

Core Curriculum

5 The Qur'an and Hadith

5.1 Islam and Other Religions

The Qur'an makes a distinction between two groups, the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitāb) and polytheists and idol worshipers (mushrikīn). The mushrikīn are those who believe in, and worship gods other than Allah. The Ahl al-Kitāb refers to Jews, Christians and Sabians which are all, or for the most part, Abrahamic religions.

This means that the religions of the Ahl al-Kitab can trace themselves back to the universal monotheistic message of the Prophet Abraham (as). There are a few fundamental differences between these two groups and how Islam views them.

In terms of the mushrikīn, Islam believes that such beliefs are deviant and contradict the truth and reality. In fact, Islam goes as far as believing that worshiping idols is in essence a Satanic activity. As such, there is no truth behind idol worship but it is instead a deviation of God's plan for humanity.

The Ahl al-Kitāb, or People of the Book, trace their origins traced back to a divinely revealed religion and a divinely inspired Prophet. Islam, for example, believes in Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them both), their teachings as well as the Divine Books that were given to them by God.

One cannot be a Muslim without belief in the divine nature of these religions. For this reason, Islam will allow Muslims to marry non-Muslims under specific conditions and contexts whereas under no circumstances does Islam allow Muslims to marry idols worshipers.

