

Who Are People of the Book in Holy Qur'an?

- 1) Some people face difficulty in coming to grips that Sabians (also spelt as *Sabeans*) are included in the Holy Qur'an injunction as "People of the Book" in addition to Jews and Christians.
- 2) This article has been expressly written to clarify this much misunderstood point.
- 3) In a nutshell, Sabians are really a monotheistic religion, part of the remnants of the Lost Tribes of Israel, after their exodus out of Egypt in search of their Promised Land. The holy scripture of Sabians is the *Zabur*¹.
- 4) To understand why Sabians are regarded as People of the Book, their entire history needs to be read in detail, followed up and understood. Later there will be incumbent need to equate their references to the Holy Qur'an and their followership of the *Zabur*.
- 5) After the exodus of 3.5 million Israelites out of Egypt² under the able leadership of Prophet Moses (*as*), the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for decades: (almost 40 years).
- 6) Their routing out of Cairo included upstream of River Nile, across Ethiopia, Sinai Peninsula, crossing the Gulf of Aqaba north of Red Sea, and then travelling north towards Babylonia and Mesopotamia. Several years later, Prophet Moses (*as*) had died and the Israelites were under the new leadership of Joshua³.
- 7) This is the point when they became known as the Lost Tribes of Israel.
- 8) When they reached Babylonia, they were attacked and looted several times by the Babylonians. Many were killed. Many others were taken as slaves. Some others fled over to Mesopotamia. Few others fled as far as

¹ The *Zabur* is Divine scripture, revealed to King David/Prophet David and nowadays often referred to as Psalms in the Bible.

² This figure of 3.5 million Israelites is an extrapolated figure by religious historians, based on the Hebrew Rabbinical records that the Exodus comprised 600,000 adult men above the age of 20, fit to be soldiers. They have also taken into consideration adding women, children, babies and very old people, not fit to be soldiers.

³ Bible: Deuteronomy 34, which mentions Moses preparing Joshua son of Nunn, as his successor. Nunn was the Commanding Officer of the defence forces of the Israelites' tribe of Levi, same tribe as Prophet Moses. Each of the twelve tribes had a defence force for protection of the tribes against foreigners during their exodus through unknown territories, looking for the Promised Land.

to Tibet, whilst some others fled to Kashmir, Sind and Cochin (in India)⁴. Evidence of their existence in those remote places still exist to this day⁵.

9) Those who took refuge into Mesopotamia settled in the Fertile Crescent, the regions between River Euphrates and River Tigris, their assuming that part of the world to be the fertile Promised Land.

10) Subsequently the new Babylonian King, as Emperor Nebuchadnezzar II (b.605BC-d.562BC), ruled, conquered and stormed them out of Mesopotamia, after conquering Mesopotamia several times. Some of these surviving remnants of Israelites fled and settled into the higher mountain regions of the Zagros ranges, and some actually crossed over further and settled into regions in central Europe, mainly around Poland, Austria, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Germany in the main. Some other tribes settled in the regions surrounding the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea. Thousands of Jews exist in those regions to this day.

11) Two of those Twelve Tribes, as tribes of Juda and Levi, went over and settled into the land of Phoenicians⁶. Whilst some moved over to what is today called Israel, and some others settled in the region of what is today Jordan. Most Jews in these regions (of modern times) were invited over and re-settled there after WWII.

12) Those who settled in northern parts of River Jordan became true believers in One God and the Last Day; and they were followers of the *Zabur* (the Psalms of David). These people were the Sabians. The Sabians were baptized by Prophet John the Baptist⁷(*as*). Sabians speak the Aramaic version of the Hebrew language, the same language which Jesus Christ and his apostles spoke.

13) Those others who settled further south of River Jordan were Mandaeans. These Mandaeans were dualistic as Gnostics and practiced

⁴ "Jesus in Heaven on Earth" written by *Al-Hajj* Khawaja Nasir Ahmad (Lahore, Pakistan, published in 1952).

⁵ These were inscribed stone tablets in ancient Hebrew, found in high mountain regions of Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and India. These tablets were kept in small libraries of monasteries.

⁶ Phoenicians were communities which had settled in eastern Mediterranean, which now are known as Syria, Lebanon and Northern Israel.

⁷ John the Baptist (*as*) was a prophet amongst the Jews and he baptized people by emersion in upper River Jordan. He upheld the *Zabur* as the valid holy scripture of the time. The *Zabur* is a Divine revealed scripture and it was sung melodiously at the time. Sabians held the fundamental principle of belief in One God only and the Last Day.

Gnosticism. The scripture used by Mandaeans is called *Ginza Rba* and their prophets' names are all those who were pre-Abrahamic.

