-Ahbar, a former Jew converted to Islam (according to the SIN) Omar’s companion built a "synagogue" on the Temple Mount

Jews came back to Jerusalem with the Arabs (around 638), then were expelled by the Arabs around 640 (Moshe Gil, A History of Palestine)

New Quranic studies:
- The Biblical context, the Aramaic background
- The global exegesis: Mecca & Jerusalem; the “good community” among the “people of the Book”, an alliance between this good community and the believers
The global exegesis of the Quranic text: “people of the Book” & “coverers”

Who are the "people of the Book"?
Who are the kuffar / kaffirun among them?

**ahl al kitab**: "people of the Book", etymologically "people of the kitab" (of the writing, of the prescription, of the scriptures)

**kuffar / kaffirun**: infidels, disbelievers according to Muslim tradition, but according to the etymology (root KFR), they are "coverers"
The people of the book in the Quran (32 occurrences of the expression)

Q2,105 Not those who cover among the people of the book, nor the Associates, appreciate that a blessing from your Lord should be brought down upon you, whereas God reserves His Mercy for whomever He wills.

Q2,109 Many from the people in the book would appreciate, out of jealousy on their part, being able to make you collectors after you have believed.

Q3,69 Some of the people in the book would have liked to lead you astray. But they only lead astray themselves, and they are not aware of it.

Q3,70 O people of the book, why do you not believe in the verses of God, while you are witnesses?

Q3,72 Thus says one part of the people of the book: "Believe at the beginning of the day what has been brought down on those who believe, and be unbelieving at the end of the day! Perhaps these people will come back [from their error]."

Q3,110 If the people of the book believed, it would be better for them, there are some who have faith, but most of them are perverts.

Q3,71 O people of the book, why do you mix the false with the true and knowingly hide the truth?

Q3,64 "O people of the book, come to a common word between us and you: that we worship only God, without associating anything with Him, and that we do not take one another as lords apart from God". Then, if they turn their backs, say: "Be witnesses that we are submissive".

Q3,75 And there are some among the people of the book who, if you entrust a qintar to him, give it back to you. But there are also some who, if you entrust him with a dinar, will only give it back to you if you force him to do so. All this because they say: "Those [Arabs] who have no book have no way of compelling us." They speak lies against God when they know.

Q3,98 "O people of the book, why do you not believe in the verses of God, when God is witness of what you are doing?

Q3,99 O people of the book, why do you obstruct the way of God to him who has faith, and why do you want to make that way crooked, when you are witnesses of the truth?

Q3,65 O people of the book, why do you dispute about Abraham, when the Torah and the Gospel did not come down until after him? Do you not reason then? 3,67. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Nazarene. He was entirely subject to God. And he was not one of the Associates.

Q3,113 But they are not all the same. Among the people of the book, there is an upright community that recites the verses of God in the hours of the night, prostrating itself.

Q3,199 Certainly there are among the people of the book those who believe in God and in what has been brought down to you and in what has been brought down to them. They are humble towards God, and do not sell the verses of God at a low price.

Q4,123 This depends neither on your desires nor on the people of the book.

Q4,159 There will be no one among the people of the book who will not have faith in him [Jesus] before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them.

Q4,171 O people of the book, do not exaggerate in your religion, and say of God only the truth.

Q4,153 The people of the book ask you to bring down a Book from heaven.

Q5,15 O people of the book! Our Messenger has certainly come to you, exposing to you much of what you have been hiding from the book.

Q5,19 O people of the book! Our Messenger has come to enlighten you after an interruption of the messengers, so that you may not say: "There has come to us neither forewarner nor warner".

Q5,59 Say: "O people of the book! Do you reproach us for anything other than believing in God, in what has been brought down to us [Gospel] and in what has been brought down before [Torah]? But most of you are perverted.

Q5,68 Say: "O people of the book, you can stand on nothing, until you conform to the Torah and the Gospel and to what has been sent down to you from your Lord". And certainly what has been sent down to you from your Lord will increase many of them in rebellion and disbelief. Therefore, do not torment yourself for the people who cover up.

Q5,65 If the people of the book believed and practised piety, We would certainly cover their misdeeds and certainly introduce them into the Gardens of Delight.

Q5,77 O people of the book, do not exaggerate in your religion, opposing the truth. Do not follow the passions of people who have gone astray before, who have led many astray and who have gone astray from the straight path.

