

The Similarity of the Bible to Islamic Narrations According to the Holy Quran

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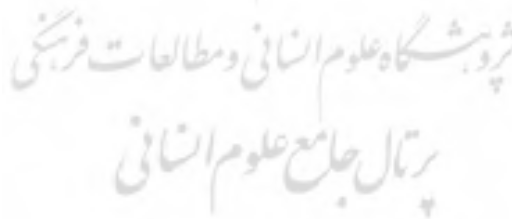
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Abstract

The Quran, on one hand, generally affirms the current Torah and Gospel (Bible) while considering them to have deficiencies on the other hand. The verses of the Quran indicate that the Bible contain omissions and additions. This statement of the Quran aligns with the historical accounts of the Bible, and the Quran speaks in accordance with reality. That is to say, the Bible is divine, yet they have become humanized and contain deficiencies. The Quran possesses unique characteristics such as clarity, being blessed, wise, and a guardian, which elevate it above any other book and render all other books reliant on it. Accordingly, all books need to present their contents to the Quran for correction and completion. This interaction of the Quran with the Bible is similar to its interaction with Islamic narrations. Although this perspective has previously been presented by the author in articles and books, this writing employs a descriptive-analytical method with a new articulation and reasoning to substantiate this viewpoint.

Keywords: Holy Quran, Torah and Gospel, Bible, Islamic Narrations, Affirmation, Presentation to the Quran.



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Introduction

The Quran affirms the current Torah and Gospel in general and introduces the Bible as having attributes such as being the command of God and being a source of guidance, mercy, and light. It also considers the Torah to possess characteristics such as being enlightening, complete and without defect, detailed in all matters, a source of counsel and admonition, and being a criterion and remembrance.

On the other hand, the Quran deems the current Torah and Gospel to have deficiencies. Concealment and fabrication of certain passages are attributed to them; that is, the verses of the Quran indicate that the Bible has omissions and additions. This statement by the Quran is consistent with the historical reality of the Bible, and the Quran speaks in accordance with that reality. The Jews and Christians themselves admit that the Bible is, on one hand, divine, but have become humanized and contain deficiencies.

This interaction of the Quran with the Bible is similar to its interaction with Islamic narrations. Both the Bible and Islamic narrations are affirmed by the Quran, yet both also contain omissions and fabrications, and for their content to be corrected and completed, they must be presented to the Quran.

1. Background

Two articles can be referenced: "A Comparative Study of the Literary Features of the Bible and the Holy Quran" and "The Compilation of the Torah and Gospel from the Perspective of the Quranic Verses," as well as a book titled "Presenting the Torah and Gospel to the Quran," published in Qom by the author.

The first article does not reference the viewpoint that the Bible is similar to Islamic narrations; however, the second article and the aforementioned book do present and substantiate this view. The distinction of this writing from the two mentioned works is that it offers a new articulation of this perspective.

The argument presented, which clarifies the structure of the article, is as follows:

- 1) The Quran affirms the Bible;
- 2) The Quran considers the Bible to have omissions and fabrications and views them as human;
- 3) The historical accounts of the Bible also confirm their human nature;
- 4) The Quran is a guardian over all books.

The conclusion is that the Bible is similar to Islamic narrations and must be presented to the Quran.

2. Affirmation of the Torah and Gospel by the Quran

The verses of the Holy Quran affirm the Torah and Gospel. Scholars such as *Allamah Ṭabaṭaba'i*, *Miṣbah Yazdi*, and *Jawadi Amuli* believe that divine knowledge exists in the current Torah and Gospel, and the Quran affirms these two books in general (Naqavi, 1980 AD/1401 AH: 32–38). Allamah states in his commentary that the Quran affirms some of the current Torah's content (Ṭabaṭaba'i, 2011 AD/1390 AH: 7, 214), and if someone claims that the current Torah is different from the Torah of the time of the Prophet (PBUH), this claim is false (ibid: 17, 372). In this context, Allamah repeatedly emphasizes that the Torah has not changed from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) until today, and the Quran affirms this same Torah, while also stressing that the current Torah has deficiencies and that the Quran's affirmation of the Torah is general rather than absolute.

It may be argued that the Quran only affirms the original Torah; that the original Torah is with the Jews and has been concealed, with verses:

- Say, [O! Muḥammad], "So bring the Torah and recite it, if you should be truthful (Ali 'Imran/93);
- O! People of the Scripture, there has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you used to conceal of the Scripture and overlooking much (al-Ma'idah/15);
- Say, "Who revealed the Scripture that Moses brought as light and guidance to the people? You [Jews] make it into pages, disclosing [some of] it and concealing much (al-An'am/91) cited as evidence for this claim.

