

THE BIBLE VS. THE QURAN

by Abdullah Al Araby.

The Quran is the Muslims' Holy Book, the same as is the Bible to Christians; Muslims regard the Quran as the infallible utterance of the Almighty. "Quran" is an Arabic word which means recitation. The name was applied by Mohammed to each individual portion of the Book, but was later used for the whole Book.

Mohammed proclaimed the Quran as the miracle that proved his prophethood. There has been, however, much debate among intellectual Muslims on the issue of the miracle of the Quran. Some Arabic scholars like az-Zamakhshari noted more than one hundred grammatical errors in the Quran.

The Quran is written in Arabic poetic prose. It is divided into 114 surahs or chapters, and contains the religious, social, civil, commercial, military, and legal code of Islam. It also contains stories which occur in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures and Apocrypha.

The Quran, however, contradicts the Bible in many of the details of these stories, including some of the names of the people involved. When faced by these contradictions, Muslims justify them by claiming that the Bible must have been altered. Yet in no place in the Quran do we find the Omniscient (knowing everything) Allah pointing out these altered passages of the Bible, or revealing the correct ones. Such a claim can also be disputed by historical evidence, as well as by the Quran itself, which approved of the Bible, and said so repeatedly:

"O ye People of the Book! Believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you....." Surah 4:47 (See also Surahs 2:40, 41; 2:91; 20:133; 26:192-198; 29:47 & 46:10-12.)

There is enough evidence to support the claim that the Quran may have been tempered with. Nobody knows where the original Quran is. The Quran that we have in our hands now is called the Uthman's Quran, which was collected long after Mohammed's death. Parts of the original Quran must have been lost, after many of the reciters of the Quran died or were killed in battle. Uthman, the third Caliph (successor of Mohammed) gathered what was left of the Quran, arranged it by length of Surahs rather than chronologically, then burned all other existing copies.

The Bible, in the other hand, has stood the test of time. To suggest that the Bible has been altered is against both reason and historic findings.

Neither Christians nor Jews can reasonably be accused of altering their Scriptures. One reason is that they didn't have anything to gain from doing so, and if they did, they wouldn't willingly spill their blood defending it. In the book of Revelation God puts a severe punishment on those who add to or take away, any part of God's Word.

"for I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Revelation 22:18 & 19. The Jews were also commanded not to commit such a terrible act.

"You shall not add unto the word which I command you neither shall you diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I command you." Deuteronomy 4:2

Furthermore, Christians and Jews did not alter their Scriptures based on historic evidence. Many manuscripts of early copies of the Bible were discovered through the years, and were found to match the text we have now. Here are some of these famous manuscripts: The Sinaitic - It was written in the middle of the fourth century, about 270 years before Islam. It contains the whole of the New Testament and a large part of the Old Testament. It is now kept in the British Museum

The Alexandrian - It was written in the early fifth century, more than 200 years before Islam. It contains the whole Bible, except a few pages that have been lost. It is also kept in the British Museum.

The Vatican - It was written in the early fourth century, about 300 years before Islam. It contains the whole Bible. It is now kept in the Vatican Library at Rome.

These and other manuscripts such as Codex Ephraemi and the Dead Sea Scrolls and the thousands of other copies or part of copies of the early Bibles prove beyond doubt that the Bible could not possibly be altered or corrupted.

-THE QURAN CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE-

Many stories of the Bible that have been recorded in the Quran were misquoted and are contradictory to the Bible. Here are a few examples:

The story of Cain and Abel

After Cain killed his brother Abel, The Quran says that "God sent a raven who scratched the ground to show him how to hide the shame of his brother." Surah 5:34. This is not mentioned in the Bible.

The story of Noah and the flood

The Quran in Surah 11:42 & 43 says that one of the sons of Noah refused to go into the Ark and was drowned in the flood, while the Bible says that all three sons of Noah went into the Ark with him and were saved from the flood (Genesis 7:7).

In Surah 11:44 the Quran says that the Ark came to rest on top of mount Judi, While the Bible says that it was Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:4).

The Story of Abraham

Abraham's father, according to the Quran, is Azar (Surah 6:74), while the Bible says that his name was Terah (Genesis 11:26).

The Quran says Abraham had two sons, the Bible says they were eight

The Quran says Abraham lived in the valley of Mecca (Surah 14:37), while the Bible says he lived in Hebron (Genesis 13:18).

In the Quran Abraham sacrificed Ismael Surah 37:100-112), while the Bible says it was Isaac (Genesis 22).

