

The Qur'an has abrogated the Bible - *really?*

Many Muslims acknowledge that the Torah, the Psalms, the Injil (Gospel) and the books of the prophets were given by God. However, there are some friends who claim that these books which are found in the Bible are now *mansukh* - abrogated or cancelled. They claim that the Qur'an has replaced them all.

Is it so?

Our study is that such a claim does not carry any weight. In this case we have to look no further than the Qur'an and to those who were among the first followers of Islam. We find that the verb "*nasakha*" (to annul) in the Qur'an refers to certain verse of the Qur'an but not the Bible. Let us see the evidence.

The background of the doctrine of abrogation in Islam

Many early Islamic commentators and schools of thought, are of the opinion that several verses in the present Qur'an have been abrogated (*mansukh*). This doctrine is known as *Al-Naskh Wa Al-Mansukh* - the abrogation and the abrogated. The simple version of this doctrine is that earlier verses of the Qur'an have been superseded by verses revealed later and found in the received text of the Qur'an. To uphold this doctrine, verses such as the following are presented:

"None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: Knowest thou not that God hath power over all things?" (Sura 2:106).

Other arguments suggest that certain verse of the Qur'an have been abrogated but no replacement verses were revealed or recorded. The extent of this is the subject of much controversy, varying from five verses to several hundred!

When Muhammad was accused by his opponents of giving contradictory statements in the Qur'an, as a result, he is said to have received a revelation that Allah replaced some of the text of the Qur'an with a later text: "When we substitute one revelation for another,

The Islamic faith requires that a Muslim should believe in the books of the earlier prophets and this principle makes the whole idea of abrogation wholly contradictory to the teaching of the Qur'an, which asks Muslims to declare, "We make no difference between one and another of them" (Sura 2:136).

- and Allah knows best what He reveals (in stages), - they say, Thou art but a forger. But most of them know not." (Sura 16:101).

Even looking at this verse we see that it does not state that Allah replaced one '*Kitab*' (book) with another but rather that he substituted one *aya* for another. The word '*aya*' principally means '*sign*'. However in the context of Muhammad's revelation, this refers only to the verses of the Qur'an and not the book of the Christians or the Jews or their verses.

The Testimony of the Qur'an

The Qur'an is a Muslim's first hand authority and we find that it does not

suggest that previous scriptures were ever abrogated. Instead of abrogation, we see that it claims to be *musadiqallima bayna yadayhi* - confirming what went before it (Sura 3:3), namely the Torah and Injil. In another place, Jews are instructed to judge by what is written in the Torah rather than come to Muhammad for judgment (Sura 5:43). If the Qur'an had invalidated the earlier books it would not have objected to the Jews bringing their cases for decision to Muhammad. Further, if the Qur'an had abrogated the Torah and the Injil, it would not have been proper for it to prescribe in these words:

"Let the people of the Gospel judge by what Allah hath revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by what Allah hath revealed, they are those who rebel." (Sura 5:47).

"O People of the book! Ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Torah, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord." (Sura 5: 68).

Do we need the Torah and the Gospel?

Usually Muslim friends say that after all they do not need the earlier Scriptures because the Qur'an contains the earlier Scriptures and thus we do not need them. However, nowhere does the Qur'an say that it contains the Torah and the Gospel. In fact, the Qur'an claims the contrary. It claims to be in the revealed books of the former people (Sura 26:196). Further, it claims to

have come lest the Arabs make excuses that they cannot understand the languages in which the earlier books, the Torah and the Gospel, were revealed (Sura 6: 157,158).

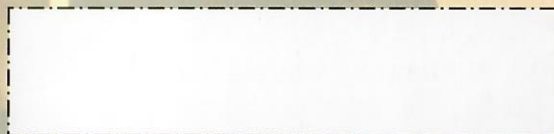
Moreover, when Muhammad sought to establish the authority of the Qur'an, he placed it alongside the Torah and the Gospel, ". . . bring ye a Book from Allah, which is a better Guide than either of them, that I may follow it! . . ." (Sura 28: 49).