The response is that none of these verses explicitly state that the original Torah has been concealed by the Jews. Additionally, the second and third verses do not mention the term "Torah" and refer to concealing parts of the book rather than the entire book.

In the first verse, there is no indication of the original status of the mentioned Torah; rather, the verse merely states that before the revelation of the Torah, no food was declared forbidden by God, except for what Jacob declared forbidden upon himself, not for the people. The Quran asks the Jews to bring forth the Torah and prove that before the Torah, God prohibited any food for Jacob. This claim is also consistent with the existing Torah, as it does not contain any content that indicates God prohibited any food for Jacob prior to the Torah.

3. Corruption of the Torah and Gospel

Muslim scholars and commentators hold various views regarding the corruption of the Torah and Gospel. *Allamah Ṭabaṭaba'i* believes that based on Quranic verses, the current Torah includes parts of the actual

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Torah that was revealed to Moses, alongside sections that have undergone reduction, alteration of words, or rearrangement. He believes that a careful examination of the Quranic verses can reveal that the current Torah is the same Torah from the time of the Prophet (PBUH), and a mixture of the original Torah and the modified content (Ṭabaṭaba'i, 2011 AD/1390 SH 5: 342-343).

Fakhr Razi also argues that due to the fame and transmission of the scripture, its verbal corruption is impossible, and he considers the claim of its spiritual corruption to be more valid (Razi, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 11, 148).

Avicenna also deemed verbal corruption impossible, arguing that the followers of Judaism were numerous, their cities were far apart, and they had differing religious beliefs. Given the large population and the enmity among them, who were watchful for any weaknesses among each other, had the Torah been altered by a group such as the Christians, it would have been declared. Since this did not happen, the Torah has not been corrupted (Avicenna, n.d.: 50).

Additionally, Professor *Tawfiqi* insists that the current Torah and Gospels are human manuscripts and that the original Torah and Gospel, akin to the scriptures of Abraham and Noah, have been lost. He argues that discussing the corruption of the scripture is senseless and negates the subject because Jews and Christians alike do not consider the scripture to be divine. The Holy Quran also does not mention any verbal corruption of the Torah and Gospel; rather, it refers to the alteration of words, which pertains to speech and hearing and does not relate to written corruption (Tawfiqi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 232-235).

Ayatollah *Ma'rifat* holds a similar view regarding the corruption of the Torah and Gospel, considering the claim of corruption in the Bible to be a negation that nullifies the subject. In this case, despite the occurrence of additions or omissions in the text of this book, it is not termed as having been corrupted. In such instances, the terms forgery and fabrication may be closer to the truth (Ma'rifat, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 152).

The Holy Quran considers one of the unacceptable actions of the People of the Book to be the deliberate concealment of religious truths and the mixing of truth with falsehood, exposing their actions in various verses. We will refer to some of these verses:

1) Concealing the Truth: "O! People of the Book! Why do you mix truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while you know [it]?" (Ali 'Imran/71). Surah *al-Baqarah* also addresses this issue in several verses (al-Baqarah/ 42, 159, 146, and 174) and in verse 42 advises the People of the Book against this action. The decisive meaning of the aforementioned verses indicates a deliberate concealment of obvious

truths by the People of the Book, with the most important truth being the prophethood of the Greatest Messenger (PBUH).

2) Concealing Writings of the Torah: Based on verse 91 of Surah *al-An'am*, the method of the People of the Book was to write the Torah on paper and hide parts of it: "...You make it into sheets that you reveal..." Verse 15 of Surah *al-Ma'idah* also refers to the concealment of the book by the People of the Book. It has been reported from Imam *Ṣadiq* (AS) regarding this verse that he said: Initially, the Jews wrote the Torah on scattered papers; then, they would reveal some parts and conceal others ('Ayyashi, 1960 AD/1380 AH: 1, 399).

3) Concealing Some Commandments: Verse 93 of Surah *Ali 'Imran* refers to the Jews' concealment of prohibitions related to food, and verse 41 of Surah *al-Ma'idah* refers to hiding the stoning ruling.

4) Forgery of Scripture: The verse "So woe to those who write the book with their own hands and then say: This is from Allah..." (al-Baqarah/79) clearly depicts the actions of the Jews in this regard, as they would introduce their own writings as the book of God.

A close examination of the verses "...You make it into sheets that you reveal and concealing much..." (al-An'am/ 91) and "So woe to those who write the book with their own hands..." (al-Baqarah/79), which are stated in the present tense, indicates that this concealment and forgery have been and continue to be a persistent tradition. Accordingly, what they present are human books.

