302121 - How Many Holy Books in Islam?

the question

I have received a number of messages on WhatsApp authenticated with a video by a shaykh whose name I do not know, and the sender does not mention his name. They say that the number of divinely revealed books was one hundred and four; Allah sent fifty pages to Sheeth (Seth); Allah sent thirty pages to Idris; Allah sent ten pages to Ibrahim; Allah sent ten pages to Moosa before the Torah; and Allah sent down the Torah (Tawrat), the Gospel (Injeel), the Psalms (Zabur) and the Furqan (Quran). He quoted as evidence the Hadith of Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari; is the Hadith of Abu Dharr inauthentic or is it an authentic Hadith?

Summary of answer

-Muslims must believe in all the books that were sent down from Allah. So we believe in general terms in the books of which we do not know the details, without specifying their number.

-We believe in the books that we know, according to what we know of their details from the texts of Revelation.

-As for the Hadith which mentions 104 books, it does not have any reliable chain of narration.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Belief in All Divine Books Is Obligatory

What is required of the Muslim is to believe in all the books that were sent down from Allah, may He be Exalted.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{I believe in whatsoever Allah has sent down of the Book [all the holy Books, - this Quran and the Books of the old from the Tawrah (Torah), or the Injil (Gospel) or the Pages of Ibrahim (Abraham).] [Ash-Shura 42:15]

The Unknown Number of Divine Books Revealed

They are books of which the number is not known, because Allah, may He be Exalted, sent down books to the Messengers and Prophets, many of whom we do not know.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed.}" [Al-Baqarah 2:213]

{We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidence and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice.} [Al-Hadid 57:25]

{Say, [O believers], We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.} [Al-Baqarah 2:136]

{Say, We have believed in Allah and in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isac, 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

Muslims [submitting] to Him.} [Al `Imran 3:84].

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Allah, may He be Exalted, taught His believing slaves to believe in what He sent down to them through His Messenger Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in detail, and in what He sent down to the previous Prophets in general terms. He mentioned some of the Messengers by name, and He mentioned the rest of the Prophets in general terms, and He instructed the Muslims not to differentiate between any of them; rather they are to believe in all of them. (End quote from Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 1/448)

Hence it is obligatory to believe in general terms in the books of which we do not know the details , without giving them a specific number, for Allah knows best about that. And we believe in the books that we know in accordance with what we know of details about them from the texts of Revelation.

Belief in the Scriptures Mentioned in the Quran

Muhammad ibn Nasr Al-Mirwazi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to the words “and His books”, it means that you should believe in the books that Allah has mentioned by name in His Book, such as the Torah (Tawrah), the Gospel (Injil) and the Psalms (Zabur) in particular , and you should believe that Allah has books other than these that He sent down to His Prophets, of which the names and number are not known except to the One Who sent them down. And you should believe in the Furqan (i.e., the Quran), and your belief in it should be different from your belief in the other books.

Your belief in the other books means affirming them in your heart and on your lips, and your belief in the Furqan (Quran) means that you affirm it and follow what it says. (End quote from Ta`dhim Qasr As-Salah, 1/393)

Hadith Narrations on the Number of Divine Books

Ibn Hibban narrated the HadithHadith of Ibrahim ibn Hisham ibn Yahya ibn Yahya Al-Ghassani, who said: My father told us, from my grandfather, from Abu Idris Al-Khawlani, from Abu Dharr, who said:

I entered the mosque and saw the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sitting on his own…

I said: O Messenger of Allah, how many books did Allah send down?

He said: One hundred and four books; fifty pages were sent down to Sheeth (Seth), thirty pages were sent down to Akhnukh (Enoch), ten pages were sent down to Ibrahim, ten pages were sent down to Moosa before the Torah, and the Torah (Tawrat), Gospel (Injil), Psalms (Zabur) and Furqan (Quran) were sent down… (Narrated by Ibn Hibban in his Sahih (Al-Ihsan fi Taqrib Sahih Ibn Hibban, 2/76-77)

Its chain of narration includes Ibrahim ibn Hisham, of whom Adh-Dhahabi said:

He is the narrator of the lengthy Hadith of Abu Dharr, of which he was the only narrator from his father, from his grandfather.

At-Tabarani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: No one narrated this from Yahya except his son, and they are trustworthy.

Ibn Hibban (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned him in Ath-Thiqat, and narrated his HadithHadith in Al-Anwa‘.

As for Ibn Abu Hatim (may Allah have mercy on him), he said: I said to my father: Why do you not narrate from Ibrahim ibn Hisham Al-Ghassani? He said: I went to his town, and he brought out to me a book that he claimed he had heard from Sa`id ibn `Abd Al-`Aziz. I looked at it, and saw that it contained the Hadiths of Damurah from Ibn Shawdhab and others. I looked at a Hadith and like it; it was a Hadith of Layth ibn Sa`d from `Aqil, so I said to him: Read this to me.