Q5,5 You are allowed to eat the food of the people of the book.

Q29,46 And discuss only in the best way with the people of the book, except with those who are unjust.

Q33,26 And He brought down from their strongholds those of the people of the book who had supported them, and He cast fear into their hearts; and a company of them ye slew, and a company ye took prisoner.

Q57,29 So that the people of the book may know that they have no access to God’s grace and that grace is in God’s hand; He gives it to whomever He wills, and God is the Holder of immense grace.

Q59,11 Have you not seen the hypocrites saying to their brethren who have covered among the people of the book

Q59,2 He it is He who expelled their homes those of the people of the book who did not believe at the time of the first exodus.

Q98,1 The collectors among the people of the book, as well as the Associates, will not cease to disbelieve until they are given clear evidence

Q98,6 The Collectors among the people of the book and the Associates will go into the fire of Hell, to dwell there for ever.
46 other occurrences of the word *kitab* ("Book") in the Quran in which it characterises a community, depending on the use it makes of it (other than in the expression "people of the book")
4, 153. The **people of the Book** ask you to bring down a Book from heaven. **They** have already asked Moses something much more serious when **they** said, "Make us see God in the open!" Then lightning struck **them** for their wrong. Then **they** adopted the Calf even after the evidence had come to them. We forgave **them** this and gave Moses a declared authority.

4, 154. And to (obtain) **their** commitment, We brandished above **them** Mount Tor, We told **them**: "Enter through the door prostrate yourself"; We told **them**, "Do not transgress the Sabbath"; and We have made a firm commitment of **them**.

4, 155. (We cursed **them**) because of **their breaking of the commitment, their covering [KFR] of the verses of God**, their unjustified murder of the prophets, and their word: "Our hearts are (veiled) and impervious“ [to what?]. And reality, it was God who sealed their hearts because of their covering, because they believed very little.

4, 156. And because of their covering [KFR] and the enormous calumny they pronounced against Mary.

4, 157. And because of their word: "We really killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of God."

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**The "people of the Book" are the "people of the Jewish Scriptures": the Jews**

The “coverers” are the Jews who covered the Torah & prophecies with their own scriptures: the rabbinical (Talmudic) Jews
There is a good community (ummah) among the People of the Book

- The “standing community" or the "group that acts righteously" among the Jews (Q3,113; Q5.66),
- The "small number" of them who did not betray the Torah (Q5,13)
- The group that recognized Jesus as the Messiah (Q2,101; Q4,159)
- The group that is opposed to rabbinical Jews and Christians (Q2,105)
- The group that considers the Torah and the Gospel sacred and holds the unaltered texts (Q2:75-79; Q5.59)
- The group who has the "true faith" (Q3,110), believes in God and the "Last Day", orders "the proper, forbids "the reprehensible" (Q3,113) and is humble towards God (Q3,199)

3,113. But they are not all the same. There is, among the people of the Book, a standing community that, at the hours of the night, recites the verses of God by prostrating itself.

3,114. They believe in God and the Last Day, order the proper, forbid the blamed, and contribute to good works. These are among the good people.

3,115. And whatever good they do, they will not be denied. For God knows the stakes well.

3,116. As for those who do not believe [KFR], neither their property nor their children will ever be able to serve them against God's punishment. And these are the people of Fire: they will dwell there forever.

3,199. There are certainly, among the people of the Book, those who believe in God and in what has been brought down to you and in those who have been brought down to them. They are humble to God, and do not sell God's verses at a low price.
The global exegesis of the Quranic text:

An alliance between the good community among the People of the Book and the Believers

There was an alliance between the good community among the "people of the Book“ and the Believers (muminun)

• Sharing women & table:

5.5. You are allowed the food of the people of the Book, and your own food is allowed to them. (You are allowed) the virtuous women of the believers, and the virtuous women of the people who received the Book before you

24,3. The fornicator will marry only a fornicator or an associator [Christian]. And the fornicator will be married only by a fornicator or associationist [Christian]; and this was forbidden to believers.

• Teaching the “good Jewish” religion:

5.3. Today, I have completed for you your justice [dîn], and fulfilled on you my blessing [dîn : justice, judgment, set of religious rules that must be applied to be a just, a "righteous"; very badly translated by the word “religion”; used here to designate dietary rules adapted from kosher]

Various teachings on Jerusalem, the place of Abraham, the Jerusalem qibla, the hajj, its whereabouts, its rites, etc.

