

# 5

## Is the Qur'an God-Sent or Man-Made?

Mr. Qasem, my old teacher of Religion, stated (as all Muslim Imams and Sheikhs say) that the miracle that Muhammad performed was the writing of the Qur'an. They claim that the Qur'an is the most eloquent, best piece of rhetoric ever written, because it is a heavenly book and not man-made. The Qur'an itself includes in its text a challenge to any man to produce a like-Qur'an or even a like-verse. Dr. Badawi, a religion teacher in high school, said "The Qur'an is the last heavenly book and Muhammad is the last prophet and the seal thereof."

Could those statements be true? In this chapter, we will investigate "the eloquence of the Qur'an" to see if it is "the most eloquent" and "a miracle." Then we will answer the question of whether the Qur'an is heavenly or man-made.

Until recently, despite my doubts, I had a good amount of faith in the above subject. I used to defend the Qur'an, and I was a fan of Sheikh Abdul Baset<sup>[1]</sup> who chanted the Qur'an, and whose voice I enjoyed very much. I believed, as all Muslims believe, that the Qur'an is a heavenly book, and that Islam, in general, was the seal of all religion, and that it came down from God. Then some whispering voice came to me and warned me: "Read in depth. Read and reflect upon the verses and upon what is in between the lines." I began to read, indeed, and what have I found?

### Qur'anic Copying

As I reflected on the Qur'an, I also reflected on the Bible, which I also read. I learned that many verses in the Qur'an are taken from the Bible, with some additions and changes.

For example, the Qur'an imposed on every Muslim the obligation to pay 2.5% for alms.<sup>[2]</sup> That copies the Old Testament, which ordained for the Jews to pay 10% of their yearly income. The Qur'an also designated specific times during the day for prayer. The Bible commands us to pray, but it does not designate a time. The Bible gives the right to pray any time and anywhere.

Fasting in the Qur'an is also copied from the Bible, with some modifications. Most of the general imperatives in the Qur'an were copied from the Bible, with either additions or subtractions. One Bible idea copied by the Qur'an is:

"The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge."<sup>[3]</sup>

It appeared that Muhammad's "Gabriel" was dipping into the Bible with some modifications on the verses.

### **The Qur'an on Muhammad**

Verses about the personal life of Muhammad were stated in the Qur'an to permit certain things in Muhammad's life while prohibiting them from the daily life of the rest of the Muslims. For example, his marriages, his divorces, and his distribution of spoils all had their verses.

### **Distorted History**

Muslims describe the Qur'an as telling the history of the world. But what little historical facts appear in the Qur'an, whether religious or mundane, are distorted quotes from the Bible. The Qur'an did not come up with anything new; it just changed the story for an Arabic audience.

For instance, the Qur'an tells the stories of Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron (Moses' brother), their dealing with Pharaoh, and crossing the Red Sea to Sinai and to the Jordan. I wish he had quoted those stories as they are in the Bible. Instead they were rewritten in his Qur'an, adding information and fabricating events that never happened. These will be discussed later. It is important to know that most Qur'anic verses are centered on daily happenings during Muhammad's life. Therefore, most verses of the Qur'an are not applicable to all times and to every generation.

### **The Miracle of the Qur'an?**

Now I will focus on what the Muslims call the "miraculousness" of the Qur'an. By this they mean it does not contain any mistake, whether grammatical, historical or biblical, and no human can come close to writing anything like it. I, till recently, challenged followers of other religions to find one single mistake in our beloved Qur'an. But some dear friends told me to read it carefully and thoroughly to find out for myself. I did, and I was shocked to find innumerable grammatical and historical errors.

[Note: Following are a few of the many *mistakes* in the Arabic grammar of the Qur'an. They are shown in Arabic, so those who know Arabic can see the obvious errors.]

### **Male vs. Female, Singular vs. Plural, Subject vs. Object**

In *Sura Al-A'raf* below,<sup>[4]</sup> Muhammad referred to the number in the female form, when the correct form would be the male form. Then he wrote the word in the plural that was supposed to be in the singular.

