

TORAH, GOSPEL AND QURAN - ACCORDING TO ISLAM

Quran has a very different view of the previous scriptures. For example, the Torah and the Gospel are compared to what modern Muslims say holds true according to their comprehension of a few verses in Quran. The Quran is stated to be the only revelation from God, which has not changed, but the Torah and Gospel has been corrupted by the people and is not authentic anymore. In this article, let's see if this is what Quran is actually stating.

CORRUPTION IN OLDER SCRIPTURES - ISLAMIC VIEW

The following are two very important verses from Quran which refer to Quran - explicitly telling the Muslims about the corruption of the Torah and the Gospel. Chapter 2, verse 75 and chapter 2, verse 78 and 79, you will see the most prominent elaboration. All the other verses in the middle are relational but these verses are explicit.

“Do you covet, that they would believe for you while a party of them used to hear the words of Allah and then distort the Torah after they had understood it while they were knowing?” (Quran 2:75)

“And among them are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture except in wishful thinking, but they are only assuming. So woe to those who write the "scripture" with their own hands, then say, "This is from Allah," in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.” (Quran 2:78-79)

If we read clearly, it is not said the Torah or Gospel are changed but Quran is talking about a group of people. For example, a group of people who changed the text. Also, they are uneducated. They simply do not know or are illiterate. These verses never generalized all of the Jews or Christians in the category of corrupting their scriptures. Another verse from the 3rd chapter of Quran can actually confirm the above in a different manner.

And indeed, there is among them a party who alter the Scripture with their tongues so you may think it is from the Scripture, but it is not from the Scripture. And they say, "This is from Allah," but it is not from Allah. And they speak untruth about Allah while they know. (Quran 3:78)

In the above verse, it is stating "they say it wrong", not even mentioning that they change the scripture in writing. But once again, if you translate it as changing the scripture in words, the Quran is again talking about some people or a group of people who changed the scriptures. This is evident that Quran is not referring to the Torah and the Gospel but about a group of people who have changed the scriptures and are not on the right path.

If we continue reading chapter 3 and move down to verses 113-115, we can actually get the answers of our initial remark very easily. Where Quran confirms otherwise that there are a community of people who held the older scriptures to their originality and are obedient to GOD.

They are not the same; among the People of the Scripture is a community standing [in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night and prostrating [in prayer]. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous. And whatever good they do - never will it be removed from them. And Allah is Knowing of the righteous. (Quran 3:113-115)

Doesn't it hold true for any religion that some people among them will change, alter, say otherwise or even interpret things differently? This is the reason there are so many sects of Islam with different beliefs as they follow different commentators (Tafsirs) of Quran. Some hold true to Hadith and disregard others even within the classification of Sahi and Hassan. Even Ahmadia's came into being and brought their own prophet and some additional books by him. Most of the Muslims don't want to classify them as Muslims but they claim to be Muslims.

If we look at Chapter 7, verse 159 of Quran, it establishes the fact further for the Torah:

And among the people of Moses is a community which guides by truth and by it establishes justice. (Quran 7:159)

If the above is sufficient for Muslims to say that the Tora and Gospel have been changed then the harshest language used in Quran is actually for Quran itself. It states that some Muslims have changed Quran into parts and not held true for all of it.

And say, "Indeed, I am the clear warner" - just as we had revealed [scriptures] to those who divided. Who have made the Qur'an into parts. (Quran 15:89-91)

According to Tafsir al-Jalalayn, "Those who have reduced the Recitation, namely those scriptures revealed to them to parts believing in some and disbelieving in others."

If the above would have been said by the Torah and Gospel, I am quite sure this would be the only verse Muslims would actually state to confirm that the older scriptures have been changed.

So, basically, does this mean Quran is changed? No. Rather, Quran is talking about some people who reduce the Quran and don't say all of it. If this is used in this way, then why are the rest of the verses about the Torah and the Gospel read and comprehended differently by the modern Muslims?

Even though the focus of the article is the Torah and the Gospel, according to Quran, I know certain Muslim friends actually bring out Jeremiah 8:8 to tell the Jews and Christians this is the verse in your own book that talks about corruption in the text of the Torah. Let's just read:

How can you say, "We are wise,
for we have the law of the LORD,"
when actually the lying pen of the scribes
has handled it falsely? (Jeremiah 8:8)

You have to read the whole chapter and you will know that the Jews, in that time, were writing commentary on the Torah. Jeremiah is talking about them in that they were changing the context of the actual words of GOD. They were not changing the Torah. Rather, miss-interpreting it in the commentary. This is just like when there are many commentaries of Quran called Tafsirs and there are clear contradictions about many verses within Tafsir. Do all Muslims hold every Tafsir to be true? No. They do not. Does every Muslim in this world follow and accept all the commentaries (i.e. Tafsir)? Not at all. So, some people will accept some commentaries of a verse by one commentator and not the other verse by the same commentator.

