

Is the Quran the Word of God?

Note: Quranic references will be accurate to within 5-8 verses.

The Quran has no standard verse structure and translations vary

INTRODUCTION

The Quran is the sacred book of Islam, divided into 114 Suras. The first and last two are short prayers. The remaining Suras are arranged roughly according to length. Generally, the shortest ones record Mohammed's first utterances.

A TABLET IN HEAVEN Muslims believe the original is written on a "guarded tablet" in heaven, 85:22. It was brought down from Allah's throne to the lowest heaven in the month of Ramadan, 2:185, and was given to Mohammed over many years. Gabriel would tell Mohammed, who would recite aloud, while others memorised it or recorded them on whatever materials were available.

Does the **ORIGINAL TEXT EXIST?** Many Muslims are told, with absolute confidence, that the "original manuscript", which Mohammed himself gathered is still in existence and that all Qurans come from this text. However, those with more knowledge are aware it was collated by Caliph Uthman a few years later.

It's message varies according to the time and circumstance of Mohammed's life. Earliest passages, written in Mecca before *hijra*, emphasised the goodness of Allah, coming Judgement, unity of Allah and respect for Jews and Christians (whom he hoped would join his cause).

As persecution increased the Quran contained more stories of apostles and prophets (many from the Bible) and warnings to those who would reject God's prophets.

After his move to Medina (*hijra*) he became a statesman and ruler. The Medina Suras contain detailed laws for his new community. He renewed the call to faithful obedience in the face of increase opposition from Jews and Christians. The Suras became increasingly hostile toward these two communities.

The Quran does mention the Torah (*Taurat*), Psalms (*Zabur*), and Gospel (*Injil*). The early Suras encouraged Muslims to believe them, 4:136. However, since contradictions occur between the Quran and Bible, Muslims accuse Christians and Jews of corrupting it.

HADITH The Hadith record the actions and saying of Mohammed. They were assembled to help Muslims know what to do in various situations. 300 years after Mohammed they were collected and edited from 600,000 to 7,397. To be *accepted* they had to have a chain of authority going back to Mohammed. Muslims take great pleasure in following Mohammed's example.

Muslims attack the Bible on three fronts: textual variants and different readings between translations; transmission of the Bible; contradictions. This they compared with the soundness of the Quran. Emory VanGerpen, Notes on Islam, Oasis Books 1974 p1-5

...so, how does the Quran stand up?

Nine claims for Divine Origin

1. PERFECT ARABIC - Muslims believe it is the eternal and uncreated word of Allah. It is not Allah, but neither can it be separated from him. Thus each point of grammar is believed to be perfect even as Allah is perfect. It is memorised in Arabic, because this is the very language of Allah. Translations are only commentaries. Only Qurans in Arabic are "Allah's words". It is affirmed that no one can write literature like the Quran.

The SHORTER ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM says, "To Muslims the absolute perfection of the language of the Koran is an impregnable dogma." They believe its beautiful Arabic literary style is another evidence of its divine origin, 12:1; 13:37; 17:88.

2. MOHAMMED WAS ILLITERATE - They accept it as a miracle because they believe it contains information and ideas which Mohammed could not have known by human reason.
3. NO VARIANT READINGS - Not only was it delivered perfect, it was preserved perfect: no variant readings, no lost verses. Many Muslims are told the "original manuscript" which Mohammed himself gathered, still exists and copies are made from this text. Muslims like to point out that the Bible has 500,000 variants (this slur is treated in another paper).
4. FULFILLED PROPHECY - Virtually none. But this is made support for it being of divine origin because only God could know the future.
5. UNITY - This is all the more wondrous because no human could keep such unity over so many years, under such varying conditions and Mohammed was illiterate. The Quran is free of any human element.
6. SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE - The Quran, it is claimed, mentions many scientific matters with great accuracy; knowledge of which people of the 7th century would have no awareness.
7. MATHEMATICAL STRUCTURE - Based on the number 19. It is claimed the opening statement of the Quran consists of 19 Arabic alphabets; the first and last revelations contain 19 words; the Quran has 114 chapters, 19x6.
8. CHANGED LIVES - It is claimed the transformation brought in lives and cultures by the Quran is unparalleled.
9. RAPID SPREAD

Evidence is easy to collect that the Quran is the work of an individual. Its internal inconsistencies, borrowed words and stories all point to this conclusion. So why don't people see this? Because this faith for most, is a received matter. That is, I do and believe what my parents and community taught. As well it is a grievous sin to question either the Quran or Mohammed. Let's take a look...

