

The Quran in the Courts

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For most of U.S. history, the Bible has been the centerpiece of the American way of life. It literally permeated national life—from its integral role in public school education to its influential place in American jurisprudence. Only within the last fifty years has the Bible's prominence receded from public life. Still, some visible vestiges remain. For example, while many have abandoned the time-honored practice, some courts still use the Bible in the procedure for swearing in witnesses. However, like many other features of America's Christian heritage, this practice is also being challenged.

Muslims in Guilford County, North Carolina have attempted to donate copies of the Quran for courtroom use. However, Chief District Court Judge Joseph Turner says taking an oath on the Quran is not permissible by North Carolina state law, which specifies that witnesses shall place their hands on the "holy scriptures"—an unmistakable historical allusion to the Bible. Judge Turner commented: "We've been doing it that way for 200 years. Until the legislature changes that law, I believe I have to do what I've been told to do in the statutes" ("Debate Brews..." 2005). However, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) are challenging the Guilford County Courts. CAIR spokesman Arsalan Iftikhar insisted: "This was the first time that we had a judge ...going on record and stating unilaterally what is a holy scripture and what is not—what we believe to be a violation of the establishment clause" ("Debate Brews...").

Indeed! Really! Never mind the fact that the Founders of this nation—the architects of the *Constitution*, which Mr. Iftikhar so easily invokes, as well as the system of jurisprudence they set in place—indicated clearly their definition of what constitutes "holy scripture." That definition does not square with the opinions of either CAIR or the ACLU. For example, James McHenry, a signer of the *Constitution*, stated emphatically: "[T]he **Holy Scriptures** ...can alone secure to society, order and peace, and to our courts of justice and constitutions of government, purity, stability, and usefulness. In vain, without **the Bible**, we increase penal laws and draw entrenchments around our institutions" (as quoted in Steiner, 1921, p. 14, emp. added). Like his contemporaries, McHenry defined "scripture" as the Bible. So did Benjamin Franklin who, at the age of 81, standing before the delegates to the Constitutional Convention on June 28, 1787, asserted: "We have been assured, Sir, in **the Sacred Writings** that 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in

this political building no better than the builders of Babel" (as quoted in Madison, 1840, 2: 985, emp. added). To what "sacred writings" did Franklin allude? The Quran? Absolutely not! His quotation of Psalm 127:1 and allusion to Babel in Genesis 11 make it undeniably clear that he "unilaterally" meant the Bible. Robert Winthrop, who was Speaker of the House in the 1840s, explained: "Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them or by a power without them; either by **the Word of God** or by the strong arm of man; either by **the Bible** or by the bayonet" (1852, p. 172, emp. added). Though this nation has been in existence for over two centuries, only recently has confusion arisen regarding which book on the planet constitutes the Word of God.

Consider the words of John Adams—signer of the *Declaration of Independence*, two-time Vice-President under George Washington, and second President of the United States—written in 1756: "Suppose a nation in some distant region should take **the Bible** for their **only** law book and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited.... What a Eutopia, what a Paradise would this region be" (1854, 2:6-7, emp. added). And in a letter to Thomas Jefferson on Christmas day, 1813, he wrote: "I have examined all [religions]... and the result is that **the Bible is the best Book in the world**" (1854, 10:85, emp. added). Patriot Patrick Henry declared: "[The Bible] is a book **worth more than all the other books** that were ever printed" (as quoted in Wirt, 1818, p. 402, emp. added). The first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, John Jay, affirmed in a letter in 1784: "The Bible is **the best of all books**, for it is the **word of God** and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next" (1980, 2: 709, emp. added). Noah Webster noted: "The Bible is **the chief moral cause** of all that is good and the best corrector of all that is evil in human society; **the best book** for regulating the temporal concerns of man" (1833, p. v, emp. added). U.S. Supreme Court justice Joseph Story, a Father of American Jurisprudence, insisted: "**The Bible** itself [is] the common inheritance, not merely of Christendom, but **of the world**" (1854, p. 259, emp. added). What do such statements imply about these Founders' opinion of the Quran?

Observe further that every President of the United States, beginning with George Washington, has been sworn into office by placing his hand on—not the Quran—but the Bible (see "Joint Congressional..." 2005 and "Bibles and Scriptures..." 2005).

So what should be done? Should Muslims be allowed to use the Quran in court? Won't they be more likely to tell the truth? Perhaps.

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But here is the bottom line: The fact that this issue has even arisen is evidence of the dilution of America's Christian heritage, and the infiltration of alien ideologies that are destructive to the American way of life. The Founders believed these non-Christian religions to be bogus and detrimental to the Republic which they established. To permit the use of the Quran in court would be to afford it a measure of credibility, creating the impression that Islam is simply one religion among many that merits acknowledgment, legal and/or societal respect, and equal status with Christianity. **The Founders never would have countenanced such a consideration.** A "Father of American Jurisprudence," New York State Supreme Court Chief Justice James Kent, in *The People v. Ruggles* in 1811, summarized the national attitude toward Islam that existed from the inception of the country:

Nor are we bound, by any expressions in the constitution, as some have strangely supposed, either not to punish at all, or to punish indiscriminately the like attacks upon the religion of Mahomet or of the Grand Lama; and for this plain reason, that the case assumes that **we are a Christian people**, and the morality of the country is deeply engrafted upon Christianity, and **not upon the doctrines or worship of those imposters** (8 Johns 290, emp. added).

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IN THE NEWS

"Most published scientific research papers are wrong" (Kleiner, 2005). This shocking admission comes from work carried out by John Ioannidis, an epidemiologist who boldly asserts that there is a **less than 50% chance that the results of any randomly chosen scientific paper are true**. He indicates that "small sample sizes, poor study design, researcher bias, and selective reporting and other problems combine to make most research findings false" (see Kleiner, 2005). Ioannidis correctly maintains that replication of reported results is a critical component to distilling out error in science.

Sadly, society has been led to believe that we are not to question science. The popular media is quick to report new discoveries as "factual" even though the results have never been replicated or verified by another laboratory. Individuals would do well to be wary of findings until they have been independently replicated. As Kurt Kleiner, staff writer for *New Scientist*, observed:

Traditionally a study is said to be "statistically significant" if the odds are only 1 in 20 that the result could be pure chance. But in a complicated field where there are many potential hypotheses to sift through—such as whether a particular gene influences a particular disease—it is easy to reach false conclusions using this standard. If you test 20 false hypotheses,

one of them is likely to show up as true, on average" (2005).

He went on to explain:

Odds get even worse for studies that are too small, studies that find small effects (for example, a drug that works for only 10% of patients), or studies where the protocol and endpoints are poorly defined, allowing **researchers to massage their conclusions after the fact**. Surprisingly, Ioannidis says another predictor of false findings is if a field is "hot," with many teams feeling pressure to beat the others to statistically significant findings (emp. added).

Given the humanistic climate in which we now find ourselves, and knowing that most researchers are anxious to silence God and disprove His existence, parents would be wise to inform their children of Ioannidis' findings. Scientific discoveries can be, and often are, "massaged" to fit the current evolutionary dogma. Nevertheless, the inspired Word of God remains the ultimate standard of Truth.

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