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I urge you my Muslim friend, read the Bible and you will find guidance and light. You will find that assurance of the great paradise of God is available only in this book. God has provided that through Jesus. He calls upon you, 'Believe in me and you will have eternal life.'

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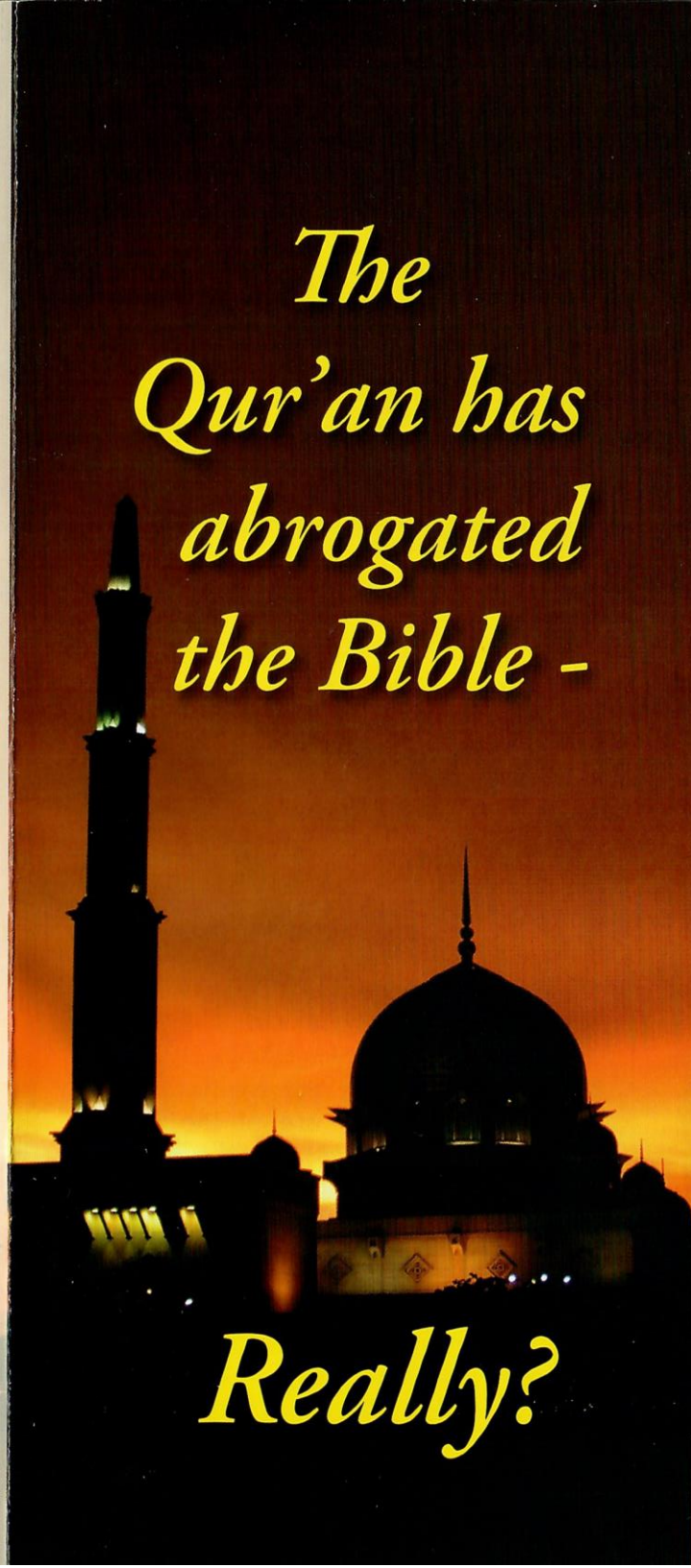
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