(كتب : «وقطعناهم اثنتي عشرة أسباطا.») (الأعراف 160)

«وكان ينبغي أن يكتب : «وقطعناهم اثني عشر سبطاً»

In the next verse, from *Sura At-Tauba*,<sup>[5]</sup> he wrote in the singular form what should have been written in the plural form:

(كتب : “وخضتم كالذي خاضوا.» (التوبة 69)

«وكان ينبغي أن يكتب: «وخضتم كالذين خاضوا

Muhammad also managed to put the subject form in place of the object form and vice-versa – an unforgivable mistake in the Arabic language, as in Sura *Al-Hajj*: [6]

(كتب : “هذان خصمان اختصوا في ربهم» (الحج 19)

«وكان ينبغي أن يكتب : «هذان خصما اختصما في ربهما

Another verse with a gross mistake is in Sura *Ta Ha*: [7]

. (كتب : “إن هذان لساحران.» (طه 63)

«وكان ينبغي أن يكتب : «إن هذين لساحران

Here is a gross error that would have made Muhammad flunk Arabic class, in Sura *Al-Ma'idah* [8]

(كتب : “إن الذين آمنوا والذين هادوا والصابئين.» (المائدة 69)

«وكان ينبغي أن يقول : «إن الذين آمنوا والذين هادوا والصابئون

Another clear mistake, in Sura *Al-Baqara*: [9]

(كتب : “لا ينال عهدي الظالمين.» (البقرة 124)

«وكان ينبغي أن يقول : «لا ينال عهدي الظالمون

In Sura *Al-A'raf*: [10], the male form was written mistakenly for the female form (a huge grammatical mistake)...

(كتب : “إن رحمة الله قريب.» (الأعراف 56)

«وكان ينبغي أن يقول : «إن رحمة الله قريبة

Here, the form of the verb was changed from present tense to the imperative mood (a major error), in *Al-Munafiqun*: [11]

(كتب : “ربي لولا اخرجتني إلى اجل قريب فأصدق وأكن من الصالحين.» (المنافقون 10)

«وكان ينبغي أن يقول : «ربي لولا اخرجتني إلى اجل قريب فأصدق وأكون من الصالحين

As mentioned before, numerous major grammatical mistakes fill the Qur'an. Muslim scholars are quite aware that pagan pieces of literature hung on the walls of the Ka'aba (المعلقات) were without any grammatical mistakes. They were much more eloquent rhetoric than the “miraculous” Qur'an, even though the authors were mere

humans. True, they were well-known poets and writers, but they were not prophets or gods, just human beings make mistakes. *But they did not.*

Those pieces of literature were so astounding that Arab poets, and writers of the present and past centuries have not been able to match such eloquence.

In the meantime, the Qur'an, believed by Muslims to be miraculous, *is full of mistakes*. Should we say that those pagan Arabic writings (which are without mistakes) were miraculous? Al-Suyuti said:

“It is not lawful, at all, to read the Qur'an without reading it in the Arabic language; even if the reader is not good at reading Arabic.”

He said this because most Muslim scholars agree that translating the Qur'an into other languages causes it to lose much of its meaning and eloquence. They claim that when it was translated into English it lost its linguistic value.

If it is not lawful for people to read the Qur'an or pray in any language other than Arabic, we must ask:

“Is Allah the god of the Arabs only?” “Is he not the God of all people?” “Does He not speak other languages—or only the Arabic, as Muhammad mentioned several times in the Qur'an?”

Muhammad went even further, claiming that the language of heaven will be Arabic, even though there are less than three hundred million Arabic-speaking people in the world. The population of the world, as we enter the 21st century, is over six billion people. *That means only 5% speak Arabic.*

Muhammad said:

“Love the Arabs for three reasons: because I am an Arab, because the Qur'an came down upon us in Arabic, [\[12\]](#) and because the language of the people in Paradise is Arabic.” [\[13\]](#)

However, the Arabian Prophet contradicted himself in another place, saying:

“There is no difference between an Arab and a non-Arab except in piety.” [\[14\]](#)

If the Qur'an was meant for the whole world, it should come in the language that could be translated without much loss in value and meaning. Moreover, if the Qur'an was from God, it should be applicable to every generation and every place, not just for Arabs, and only during a certain epoch!

### **Other Reasons for Confusion**

When the Qur'an was written, it didn't have the needed dots on the letters, [\[15\]](#) which are most important in Arabic. The Sheikh of Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah, [\[16\]](#) wrote:

“The companions of Muhammad did not put the dots on the letters nor did they put the accents on the letters. For this, the word could be read two different ways, having two different meanings such as: ون و يعلمون ،

صار وضار ، ش س

This particular fact – the writing of the Qur’an without dots – was confirmed by Al-Suyuti.[\[17\]](#)

That there are many mistakes in the Qur’an is well known among Muslims, and cannot be denied by their scholars. I ask: “Did not “Gabriel” realize the importance of the accents and dots on letters when the Qur’an was sent down?”

