

The Holy Qur'an

- 1 5 mins Introduction to the Unit and Work

- 2 5 mins Discuss Preservation of The Holy Qur'an

- 3 15 mins Students to write an A4 page essay on the Preservation of The Holy Qur'an. Students may use article enclosed as reference.

- 4 3 mins Highlight the Importance of The Holy Qur'an

- 5 27 mins Use the various references provided to write 2 pages of A4 Pages essay highlighting The Importance of The Holy Qur'an

- 6 10 mins Storyboard a presentation on 'Similarities between the Bible and The Holy Qur'an' *groups of 3*

- 7 10 mins Present your presentation

Learning Objectives/Aims

- 1 Understand the preservation of The Holy Qur'an
- 2 Develop the understanding similarities with the Bible
- 3 Understand the importance of The Holy Qur'an

Name:

Qiadat:

Region:

The Holy Quran : Preserved Forever

Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian, (Al-Hijr, 15:10)

This verse of the Holy Quran promises that its text has been safe-guarded in its original form by a divine plan for all times to come.

Commentary:

This verse furnishes a powerful proof of the truth of the Quran and of its divine origin. In fact, the promise about the preservation of the Quran made in this verse has been remarkably fulfilled that even if there had been no other proof of the truth of Islam, this alone would have sufficed to establish its divine origin.

Verse 8 of this Sura, contains the demand, mockingly made by disbelievers that if the Quran were really as grand a book as it was claimed to be, it ought to have descended under the guardianship of angels. This ridicule of disbelievers has been answered in the present verse, which emphatically says that the Quran is indeed a sublime book and that God Himself has undertaken to act as its Guardian and that He will always protect it against every kind of corruption and interference. And in order that this promise about the protection of the Quran may gain still more force, particles expressive of special emphasis, such as 'Anna' (verily We) and 'Nahnou' (Ourselves) and again 'Anna' followed by 'Lam' (most surely) have been used in this verse. Thus the claim has been made in the most emphatic and forceful language.

The statement that God Himself is the Guardian of the Quran does not mean that angels do not guard it. They also do so, for when the master himself is guarding a thing, the servants must also be necessarily engaged in that service. By saying, most surely We will be its Guardian, God, however, points to the fact that there are certain peculiarities of the Quran which it is beyond the power of angels to guard and therefore, God Himself has undertaken to do that work.

The means adopted to safeguard the purity of the text of the Quran have been briefly referred to in verse 2 in the memorable words 'Al-kitab' (the written Book) and 'Quran e Mubeen' (the illuminating Recital) signifying: (a) That every verse of the Quran was committed to writing as soon as it was revealed and this writing was most tenaciously preserved. (b) That it was committed to memory as soon as revealed by a number of Muslims. And this pious practice has increasingly continued so much so that in the past centuries hundreds of thousands of Muslims have had the entire Quran literally on the tips of their tongues. Add to this the fact that from the very beginning of Islam the recital of parts of the Quran in the five daily Prayers was made obligatory.

Again, it is not only the text of the Quran that has been preserved intact by God. He has provided for the preservation of its spirit also. This has been done by raising divinely inspired Reformers among the Muslims from time to time. These Reformers, known in Islamic terminology as Mujaddids, receive revelations from God and interpret and explain the true meaning of the Quranic text. Such Reformers appeared among the

followers of other religions also, but that was only for so long as such Scriptures served as guides for their followers. After the advent of Islam, however, all other religious systems and their Scriptures, which were intended only for specific periods and specific peoples, became abrogated and divinely inspired Reformers ceased to appear among them. Now, therefore, the Quran alone among all revealed Scriptures of the world holds the field as a living book and hence divinely inspired Reformers now appear only among the followers of Islam. The appearance of such reformers in itself constitutes proof of the living power of a religion and its Scripture inasmuch as they are really the fruit of their religion and their appearance proves its efficacy.