...are these things so?

1. NOT PERFECT ARABIC - Ali Dashti, Iranian Shi'ite scholar observed "The Quran contains sentences which are incomplete and not fully intelligible without the aid of commentaries; foreign words, and words used other than normal meaning; adjectives and verbs inflected without observance of the concords of gender and number; illogically and ungrammatically applied pronouns which sometimes have no referent.... ." To sum up, more than 100 aberrations from normal Arabic grammar have been noted. 2:177,192; 3:59; 4:162; 5:69; 7:160... .

There are parts that are not even Arabic. Arthur Jeffrey documents over 100 non-Arabic words. The Arabic scholar Jalalu Din as-Syuti noted 107.

That the Quran is perfect Arabic is not universally accepted. In fact most would agree with Carlyle, "It is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook, a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite."

2. MOHAMMED WAS ILLITERATE - Was he? Al Umni, translated "the unlettered" in 7:157, may also be rendered "heathen". It is translated thus in 62:2 and elsewhere. Other incidents in his life indicate he could read and write. He asked for a pen to change his title in The Treaty of Hudaibah, before the words were read. S.W. Zwemer in *The Muslim Doctrine of God* 92 provides a long list of defenders for both views.

3. NO VARIANT READINGS - Originally memorised or recorded on rock or organic materials, no text had been gathered upon the death of Mohammed. There are no originals. Uthman (see below) found it necessary to create a uniform text because of the large number of variants. This, only a few years after Mohammed's death.

Variant readings Jeffrey Archer in *Material for the History of the Text of the Quran*, gives 90 pages of variant readings. In Sura 2 there are over 140 conflicting or variant readings! Even Muslim scholars are beginning to acknowledge these do exist. Western scholars have been denied access to old manuscripts based on pre-Uthman texts. The late Prof. Berstrasser was photographing texts in a Cairo museum when he noticed that a text in an adjacent room possessed certain curious features. He sought permission to photograph but was denied and the Codex was withdrawn from access. *Islam Unveiled*, R. Morey

Even most Muslims are unaware the two major branches of Islam, use a different standard text. In the second Sura alone there are nearly 150 variations. Unlike the Bible, these are not merely spelling or minor grammatical changes. Whole clauses and sentences are omitted.

Lost verses Some of the original verses are lost. One Sura had 200 verses but when the text was standardised there were only 52. Others were lost when those who had them only in their memory were killed in battle. Shi'ites claim Uthman left out 25% of the original for political reasons. John Burton in *The Collection of the Quran*, Cambridge University Press, states "The Muslim accounts of the history of the Quranic Texts are a mass of confusion, contradiction and inconsistencies."

Widely accepted traditions dating back to Mohammed refer to Quranic verses about suckling, stoning, and the so called Satanic verses.

Altered verses Some were changed in Mohammed's day. In early days the scribe Abdollah Sarh would make suggestions about rephrasing or subtracting verses. Ali Dsahti explains, "Abdollah renounced Islam on the ground that the revelations, if from God, could not be changed at the prompting of a scribe such as he." He joined another group in Mecca. It surprises no one that when Mohammed conquered Mecca this man was one of the first he executed.

Note: Many Muslims confuse the various Bible *versions* with altered verses.

Removed verses Some verses have been removed, abrogated. The Satanic verses, 5:21-23, approved of praying to certain idols. Mohammed said Satan had deceived him and inserted the verses. (see 2:100; 13:39; 16:101; 22:52)

Yet 2:181; 6:115; 15:9 affirm the Quran is safeguarded from alteration or substitution.

Note: Many Muslims claim Christianities exclusion of the Apocrypha is abrogation. But these books never were considered Scripture and were only included for devotional purposes by Jews and Roman Catholics.