• Establishing an alliance between Abraham and Ishmael to rebuild Jerusalem’s Temple

2,125. And We confided to Abraham and Ishmael this: "Purify My House for those who turn around, make a pious retreat there, bow to it and prostrate themselves there".

2,127. Then Abraham will raise the House from its foundations with the help of Ishmael
The Quranic Nazarenes were this good community among the "people of the Book" who made a divine alliance with the believers

• The Quranic Nazarenes belong to the People of the Book; they are no associationists; they are different from the other Jews
  Q3,65-67; 5,51; 5,69; 22,17

• The Quranic Nazarenes were the “closest” to the Believers
  Q5.82. You will certainly find that the fiercest enemies of believers are the Jews and those who associate [Christians]. And you will certainly find that the closest to the believers are those who say, "We are Nazarenes." It is that there are among them priests and monks, and that they do not swell with pride.

• The Quranic Nazarenes became enemies to the Believers
  Q5.51. O believers! Do not take the Jews and the Nazarenes as allies; they are allies of one another [= 4.89]. And the one of you who takes them as allies, becomes one of their own. God certainly does not guide unjust people

• The Quranic Nazarenes broke the alliance
  Q5.14. And of those who say: "We are Nazarenes", we have made their commitment. But they have forgotten some of what was reminded of them. So we aroused enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Resurrection. And God will inform them of what they were doing.
Conclusion
what was the real influence of the Quranic Nazarenes in the emergence of Islam

- The Quranic text proves the existence of a “righteous” Jewish group allied with the Believers: the Quranic Nazarenes
- What impact on all Arab factions? They were obviously related to the faction that took Jerusalem (maybe to other factions, cf. the “false prophets” of the SIN)
- A sure influence on the folios that will become the Quran - but how was the Quran constituted? As a book for of all Arab factions? As the book of the faction that took over Jerusalem?
- From the Quranic Nazarenes to the Judaeonazarenes: Gallez's hypothesis about their origin in the 1st century, from the judaeo-Christian community of Jerusalem, through the Ebionites and Nazarenes currents up to the 7th. c. Arab uprising.
- A groundbreaking discovery that makes us understand the apocalyptic expectations, why Jerusalem, and what was the role of the Messiah
- Islam emerged from a “failed apocalypse”, which led to the struggle of the Arab leaders (fitna), and to the creation of an autonomous entity, independent from Judaism, Nazarenism and Christianity (abd al Malik’s caliphate), which eventually disconnected from the reference to the Messiah Jesus (Abbassids)

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A very profound key for the understanding Islam
“What can you tell me about the prophet who has appeared with the Saracens?"

He replied, groaning deeply: "He is false, for the prophets do not come armed with a sword. Truly they are works of anarchy being committed today and I fear that the first Christ to come, whom the Christians worship, was the one sent by God and we instead are preparing to receive the Antichrist.”
“So they departed, taking the road through the desert to Tachkastan to the sons of Ishmael.

[The Jews] called [the Arabs] to their aid and familiarized them with the relationship they had through the books of the [Old] Testament. (...).

In that period a certain one of them, a man of the sons of Ishmael named Muhammad, a merchant, became prominent. A sermon about the Way of Truth, supposedly at God's command, was revealed to them, and [Muhammad] taught them to recognize the God of Abraham, especially since he was informed and knowledgeable about Mosaic history., elsewhere.

He said: "God promised that country to Abraham and to his son after him. (...) Now, however, you are the sons of Abraham, and God shall fulfill the promise made to Abraham and his son on you. Only love the God of Abraham and go and take the country which God gave to your father, Abraham."
“When the Arabs came to Jerusalem, there were with them men from among the sons of Israel who showed them the location of the Temple”
“Now I shall speak about the plot of the Jewish rebels, who, finding support from the Hagarenes for a short time, planned to [re]build the temple of Solomon. Locating the place called the holy of holies, they constructed [the temple] with a pedestal, to serve as their place of prayer. But the Ishmaelites envied [the Jews], expelled them from the place, and named the same building their own place of prayer. [The Jews] built a temple for their worship, elsewhere.”