Therefore, the corruption of the Torah is a textual alteration; in such a way that fraudulent texts were added to the Torah, while on the other hand, some texts were removed under the pretext of being unofficial. The viewpoint that makes the discussion of the corruption of the scripture meaningless seems valid; because when we refer to it being corrupted, we consider the scripture to be divine and then claim that it has been verbally altered; whereas investigations by the Jews themselves and Christians acknowledge that these books are human. In summary, the Torah and the Gospels are human, and their verbal corruption, in the sense that we intend—that is, to consider the Bible as divine and claim that some of their words have been altered—is outside the scope of the discussion.

The Torah and the Gospel today are akin to Islamic narrations in that the sacred legislator has not provided for their preservation. In such texts, there exists the possibility of verbal alterations that could lead to changes in meaning, as well as the potential for the fabrication of texts and similar issues. However, with regard to the Holy Quran, the sacred legislator has made an effort not only to preserve the meaning but also to safeguard the wording. This issue has become so institutionalized among Muslims that

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it is recorded in history that Muslims stood firmly against the second and third caliphs and prevented the deletion of the word "Waw" from the Quran, even though the caliph held the highest social position and was respected (cf. Jawadi Amuli, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 125).

We have previously stated that the Bible are not like the Quran, and if we were to identify equivalents in Islamic texts, they would very much resemble Islamic narrations in that, firstly, they are compilations, and secondly, some of them have been concealed regarding the prohibition of writing Hadith, and there are also fabricated narrations among them. In contrast, the Quran is a book that was written down during the time of its revealer and, according to some views, was compiled and codified during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Regarding the Quran, the verses "Indeed, upon Us is its collection and recitation" (al-Qiyamah/17) and "Indeed, We sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will preserve it" (al-Hijr/9) indicate that the collection and codification of the Quran and its preservation from distortion and tampering by humans were part of divine planning; however, such an assurance does not exist for the Torah and the Gospel. Therefore, although verbal corruption has occurred within them, it is outside the concern of the legislator, who aims to preserve the meaning, not the wording. Hence, it is better to use the terms "Fabrication" and "Construction" in relation to them rather than "Verbal Corruption."

4. History of the Bible

An examination of the history of the Bible reveals that the Torah and the Gospel referred to by the Holy Quran are consistent with the Bible, meaning that the verses of the Quran speak in accordance with reality, and the Torah and Gospel referred to by the Quran possess all the characteristics of the existing Torah and Gospel, that is, the Bible.

The Holy Scripture consists of two main sections: The Old Testament, which comprises more than three-quarters of this book and is considered authentic by Christians and Jews, and the New Testament, which is only accepted by Christians.

4.1. The Old Testament

The collection known as the Old Testament is said to have been written over centuries by various authors and contains diverse material such as history, law, wisdom, prayers, poetry, and prophecies. This collection consists of 39 books. However, as will be discussed, the Catholic and Orthodox Christian sects believe that the Old Testament consists of 46 books.

According to Jewish belief, God conveyed the Torah through Moses in five books to the Children of Israel. Thus, belief in the divine origin

of the Torah is considered a fundamental aspect of the Jewish faith (War, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 2, 623-624; Altman, 1996: 3, 655). However, in the Torah itself, there is no explicit mention that all five books were authored or even presented by Moses (Sarna, 1993: 2, 158). The term "Torah" also applies to the entire Hebrew Bible, meaning the Old Testament, which is commonly accepted among Jews (Anterman, 2012: 72).

4.1.1. The Historical Narrative of the Old Testament from Its Own Perspective

The Old Testament reports its historical journey beginning with the Book of Exodus, Chapter 24, which states that Moses and Aaron, along with some elders of the Children of Israel, went up to Mount Sinai, and Moses alone approached God to receive the tablets, which were the handwritten words of God (Exodus: 31, 18; 32,15-16). Afterward, Moses returned to his people and, upon witnessing the calf worship of the Children of Israel, became enraged and threw the tablets to the ground, resulting in their destruction (Exodus: 32,19). Following a subsequent encounter with God in the Tent of Meeting, God instructed Moses to prepare two new tablets similar to the first ones. Moses stayed on Mount Sinai for forty days and nights, and God once again inscribed the Ten Commandments on those two stone tablets (Exodus: 33, 7-23 and 34, 1 and 28).

These details are also found, with slight variations, in the Book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy: 4, 44; 5, 22; 9, 9-18; 10, 1-5). Furthermore, in Deuteronomy, Chapter 31, it is stated that at the time of his death, Moses wrote down the Torah and entrusted it to the Levitical priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant, as well as to the elders of the Children of Israel. He instructed them to read these laws and teachings to all the Children of Israel at the end of every seven-year cycle during the Feast of Tabernacles. The Book of Joshua records that he inscribed the Torah on the stones of the altar on Mount Ebal and read all the contents of the Torah, including both blessings and curses, to the entire Children of Israel (Joshua: 8, 30-35).