The question here arises, if the Scriptures revealed to the previous Prophets have not been preserved in their original purity, what guarantee is there to believe that the Quran would enjoy permanent security? In this connection it should be noted that the promise of protection made by God in this verse mentions the word 'Al Zikr' (rendered in the text as "this Exhortation") and not the Quran or any other word; and herein lies the answer to the above question. For, to become deserving of the permanent protection of God it is essential that the divine revelation should be 'Al Zikr' of which the necessary attributes are. (1) that it should establish a close and permanent relationship between man and his Maker, inspiring in the former constant remembrance of God, the word 'Zikr' meaning remembering; and (2) that it should elevate man to a state where God may also remember him or in other words favor him with His words and with heavenly help, the word 'Zikr' also meaning eminence. 'the verse under comment thus purports to mean that God undertakes to protect any Scripture so long as it serves the above two purposes. But when, through changes in the conditions and circumstances of man, any Scripture ceases to perform these functions and God, in infallible wisdom, deems it necessary to reveal another Scripture, He naturally ceases to extend His protection to earlier revelations.

The Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an is the name given by God Himself to the book revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam, containing the final law for mankind. The word Qur'an means a book which is meant to be read. The word also means a book or message which is meant to be conveyed and delivered to all peoples. The Qur'an is the only revealed book whose delivery or message is absolutely unrestricted; for whereas all other books are meant for specific times and specific peoples, the Quran is meant for all times and all peoples (34:29).

2: 2. Alif, Lam, Mim.

2: 3. This is a perfect Book; there is no doubt in it; it is a guidance for the righteous,

56: 78. This is, indeed, a noble Qur'an,

56: 79. In a well-preserved Book.

98: 4. Wherein are lasting commandments.

39: 24. ALLAH has sent down the Best Discourse - a Book, whose verses are mutually supporting and repeated in diverse forms. The skins of those, who fear their Lord, do creep at its recital, then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of ALLAH. Such is the guidance of ALLAH. HE guides therewith whom HE pleases. And he whom ALLAH adjudges astray - he shall have no guide.

43: 2. Ha Mim.

43: 3. WE cite as evidence this perspicuous Book,

43: 4. WE have made it a Book to be oft read in clear, eloquent language that you may understand.

43: 5. And, surely, it is safe with US in the Mother of the Book, exalted and full of wisdom.

33: 73. Verily, WE have offered the trust of the Divine Law to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it. But man bore it. Indeed, he is capable of being unjust to, and neglectful of, himself.

33: 74. The consequence is that ALLAH will punish hypocritical men and hypocritical women, and idolatrous men and idolatrous women; and ALLAH turns in Mercy to believing men and believing women; and ALLAH is Most forgiving Merciful.

17: 89. Say, 'If men and jinn should gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another.'

17: 90. And surely We have set forth for mankind in various ways all kinds of similitudes in this Qur'an, but most men would reject everything in respect of it but disbelief.

11: 18. Can he, then, who stands upon a clear proof from his Lord, and to testify to whose truth a witness from HIM shall follow him, and who was preceded by the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy, be an imposter? Those who are the true followers of Moses believe therein, and whoever of the opposing parties disbelieve in it, the Fire shall be his promised place. So be not thou, O reader, in doubt about it. Surely, it is the truth from thy Lord; but most men believe not.

6: 93. And this is a Book which WE have revealed, full of blessings, to fulfil that which preceded it, and to enable thee to warn the Mother of towns and those around her. And those, who believe in the Hereafter, believe therein and they strictly observe their Prayers.

5: 4. Forbidden to you is the flesh of an animal which dies of itself, and blood and the flesh of swine; and that on which is invoked the name of any other than ALLAH; and that which has been strangled; and that which has been beaten to death; and that which has been killed by a fall and that which has been gored to death; and that of which a wild animal has eaten, except that which you have properly slaughtered; and that which has been slaughtered at an altar as an offering to idols. And forbidden is also this that you seek to know your lot by the divining arrows. That is an act of disobedience. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of harming your religion. So fear them not, but fear ME. This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed MY favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion. But whoso is forced by hunger, without being wilfully inclined to sin, then, surely, ALLAH is Most Forgiving, and is Merciful.