Contradictory verses Some verses are contradictory, because God later on revoked what he had said earlier. This is particularly true in regard Muslims relationship with Jews and Christians. Also read "UNITY" below.

Noah's son drowns, 11, while Sura 21 says all saved.
Story of Joseph Sura 12:11-20 & Genesis 37
Saul and Gideon confused in 2:241
Disciples of Jesus claimed to be Muslim
Israel smaller than Egyptian nation 26:55-60 cf. Exodus 1:7-10
Zaccarius dumb for 3 days, rather than until John's birth 3:41

It is the only historical book that claims Jesus did not die on the cross. Thus it fails as a reliable historical source, not only differing from the Bible, but with many historical documents.

4. FULFILLED PROPHECY - Most so called prophecies were vague "pep" talks before a battle of the, "God is on our side", type. Nor were their consistency in predicting victories unexpected, considering the dual motivation of a guarantee of immediate entry to a sensual Paradise if they died in battle or cruel punishment if they quit battle.

The only substantive prediction was of Rome's victory over Persia, 30:2-4. But this one example is a grasping at straws. Vowel points were not added until years after the event. As it was, it could read "they shall defeat" or "they shall be defeated" (and appears both ways in various texts). This prediction of events that would happen within a few years was less than dramatic, compared to Bible predictions separated by centuries. That Rome would fight back would surprise no one.

5. UNITY

- .1 ABROGATION - How can one claim unity. 10:64; 6:34 Allah's words cannot be changed, yet 2:106 says Allah can abrogate verses, change them.. One example is the change from stoning to lashes for adulterers. 9:5, "fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them" annuls 124 verses on tolerance, e.g. 2:256, "let there be no compulsion in religion". Prayer to Mecca annuls 63 statements to pray toward Jerusalem, 2:138,143; 2:139, 144.

- .2 OUTSIDE SOURCES - "The extraordinary sequel between the story of the raven in both the Qur'an and Jewish folklore and the subsequent philosophy about the implications of the murder of one man together with his seed clearly suggests that Mohammed was depending on certain informants for his information and that these verses could not possibly have come from God." Gilchrist p 35 The words *Injil* and *Taurat* are Hebrew in origin.

Other stories show the influence of heretical Christian groups: infant Jesus speaking from cradle, 3:42 or young Jesus creating live animals from clay 5:119. The picture of the razor bridge, Zirat, is from Zoroastrian sources. These and other borrowings are documented in Rev. W. St Clair-Tisdall's book *The Sources of Islam*.

Quran contains words not from God. Mohammed's words: e.g. Zakariya in 3:40. Whether this is God telling us the prophets words or the prophets speaking for himself; either way they are the words of the prophet. In 19:64 angels are speaking, 'We come not down save by commandment of thy Lord.'

.3 INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Worship | 2:256, 3:20, 10:99 (don't compel), 13:40 talk of freedom of worship
comp. 2:190,191, 9:5 (kill those who do agree) |
| Jesus' death | 4:157 Jesus did not die
comp. 3:55 Jesus died |
| First Muslims | 39:11,12 Mohammed first Muslim
comp. 3:64,67 says Jesus' disciples and Abraham first Muslims |
| Difference between apostles | 2:285 says no difference
comp. 2:253 there should be a difference |
| Salvation | 2:62 says salvation for non-Muslims
comp; 3:85 says it is for Muslims only |
| Mans Creation | 2:30, 71:17,18 say mankind was created on earth
comp. 2:36 which says created in heaven |
| Position in Prayer | 2:115,117 say feel free to take any position
comp. 2:144,149,150 which state one must take a specific position |
| Regarding fatalism (qadar) | 40:40, 18:30 say our salvation is in our hands
comp. 3:145, 154, 16:35,36, 76:31 salvation is up for grabs, fate (qadar)
determines it 17:13, 10:99,100 God has sealed our fate. |
| World made in six days | 7:54
Comp. 41:9-12 is says eight |

- .4 ALLAH'S WORD IN OTHER SOURCES - The Hadith also contain words from Allah not found in Quran, Hadith-i-Qudsi, 'Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, said:...'. Sahih Muslim, Vol.4 p 1476

- .5 UNITY - While unity is never a test, as it may only indicate good editing, the Bible does have unity while the Quran does not. Both cannot be right.

6. SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE - Modern science was made possible and established on a Christian world view, not Muslim. Arabic Islam persecuted its thinkers. Much, if not most, of the advances attributed came from captives or their books.

Umar, the second Caliph, destroyed the vast libraries of Alexandria and Persia. To claim inspiration because a text agrees with modern science is dangerous. Science is always changing.

Besides, the Quran makes some poor scientific observations.

23:14 says we begin life as a blood clot.

18:86 says one can travel west to where the sun sets in a muddy spring. This with...

36:38-40 seem to indicate a belief in a flat earth

7. MATHEMATICAL STRUCTURE - Mathematical structure can be found in any writing. 7 occurs countless times in Genesis 1:1. The verse has 7 Hebrew words, and 28 letters (7x4). There are three nouns, God, heavens, earth whose numeric value together is 777 (7x11), and more... .

8. CHANGED LIVES - A claim common to any organisation offering help. Any set of ideas fervently believed and lived out will affect change. Is Karl Marx's book Das Kapital, inspired because lives are changed? Death and persecution are the only options for non-believers in Muslim controlled areas, only ardent believers would not "convert".

The appeal to a higher moral ground and changed lives is lost in the reality of polygamy (Mohammed even had more than permitted and disregarded the teachings on conjugal rights, his youngest Aisha was only nine) 4:15; beating of women 4:34; encouraged violence in battle 2:44, 9:5.

A belief system can rise no higher than its source. There is a world of difference between the loving, merciful and sinless Jesus (acknowledge so in Quran) and the vengeful, merciless and lustful Mohammed (matters he himself confirms in Haddith).

Note. To point out the weakness of another brings strife, to point to God, brings life. It is a sterile faith that persecuted thinkers; degraded women and men through slavery, concubinage, serial marriage, polygamy, wife beating; providing few ethical restraints in commerce, encouraged war. The ethics of Islam owe more to contact with Judeo-Christian culture than any inherited moral ethic derived from the Quran.

9. RAPID SPREAD is sometimes used as an argument. But Christianity also spread dramatically in the first three centuries, and this in the face of very bitter opposition. Islam never spread until Mohammed took up the sword. Except for SE Asia and a few trade ports in East Africa, that has been largely the case since.

How has Islam handled problems?

Criticism did come. As Muslims increasingly came into contact with Christians during the eighth century, the wars of conquest were accompanied by theological polemics, in which Christians and others latched on to the confusing literary state of the Quran as proof of its human origins.

Muslim scholars themselves were fastidiously cataloguing the problematic aspects of the Quran - unfamiliar vocabulary, seeming omissions of text, grammatical incongruities, deviant readings, and so on. A major theological debate in fact arose within Islam in the late eighth century, pitting those who believed in the Quran as the "uncreated" and eternal Word of God against those who believed in it as created in time, like anything that isn't God himself.

Under Caliph al-Ma'mun (813-833) this latter view briefly became orthodox doctrine. It was supported by several schools of thought, including an influential one known as Mu'tazilism, that developed a complex theology based partly on a metaphorical rather than simply literal understanding of the Quran.

The typical line of defence is that yes there are problems, but Allah, is Allah; who are we to question?

Most of the material in this section from: ANSWERING ISLAM, Geisler & Saleb, pg 192

Does the BIBLE and QURAN have the same AUTHOR?

The *teaching* of the two books is different. If the first three Books agree and not the fourth, the Quran, then it cannot be from the same God.

The deities revealed in these two books are total opposites.

The moral and ethical guidelines rarely agree.

Biographical material disagrees.

How could the author of the first two Testaments, which do harmonise in prophecy and core moral values be author of the Quran?

1. BIBLE WARNS - For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached,... or a different gospel which you have not accepted.. such men are false apostles, deceitful workers... 2 Corinthians 3:4,13-15

Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

Do not add to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.