By studying the Old Testament, it becomes evident that the Torah had a fundamental core that Moses brought forth in the tablets, and over time, it became more complete. In the continuation of the Old Testament narrative, we see that Moses detailed it (Deuteronomy: 31, 9), and afterward, Joshua established regulations and statutes for the people, then wrote and added them to the Torah (Joshua: 24, 25-26).

The difference between the Quran and the Torah is that the core and central revelation, that is, the Quran, remained intact, while the details of this revelation were reflected in the books of narration; however, the content of the Torah became intertwined with its interpretations and expansions.

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In the continuation of the story regarding the fate of the book of Moses in the Old Testament, we encounter the conflict between the Philistines and the Children of Israel, during which the Ark of the Covenant was captured (1 Samuel 4 and 5). It is unclear what happened to the scripture in this war that occurred before the reign of Saul and David.

During the period from Joshua until the reign of Solomon in the Old Testament, there is no mention of the Torah until it is noted in the Books of Kings and Chronicles that, by Solomon's order, the Ark of the Covenant was opened, and the two stone tablets that Moses received on Mount Horeb were seen (1 Kings: 8, 9; 2 Chronicles: 5, 10).

After Solomon and his son Rehoboam, there is no news of the Torah until the Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak attacked Jerusalem and plundered it, and it is unknown what became of the Torah scroll (2 Chronicles: 12, 9).

Nevertheless, there is no explicit mention or emphasis in the Old Testament regarding the Torah being lost; however, the content of the Old Testament suggests that the Torah was entirely lost during certain events, and no one had any knowledge of it.

After Solomon and his son Rehoboam, there is no mention of the Torah until the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign, when a priest named Hilkiah claimed to have found the scripture (2 Chronicles: 34, 8-20; 2 Kings: 22). He informed Josiah that the Book of the Torah had been found in the House of God and sent it to the king. Upon hearing this, the king tore his clothes and was saddened and distressed that his ancestors had not acted according to this book. He ordered the people of Jerusalem to gather, read the book to them, and commanded that they follow its teachings. These accounts indicate that at that time, the Torah was either lost or hidden, and the priest Hilkiah claimed he had found it.

The storyline enhances the possibility that the events are fabricated. Will Durant believes that due to the unstable situation of the Jews, the priests decided to bring a message from God to the people and to formulate a law that would strengthen their religion and ethical foundations. This idea was supported by Josiah (Will Durant, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 1, 374).

Continuing with the events related to the Bible, we reach the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem. At that time, everything in Solomon's Temple was destroyed and burned, and the Israelites were taken captive to Babylon along with the objects inside the Temple. Since the Holy Scriptures were kept inside the Temple, they were either burned or plundered (2 Chronicles 36: 17-20; 2 Kings 24-25). Years later, after their liberation from captivity, when the Israelites returned to Jerusalem, they asked Ezra the priest to bring the Torah of

Moses and read it for them. Ezra and his assistants read and interpreted it from morning until noon on the first day of the seventh month. They continued this until the seventh day, which was the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles for the Jews (Nehemiah 8: 1-8). The text of the Bible conveys that the Jews had taken the Scriptures with them and that upon their return; they asked Ezra to bring it and read it to them.

Even if we accept that Ezra's version was the original Torah, considering the events that occurred afterward, it cannot be accepted that Ezra's version survived and it surely perished during the campaign of Antiochus (Rahmatullah al-Hindi, n.d.: 1, 212).

Antiochus Epiphanes ascended to the throne of the Seleucid Greeks in 175 B.C. and after conquering Egypt, invaded Jerusalem in 169 B.C., destroying it and plundering all its wealth and treasures. He burned all copies of the Torah and other books of the Old Testament and declared that whoever was found in possession of a copy of the Torah or Old Testament would be killed. He conducted monthly inspections in this regard (Apocrypha of the Old Testament, 2004 AD/1383 SH; 1 Maccabees 1: 11-61, pp. 383-388).

The Old Testament narrative regarding the Scriptures ends at this point; however, history states that in 70 A.D., Titus gathered an army of Romans and invaded Jerusalem. When the city fell to the Romans, Titus offered terms to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but they did not accept. Because of this, he ordered the destruction of their temple, leading to the deaths of many Jews (Kleppman, 1970 AD/1349 SH: 2, 169-173).

At this point in time, Yohanan ibn Zakkai, one of the prominent scholars and a distinguished member of the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, fled the city during the Roman siege out of fear that all the religious scholars would be killed and the teachings would be lost. He established a new assembly of scholars in the city of Yavne, and most Jews in Palestine recognized its authority for all religious and ethical matters (ibid: 2, 180-185). This center is where the writings of the Scriptures were revived once again.

Therefore, examining the historical process of the Scriptures indicates that the current Torah has no documentary validity and cannot be trusted.