If Muslims hold Jeremiah to be the truth and not corrupted, then we can easily check another chapter of Jeremiah. It is only fair to accept one chapter of the book when you can accept the other chapter of the same book or else both are wrong and shouldn't be quoted at all.

Say to them, 'This is what the LORD says: If you do not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (though you have not listened), then I will make this house like Shiloh and this city a curse[a] among all the nations of the earth.' (Jeremiah 26:4-6)

Now this is where Jeremiah is actually telling us that nothing has changed at all. It's authoritative and the book holds true. There is severe punishment if they do not follow the scriptures which are the Word of God.

AUTHENTICITY OF TORAH AND THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO QURAN

Now, I would like to change your focus. Instead of looking at the verses where a group has changed the text, Let's see where Quran refers to the Torah and the Gospel and tells the people, of that time, about the previous scriptures.

Quran mentions around 25 prophets before Muhammad. In chapter 3, verse 84, it describes a few of them and talks about them having the Word of God.

Say, "We have believed in Allah and in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are submit to Him." (Quran 3:84)

The following verses of the Quran describe to Muhammad that Quran is confirming all the previous scriptures. It doesn't say they are corrupted. How can you confirm if the older one is actually corrupted? One can only confirm something if it is in its true form.

He has sent down upon you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming what was before it. And He revealed the Torah and the Gospel. (Quran 3:3)

And this is a Book which We have sent down, blessed and confirming what was before it, that you may warn the Mother of Cities and those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they are maintaining their prayers. (Quran 6:92)

And it was not [possible] for this Qur'an to be produced by other than Allah, but [it is] a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of the [former] Scripture, about which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds. (Quran 10:37)

And that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], of the Book is the truth, confirming what was before it. Indeed, Allah, of His servants, is Acquainted and Seeing. (Quran 35:31)

Quran goes beyond and claims that Christians and Jews have the Torah and the Gospel. These books are the authority for them. These books are the guidance for truth and the straight path.

They said, "O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book revealed after Moses confirming what was before it which guides to the truth and to a straight path. (Quran 46:30)

The authenticity and uncorrupted text in the Torah and the Gospel is unemphatically true, according to Quran, that it states to the followers of Muhammad, to validate their prophet from the older scriptures in Quran.

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful.” (Quran 7:157)

Prophesies about Muhammad are said to be in the Torah and the Gospel, according to Quran. Then it is actually affirming these books are present in it's correct and original form, at the time of 7th century Arabia. Otherwise, how can you refer to a book for the validation of someone who is present at this current time of 7th century from a non-authentic source? If Quran is referring to a book, we have to believe that it is an authentic source and is not changed at the time of Muhammad. Secondly, it is an inadequate argument to say one verse fits your need and is authentic, but the other verse is not authentic.

Off topic: I will write another article where prophecies about Muhammad are in the Torah and the Gospel according to Muslim scholars. I will provide answers from the Torah and the Gospel as well.

Quran also confirms and asks Muhammad to tell the people that the older scriptures are sent by God and they are truth and just. Also confirms that no one can alter His words and one should not doubt about those being the Word of God.

[Say], "Then is it other than Allah I should seek as judge while it is He who has revealed to you the Book explained in detail?" And those to whom We [previously] gave the Scripture know that it is sent down from your Lord in truth, so never be among the doubters. And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can alter His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (Quran 6:114-115)

Quran affirms that the Jews and the Christians should be judged by their own book. How can Quran tell this if the words have been changed and Quran now has the final correct words

But how is it that they come to you for judgement while they have the Torah, in which is the judgement of Allah? Then they turn away, [even] after that; but those are not [in fact] believers. (Quran 5:43)

And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient. (Quran 5:47)

Now, once again, some modern Muslims would argue, but as all Muslims agree that Muhammad is the best interpreter of Quran and the whole Quranic revelation actually came upon him, we can actually refer to his interpretation to see what he says about the above Torah and Gospel, in Sunan Abi Dawad 4449.

“A group of Jews came and invited the Messenger of Allah (?) to Quff. So he visited them in their school.

