

Quran Appreciation - Winter Term (Jan-Mar 2018)

The Story of Nabi Isa (a)

The Holy Books

Verse for the session

وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ

And when I taught you the Book and the wisdom and the Taurat and the Injeel
(Sura Maidah, verse 110)

Reflections

- What is the Book? Were the Taurat and the Injeel revealed as books?
- What is the difference between the Book and Wisdom?

Cross reference verses

The Holy Prophet sent to teach the Book and Wisdom - 62:2

Wisdom as great good - 2:269

Tafsir

The verse continues to remind of the blessings of Allah on Nabi Isa (a). Allah taught him the Book and Wisdom, and the Taurat and Injeel. The names of two specific books are an extension of the word 'Book'. If someone were to ask what book, the answer would be Taurat and Injeel. Those were the books of laws (Shariah) that Nabi Isa was taught. The verse shows that all of this was taught at one time to him.

Wisdom is understood to be the correct implementation of knowledge. It has been interpreted in this verse as the Shariah of laws that was taught by Nabi isa and carried out in his life and the lives of believers. The word wisdom comes up repeatedly in the Quran (check cross reference verses) .

The Taurat is the Arabic word for the Torah given to Nabi Musa. Nabi Isa received that knowledge and had the duty of amending the book and adding or changing it according to what was in the Injeel. He did not abrogate it completely but amended it and made it easier to follow.

He told the people; ‘Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them.’

The Taurat is usually referred to as the “Law” in the Quran. Specifically, the Law brought by Nabi Musa. Many people think the Taurat is the Old Testament of the Christian faith. This is not completely accurate because the Torah consists of more than just the law revealed to Nabi Musa. No one really knows the full history of the Torah, and there are several different versions of it. For instance, the Catholic Old Testament is different from the Protestant Old Testament. And scholars have concluded the Torah was not written by one person, and certainly not by Nabi Musa.

The Taurat that Muslims accept as the true commands of Allah is that which was directly revealed to Nabi Musa. While that message is still alive today in the message of the Quran, the actual text has been lost.

The Injeel was revealed to Nabi Isa in the month of Ramadan. Like the other books before it, it was given to Nabi Isa intact as a complete book. The Injeel contained a lot of advice and warnings, as well as parables.

Injeel means evangelion, or Gospel. Like the Taurat, many people think the Injeel is the New Testament of the Bible. But the New Testament consists of written work attributed to some of Jesus’ disciples. And a good portion of the New Testament was written by Paul, who was not a disciple at all. It is believed unlikely that Jesus’ actual disciples wrote any part of the New Testament. Even if they had written it they were not the Prophets of Allah. While there may be some truth in the writings popularly known as the Gospels of Mark, Luke, John, and Matt, Muslims believe that the actual text of the Injeel is no longer available. But the message of Injeel is preserved in the message of the Quran.

Nabi Isa told his people; ‘I have brought you wisdom and I have come to clarify for you some of the things about which you differ. So be God conscious and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord so worship Him. This is the straight path. I have come to confirm the Tawrat which came before me and to make lawful some of the things you were forbidden.’

Muslims believe in the Taurat and Injeel as holy books revealed to past Prophets. The Quran is the final holy revelation and abrogates all the previous books.

Important Lessons

- 1) Allah has always sent guidance for people to lead lives that are truly successful and perfect.
- 2) Muslims believe in and respect the past Prophets and holy books. The Holy Prophet and the Quran are the final message for humanity that completes and perfects the previous messages.
- 3) Knowledge and wisdom are important tools for a believer.

Ideas

- 1) Discuss the similarities between messages of Nabi Musa and Nabi Isa and that of the Holy Prophet (all came to guide towards worship of One God, belief in Prophets and in the Day of Judgment, and laws to lead a virtuous life). Children could draw or make the books with similar messages.

- 2) Talk about knowledge and wisdom. How are these two the same? How are they different?

Check:

<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/what-are-the-differences-between-knowledge-wisdom-and-insight.html>

Sources:

Tafsir Namune, Ayt. Nasir Makarim Shirazi

Shaykh Rizwan Arastu, God's Emissaries