4.1.2. Compilation of the Old Testament

The Old Testament, according to the existing evidence and reports, was written over a thousand years (1400-400 B.C.) by at least thirty different authors, some of whom remain unknown (Schultz, n.d.: 2; Suhail Dib, 1985: 5-6). Others have suggested that the writing and compiling of the Scriptures occurred over a thousand years, from 1100 to 100 B.C. (Van Vorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 42-43). However, researchers have accepted

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the second perspective, believing that these books underwent editing by priests during multiple periods. The writing began around 1100 B.C. after the Israelites entered Palestine, with the Song of Moses and Miriam (Exodus 15) being composed, and perhaps by 400 B.C., as the priests of Jerusalem completed and edited it, it took its current form. The editing of some books, such as Isaiah (24-27) and Ezekiel (38), as well as Daniel, was completed around 160 B.C., and the collection of the writings essentially gathered around 100 B.C.; however, the status of some books, such as Esther and the Song of Songs, continued to be disputed even after that date (Van Vorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 42-43; Robert Wear, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 2, 607).

After completing the process of compilation and editing and finalizing the books of the Old Testament, discussions began about preparing a list of these numerous books, determining which of them were sacred and which were not—a process referred to as "Canonization." The Jewish council in Yavne (around 90 A.D.) accepted the existing official books; however, it took several years for this decree to be accepted (Mohammadian et al., 2001 AD/1380 SH: 5; Barclay, 1972: 40).

4.1.3. Apocrypha of the Old Testament

There are two existing versions of the Old Testament that have significant differences. The translation of the Torah into Greek began in the third century B.C. for the benefit of Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, and it was ultimately completed around 132 B.C. (Sarna, 1993: 2, 155). This translation was widely used among Jews scattered throughout the Mediterranean during the time of Jesus Christ and was also considered the Scripture of the early Church (Muriel C. Tani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 1, 30).

In this version, there are seven books for which the Hebrew texts are not available, and these books do not exist in the Hebrew version. These books are: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach, Baruch, 1 Maccabees, and 2 Maccabees.

In the two centuries before the emergence of Christianity and one century after, many Jews and Christians used this version until around 100 A.D. when Jewish leaders convened a council and voted on the official status of the 39 books, declaring the seven books present in the Septuagint (the Greek translation) as unauthorized; however, Christians continued to consider this version valid until Protestants returned to the Hebrew text in the 16th century and declared these seven books unofficial (cf. Soleimani Ardestani, 2000 AD/1379 SH (A): 91).

Protestants refer to the seven additional books in the Septuagint as "Apocrypha," meaning "Hidden and Concealed," while Catholics and Orthodox Christians refer to them as "Deuterocanonical," which implies a secondary level of authority (Charlesworth, 1993: 2, 174).

Besides the canonical and apocryphal books of the Old Testament, there is another collection of writings associated with the Old Testament known as the "Pseudepigrapha" or "*Maj'ūl al-'Unwan*." Since these books are not found in any of the existing ancient versions, both Jews and Christians do not consider them canonical. Some count them as 65, while others count 52 (Soleymani Ardestani, 2000 AD/1379 SH (A): 92; 114).

4.2. New Testament

The second part of the Bible is the New Testament, which is accepted only by Christians. This section includes various books and epistles.

The New Testament consists of 27 books and letters written by nine authors, and if we consider Paul the Apostle as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the number of New Testament authors will decrease to eight. These books were written over a period of just a little more than half a century, from around 45 to approximately 100 A.D. (Muriel C. Tani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 1, 136).

4.2.1. Writers of the New Testament

One point that must be mentioned regarding the New Testament is that Christians believe that Jesus Christ never brought a book and that it was not necessary for Him to have brought one; because the prophets, who are intermediaries between God and humanity, bring messages and books from God, while Jesus is God Himself and the embodiment of revelation (Miller, 1981: 66).

Therefore, His behavior and speech are sufficient for humanity, and the Gospels were written by others after His passing. It should be noted that the Christian belief differs from what exists in Islamic culture and texts regarding Jesus and His book. Christians do not consider the authors of the New Testament books to be prophets, but they believe that all of them acted with divine inspiration in everything they wrote (ibid: 51; 70).

The four Gospels have traditionally been attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; however, the original titles of the Gospels are unknown. The names of most Greek works are explicitly added to their authors; for example, they are referred to as "Homer's Iliad" or "Plato's Republic." In contrast, for the Gospels, the expression "According to the account of..." is used; for instance, "the Gospel according to Matthew." This seems to avoid attributing these books directly to their traditional authors (Robertson, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 19-20).

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Modern biblical scholars believe that aside from the seven or eight letters of Paul, there is doubt about the authorship of other sections, and there is no sufficient evidence to determine the authorship of each part (Soleymani Ardestani, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 75). Therefore, there is no established consensus regarding the transmission of the New Testament.

