

The authorship of The Qur'an (1 of 3): The Words of a human?

[English]

حقيقة القرآن: 1- أهو من كلام البشر؟

[اللغة الإنجليزية]

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Although it is proven that the text of the Quran has remained intact till today, how are we sure that that the words actually originated from God and not some other source? This takes us to look at the authenticity, authority, or source of the Quran.

Concerning the authorship of the Quran, Muslims believe that it was revealed verbatim (i.e. word for word) by God, to Muhammad, may God praise him. Non-Muslims, however, who do not support this view, can have no differences with Muslims concerning the fact that the Quran was at least first witnessed to be uttered by Muhammad, a Meccan Arab in the 7th century CE and, as proved above, there have been no changes to the records of his utterances since then.

Muslims' claim of "internal evidence" for the divine authorship of the Quran, i.e. from statements to that effect in the Quran itself (e.g. Quran 4:82; 6:19; 6:92; 27:6; 45:2, etc.), is understandably looked upon with skepticism, as nearly anyone can quote passages from his or her scripture that claim the scripture in question is revelation from God.

We are therefore forced by reason and objectivity to look elsewhere for "external evidence" of the Quran's divine source or authority. The simple proposed structure for the presentation of this "external evidence" is an elimination process, where we get to the answer of the question – "Who is the author of the Quran?" – by eliminating all alternative answers to this question which are definitely implausible. In other words, the definite or (at least) most probable author or source of the Quran is identified by eliminating unacceptable alternative candidates.

There are various contradictory views and opinions held by some non-Muslims as to the source of the Quran. The following list of "possible" authors reflects the main theories:



- 1) Muhammad.
- 2) Some other Arab poet(s), scholars, etc.
- 3) Some non-Arab scholars, or poets or religious personalities.
- 4) Monks or Rabbis (i.e. from the Bible or Judeo-Christian sources).
- 5) Satan (or other deceitful “spirits” or “aliens”, etc.).
- 6) God.

We may now proceed to examine from a closer study of the Quran and history how plausible these theories are.

Muhammad: Unlettered and Uneducated

The fact that Muhammad could neither read nor write (Quran 29:48) is well known and uncontested by even his non-Muslim contemporaries and present day historians. He had no schooling or teacher of any kind. He had never been known to compose oral poetry or prose. The Quran, with its all-embracing laws and freedom from all inconsistencies, has its greatness acknowledged even by non-Muslim scholars.¹

Its contents treat social, economic, political and religious legislation, history, views of the universe, living things, thought, human transactions, war, peace, marriage, worship, business, and everything relating to life - with no contradicting principles.

The Quran has never been edited or revised as it was never in need of any revision or correction. How were such vast subject areas expounded upon with such precision by a 7th century Arab with no formal education or even the ability to read what scant material there may have been in his environ-

¹ See Fredrick Denny, *Islam*, NY: Harper & Row, 1987, p.88; Dr. Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Quran and Science*, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1983, p.163; and H.A.R. Gibb, *Wither Islam*, NY: A.M.S. Press, 1932, p.350; etc.

ment on such topics? Where and when has history ever produced an illiterate and uneducated author of such a scripture?

Muhammad's known Integrity

Muhammad's sincerity, truthfulness and integrity were so well known that he was even nicknamed "*Al-Ameen*" (The Trustworthy) by his pre-Islamic community.

Not a single lie is recorded against him, and many modern Western Orientalists have themselves admitted that contrary to any deliberate deception, that the Prophet had a profoundly sincere conviction that it was revealed to him by God Himself is undeniable.¹

If his integrity had been in question, and he was supposed to have been motivated by the desire for personal glory to produce the Quran, why then would he disclaim authorship and instead claim it was from God, especially when the pagan Meccans had conceded that no one could produce such a scripture (Quran 2:23-24, 17:88, etc.), but only marvel at it?

His enemies even offered him kingship over Mecca and any riches he desired if only he would stop reciting. If it was true that he desired his personal glory and leadership, why would he decline the offer when it was presented to him and instead prefer a life of humility, simplicity, persecution, sanctions, and even hostile attack by those who felt threatened by the Message of One God?

