

## Session 2: Building Bridges - Deciding What Bridge to Build 3/11/09

### Review of Session 1:

#### Definitions/Etymologies

##### Judaism

from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etymology\\_of\\_the\\_word\\_Jew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etymology_of_the_word_Jew)

The [Jewish ethnonym](#) in [Hebrew](#) is יהודים *Yehudim* (plural of יהודי *Yehudi*) which is the origin of the English word *Jew*. The Hebrew name is derived from the region name [Judah](#) (*Yehudah* יהודה). Originally the name referred to the territory allotted to the [tribe](#) descended from [Judah](#) the fourth son of the patriarch [Jacob](#) ([Numbers](#)). [Judah](#) was one of the twelve sons of [Jacob](#) and one of the [Twelve tribes of Israel](#) ([Genesis](#)). The [Genesis](#) 29:35 [1] relates that Judah's mother — the matriarch [Leah](#) — named him *Yehudah* (i.e. "Judah") because she wanted to "praise God" for giving birth to so many sons: "She said, 'This time let me praise (*odeh* אודה) God (יהודה),' and named the child Judah (*Yehudah* יהודה)." Thus combining "praise" and "God" into one new name. Thereafter Judah vouchsafes the Jewish monarchy, and the [Israelite](#) kings [David](#) and [Solomon](#) derive their lineage from Judah. After the splitting of the united [Kingdom of Israel](#), the name was used for the southern [kingdom of Judah](#), containing not only the land of the [tribe of Judah](#) but also that of [Benjamin](#) and [Simeon](#). With the destruction of the northern [kingdom of Israel](#), the kingdom of Judah became the sole Jewish state and the term *y'hudi* (יהודי) was applied to all Israelites. When the word makes its first appearance in writing (in the book of Esther) its meaning has already expanded to include converts to the Jewish religion as well as descendants of Israelites.

In [Hebrew](#), the name "Judah" (יהודה) contains the four letters of the [Tetragrammaton](#) — the special, holy, and ineffable name of the [Jewish God](#). The very holiness of the name of Judah attests to its importance as an alternate name for "[Israelites](#)" that it ultimately replaces.

##### Israel

from <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Israel>

O.E., "the Jewish people," from L. Israel, from Gk., from Heb. yisra'el "he that striveth with God" (Gen. xxxii.28), symbolic proper name conferred on Jacob and extended to his descendants, from sara "he fought, contended" + El "God." As an independent Jewish state in the country formerly called Palestine, it is attested from 1948. Citizens of it are called Israelis; the ancient people are Israelites (1382).

##### Torah

from <http://jewsandjoes.com/etymology-of-torah.html>

What is the "true sense" or "true meaning" of the word "Torah"? From the Hebrew Scriptures, we know that the [Torah](#) is "Light", "Light that shows the Way of/to Life".

[Proverb 6:23](#) "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching [*Hebrew: Torah*] is light [*Hebrew: Ore*]; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life"

If you were reading the above passage in [Hebrew](#), you would immediately hear the word relationship between "Ore" and "Torah". See also: [Psalms 119:105-115](#); [Isaiah 8:20](#). Hebrew words are formed or derived from two and three letter [root words](#). Looking at root words and closely related words with the same root as "Torah", you'll begin to see the "root meaning" of the word Torah. The word depicts much more than what is generally perceived as just "Law" in the English language.

Ore - "light" (Hebrew: אור - Strongs#:H216)

Yarah - "to shoot, to point, to teach" (Hebrew: ירה - Strongs#:H3384)

Moreh - "archer, teacher" (Hebrew: מורה - Strongs#:H4175)

Torah - "instruction, teaching, law" (Hebrew: תורה - Strongs#:H8451)

Ultimately, the Torah can be defined as this: "the Light (ore) which the Teacher (Moreh) casts in a direction (yarah) for us to walk in". When regarding the Torah given to [Moses](#), [יהוה](#) is Teacher and Giver of the Light, the Torah. He is the One who loves us so much that He wants us to walk in the pathway of Light and safety, not in ignorance and darkness.