4.2.2. Establishment of the New Testament

One of the challenges faced by the early Church was the increasing number of Gospels, as some sects like Marcion only accepted the Gospel of Luke and ten letters of Paul. In the third and fourth centuries, there was still no consensus on the books of the New Testament, and some churches did not recognize the Epistle to the Hebrews, James, the second and third letters of John, the Epistle of Jude, the second Epistle of Peter, and the Revelation of John as part of the sacred books (Van Voorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 121).

The process of legitimizing and selecting the 27 books of the New Testament from among the numerous available texts and letters took place from the early second century until the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D. (Mohammadiyan et al., 2001 AD/1380 SH: 5; Van Voorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 120-121; Shnidooyand, 2005: 3). Thus, the process of canonizing the New Testament took approximately 300 years (Barclay, 1972: 45). This list was subsequently reaffirmed by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) (Lehmarch, 1990: 27).

4.2.3. The Authority of the Holy Scriptures

In the Thirteenth Article of Jewish Belief, it states: Every believing Jew must testify that the Torah in the hands of the Jews is the same Torah that was revealed to Moses, and it has never been altered and will never be altered (Robert Weir, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 2, 623-624; Altman, 1996: 3, 655). It must be examined whether this belief of the Jews is correct or not.

The credibility of a book hinges on whether it can be established through reliable methods that the book belongs to its author and that it is the same wording and text without any changes. The question of how much authority and validity the author's own words and writings possess is a separate issue.

Christians believe that neither the church nor any council has officially recognized any book as canonical or valid, but rather a book is either valid or it is not, and the church and council only act to recognize its validity and announce it. Their criteria for the authority of sacred scripture are as follows: 1) Regarding the Old Testament, the author must be a lawgiver, a prophet, or a leader of the Israelites, and regarding the New Testament, they must be one of the apostles or endorsed by one of the apostles mentioned in the book; 2) Internal evidence within the book

must indicate its divine inspiration; 3) The opinion and consensus of the churches (agreement) regarding its validity (Mohammadiyan et al., 2001 AD/1380 SH: 5).

Of course, all these criteria can be doubted, and historically, the authority of the book is as has been mentioned. From a historical and evidentiary perspective, the only heavenly book that has a clear history and its transmission is confirmed through numerous sources without denial is the Quran; however, the Torah and Gospel do not have a clear history and are not confirmed through widespread transmission, thus lacking in authority.

Despite numerous efforts to prove that the Holy Scriptures are the word of God, the prevailing theory is that even the Five Books of Moses are not the word of God, and the current Torah is not the Torah of Moses. The Holy Scriptures are nothing more than a collection of literary, historical, and narrative books that took shape in the first two centuries CE.

Spinoza was among the first individual who clearly demonstrates that the author of the Five Books is not Moses (Spinoza, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 89).

Jacob Qirqisani, a Jewish scholar, has written that Jewish Rabbis believe the current Torah was written by Ezra, and the original Torah has been lost:

Then they [the Rabbis] claimed that the Torah in the hands of the nation is not the Torah that was brought by Moses, but rather that it was authored by Ezra, because the one brought by Moses, they claimed, has disappeared and been lost. This is a complete destruction of the religion. If Muslims were to become aware of this claim, they would no longer need anything else for which to criticize and argue against us. Indeed, it is the case that some of their scholars claim that the Torah you possess is not the Torah of Moses (Qirqisani, 1939: 1, 15).

In this statement, it is mentioned that the belief that the Mosaic Torah has been lost represents a total eradication of the religion. If Muslims become aware of this acknowledgment, they wouldn't need anything further to critique us; this alone would suffice. They assert that your Torah is not Mosaic, and if they observe this acknowledgment, they will have evidence for their claims. However, it should be noted that, as mentioned, it cannot be proven that the current version is the same as that written by Ezra.

Phillips Shaleh believes that none of the original manuscript books of the Holy Scriptures currently exists in Hebrew, and the history of the oldest extant Hebrew manuscript does not go beyond the tenth century CE (Shaleh, 1967 AD/1346 SH: 270).

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When we examine the manuscripts, we can clearly see that there are significant discrepancies among the Hebrew, Greek, and Samaritan versions of the Torah (Sarna, 1993: 2, 154-155; Lonnestem & MacDonald, 1996: 13, 264-268).

The attribution of the books mentioned in the Holy Scriptures to the prophets whose names they bear is impossible (Balaghi, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 404-420; Raḥmatullah al-Hindi, n.d.: 56). The primary evidence is the decision of councils that have considered them as inspired. Furthermore, historically, their prophecy cannot be proven (Balaghi, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 108). Another point is that the Holy Scriptures are essentially translations, and various translations have introduced errors and distortions (ibid: 109-115). Therefore, we see that from both the perspective of attribution to the author and in terms of the author themselves, the Holy Scriptures lack credibility.