Long after the Qur’an was written, Abu Al-Aswad Al-Du’ali and Saybubia (Khalil Ibn Ahmad) finished the job “Gabriel” was incapable of doing. When putting the accents and dots on the letters was finished, a clash happened among Muslims, and it is still going on today: the Qur’an is being read in two different ways, and Muslim scholars confirm that fact! However, Muhammad confessed that the Qur’an could be read in seven different ways (that would give different meanings to many of its words) as was recorded in the *Ahadith* of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.[\[18\]](#)

Differences in the recitation of the Qur’an by different Muslim scholars have caused many different interpretations of the laws and the legislation of different Muslim countries.[\[19\]](#)

When I was a young child, I asked my religion teacher why the alif was deleted from all the words where it should have been placed. He had no answer then, and Muslim scholars still do not have an answer. I wondered if “Gabriel,” the archangel, had eaten that alif on his way down to dictate those words to Muhammad. Who knows? Maybe the dictionary of “Gabriel” did not have the alif in it.

They say the Qur’an is a miracle. Could it be a miracle because of the hundreds of *verses* that no one has been able to find a meaning for? It is even hard to find meanings for some of the *words*!

Once, an Arabian asked Abu Bakr about the phrase in the Qur’an, “And the fruit and Abban وفاكهة وأبأ”. He answered, “I cannot explain what I do not know.” But Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the third Caliph, said sarcastically in one of his Friday sermons:

“The fruit we do know, but what is the meaning of Abban? I personally challenge the Muslim scholars to tell me the meaning of the phrase in Sura of Mary 19:13 where it says: ”وحنان من لدنا وزكوة وكان تقياً“

(I wrote the above phrase in Arabic because it cannot be understood or translated coherently). Muslim scholars gave it twelve different interpretations. Sa’id Ibn Jubair wrote about this verse:

“I asked Sa’id Ibn Abbas about it, but he did not answer me.”

The Imam Al-Suyuti quoted Ibn Abbas himself:

“I do not know the meaning of many words in the Qur’an.”

I also want to note some words and letters that are symbols in the Qur’an to see if anyone has an interpretation:

“خم ون وك هـ ي ع ص ، ح م ع س ق ... إلخ”

Al-Suyuti wrote:

“The beginning of all the suras are mysteries that no one knows the meaning thereof except for Allah.”

When they asked him what TAH, YASEEN and SAD طه ، ياسين وص mean, he said:

“I do not know. However, I think TAHA and YASEEN were names that Muhammad’s god used to call him by. For example, when his god addressed him in the sura, he said: ‘TAHA, we have not sent down the Qur’an to thee to be in distress.’ So was also the word YASEEN used. But I surely confess that I am incapable of knowing the meaning of SSAD and QAF.”[\[20\]](#)

The Qur’an itself acknowledges that it quotes Bible verses and stories. One admission is in the following verse:

“He is he who sent down upon you, and from him, commanding verses from the very Book, and others like them.”[\[21\]](#) In this verse, the alif was deleted from three words represented in the highlighted ones.

### **Meaninglessness!**

Many Qur’an verses have no meaning, and if a meaning is given, Muslim scholars differ with each other concerning it. For example, Sura *Ar-Rahman*, 55:6, says:

“The star and the tree both bow down in adoration.”

On this, Al-Baydawi,[\[22\]](#) Jalalayn[\[23\]](#) and Zamkhashri[\[24\]](#) all agreed that “star” means some herbs. But many other scholars, especially the contemporaries, disagree, saying it means the stars in heaven. Even in different English translations of the Qur’an, some translations use the word herbs, and others use star. But there is no relation between stars and herbs.[\[25\]](#)

As mentioned above, there have always been clashes among Muslims on the interpretation of meaningless verses.[\[26\]](#)

The Qur'an is full of grammatical mistakes, historical mistakes and many meaningless phrases that no one can be sure what they mean, Yet Muslims still boast that the Qur'an is a linguistic Miracle. They even dare to challenge, and the Qur'an itself challenges, people to write at least one verse that matches its eloquence. Muhammad boasted that it was his only miracle. Is it possible that the Qur'an is a miracle because of its eloquence when it really *lacks* that eloquence in many verses and paragraphs?