Proverbs 30:5,6

But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let them be accursed. Galatians 1:1-10 (8)

Revelation 22:18,19 warns not to add to nor take away from the words of "this book". That book is the book of Revelation and in it is revealed the nature and work of God, through Jesus. *Any book claiming to be from God and not agreeing with Revelation is cursed.*

See also: Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-16;
Hebrews 13:9; Jude 3

2. DOCTRINE DIFFERS - Quran presents an evil and arbitrary deity producing fatalism. Allah winks at sin among true believers. Islam relies heavily on violence and force through "holy war" to make conversions. Quran accepts polygamy (Mohammed had several wives), concubinage, even wife beating, 4:38, which de-stabilises families. Other differences...

	<i>The Bible</i>	<i>The Quran</i>
GOD:	Tri-unity	Unitarian & polytheistic- God is everything
JESUS:	God incarnate Alpha & Omega, Saviour	A man, though miracle worker and sinless
SALVATION:	By grace with assurance	By works, without assurance hoping Allah will be merciful
HEAVEN:	Place of relationship	Place of sensual pleasures, mostly men

3. BIBLE STORIES DIFFER -

Noah's son	Genesis 7:7	Sura 11:32-48
Noah's ark	Genesis 8:4	11:44
Abraham	Genesis 13:18	14:37
Joseph	Genesis 37-50	12
Pharaoh	Exodus 2:5	28:8,9
Jesus' miracles	John 2:11	3:49
Crucifixion	Matt. 27:35; Jo 19:8	4:157
Deity	Matt 16:16; Jo 20:28	9:30
God's nature	John 3:16	3:32,57
God's love	Romans 5:8	2:190

4. PROPHETS DIFFER

.1 God used miracle to establish His Covenant with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel and finally with us. **Mohammed had no covenant and performed no miracle**, as was common in the establishment of all previous covenants, to demonstrate he was an approved and acceptable speaker for God. He said his credentials was the *Quran* itself. Mohammed did no miracles 10:38, 11:13

.2 Muslims believe **heaven depends entirely upon the will of Allah**, so no need for signs; "Allah believes in saving whom He will, and guides those who repent and have faith..."

- .3 Jesus and apostles warned of **deceiving spirits**, they must be tested in light of the revealed Word and personal character: love
- All agree Mohammed had a spiritual guide whom he called Gabriel. No one denies he had other spirit encounters. All agree that Mohammed, himself, confessed doubts as to whether or not he was possessed by an evil spirit.
 - He received revelation while in a trance as spirit mediums have always done. This was common in Arabia in his time. We can agree the Quran is of spirit origin, but must ask some questions. *What kind of spirit would send such contradictory messages; deny the deity of Jesus; distort the Bible; oppose God's plan of salvation and teach lies?* This is typical of teachings from spirit mediums: rejecting God and teach harmful doctrines.
 - Mohammed saw the invitation to leave the opposition of Mecca and serve in Medina, as the hand of God. He also believed that any success vindicated his new faith. Suras from his early years in Mecca reflect a high regard for Jews and Christians. When these same faith groups opposed him in Medina, the Suras reflect a hostile attitude!

5. WHO IS THE AUTHOR?

- .1 If, as Mohammed and the Quran testify, the Law and Gospels are of God, how does one accept the Quran in violation of the Law and Gospels' teachings? Either the Quran is weak in it's upholding their validity or it is in error for it violates their testimony.
- One solution is to declare the Bible corrupt, but how could God allow that?
 - The only other solution is to accept the Bible or, declare *both* books corrupt and found one's faith on experience.
 - It seems strange, and inconsistent, that the God who could preserve the Quran was incapable of preserving His Injil and Taurat. Is He not all powerful?
- .2 Is the Quran perfectly preserved and free of human tampering? This is a deeply emotional issue and should be discussed only with extreme caution. As noted, evidence for the human origin of the Quran is very strong. Remember, how do you feel when someone attack the Bible? And this in light of being allowed to ask questions. The Muslim is not. Most Muslims accept, on blind faith, that neither Mohammed nor Allah would lie.

If the Bible is established, then when new but contradictory revelations come along, what should we conclude would be their source?