5. Historical Criticism of the Holy Scriptures in Modern Times

In the eighteenth century and the Age of Enlightenment, following the dominance of scientific-critical thought over human knowledge, this type of perspective also permeated religious teachings, and the Holy Scriptures were subject to criticism (Kiyupit, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 109).

The criticism of the Holy Scriptures took two forms: External and substantive. External criticism includes textual criticism, historical criticism, linguistic criticism, stylistic criticism, formal criticism, traditionology criticism, editorial criticism, and legal criticism. Substantive criticism includes the examination of the moral dimensions of the stories of prominent figures and prophets (the Holy Scriptures attribute characteristics to them that are not consistent with their exemplary status), the conflict of scientific statements in the Holy Scriptures with new discoveries in various fields such as history, archaeology, linguistics, and cosmology, as well as historical criticism and the miracles described in the Holy Scriptures (Soleymani Ardestani, 2000 AD/1379 SH (B): 102–106; Hordern, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 37–38; Mohammadiyan et al., 2001 AD/1380 SH: 46).

This criticism led to doubts regarding the credibility of the content and narratives of the Holy Scriptures; as Christians believed that the Gospels and the Old Testament were written by prophets and apostles, this religious belief was shaken (Hordern, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 38).

Considering the above mentioned, the overall process of the compilation and editing of the Holy Scriptures has become clear, and with the discussion on the credibility of the Holy Scriptures and their criticism, it has been revealed that historically, the Holy Scriptures lack

a verified document; however, intrinsically, they hold credibility and sanctity for Jews and Christians.

As established, both in the history of Judaism and Christianity and in the verses of the Quran, the Torah and the Gospel are considered writings that have evolved over time and have been altered, unlike the Quran which was formed during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and has not undergone any alterations in its content or wording after him. In some respects, the Torah and the Gospel resemble Islamic traditions in that there is the possibility of human alteration in terms of content, wording, and documentation. Therefore, just as it is necessary to conduct content analysis, wording analysis, and documentation analysis for utilizing Islamic traditions, all these aspects must be carried out for the Holy Scriptures to be deemed usable. It is a gross mistake for some to compare the Holy Scriptures with the Quran, which does not require textual verification, content criticism, or analysis of wording (Naqavi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 23).

Another point is that if we acknowledge that the Quran considers the Torah and the Gospel as the existing books, then the argument of *Muḥaddith Nūri* in proving the textual distortion of the Quran becomes invalid; as his basis of argument draws parallels between the Quran, the Torah, and the Gospel, and the likeness of the Islamic community to Bani Israel—this explanation invalidates his argument, as the Quran is guaranteed to be preserved and is a miracle, whereas the Torah and the Gospel are not and are similar to Islamic traditions (cf. Naqavi, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 7–25)

Comparison of the Holy Quran and the Two Testaments Regarding Revelation and Certain Other Characteristics:

Quran	Old Testament and New Testament
One book	66 or 73 books
Its language is Arabic	Its languages are Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
Its author is God	Its authors are God and humans
Its words are divine (revelation)	Its words are human (inspiration)
Revealed over 23 years	Compiled over several centuries
Does not have apocryphal books	Has apocryphal books
The Quran is a challenge and a miracle	The Testaments are not a challenge and are not miracles

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This comparison is adapted from a table on page 31 of the book "Christian Discourse," with additions included here (Michel, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 31; Naqavi, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 23).

6. Common Features of the Quran and the Testaments and Exclusive Features of the Holy Quran

In the verses of the Quran, the Torah, and the Gospel, they are described with characteristics such as being the judgment of God (al-Ma'idah/43; 45; 47) and having guidance, mercy, and light (al-Ma'idah/44; 46; al-An'am/91; 154; al-A'raf/ 154; al-Isra'/2; al-Anbiya'/48). The Torah is also characterized by qualities such as being a source of insight (al-Qasaṣ/43; al-A'raf/203), being complete and without flaws, and providing detailed accounts of everything (al-An'am/154; al-A'raf/145), being a source of admonition and guidance (al-A'raf/145; Ghafir/53-54), and being a criterion and reminder (al-Anbiya'/48).