On the other hand, if we compare the Qur'an to the seven famous Arabic poems called the "Hanging Poems," the Qur'an's position would have to be #8 in rhetoric and eloquence — after we forget about its huge grammatical and historical mistakes! These were the poems etched on the Ka'aba unto this day, which were presented to Muhammad by the people of Mecca as the works that he could not even come *close* to matching.

### **Inspiration of Muhammad's Companions?**

More evidence that proves that the Qur'an is man-made and not heavenly is this fact: ***many of its verses did not come down from heaven***, but rather ***came up*** from Muhammad's companions and his wives. Were, therefore, Abu Bakr and Umar Al-Khattab also prophets for their active participation in the writing of the Qur'an? Who knows? Let us see...

#### **Abu Bakr**

One Sura says:

"Muhammad is no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. If he died or was slain, will ye then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah, but Allah will reward the grateful."[\[27\]](#)

---

[\[1\]](#) Abdul Baset Abdel Samad, a popular reciter of the Qur'an.

[\[2\]](#) 2.5% - that is, Al-Zakat. See Chapter 4, Footnote #54.

[\[3\]](#) The Bible, Proverbs 1:7. See also 9:10; Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; & Ecclesiastes 12:13. Compare to Sura Al-Fatir (the Creator) 35:28.

[\[4\]](#) See Sura Al-A'raf (the Heights), 7:160.

[\[5\]](#) See Sura At-Tauba (Repentance) 9:69.

[\[6\]](#) See Sura Al-Hajj (the Pilgrimage) 22:69

[\[7\]](#) See Sura Ta Ha 20:63.

[\[8\]](#) See Sura Al-Ma'idah (the Table) 5:69.

[9] See Sura Al-Baqara (the Cow) 2:124.

[10] See Sura Al-A'raf (the Heights) 7:56.

[11] See Sura Al-Munafiqun (the Hypocrites) 63:10

[12] More specifically, the Qur'an was "revealed" in the Quraish dialect. See the Hadith of Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 6, Book 61, #507.

[13] See Hadith #5751 (Mishkat, Vol. 3). Not in the Ahadith of Bukhari or Muslim, but is a genuine saying of Muhammad, according to Al-Qari's Dictionary of Hadith Forgeries (Al-Asrar Al-Marfu'a), translation and notes by GF Haddad. Arabic also emphasized in the Qur'an. See Suras Ash-Shu'ara' (the Poets) 26:195; Az-Zumar (the Crowds) 39:28; Ha Mim Sajdah (Revelations Well-Expounded) 41:3, 44; Ash-Shura (the Counsel) 42:7; Az-Zukhruf (the Embellishment) 43:3; Ad-Dukhan (the Smoke) 44:58; Al-Ahqaf (the Sandhills) 46:12; and An-Nahl (the Bee) 16:103.

[14] See Chapter 3, Footnote #18 for details.

[15] Called "diacritical points," which may change the actual meaning of a word or a word's tense, voice or mood; or they may distinguish between one word and a completely different word.

[16]Majmoo' Al-Fatawa (Compilation of Fatawa), Vol. XVII, p. 101.

[17] See Al-Ittiqan by Al-Suyuti, Vol. I, p. 160. See also Behind the Veil: Unmasking Islam by Abd El Schafi (1996), pp. 189-194.

[18] See the Hadith of Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Book 41, #601; Vol. 4, Book 54, #442; Vol. 6, Book 61, #513-514; Vol. 9, Book 93, #640; and the Hadith of Sahih Muslim, Book 4, Chapter 139: "The Qur'an Has Been Revealed in Seven Modes of Reading' and Its Meaning," #1782-1790.

[19] For more information, see Al-Ittiqan by Al-Suyuti, Vol. 1, pp. 157 & 226, and other sections of Part Four in his book.

[20]Al-Ittiqan by Al-Suyuti, Vol. III, p. 29.

[21] Sura Al-Imran (the Family of Imran) 3:7, author's translation.

[22]Al-Baydawi, p. 705.

[23]Jalalayn, p. 450.

[24]Al-Kashaf by Al-Zamkhashri, Vol. IV, p. 443.

[25] For instance, compare Yusuf Ali's "herbs" to Pickthall's "stars!"



[26] More meaningless verses can be found in: Suras Al-Baqara (the Cow) 2:143; At-Tauba (Repentance) 9:85; Al-Qiyamah (the Resurrection) 75:17; and Al-Furqan (the Criterion) 25:43.

[27] Sura Al-Imran (the Family of Imran) 3:144, author's translation.