6:156. And this is a Book which WE have sent down; full of blessings. So follow it, and guard against evils that you may be shown mercy,

17: 83. And WE gradually reveal of the Qur'an that which is healing and a mercy to believers; but it only adds to the loss of the wrongdoers.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: A Common Tradition

Author: Arshad Khan, The Review of Religions, October 1992

The world of the ancient Near East -- particularly in the regions of Egypt and the lands east of the Mediterranean Sea (Assyria and Media) -- was predominantly a polytheistic world around the time of the 7th Century B.C. (Historical Atlas of the World, p. 3). The people in those lands worshipped many different kinds of deities. Some were linked to the welfare of towns and cities in local areas, such as Marduk in Babylonia or Ra of Heliopolis in Egypt. Other gods were responsible for the livelihood and welfare of man during times of war and chaotic upheaval -- such as Baal for the Canaanites, and Ishtar for the Sumerians and Assyrians. (The Heritage of World Civilizations, p 54)

Amongst this diverse conglomerate of varying polytheistic cultures and beliefs, emerged a single great tradition that was to later fuse the foundations of three great religions of the world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These three religions can all be linked to one common religious tradition that goes as far back as the time of the patriarchal prophet Abraham. This underlying religious tradition forms the solid foundation on which all three religions have built upon over the course of history, and from which each has developed different beliefs and ideals that set them apart from others.

To begin with, the one fundamental difference that sets apart the religious tradition of these three religions was the unifying concept of monotheism:

faith in a single, All-Powerful God who is the sole Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of the universe. (Ibid, p. 56)

While it is not quite clear exactly when this doctrine first came into being, historians generally agree that the concept of monotheism first made a clear appearance amongst a nomadic tribal people known as the Hebrews. (Ibid, p. 56) Essentially, the common religious tradition that Islam, Christianity, and Judaism share can be traced back to these peoples. A better understanding of the history of this group of people can be useful in understanding the common origin of contemporary monotheistic religions.

The precise account of the activities of the Hebrews is not available. Nevertheless, scholars agree on the fact that Biblical accounts of the migration of the Hebrews into the Near Eastern area from Mesopotamia are plausible, and in accord with what is known of the general migration routes of such semi-nomadic tribes. (Ibid, p. 57) Religious and historical traditions mention that the patriarch Abraham came from Mesopotamia, and migrated west with his Hebrews followers, and settled along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, in the area now known as Palestine. (Ibid, p. 56)

Abraham brought with him the idea of a monotheistic belief, an idea that would later prove to endure for a long time in the area. Monotheistic belief emphasized on the moral demands and responsibilities of the individual and the community towards the worship of one God, who was ruler over all. Moreover, a belief in one God stressed the

idea that God had a divine plan for human history, and the actions and ideals of His chosen people were inextricably tied to that divine plan. (Ibid, p. C-1) At the apex of this tradition sits Abraham, who is recognized as the founder of their faith by all three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Abraham's followers passed down this tradition generation after generation, strengthening and unifying the people in the Palestine area with the belief in God and the *covenant* made with His chosen people. It was the 13th century B.C. that the personage of Moses proved to be a great unifying force that was to quite literally forge the nation of Israel. It was during the time of Moses that the concept of the covenant was reiterated and reinstated amongst the descendants of Abraham.

The importance of this covenant can be recognized from a close scriptural analysis of all three religions. All three branches of the original monotheistic beliefs introduced by Abraham into the Palestine area recognize and account for the event in their religious scriptures:

And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. ... And Moses took half of the blood of the oxen, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. (Exodus: 24: 4, 6, 7)

Similarly, the religion of Islam also recognizes the covenant of the Hebrews with God. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran, the religious text of the Muslims, that man must remember the fact that such a covenant was taken by a group of people with God:

O children of Israel! Remember My favours which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with Me, I will fulfil My covenant with you, and Me alone should you fear.....
(The Holy Quran: [2:41](#))

O children of Israel! Remember My favour which I bestowed on you and that I exalted you above the peoples of the time. (The Holy Quran: [2:48](#))

And remember when We gave Moses the Book and the Discrimination, that you might be rightly guided. (The Holy Quran: [2:54](#))

And remember the time when WE took a covenant from you and raised you above the Mount, saying, `Hold fast that which WE have given you and bear in mind what is therein, that you may be saved.' (The Holy Quran: [2:64](#))

The need to quote the fore-going passages is seen when one attempts to correlate and compare them together with other underlying beliefs found in all three religions. It is seen that the tradition brought by Abraham عليه السلام, and reinforced and reinstated by Moses, is present and recognized by all three religions. This is the common point among all the three faiths: an affirmation and acknowledgment of the *covenant* which the Hebrews of the Palestine area made with God. This forms the fundamental basis for these monotheistic religions.