Allamah Ṭabaṭaba'i states that from verse 43 of Surah al-Ma'idah, it can be inferred that the Torah which is currently in the hands of the Jews contains part of the true Torah that was revealed to Moses, and part of it has been distorted and changed. He interprets "Guidance" in the context of the Torah (al-Ma'idah/44) and the Gospel (al-Ma'idah/46) to refer to doctrinal beliefs such as monotheism and resurrection, and interprets "Light" in these two verses as the inclusion of laws and regulations in the Torah and the Gospel. He mentions that God has provided guidance, knowledge, and laws to the extent of Bani Israel's understanding and capacity, which is also evident from verse 145 of Surah al-A'raf (Ṭabaṭaba'i, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 5, 342-346). It is essential to note that it is possible for a book to have been revealed by God and still have had human intervention, yet may still retain some characteristics related to guidance. Therefore, as Allamah has indicated, the existing Torah and Gospels also possess these characteristics. The Holy Quran, in addition to these features, has unique characteristics that will be referenced next.

6.1. Clarifying and Explaining

The term "Tibyan" (al-Nahl/89) and "Mubin" in the verses of the Quran is used exclusively for the Quran. Therefore, the book of Moses is not a "Tibyan" for everything. A closer examination of the description "Mustabin" (Ṣffat/117), which is attributed to the book of Prophet Moses in the Quran, clarifies this point further. Commentators and linguists believe that "Mustabin" and "Mubin" are synonymous; however, it seems there should be a distinction between the two. What raises doubt is that the Quran is described with the adjective "Mubin," while the book of Moses is never described with this term and only in this verse is the characteristic of "Mustabin" mentioned.

"Mustabin" is from the root of "Istif'al," and one of its meanings is the inclusion of the action in the source of derivation. Here, it signifies that while the Torah is introduced as enlightening, it was also such that all necessary matters for the Jews of that time left no room for doubt and detailed all the religious knowledge they needed at that time; whereas the Quran is "Mubin," meaning it is both clear and clarifying. Considering the different usage of this term in the Quran, this meaning becomes fully clear: "And thus We detail the verses, and so that the path of the criminals may become distinct." (al-An'am, 55) No commentator has translated the term "Tastabin" in this verse as to clarify but all have translated it as so that the path of the criminals may become clear. In the book "Investigating the Words of the Glorious Quran," it is stated that the word "Mubin" means that it is self-evident and also declares this clarity, and in some cases, it also enlightens others. However, the term "Mustabin" means the acceptance of clarity. One of the meanings of the "Istif'al" form is the request for the origin of the action; meaning it seeks clarity and becomes clear. In this sense, the book of Moses is a book that is clear, but it does not imply that it enlightens others.

6.2. Wisdom (Being Wise)

Another characteristic that is unique to the Quran is the attribute of being "Hakim." (Yunus/1; Luqman/2; Yasin/2) The description of being "Hakim" refers to precision and the absence of contradictions, confusion, and doubt (Muṣṭafawi, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 2, 265). Therefore, the Quran possesses precision, unlike other divine books that have been revealed, which do not possess this level of precision.

6.3. Blessedness

Another characteristic mentioned exclusively for the Quran is "Blessed" (Mubarak). (al-An'am/92 and 155; al-Anbiya'/50; Sad/29). This attribute, like "Tibyan" and "Mubin," conveys that the Quran, in addition to having sublime qualities itself, also influences other books. Everything that is blessed is this way. A blessed book is such that its blessing allows other texts to benefit from it and correct their ambiguous and erroneous content.

6.4. Guardianship (Muhaymin)

Another characteristic unique to the Quran is the attribute of "Muhaymin" (al-Ma'idah/48), which, like "Tibyan," "Mubin," and "Mubarak," indicates that the Quran has authority and superiority over prior scriptures, including the book of Moses, and that the earlier books must present themselves to the Quran and rectify their deficiencies (Ṭabaṭaba'i, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 5, 348).

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Conclusion

1. The Quran, on one hand, partially confirms the current Torah and Gospel, introducing the two Testaments as possessing qualities such as divine judgment, guidance, mercy, and light. It also considers the Torah to have characteristics such as being insightful, complete and flawless, detailing everything, providing advice and admonition, distinguishing truth from falsehood, and being a reminder.
2. On the other hand, the Quran sees the current Torah and Gospel as having deficiencies. Concealment and distortion of certain passages have been attributed to them, meaning that the verses of the Quran indicate that the two Testaments contain omissions and additions.
3. This assertion of the Quran aligns with the historical context of the Testaments, reflecting that the Quran speaks in accordance with reality. This means that the Jews and Christians themselves acknowledge that while the Testaments are divine, they have been humanized and contain deficiencies.
4. The Quran possesses unique attributes such as being a statement and explanation, being blessed, being wise, and being guardian, placing it above any other book and making all texts dependent on it. Additionally, the Quran encompasses a challenge, meaning it is a miracle, and no other book can be on the same level. Therefore, all texts need to present their content to the Quran for correction and completion.
5. This interaction of the Quran with the two Testaments is similar to its interaction with Islamic traditions. Both the Testaments and Islamic traditions are confirmed by the Quran, but both also contain omissions and fabrications, and to correct and complete their content, they must be presented to the Quran.

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