Many Muslims have been told they have the original Quran. True?

Do we have the original QURAN?

Many QURANS Caliph Uthman, third Caliph, was aware both of the death of most of those who had memorised the Quran and the presence of the many variant Codices being used in Syria, Iraq and Armenia. He called for the copy in the hands of Hafsa, one of Mohammed's wives, ordered Zaid-b-Thabit and three others to make copies, correcting where necessary.

Uthman then sent this standardised text to every Muslim province, and ordered that all other Quranic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol 6, p479

We find, now, that a man, with no decree from God, at his own discretion, ordered the standardisation. More, this *standard* was probably not the best. Because all previous copies were ordered burnt, it can be assumed many, if not all, were in significant disagreement, as witnessed by the two standard texts in circulation today.

1. Why did Caliph Uthman find it necessary to standardise the text, if one already existed?
And why destroy all others?
2. Why use the threat of death to force acceptance of his text if people all had the same text?

Arthur Jeffery states, "Nothing is more certain than that when the prophet died there was no collected, arranged, collated body of revelation." THE SHORTER ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM comments, "One thing only is certain and is openly recognised by tradition, namely, that there was not in existence any collection of revelations in final form, because, as long as he was alive, new revelations were being added to the earlier ones."

At no time in Christian history has anyone attempted to standardise just one copy of the Bible while attempting to destroy all others. In 384AD Jerome completed a revision of the Latin Bible which became the standard for the Latin church, but nothing was done about manuscripts that had variations.

Even after these copies were sent out, Zaid recalled a missing verse Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol.6, p479. This would indicate that not one of the versions available had that verse, Sura 33:23, all were in error.

Caliph Umar, second Caliph who took office two years after Mohammed's death, recalled verses on stoning that was part of the Quran. "God sent Mohammed and sent down the Scripture to him. Part of which he sent down was the passage on stoning, we read it, we were taught it, and we heeded it". Ibn Ishaq, Sirat Rasulallah, p684

The Hadith² refers to other verses not found in the Quran. Jeffrey, in THE QUR'AN AS SCRIPTURE, states that there were "real textual variants and not mere dialectal peculiarities"; that is, words, clauses and whole sentences. He gathered his evidence from grammatical, lexical and masoretic literature of later generations which still remembered and discussed them. An important part of his study was the CODEX BOOK of Ibn Abi Dawud Anderson p 46.

Codex of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud. This codex was not surrendered as Caliph Uthman had ordered. Ibn Mas'ud was one of the very first Muslims and earliest teachers. It is said he once recited 70 suras of the Quran before Mohammed and no one found fault. It goes on to say that Ibn Mas'ud was one of four persons recommended to teach it. *Sahih Muslim*, Vol.4 p1313.

Another tradition says Ibn Mas'ud was always with Mohammed when he reviewed the Qur'an with Gabriel each year Ibn Sa'd, *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, Vol.2, p441. Still another records, Mohammed recommended one learn the recitation of the Qur'an one of four, and started with the name of Ibn Mas'ud *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol.5, p96f Ibn Mas'ud was considered the foremost authority.

Arthur Jeffery, in his book on the Quran list 90 pages, literally thousands, of variant readings (p24-114). 149 cases from Sura 2 alone! Ibn Mas'ud rejected Caliph Uthman's edition because its compiler was not yet born while Ibn Mas'ud was already a close companion of Mohammed.

Until 932 the official text was purely consonantal and devoid of any diacritical marks. Therefore, an enormous number of variant readings and interpretations were recorded. Anderson p 47 This would indicate that Ibn Mas'ud's text was better.

Borrowed Stories Mohammed sought to unite all the people of Arabia. He felt he could do this by blending something from each tradition. While this failed, the many stories collected can be traced to their various sources outside Arabia.