In addition, how reasonable is it to believe that unlettered Muhammad would author the Quran for personal benefit and then within the Quran correct and reprove himself? For example:

"He frowned and turned away when the blind man came to him..." (Quran 80:1-2)

And also,

¹ See for example, H.A.R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, p.25

“...And you did fear men, though God is more deserving that you should fear Him” (Quran 33:37)

There are other verse you may refer to, such as chapter18, verse 23-24, and others. Why would he embarrass himself when he could simply omit or favorably modify such verses in the Quran? They were certainly not to his advantage if his goals were power and prestige. The existence of such verses only proves that Muhammad was indeed a truthful and sincere Messenger of God!

The authorship of The Qur'an (3 of 3): Was it the Words of Satan or God?

[English]

حقيقة القرآن: 3- من الله أم من الشيطان؟

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Quranic Teachings about Satan and about Morality

Some claim that the Quran was the work of the devil.¹ Let us examine how much sense (or non-sense) this allegation makes. If he authored or inspired the Quran, why would Satan curse himself and call himself the worst enemy of man (Q.35:6; 36:60)? Why would Satan command that before reciting the Quran, one must first say: “...I seek refuge in God from Satan the accursed.” (Quran 16:98)

How could Satan so vehemently condemn himself? Is it really acceptable to common sense to hold the view that Satan would ask people to do good, to be moral and virtuous, to worship none but God, to not follow Satan or his whispers, and to avoid and struggle against evil?

To hold such a view is clearly repugnant to reason, as Satan has only undermined himself through this means if he is the author. Even the Bible attests: “And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.” (Mark 3:26)² This argument applies to any “Satanic forces”, be they “evil spirits”, “deceitful aliens”, etc.

The Quran’s Factual Contents and Scientific Information

Within the Quran are recorded facts about ancient times that were unknown to Muhammad’s contemporaries and even to historians in the first half of the 20th century.

In scores of verses, we also find references to scientific wonders, some only recently discovered or confirmed, regarding the universe, biology, embryology, astronomy, physics, geography, meteorology, medicine, history, oceanography, etc. Below are some examples of modern scientific discoveries mentioned in the Quran.

¹ See Norman Daniel’s *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image*, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 1989, p.83, 94, etc.

² Cited in H.M. Njozi, *The Sources of the Quran: A Critical Review of the Authorship Theories*, Saudi Arabia: WAMY Publications, 1991, p.96

- The Lost City of Iram. (Quran 89:7)
- Worker bees being female. (Quran 16:68)
- Mountains as “stakes” and stabilizers. (Quran 78:6-7)
- The spherical shape of the Earth. (Quran 7:54; 36:37; 31:29)
- The expanding universe. (Quran 51:47)
- The “Big Bang”. (Quran 21:30)
- That at one point in time, the whole universe was nothing but a cloud of “smoke”. (Quran 41:11)
- The Quranic description of the development of the human embryo. (Quran 23:12-14)

Readers who are interested in further examples, are referred to “The Bible, the Quran and Science” by Maurice Bucaille,¹ “Struggling to Surrender” p.33-38, by Jeffery Lang², “The Quranic Phenomenon” by Malik Bennabi³, “The Developing Human”, 3rd edition, by Keith L. Moore⁴, “A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam”, by I. A. Ibrahim⁵, “The Sources of the Qu-

¹ Maurice Bucaille, The Bible, the Quran and Science, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978

² Jeffrey Lang, Struggling to Surrender, Maryland: Amana Publications, 1994

³ Malik Bennabi, The Quranic Phenomenon, transl. A.B. Kirkary, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1983

⁴ Keith Moore, The Developing Human, 3rd edition, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1982

⁵ I.A. Ibrahim, A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam, Houston: Darussalam Publishers, 1997

ran” by Hamza Mustapha Njozi¹, “The Basis of Muslim Beliefs”² and “The Amazing Quran” by Gary Miller³, etc.

How many well trained modern scientists and geniuses with the aid of hi-tech equipment, satellites, telescopes, microscopes and computers were required to discover the scientific facts mentioned in the Quran, and over what time span?

