

Chapter One: Judaism

Judaism as a Monotheistic Religion

Judaism is presented as a monotheistic religion with its own divine books. This is a positive step, as it was not the case in earlier textbooks. Beyond this, however, no information is provided to the student about the Jewish religion.

“3. Why did God give power to the infidel Zoroastrians over the Children of Israel who are followers of a heavenly [i.e., monotheistic] religion?”

(Reading and Texts, Grade 8, Part 2 (2002) p. 95)

“The Divine Books

The holy Qur’an mentions the following Divine Books:

1. The Leaves of Abraham, may peace be upon him...
2. The Torah [which] was sent down to Moses, may peace be upon him, for the guidance of the Children of Israel.
3. Psalms [which] were sent down to David, may peace be upon him, in which there are spiritual counsels and directives for the Children of Israel.
4. The Gospels [which] were sent down to Jesus, may peace be upon him, for the guidance of the Children of Israel...
5. The holy Qur’an [which] was sent down to our Prophet Muhammad in order to call upon all the people to worship God. This is the last of the Divine Books...”

(Islamic Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 20)

“Belief in the Divine Books: We believe in all the books that were sent down from God.”

(Islamic Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 4)

“The Muslim believes in all the Divine Books that God sent down to His messengers and acts according to what is said in the holy Qur’an.”

(Islamic Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 19)

“People of the Heavenly [i.e., Monotheistic] Religions

- The Jews. They believe in what is said in the Torah and the Psalms.
- The Christians. They believe in what is said in the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospels.
- The Muslims. They believe in all the Divine Books and act according to the holy Qur’an alone, because it is the last of these books and it includes God’s rules and instructions that were contained in them. No change or alteration has occurred in it, as happened in the Divine Books that preceded it.”

(Islamic Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 21)

“Activity

‘He [i.e., God] previously sent down the Torah and the Gospels, as guidance to the people, and sent down the *Furqan* [i.e., the Qur’an]’.

1. What are the names of the Divine Books mentioned in the holy verse [of the Qur’an]?
2. ...
3. What is the purpose of God’s sending down the Torah and the Gospels?”

(Islamic Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 22)

“Complete the following phrase:

- The Divine Book that the Jews believe in is the
- The two Divine Books that the Christians believe in are the
- The Divine Books that the Muslims believe in are”

(Islamic Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 23)

Judaism and Palestine

In none of the Palestinian textbooks that have been published so far is there any specific reference to Judaism as one of the religions to which the country is considered to be holy. The following three quotations may well imply this, but fall short of mentioning Judaism by name. Nevertheless, this first appearance of such statements may indicate some awareness of the issue on the part of the Palestinian educators. The Jewish presence in Palestine is ignored.

“Our country is considered to be holy for other religions. Do you know them?”

(Christian Education, Grade 3, (2002) p. 89)

“Mother Palestine, with whom the three heavenly [i.e., monotheistic] religions have connections...”

(Our Beautiful Language, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 14)

“What are the heavenly [i.e., monotheistic] religions that are connected with Palestine?”

(Question, Our Beautiful Language, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 15)

There is another statement that speaks of diversity and pluralism in Palestine, but it is hard to determine whether it includes the Jews and Judaism or relates only to the Arab population of Palestine.

“Lesson 3: Palestine – the Country of Diversity and Pluralism

During the last four thousand years, invading or immigrating nations [and] numerous cultures and religions which either developed in it or came through interaction, have all left cultural traces that interacted together to create Palestine's present picture as a country of religious, intellectual, cultural and political diversity and pluralism.

(Excerpt from the Declaration of [Palestinian] Independence [Algiers, Nov. 15, 1988])”

(Civic Education, Grade 8, (2002) p. 40)

“2. I will mention a number of areas in which cultural pluralism and diversity appear in Palestine.

3. Let us quote a paragraph from the Declaration of Independence which supports cultural pluralism in Palestine.”

(Assignment, Civic Education, Grade 8 (2002) p. 41)

The holy places in the country which are mentioned, are recognized only as Muslim and Christian. There is no reference to Jewish holy places as such.

“Palestine is part of this world... It has religious monuments for all the heavenly [i.e., monotheistic] religions, such as al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.”

(National Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 37)

“The religious holy places are considered a religious window that has tied Palestine to the world and made it an object of interest for those who believe in God from among the followers of the heavenly missions...”

“The city of Jerusalem...:

- A. Al-Aqsa Mosque...
- B. The Dome of the Rock...
- C. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher...

“The city of Hebron: The Sanctuary of Abraham [Cave of the Patriarchs] is located there. It has been so named after our lord Abraham, may peace be upon him, who is buried there.

“The city of Bethlehem: The Church of the Nativity is located there...”

“Nazareth: The Church of Annunciation is located there...”

(National Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) pp. 39-40)

The following quotation, although it mentions the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, does not include the nearby Wailing Wall within the category of ‘Religious Sites’.

“Activity: We will look at the following [city] map of [the] Old [City of] Jerusalem and answer the questions that follow it.

[Legend:]

Jerusalem

Sections of the Old City

Muslim Quarter

Jewish Quarter

Armenian Quarter

Christian Quarter

Religious Sites

The Dome of the Rock

Al-Aqsa Mosque

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher”



(National Education, Grade 3, Part 1 (2002) p. 42)

The actual presence of more than five million adherents of the Jewish religion in the country, where they form the majority of the population, is ignored. A map indicating the spread of world religions in an atlas issued

for Palestinian school children fails to mention Judaism alongside other religions.

[Map]

“The World Religiously and Educationally

The Religions

- Christianity
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Animism”

(Atlas of Palestine, The Arab Homeland and the World, (2002) p. 32)