- 14) An important point to note is that neither the Sabians nor the Mandaeans are Muslims or considered as subsets of Islam.
- 15) Both the Sabians and the Mandaeans were already existing communities, for hundreds of years before the birth of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*). They also existed as practising ethnicities several hundreds of years before Christianity.
- 16) Around 250,000 Sabians and around the same number of Mandaeans existed in the very high mountain regions bordering north of Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, stretching westwards towards Jordan, Syria, Turkey and the Zagros Ranges prior to year 2003.
- 17) Majority of the Sabians and Mandaeans got killed with the Americans' merciless and relentless bombing of these mountain regions during their one-sided Gulf War of 2003-2011. The balance of Sabians and Mandaeans have fled those regions to other countries as war refugees.
- 18) Sabians are regarded as People of the Book, as followers of the *Zabur* (HQ2:62, HQ5:69 and HQ22:17).
- 19) Mandaeans are not regarded as People of the Book, because of their belief and practices of Gnosticism and they have 9-principles of faith.
- 20) That difference between Sabians and Mandaeans is not widely understood by many.
- 21) Arab sources of early Qur'anic times (about 7th century) make some references to Sabians. They are counted among the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book), and several Hadith⁸ also feature their existence.
- 22) The Holy Qur'an gives assurances of accepting the Sabians as People of the Book, because they follow the *Zabur*, Believe in One God and also believe in the Last Day. This is stated in Holy Qur'an at HQ2:62 "*Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.*"
- 23) The same assurance is also given in Holy Qur'an at HQ5:69 "*Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabians and the Christians — whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good —*

⁸ Sabians have been mentioned in several Hadith. Examples are in Sahih Bukhari: Book No 7 Hadith No 340; Book No 59 Hadith No 628; Book No 89 Hadith No 299, who subsequently converted to Islam, as mentions.

they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.” However, the verse in Holy Qur’an at HQ22:17, mentions the Magians, who were followers of dualistic creeds and they are warned of their final stand on the Last Day as *“Those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabians and the Christians and the Magians and those who set up partners (with Allah) — surely Allah will decide between them on the day of Resurrection. Surely Allah is Witness over all things.”* The stress here is upon the Magians as direct warning and not the Sabians.

- 24)** Magians are warned because of their dualistic creed, are also associates of Zoroastrianism and will be alienated from the People of the Book on the Last Day, as concise injunction in the Holy Qur’an. It is also necessary to understand wholly, who are the People of the Book and what are their Books?
- 25)** Recognition of previously named prophets in the *TaNaKh*, *Injeel*, *Zabur* and the Qur’an are imposed upon Muslims by the Holy Qur’an.
- 26)** The *TaNaKh* is an acronym for original Jewish combined scriptures of *Torah*, *Nevi’im* and *Ketuvim*. They are about Jewish Law, Prophets and Jewish Writings in that respective order, and they also form the canonical collection of Jewish texts. These Jewish scriptures also form the basic texts of the Christian Old Testament in structure format, but are written in ancient Hebrew texts. On the contrary, it may be stated that the English and other mainstream language versions of the Old Testament are really modified translations from the basic Hebrew texts. In addition, there are slight variations in numbering order of verses.
- 27)** The acronym *TaNaKh* is deciphered as follows: *Ta= Torah*: These are first five books of Prophet Moses (*as*), (also referred to as the Pentateuch) comprising English language names of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In the Torah however, they are with unique Jewish language names.
- 28)** *Na= Nevi’im*. The *Nevi’im* is the second main division between the *Torah* and the *Ketuvim* and the *Nevi’im* deals with all listed prophets within Judaism. The *Nevi’im* is divided into 24 books and is mainly poetical (e.g. Psalms and Proverbs). They are however, not one-on-one direct match with the Bible order of books.
- 29)** *Kh= Ketuvim*. The *Ketuvim* is divided into main 4 sections. It is also reflective of the Bible but also not one-on-one direct match with the Bible order of books.

- 30)** *Injeel* (or spelt *Injil*) is the Arabic word for all Divine revelations to Jesus Christ (*as*). The *Injeel* was revealed to Jesus Christ (*as*) in a manner, not too different to what was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*).
- 31)** The Holy Qur'an makes 12 mentions of the *Injeel* within its texts of different Chapters.
- 32)** On the contrary, the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are not Divine revealed deliveries by Archangel Gabriel: but they are the handiwork of those four apostles and do not form part of the *Injeel*.
- 33)** The *Zabur* refers to the scripture revealed to King David, who was also Prophet David (*as*). There is incorporation of the *Zabur* into the Bible under the caption of the Psalms. However, the Holy Qur'an makes only 3 mentions of the *Zabur* (HQ4:163, HQ17:55, HQ21:105).
- 34)** Of course the Holy Qur'an is the Book authored by Almighty God and was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) over a period of 23 years, as the last and final of all revealed Holy Scriptures.
- 35)** Islam and Prophet Muhammad remain sealed as the last and final revealed religion and last and Final Prophet respectively, forever into the future. After the death of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) in 632AD, there will not be any new prophet or any second visitation by any of the past 124,000 prophets. There is dire need to refer to HQ33:40 "*Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets. And Allah is ever Knower of all things.*"

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