

Belief in the Scriptures

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Belief in Scriptures is the third article of Islaamic faith.

First, let us look at why they were revealed.

(1) The scripture revealed to a prophet is a point of reference to learn the religion and obligations towards Allaah and fellow human beings. Allaah guides human beings by revealing Divine Scriptures through which they realise the purpose of their creation.

(2) By referring to it religious disputes and differences between its followers could be settled.

(3) The scriptures serve to keep the religion safe from corruption and deterioration at least for some time after the death of a Prophet. However, the Qur'aan revealed to our Prophet remains safe from corruption till the end of the time. Allaah, the Exalted, says:

['Indeed, it is We who sent down the message and indeed, We will be its guardian.']*¹

(4) In order that Allaah's conclusive argument brought by the messengers against human beings remains after their death.

["Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that humankind should have no plea against Allaah after the Messengers. And Allaah is Ever All Powerful, All Wise."]*²

No one can plea that the prophets and their messages are no longer in existence as long as the scriptures are present.

Belief in scriptures entails:

(1) Allaah truly revealed them.

(2) Belief in the names of certain scriptures.

¹ Qur'aan [15:9]

² Qur'aan [4:165]

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(3) Belief that they contain the truth. As for the scriptures prior to the Qur'aan, since they have been changed, we believe in the original scriptures that were revealed to the Prophets.

(4) Belief that the Qur'aan is a witness over them and confirms them. The truth remains one and the same, and thus the Qur'aan confirms the truth which was in them. As for the laws, the Qur'aan has abrogated the previous scriptures.

First, a Muslim firmly believes that Divine Scriptures were revealed by Allaah to His messengers to guide mankind. Muslims believe the Qur'aan is not the only spoken Word of Allaah, but that Allaah also spoke to prophets before Prophet Muhammad.

[“...and to Moses Allaah spoke directly.”]³

Allaah describes true believers are those who:

[“...believe in what has been sent down to you (Muhammad) and what has been sent down before you.”]⁴

The most important and central message of all scriptures was to worship Allaah alone.

[“And we sent never a Messenger before you except that we revealed to him, saying, ‘there is no God but I so worship Me.’”]⁵

Second, we believe in the scriptures mentioned in the Qur'aan:

(1) The Qur'aan itself, revealed to Prophet Muhammad, (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*).

(2) The Torah (Taurah in Arabic) revealed to Prophet Moses (different from the Old Testament read today).

(3) The Gospel (Injeel in Arabic) revealed to Prophet Jesus (different from the New Testament read in churches today).

(4) The Psalms (Zaboor in Arabic) of David.

(5) The scriptures (Soohoof in Arabic) of Moses and Abraham.

We have a general belief that there were other scriptures revealed by Allaah whose names and specifics are not known to us. Thus we cannot definitely affirm that scriptures of other religions prior to Muhammad other than those mentioned were revealed from Allaah.

³ Qur'aan [4:164]

⁴ Qur'aan [2:4]

⁵ Qur'aan [21:25]

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Third, Muslims believe whatever is true in them and has not been altered or corrupted in the previous scriptures. This point will be elaborated below so it becomes clear and no confusion remains.

Fourth, belief that Allaah revealed the Qur'aan as a witness over the previous scriptures and to confirm them, as Allaah says:

["And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (this Qur'aan) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and trustworthy in highness and a witness over it (old Scriptures)"]⁶

Meaning the Qur'aan confirms whatever is true in previous scriptures and rejects whatever alterations and changes human hands have made in them, and that the laws brought by the Qur'aan overrule and abrogate any laws brought by the previous religions.

Original Scriptures & the Bible

We must distinguish between two matters: the original Torah, Gospel, and Psalms and the present day Bible. We believe the originals were Allaah's revelation, but the present day Bible does not have the exact original scripture.

No scripture exists today in the original language it was revealed in, except the Qur'aan. The Bible was not revealed in English. Different books of today's Bible are translations of translations and different versions exist. These multiple translations were done by people whose knowledge or honesty is not known. As a result, some Bibles are bigger than others and have contradictions and internal inconsistencies! No originals exist. The Qur'aan, on the other hand, is the only scripture in existence today in its original language and is internally consistent with no contradictions. It is today as it was revealed 1400 years ago, transmitted by a rock-solid tradition of memorisation and writing. Few human beings have ever memorised the whole Bible, not even any pope, whereas, the entire Qur'aan is memorised by almost every Islaamic scholar and hundreds of thousands of ordinary Muslims, generation after generation. Now, that is preservation!

The previous scriptures essentially consist of:

(1) Stories of man's creation and earlier nations, prophesies of what was to come like signs before the Judgment Day and new prophets, and other news.

The stories, prophesies, and news in the Bible read in churches and synagogues today are partly true and partly false. These books consist of some translated fragments of the original scripture revealed by Allaah, words of some prophets, mixed with explanations of scholars,

⁶ Qur'aan [5:48]

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errors of scribes, and outright malicious insertions and deletions. The Qur'aan, the final and trustworthy scripture, helps us sort out fact from fiction. It is the criterion to judge the truth from the falsehood in them. For example, the Bible still contains some clear passages pointing to Allaah's oneness.⁷ Also, some prophecies regarding Prophet Muhammad are found in the Bible as well.⁸ Yet, there are passages, even whole books almost entirely recognised to be forgeries and handiwork of men.⁹

(2) Law and rulings, the allowed and prohibited, like the Law of Moses.

If we were to assume the law, that is 'the lawful and the prohibited' contained in the previous books did not suffer corruption, the Qur'aan still abrogates those rulings, it cancels the old law which was suitable for its time and is no longer applicable today. For example, many old laws pertaining to diet, ritual prayer, fasting, inheritance, marriage and divorce have been abrogated by the Islaamic Law, while others have remained the same.

The Qur'aan

The Qur'aan is different from other scriptures in the following respects:

(1) The Qur'aan is miraculous and inimitable. Nothing similar to it can be produced by human beings.

(2) After the Qur'aan, no more scriptures will be revealed by Allaah. Just as Prophet Muhammad is the Last Prophet, the Qur'aan is the Last Scripture.

(3) Allaah has taken it upon Himself to protect the Qur'aan from alteration, to safeguard it from corruption, and to preserve it from distortion. On the other hand, previous scriptures suffered alteration and distortion and do not remain in their originally revealed form.

(4) The Qur'aan, for one, confirms early scriptures and, for another, is a trustworthy witness over them.

(5) The Qur'aan abrogates them, meaning it cancels many rulings of the previous scriptures and renders them inapplicable. Thus the sum of Laws of the old scriptures is no longer applicable, the previous rulings having been abrogated or confirmed with what the Qur'aan has brought.

⁷ For example the declaration of Moses: "Hear, O Israel The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4) and the announcement of Jesus: "...The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." (Mark 12:29)

⁸ Refer to Deuteronomy 18:18, Deuteronomy 33:1-2, Isaiah 28:11, Isaiah 42:1-13, Habakkuk 3:3, John 16:13, John 1:19-21, Matthew 21 :42, 43 and more.

⁹ For instance, please refer to books of the Apocrypha.