The Quran says that Abraham had two wives; in the Bible he had three.

The Quran says that he built the Kaaba (Surah 2:125-127). The Bible has no record of that.

The story of Moses

The Quran states that the one who adopted Moses was Pharaoh's wife (Surah 28:9), while the Bible says it was Pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:5)

The Quran states that Haman lived in Egypt during Moses' time (Surah 27:4-6), while the Bible says that Haman lived in Persia during King Ahasuerus time (Esther 3:1).

The story of Mary (the mother of Jesus)

The Quran states that her brother was Aaron (Surah 19:28), while the Bible says that Aaron lived 1300 years before Mary (Numbers 26:59). That she gave birth to Jesus under a palm tree (Surah 19:13), while the Bible says it was in a stable (Luke 2:7).

That Jesus spoke and made miracles at the time he was a baby (Surah 19:24-26). The Bible has no record of that.

That Zacharias could not speak for three days (Surah 19:10), while the Bible says he could not speak until the child was born (or for about 9 months) Luke 1:20.

-CAN GOD MAKE THESE ERRORS?-

Muslims believe that the Quran is a direct utterance of Allah (God). Because God is infallible, one would expect the Quran to be infallible also. However, by examining the Quran, we are faced by many statements that go against the undisputed facts of science. It would be unacceptable if such errors were attributed to a learned human being, worse yet to attribute them to the Omniscient God. The list of the errors in the Quran is very long, and is discussed in full detail in other books. Here, we have a limited space to list only a few samples. Our goal is to question whether God can make such errors, whether God was in fact the author of the Quran.

Geographical Errors

✓ The Earth is stationary

"He created the heavens without any pillars that ye can see; He set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you; and He scattered through it beasts of all kinds. We send down rain from the sky, and produce on the earth every kind of noble creature, in pairs." Surah 31:10

- ✓ The Sun sets in a spring

"Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it set in a spring of murky water: Near it he found a People: We said: "O Zul-qarnain! (thou hast authority,) either to punish them, or to treat them with kindness." Surah 18:86

Historical Errors

- ✓ Pharaoh built the tower of Babel in Egypt

"Pharaoh said: "O Chiefs! no god do I know for you but myself: therefore, O Haman! light me a (kiln to bake bricks) out of clay, and build me a lofty palace, that I may mount up to the god of Moses: but as far as I am concerned, I think (Moses) is a liar!" Surah 28:38

- ✓ Alexander the Great was a prophet

"They ask thee concerning Zul-qarnain (Alexander the Great) Say, "I will rehearse to you something of his story." Verily We established his power on earth, and We gave him the ways and the means to all ends. One (such) way he followed, until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it set in a spring of murky water: Near it he found a People: We said: "O Zul-qarnain! (thou hast authority,) either to punish them, or to treat them with kindness." Surah 18:83-88

Ethical Errors

- ✓ Legalizing perjury

"God will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts; and He is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing." Surah 2:225

- ✓ Legalizing murder

"O Apostle! rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding." Surah 8:65

✓ Legalizing deceit

"God will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths: for expiation, feed ten indigent persons, on a scale of the average for the food of your families; or clothe them; or give a slave his freedom. If that is beyond your means, fast for three days. That is the expiation for the oaths ye have sworn. But keep to your oaths. Thus doth God make clear to you His signs, that ye may be grateful." Surah 5:89

Scientific Errors

✓ A corps leaning on a staff for a year

"Then, when We decreed (Solomon's) death, nothing showed them his death except a little worm of the earth, which kept (slowly) gnawing away at his staff: so when he fell down, the Jinns saw plainly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have tarried in the humiliating Penalty (of their Task)." Surah 34: 14

✓ A nap lasting three hundred and nine years

"So they stayed in their Cave three hundred years and (some) add nine (more)" Surah 18: 9-26

Legal Errors

✓ Scourging the witness

"And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations), - flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after: for such men are wicked transgressors; -" Surah 24: 4

✓ God ordains taking spoils

"And know that out of all the booty that ye may acquire (in war), a fifth share is assigned to God,- and to the Apostle, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer,- if ye do believe in God and in the revelation We sent down to Our servant on the Day of Testing,- the Day of the meeting of the two forces. For God hath power over all things." Surah 8: 41

Since the Bible came first, and since there is every reason to believe that the Bible was kept uncorrupted, Muslim theologians have lots of explaining to do with regard to such contradictions in their Book.