##### Islam

from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam#Etymology\\_and\\_meaning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam#Etymology_and_meaning)

The word *Islam* is a [verbal noun](#) originating from the [triliteral](#) root *s-l-m*, and is derived from the [Arabic verb](#) *Aslama*, which means "to accept, surrender or submit." Thus, Islam means acceptance of and submission to God, and believers must demonstrate this by worshipping him, following his commands, and avoiding [polytheism](#). The word is given a number of meanings in the [Qur'an](#). In some verses ([ayat](#)), the quality of Islam as an internal conviction is stressed: "Whomsoever God desires to guide, He expands his breast to Islam." [12] Other verses connect *islām* and *dīn* (usually translated as "religion"): "Today, I have perfected your religion (*dīn*) for you; I have completed My blessing upon you; I have approved Islam for your religion." [13] Still others describe Islam as an action of returning to God — more than just a verbal affirmation of faith. [14] Another technical meaning in Islamic thought is as one part of a triad of *islam*, [imān](#) (faith), and [ihsān](#) (excellence); where it represents acts of worship ([`ibādah](#)) and Islamic law ([sharia](#)). [15]

##### Jihad

from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam#Jihad>

Jihad means "to strive or struggle" (in the way of God) and is considered the "[Sixth Pillar of Islam](#)" by a minority of Sunni Muslim authorities. [58] Jihad, in its broadest sense, is classically defined as "exerting one's utmost power, efforts, endeavors, or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation." Depending on the object being a visible enemy, the devil, and aspects of one's own

self, different categories of Jihad are defined. [59] Jihad when used without any qualifier is understood in its military aspect. [60][61] Jihad also refers to one's striving to attain religious and moral perfection. [62] Some Muslim authorities, especially among the Shi'a and Sufis, distinguish between the "greater jihad", which pertains to spiritual self-perfection, and the "lesser jihad", defined as warfare. [63]

### Qu'ran

from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qu'ran#Etymology\\_and\\_meaning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qu'ran#Etymology_and_meaning)

The original usage of the word *qur`ān* is in the Qur'an itself, where it occurs about 70 times assuming various meanings. It is a verbal noun (*maṣ dar*) of the Arabic verb *qara`a* (Arabic: قرأ), meaning "he read" or "he recited", and represents the Syriac equivalent *qeryānā* which refers to "scripture reading" or "lesson". While most Western scholars consider the word to be derived from the Syriac, the majority of Muslim authorities hold the origin of the word is *qara`a* itself. [24] In any case, it had become an Arabic term by Muhammad's lifetime. [2] Among the earliest meanings of the word Qur'an is the "act of reciting", for example in a Qur'anic passage: "*Ours is it to put it together and [Ours is] its qur`ān*". [25] In other verses it refers to "an individual passage recited [by Muhammad]". In the large majority of contexts, usually with a definite article (*al-*), the word is referred to as the "revelation" (*wahy*), that which has been "sent down" (*tanzil*) at intervals. [26][27] Its liturgical context is seen in a number of passages, for example: "*So when al-qur`ān is recited, listen to it and keep silent*". [28] The word may also assume the meaning of a codified scripture when mentioned with other scriptures such as the Torah and Gospel. [29]

### Christianity

from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity>

(from the word Χριστός "Christ") is a monotheistic religion [1] centered on the life and teachings of Jesus as presented in the New Testament. [2]

### New Testament

from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Testament#Etymology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament#Etymology)

The New Testament (Greek: Καινή Διαθήκη, *Kainē Diathēkē*) is the name given to the second major division of the Christian Bible, the first such division being the much longer Old Testament. The New Testament is sometimes called the Greek New Testament or Greek Scriptures, or the New Covenant.

### Presentations/Discussion

Choose one organization, investigate how it is trying to build bridges, try to estimate how many people it is reaching.

### Examples:

[Facebook - Interactive Interfaith - common interest group - 21 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=3617575577>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Alliance 2 - student group - 25 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=14528864719>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Alliance - religious organization - 111 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=8f3d6fc3aa67c213fb5076382b494001&gid=44584539154>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Connections - common interest group - 72 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=2205086208>)

[Facebook - Interfaith Inventions - religious organization - 298 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=21238812230>)

[Facebook - InterFaith - common interest group - 68 members](#)

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=be71349a3a4feea57e6e1baa14fb6797&gid=3466714795>)

[Facebook - Project Interfaith - cause - 195 members -](#) (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Interfaith/9147697529>)

[Project Interfaith](http://www.projectinterfaithusa.org/) (<http://www.projectinterfaithusa.org/>)

[Welcome to the Interfaith Alliance](http://www.interfaithalliance.org/) (<http://www.interfaithalliance.org/>)

### Identification of Interfaith Friends/Discussion

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### Group discussion:

How do we decide what bridge to build?

What is the process in building a bridge?

Do people need to understand their own religion before building bridges to others?

### Homework:

What bridge would you like to build?