Another important similarity among the three religions is their relative closeness in terms of geographical proximity. It is not coincidental that all three great monotheistic religions of the world today have a common ancestral homeland: the fact that Abraham was the *father of the faithful* for all three religions also would signify that the place where he lived and led his people would be the place where all three faiths would be born. The Near East, comprising of the Palestine area, the Sinai Peninsula, the Arabian peninsula (especially the northern half), and the areas of modern-day Turkey and Greece -- essentially make up the *birthplace* of all three faiths.

Yet another parallelism among the three religions is the belief and ideal that through prayer and supplications, and establishing a relationship with God, one can achieve goodness in life and be in a constant state of peace and tranquility with himself. This is the fundamental root of all worship in a monotheistic religion. The Almighty Creator is seen as a Being actively concerned with the deeds and doings of His creatures: thus a turning to Him would eventually lead to a path of divine Grace and Mercy. Essentially speaking, God's purpose in creating mankind was for a very good reason:

they were called upon to be just and good like their Creator, for they were involved with the fulfillment of His divine purpose. (Craig, Albert, et al; [The Heritage of World Civilizations, page 60])

This concept is illustrated in God's statement to the House of Israel mentioned in the Bible.

I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah: 31:33)

God's purpose, according to monotheistic beliefs, was to raise man in rank and elevation in terms of spiritual conduct and moral excellence. This could only be done if the individual, or the society at large, would acknowledge the fact that they were created for a divine purpose, and according to a pre-ordained plan. Believers were expected to follow the teachings given to them through their respective scriptures and to recognize such personages as Abraham, Moses, and others to be Prophets who were inspired and enlightened by God, and given the task of leading and reforming the people. (Craig, Albert, et al; [The Heritage of World Civilizations, page 59])

All of the beliefs mentioned are found in all three faiths. They all share a common belief in a living, self-sufficient, and ever-present God that maintains and regulates each and every individual's lifestyle and conduct. These beliefs formed the cement for the foundation that was common to all faiths which originated from Abraham. This common point also served as the unifying force that united all of Israel under one belief and one God.

The religions of Islam and Christianity also maintain these beliefs. Originating in the Arabian Peninsula and Palestine area respectively, both hold the personage of Christ to be the extension of this tradition. While both Islam and Christianity believe in Christ as a Prophet and reformer -- the Jewish faith does not.

This is where the parallelisms and similarities among all three religions stop. Islam and Christianity break away from Judaism when they acknowledge the holiness and righteousness of Christ. All three share a belief in Moses, but only two share a belief in the truth of Christ. The similarities between Christianity and Islam come to an end as well, when Islam breaks away from the parallelisms and acknowledges the Holy Prophet of Islam as a true prophet of God who came after Christ to bring God's final law for the guidance of all mankind. Both Judaism and Christianity reject this claim. Hence, the religions split apart, and their similarities end when they begin to differ in opinion regarding Christ and Muhammad (peace be on them). Only Islam acknowledges the divine selection and prophethood of all three personages, while the other two do not.

All three religions do not share common beliefs after the belief in Moses. Islam acknowledges all three, Christianity acknowledges two, and Judaism only one.

Yet all are deeply rooted in the fabric of monotheism. It is this tradition that serves as the backbone for each religion. The covenant established by the patriarch Abraham, reinstated by Moses -- serves as the common link between three world religions. A close geographical and historical origin brings all three religions closer together, and under a unifying perspective. This feature is what makes the religions so remarkably similar.

The great tradition that gave rise to these three faiths traces its origin and birth to a tiny group of nomadic Hebrew people, simple in lifestyle and habits. It was not the product of imperial forces, or from great empires (Bid, page 56). The eventual products that formed as a result of this tradition came into being after a long period of time. It was a gradual and slow process -- not a quick period of religious upheaval and chaos. The time interval between the advent of Moses and Muhammad (peace be on them) was roughly nineteen centuries (1300 B.C. - 600 A.D.) -- a monumental amount of time to change and evolve in religion.

Nevertheless, a proper understanding of the origin of monotheistic belief enables one to clearly and understand to what extent Judaism, Christianity and Islam can be considered as part of the same religious and spiritual tradition: a tradition that dates back to the time of Abraham, simple nomad leading his flock of followers to a better homeland.