

Chapter One: Other Religions and their Followers in General

Grade 11

For the first time within the PA textbook publishing process, the student is given adequate, though very limited information about the Jewish and Christian scriptures, from an Islamic point of view, which is not always accurate, as far as the existing Biblical text is concerned, and see the footnotes below.

The Torah

This is the book revealed by God to Moses. The word “Torah” means teachings or law. The Torah has been mentioned in the Holy Qur’an... Some of the Qur’an verses talked about some of the material which appeared there, such as:

1. Rules and laws that were given to the Children of Israel [a Qur’anic verse is here given].
2. The prophecy regarding the mission of our Messenger Muhammad and the mentioning of his and his friends’ features [a Qur’anic verse].¹
3. Urging [to practice] Jihad by soul and property [a Qur’anic verse].

The Jews believe in what is called “the Old Testament” which consists of thirty-nine books organized in four categories as follows:

1. The five books called “Torah” by the Jews. These books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
2. The historical books which talk of the history of the Children of Israel.
3. The books of poetical wisdom. These are books containing anthems, proverbs, sermons and religious hymns.
4. Books of the Prophets, which talk of the missions of the prophets of the Children of Israel and their history from the Jewish point of view.

Much the same as the Old Testament is sacred among the Jews it is sacred among the Christians as well but the number of its books among them is larger than the number of the books in the Jewish version.

The Holy Qur’an has mentioned in more than one verse that distortion has taken place in the Torah [a Qur’anic verse].

Dr. Maurice Bukai, a Frenchman, explains in his book “The Koran, the Torah, the Gospels and Science” the essence of the Old Testament and says: “The Old Testament comprises a group of books unequal in length and different in type. These books were written over a period of more than nine centuries in different languages relying on the orally handed down heritage. Most of these books were amended and completed due to events that took place or due to specific needs, sometimes in periods disconnected from one another.”

Psalms

Psalms is the book revealed by God to David, one of the prophets of the Children of Israel [a Qur’anic verse].

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¹ This is an Islamic belief based on a Qur’anic verse not substantiated by Biblical text.

The text proceeds to discuss the Christian Scriptures, which it treats from an Islamic point of view as part of ancient Jewish history.

The Gospel

The Gospel is the book revealed by God to Jesus for the guidance of the Children of Israel, as is the case with the Torah and Psalms... The Holy Qur'an already mentioned some of the rules appearing in the Gospel, which came to complement or amend the rules of the Torah... Among these as well is the prophecy about Muhammad and the mentioning of some of his features [a Qur'anic verse]². The Gospel is known among the Christians as "the New Testament". The New Testament is divided as far as its content is concerned into two parts: the historical books and the instructional books.

The historical books include the four Gospels, which are: Mathew's Gospel, Lucas' Gospel, Mark's Gospel and John's Gospel. They have been selected by the synod of Nicaea in 335 CE.

As regards the instructional books, they include twenty-two epistles mostly written by Paul, although he was not one of Jesus' disciples.

Islamic Education, Grade 11, Part 1 (2005) pp. 42-43

God has pledged to keep the Islamic mission undistorted and unaltered, in contrast to the other beliefs. I will explain that.

Islamic Education, Grade 11, Part 1 (2005) p. 27

The Holy Qur'an has a special status among the rest of the Divine Books, which has become apparent in the following facts:

1. The Holy Qur'an came approving of the preceding Divine Books and having guardianship over them. What it has confirmed in them and pronounced to be true is therefore true and what it has annulled in them and refuted is therefore untrue.
2. With the revelation of the Qur'an the Divine missions have been completed. There is no book after the Holy Qur'an and no prophet after Muhammad.
3. The former Divine Books have been affected by distortion and destruction [a Qur'anic verse], while the Holy Qur'an has been guarded by God against destruction and distortion [a Qur'anic verse].
4. The legislation appearing in the former Divine Books was designated for specific peoples and for a limited period of time, while the legislation of the Qur'an and its rules are general for all people regardless of time and place...

Islam's Attitude to the Divine Books

In view of the distortion phenomena in the Old and New Testament, which we have mentioned, Islam's attitude to these books is based on the following:

1. The contents of every text in the existing books of the People of the Book [namely, Jews and Christians] – whether a historical [piece of] information, or a scientific fact or a legal rule – if the Qur'an, or the Prophetic Tradition [*Sunnah*], pronounces it as true, then, it is accepted by us for certain, and if the Qur'an, or the Prophetic Tradition, denies it, it is then rejected by us for certain.
2. As for the issues which the Qur'an has not ruled regarding their being true or false, we consider them neither true nor false because of the possibility of their being true or false, except when reality indicates their being true or false. Then, we accept that evidence and consider them true or false...

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² See the former footnote.

Grade 12

...Caution vis-à-vis the *Israiliyyat*

I learn: The meaning of *Israiliyyat* is stories given by [Qur'an] commentators [which have been taken] from what is told about the Children of Israel [i.e., from Biblical and Rabbinical sources].

The method of the Qur'an regarding the discussion of previous nations is that it limits itself, while giving details about them, to issues containing lessons and admonitions. It does not expatiate in mentioning people's names and details and times of events. That is so because the Qur'an is a book of guidance. Events do not concern it, but to the point of the lessons they contain. That stands in contrast to the holy scriptures of non-Muslims, for they mention lots of details not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Extended reliance [in Qur'an commentary] on the embrace of these details mentioned in the *Israiliyyat* has resulted in errors in the commentary some of which [are the following]:

1. Being busy with useless matters such as mentioning the names of the Cave Dwellers³ and their dog's color.
2. Penetration of fables and myths into some of the commentary books, such as the saying that Earth is carried on a bull's horn and that the planet Venus used to be a woman whom God has turned into a star in the sky.
3. Penetration of stories, which do not befit the prophets' virtuousness and which attribute abominable sins to them.

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³ A story briefly mentioned in the Qur'an and mistakenly believed to have been fully told in the Torah. Actually, it is not mentioned there.