Many stories in the Quran, set forth as true to history, which have parallels in pre-Islamic **Jewish books of fables**. One example is the murder of Abel, 5:27-32, with one important variant from Genesis. God sends a raven scratching up the ground to show Cain how to hide his brother's corpse. This incident is found in a Jewish book of folklore *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*, ch21. The similarity is unmistakable. That verse is followed by one about the implications of murder which has an exact parallel from *The Mishnah, Mishnah Sanhedrin*, 4.5

"The extraordinary sequel between the story of the raven in both the Qur'an and Jewish folklore and the subsequent philosophy about the implications of the murder of one man together with his seed clearly suggests that Mohammed was depending on certain informants for his information and that these verse could not possibly have come from God." Gilchrist p 35

It would be natural for Mohammed to come in contact with many **heretical Christian** teachings, as Arabia was a common place of banishment from the Roman World.

Some of the stories he received from the heretical Christian sects were of Mary receiving food directly from God after Jesus' birth 3:32; of Jesus speaking from the cradle, 3:42; of Jesus creating live animals from clay 5:119.

The picture of the razor bridge, Zirat, which one crosses after judgement to reach Paradise is from **Zoroastrian** sources. These and other borrowings are documented in Rev. W. St Clair-Tisdall's book **THE SOURCES OF ISLAM**.

In Summary. In its early days there were many variants of the Quran. There is much evidence that the present text is *far from complete* or in any way perfect and that Mohammed *borrowed* from other sources. *To the unbiased scholar, the fingerprint of Mohammed is on every page of the Quran*, from the borrowing of stories, texts and words in current use, to the convenient changing of emphasis in the text in regard to current political or personal needs.

THE DILEMMA

1. If, as Mohammed and the Quran testify, the *Taurat* and *Injil* are of God, how does one accept the Quran in violation of their teachings? Either the Quran is *weak* in it's upholding their validity or it is *in error* for it violates their testimony.

The Quran Plainly states that the *Taurat*, *Zabur* and *Injil* were revealed by God, 2:87; 4:163,164; 5:44; 32:24; 35:27-31; 46:11,12, and also states God's revelation is incorruptible and changeable by no one, 6:115. The charge of corrupted texts is indefensible. McDowell p22

"Those that deny Allah's revelation (in Torah & Gospel) shall be sternly punished"

How could the God who preserved the Quran be incapable of preserving His *Injil*¹ and *Taurat*. Is He not all powerful? If a book is the Word of God, variant readings and copyist errors would not negate the divine authority.

But how shall they make thee their judge, since they possess already the Law (Taurat), in which are the behests of God? ... Verily, we have sent down the law (Taurat) wherein are guidance and light, 5:47,48.

...and we gave him (Jesus) the Evangel (Injil) with its guidance and light, confirmatory of the preceding Law (Taurat); a guidance and warning to those who fear God; - and that the people of the Evangel (Injil) may judge according to what God hath sent down - such are the perverse. And to thee we have sent down the Book of the Koran with truth, confirmatory of previous Scriptures, and their safeguard. ... To every one of you have we given a rule and a beaten track. And if God had pleased He had surely made you all one people; but He would test you by what He hath given to each... . 5:50-55

Some Muslims have confused the English word "version", meaning *translation*, with it meaning differing understandings.

2. If Muslims accept the Quran they must accept the Bible. But if they accept the Bible they must reject the Quran.

"Those that deny Allah's revelation (in *Taurat* & *Injil*) shall be sternly punished"

3. How could the God who preserved the Quran be incapable of preserving His *Injil*¹ and *Taurat*. Is He not all powerful? If a book is the Word of God, variant readings and copyist errors would not negate the divine authority.

4. How do Muslims handle such contradictions?

4.1 Muslims respond to criticism by:

- Blind allegiance - they have heard the Shahada since before they were born and constantly since then. They were raised in a community that did not, dare not, question.
- Scepticism about God, but faithfulness to the culture

- Rejection (and sometimes all supernatural)
 - Mysticism that enables the believer to bypass intellectual problems.
Because of such problems, knowledgeable Muslims do not seek to understand but attempt to affirm both.
- 4.2 There are questions we Christians have and do not understand. While ours may not involve such obvious contradictions, we are aware there are questions.
- 4.3 Quran provides an out. Sura 2:100 (cf. 13:39; 16:101; 22:52)
Whatever verses we cancel, or cause thee to forget, we bring a better or its like. Knowest thou not that God hath power over all things. This may serve to help deal with contradictions, but it leaves Scripture untrustworthy. Which are to be trusted? What does it say about God's ability to communicate to His creation? They have been told God is beyond understanding.