Is it even conceivable that any human being over 1,400 years ago could have produced a scripture with such information in it, let alone a person who had never been educated?

Although the inability of man to encompass all the mysteries and complexity of creation is mentioned in the Quran (67:3-4), the revelation nevertheless seems to point to various natural phenomena as if urging human beings to enquire and verify what is said – again, with such an attitude of confidence that one can only assume the author is indeed challenging our disbelief.

To be generous to the skeptic, perhaps one or two of the scientific revelations were the result of nothing more than a good guess or coincidence, but how probable could it have been that they all were?

Comparing Quranic statements that deal with the physical universe with certain scientific notions leads us to discover profound similarities. But, more notably, as Dr. Maurice Bucaille observes, the Quran is distinguished from all other works of antiquity that describe or attempt to explain the workings of nature in that it avoids mistaken concepts. For in the Quran, many subjects

¹ H.M. Njozi, *The Sources of the Quran: A Critical Review of the Authorship Theories*, Saudi Arabia: WAMY Publications, 1991

² Gary Miller, *The Basis of Muslim Beliefs*, Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister’s Department - Islamic Affairs Division, 1995

³ (<http://users.erols.com/ameen/amazingq.htm>)

are referred to that have a bearing on modern knowledge without a single statement contradicting what has been established by present-day science.¹

Dr. Bucaille goes as far as to conclude his study with the following remark: “In view of the level of knowledge in Muhammad’s day, it is inconceivable that many statements in the Quran which are connected with science could have been the work of a man. It is, moreover, perfectly legitimate, not only to regard the Quran as an expression of Revelation, but also to award it a very special place, on account of the guarantee of authenticity it provides and the presence in it of scientific statements which, when studied today, appear as a challenge to explanation in human terms.”²

Conclusions

In examining the possible source of the Quran we have covered the following points:

- Muhammad’s being unlettered
- Muhammad’s integrity
- The Style of the Quran
- Discrepancies between the Quran and the Bible
- Quranic teachings about Satan and about morality, and
- The Quran’s factual contents and scientific information

These points were presented to aid us in our “elimination process” of unacceptable sources or authors of the Quran, as follows:

¹ Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Quran and Science*, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978

² [76] *ibid.*, p.163.

Muhammad: We might start by eliminating Muhammad from the list of possible authors of the Quran. There is just no way that he could have authored the Quran in view of points 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 presented above.

Other Arab Poet(s), Scholar(s), etc.: We can also eliminate any other Arab from the list of possible authors in view of points 2, 3 and 6 (at least).

Some non-Arab: The reasons for the elimination of any Arab from the list also eliminate any non-Arab scholar, poet or religious personality.

Christian Monks or Jewish Rabbis (i.e. Judeo-Christian sources): This alternative source of the Quran is unreasonable in view of points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6.

Satan (or other deceitful spirits or aliens, or anyone on his side, etc.): This option is also unacceptable in view of the points discussed, especially under 5.

God (i.e. God): In the absence of any more acceptable alternative as source and author of the Quran, one is more or less forced by reason to accept the Quran for what it claims to be – revelation from God



through His Prophet Muhammad, may the blessing and mercy of God be upon him, This position seems reasonable not just because it is the only option that cannot be objectively eliminated, but because it is only reasonable to expect that a book with such qualities and contents would come from man's Creator and Guide. Of all the possible sources of the Quran, it is also only the last alternative – God – who even claims in the Quran itself to be the author of the scripture.

The position, therefore, which holds that God is the author of the Quran still stands, and the challenge (or falsification test, Q.4:82) remains open to anyone to disprove the Quran's claim to being revelation from God. Having

undertaken this task ourselves, the Muslim's contention that the Quran is the Word of God appears not just a product of blind faith but, in fact, a product of very sound and reasoned judgment in light of all the available evidence. Indeed, after having assessed the evidence, it would be blind faith to contend otherwise!

Note: The evidence for the Divine Authorship of the Quran is also evidence for the existence of the Divine. God must exist, unless a more reasonably acceptable author of the Quran can be produced!