He said: Sa`id ibn `Abd Al-`Aziz told us, from Layth ibn Sa`d, from `Iqil (he misread the name).

And I saw in his book Hadiths from Suwayd ibn `Abd Al-`Aziz, from Mughirah. I said: These are the Hadiths of Suwayd! He said: Sa`id ibn `Abd Al-`Aziz told us, from Suwayd.

Abu Hatim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I think that he never sought knowledge, and that he was a liar.

`Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Abu Hatim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I mentioned some of this to `Ali ibn Al-Husayn ibn Al-Junayd, and he said: Abu Hatim is right; no one should narrate from him.

Ibn Al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Abu Zar`ah said: (He is) a liar. (End quote from Mizan Al-I`tidal, 1/72-73)

Undoubtedly Abu Hatim is one of the elite scholars who were well-versed in knowledge of narrators' biographies and the methods of determining their soundness or otherwise (Al-Jarh wat-Ta`dil). He examined the man and realized that he was not trustworthy in narrating Hadith.

For this reason, a number of well-versed scholars stated that this HadithHadith is inauthentic. In fact, they thought that this particular Hadith was one of the reasons for classing this narrator as weak.

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Undoubtedly more than one of the leading scholars of Al-Jarh wat-Ta`dil (evaluation of narrators and their chains of narration) spoke out against him because of this Hadith. (End quote from Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 2/470)

At-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated in At-Tarikh (1/152-153) from the Hadith of Al-Madi ibn Muhammad, from Abu Sulayman – a number of scholars thought it most likely that this narrator was `Ali ibn Sulayman – from Al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, from Abu Idris Al-Khawlani, from Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, who said:

I said: O Messenger of Allah, how many books did Allah, may He be glorified and Exalted, send

down?

He said: One hundred and four books; Allah sent down fifty pages to Sheeth (Seth)…

Al-Madi ibn Muhammad was classed as weak by the scholars.

Ibn `Adi said: His HadithHadith is odd. (End quote from Al-Kamil, 8/183)

`Ali ibn Sulayman is unknown, as was stated by Al-Hafidh ibn Hajar in Taqrib At-Tahdhib, (p. 401).

Regarding Al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Qasim ibn Muhammad was a shaykh of aAli ibn Sulayman, and is unknown. (End quote from Taqrib At-Tahdhib, p. 452)

It was also narrated by Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak (2/597) and Yahya ibn Al-Husayn Al-Shajari in Al-Amali (915), and others:

From the Hadith of Yahya ibn Sa`id As-Sa`di Al-Basri: `Abd Al-Malik ibn Jurayj told us, from `Ata', from `Ubayd ibn `Umayr Al-Laythi, from Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him).

Al-Hakim (may Allah have mercy on him) did not say anything about him; Adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) commented on him by saying: [Yahya ibn Sa`id] As-Sa`di is not trustworthy.

Ibn Hibban (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Yahya ibn Sa`id Ash-Shahid is a shaykh who narrated back-to-front reports from Ibn Jurayj and patched-together reports from others; it is not permissible to quote his reports as evidence if the report was narrated through him only.

He narrated from Ibn Jurayj, from `Ata', from `Ubayd ibn `Umayr, from Abu Dharr who said: I entered the mosque and saw the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sitting there. He said to me: "O Abu Dharr, there is a greeting for the mosque, so get up and pray [two Rak`ahs to greet the mosque]. Then he quoted the lengthy Hadith which mentions the

Prophet’s advice to Abu Dharr.

But neither Ibn Jurayj, `Ata’ nor `Ubayd ibn `Umayr have anything to do with HadithHadith; the closest Hadith to it is that narrated by Abu Idris Al-Khawlani. (End quote from Al-Majruhin, 3/129-130)

Ibn `Adi said:

This is an odd Hadith with this chain of narration, from Ibn Jurayj, from `Ata’, from `Ubayd ibn `Umayr, from Abu Dharr.

This Hadith has no other chains of narration, except from Abu Idris Al-Khalwani and Al-Qasim ibn Muhammad from Abu Dharr.

The third is the Hadith of Ibn Jurayj, which is the oddest of the reports. Yahya ibn Sa`id is known to have narrated this Hadith. (End quote from Al-Kamil, 9/107)

In conclusion, this Hadith has no sound, reliable chain of narration.

Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It was narrated from Abu Dharr via several chains of narration, all of which are not free of problems. (End quote from Fat-h Al-Bari, 3/274)

And Allah knows best.