Footnotes

1. Respected Muslim commentators Baidawi and Zamakshari acknowledge that *Injil* is not the original Arabic word but is borrowed from the Syriac word used by the Christians to describe their gospel. Indeed, early Quranic scholars tried to find an Arabic origin but failed. *Taurat* is obviously of Hebrew origin.
2. Anderson states, the traditional view that Islamic law was derived *directly from* the Qur'an and *sunna* by Muslim jurists located primarily in Mecca and Medina, by a process of pure deduction, represents a travesty of what really happened. The fact is that it was the customary law of both Arabia and the newly conquered territories, on the one hand, and the administrative practices of the early Caliphs, on the other.

Sometimes it even appears to depart from clear teaching in the Quran. Islamic law gives priority to oral testimony, with the virtual rejection of documentary evidence, yet 2:282 states that certain kinds of contracts should be reduced to writing. Cases can be found where laws are based on the earlier manuscripts replaced in Caliph Uthman's time. They borrowed from Jewish or Rabbinical law regarding lending money, interest rates, stoning of adulterers. From Byzantine law they adopted the 'inspector of the market'. .Anderson p49f

note: al-Bukhari in compiling his collection of traditions, *al-Sahih*, considered some 600,000 but accepted only 7000!

NOTE - Some who work among Muslims feel free to use Quran as a starting point, a common story or reference to Jesus. But they warn do not try to prove Christian doctrine by it. This gives the impression you accept it as true. Often a Muslim's interpretation of the Quran will differ from yours, thus he will feel you are misrepresenting it.

Don't compare with Bible, rather point them to Jesus. Time and God's Spirit, who convicts us of sin and separateness from God, will deal with the Quran.

Quran Affirms

The Fall 7:15f; 11:34; 20:113-19
 Virgin Birth 3:40-48; 19:16-21; 66:12
 Jesus' righteousness 3:46
 Jesus' created 3:52
 Jesus' miracles 5:109
 As alive in heaven 19:330
 Bible is God's Word 5:46-48
 All Muslims to believe it 3:2-4

Quran Denies

Trinity 112; 4:169; 6:101; 106
 Sonship 112; 4:51; 19:35; 43:81
 Crucifixion 4:155f
 Resurrection, claims Jesus will return, become a Muslim, then die 19:34f

ISLAM'S DEFENCE OF QURAN

1. It confirms itself to those who approach it with reverence.
If we find logical and grammatical errors and moral lapses, and question it, that is our problem. It is perfect. If we do not read with reverence then we are irreverent, biased and prejudiced.
2. It is beautiful to the ear.
No matter how well it sounds in its native tongue, what is it saying? It does not cover its grammatical problems and tedious and repetitive manifestos attempting to justify crimes against humanity.
3. Any problems are the result of translation.
Languages are not that different. Any linguist will tell you they can translate the meaning. If the Koran makes sense only in Arabic, then it is not for all mankind.
4. Such a literary masterpiece could not come from an illiterate man.
So stated, one expects stimulating reading. Instead one is faced with much repetition ie 2:23,39,48,79, 81,89,90,96,98; frequent threats of hell - 12% of verses; almost 100 "God sent down this book". It replaces several hundred very-needed nouns with frustratingly ambiguous pronouns.

5. Violence was justifiable at Islam's beginning, but not now.

True? Mecca and Median were at peace until Mohammed attacked. The Jews he killed or captured had been supporting him.

Is Yahweh violent as Islam affirms. To compare God's decrees in the Old Testament to punish people, with those in the Koran, must be seen in light of both His over all nature, as revealed in the Bible and Koran, and the particular situation.

The God of the Bible is overwhelmingly referred to as a God of love. Not just love, but long suffering, pro-active love that sought reconciliation compared to Allah who changed His mind, whose love is rarely referred to. The God of the Bible gave people ample time to repent. Allah often asked his followers to eliminate the infidel. Reconciliation and compassion was never suggested; nor is

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