They said: AbulQasim, one of our men has committed fornication with a woman; so pronounce judgment upon them. They placed a cushion for the Messenger of Allah (?) who sat on it and said: Bring the Torah. It was then brought. He then withdrew the cushion from beneath him and placed the Torah on it saying: I believed in thee and in Him Who revealed thee.

He then said: Bring me one who is learned among you. Then a young man was brought. The transmitter then mentioned the rest of the tradition of stoning similar to the one transmitted by Malik from Nafi'(No. 4431).” Grade Hassan (Al-Albani)”

Quran also tells very clearly, that unless you uphold the Torah and the Gospel, you are doomed.

Say, "O People of the Scripture, you are [standing] on nothing until you uphold [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your Lord." And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in transgression and disbelief. So do not grieve over the disbelieving people. (Quran 5:68)

The affirmation of the Torah and the Gospel is so clear in Quran that it goes beyond what is necessary. Quran actually asks Muhammad that if he is in doubt, he should refer back to the older scriptures!

So if you are in doubt, [O Muhammad], about that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Scripture before you. The truth has certainly come to you from your Lord, so never be among the doubters. (Quran 10:94)

How is Muhammad being asked to refer to corrupt scriptures? Quran is authentic. If it is referring to a corrupt scripture, then doesn't that imply Quran would be corrupt as well? If Quran is not corrupt, then the book it is referring to cannot be corrupted either.

I would conclude all of this with a quotation of Abdullah Saeed, who is an Australian academic scholar of Islamic studies. He is currently the Sultan of Oman, Professor of Arab and Islamic studies at the University of Melbourne. In his book, "THE CHARGE OF DISTORTION OF JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES," his final chapter states;

"Since the 'authorized' scriptures of Jews and Christians remain very much today as they existed at the time of the Prophet, it is difficult to argue that the Quranic references to Tawrdt (Torah) and Injtl (Gospel) were only to the 'pure' Tawrdt (Torah) and Injtl (Gospel) as existed at the time of Moses and Jesus, respectively. If the texts have remained more or less as they were in the 7th century CE, the reverence the Quran has shown them at the time should be retained even today. Many interpreters of the Quran, from Tabari to Razi to Ibn Taymiyya and even Qutb, appear to be inclined to share this view. The wholesale dismissive attitude held by many Muslims in the modern period towards the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity do not seem to have the support of either the Quran or the major figures of Tafsir."

QURAN ACCORDING TO QURAN

After looking at Quran telling us about the Torah and the Gospel, let's now look at what Quran states about Quran itself. This should be a very important question. If Quran is affirming the Torah and the Gospel, then why was the Quran required? The answer lies within Quran itself.

And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'an that you may warn the Mother of Cities [Makkah] and those around it and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze. (Quran 42:7)

And before it was the scripture of Moses to lead and as a mercy. And this is a confirming Book in an Arabic tongue to warn those who have wronged and as good tidings to the doers of good. (Quran 46:12)

In the true sense, Quran is telling everyone that it is an Arabic revelation for the people of Makkah the surrounding areas so they will be warned and they would not have an excuse in the afterlife that they did not get the revelation in their own tongue.

In chapter 6, verses 155 to 157, the above point is explained even further while confirming the Torah and the Gospel is a scripture in Arabic for those people. This was so they will not have any doubts and they would not say they never had any book or guidance from God.

And this [Qur'an] is a Book We have revealed [which is] blessed, so follow it and fear Allah that you may receive mercy. [We revealed it] lest you say, "The Scripture was only sent down to two groups before us, but we were of their study unaware," Or lest you say, "If only the Scripture had been revealed to us, we would have been better guided than they." So there has [now] come to you a clear evidence from your Lord and a guidance and mercy. Then who is more unjust than one who denies the verses of Allah and turns away from them? We will recompense those who turn away from Our verses with the worst of punishment for their having turned away. (Quran 6:155-157)

Now, when confirming it is for the Arabian people who speak Arabic, is it not fair to say that it is revealed for the people of the Arabs? What excuse is there remaining for others to say this book is for all people, even those who do not understand Arabic yet, should study Arabic and then learn Quran? It is stated by many scholars that we should read Quran in Arabic, even when we do not understand Arabic. Read the translations. However, reading Arabic is considered a requirement by most scholars and Imams of Islam. Are they referring to the above verses? If that holds true, then the Torah and the Gospel are good for the Jews and Christians and Quran is good

for the Arabian people as it is explained in the Quran itself. This creates a clear segregation that Islam is not for all humans of this world as not all speak Arabic.