

Excerpts from the Qur'an

BY THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST BENEFICENT, THE MOST MERCIFUL

Muslims do not consider the Qur'an to be a "book" in the ordinary sense. They believe that each and every word in it is directly from God, revealed through his final Messenger Muhammad (May Allah's peace be upon him and his progeny).

There are several qualities that set the Qur'an apart from other religious scriptures. The Qur'an, in its current form, is exactly the same as it was when it was revealed. It was revealed over a period of 23 years, during which time the companions of Muhammad (May Allah's peace be upon him and his progeny) meticulously recorded each and every word he uttered. They did not add, delete, or modify even a single word of it. As a result, the Qur'an, in its current form, is exactly the same, word-for-word, as when it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace be upon him and his progeny). Moreover, the dwellers of Arabia had a great oral tradition, and hundreds of early Muslims had committed the entire Qur'an to memory, and transmitted it to successive generations through oral recitation. Even today, the Qur'an is the most read "book" in the world, and thousands of Muslims have its entire contents memorized.

The Qur'an was revealed in the most perfect and eloquent Arabic prose. No Arabic text in the world can compare to its rhythmic pattern or consistency. In fact, the Qur'an consistently challenges skeptics to "produce a chapter like it." The Qur'an was revealed to a community with a great oral tradition. Among them were refined poets, storytellers, and magicians. And yet, even these dwellers of 7th century Arabia, who prided themselves in their poetic prowess, proved unable to meet the Qur'an's challenge.

The Qur'an itself relates the following verse:

Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an? If it had been from other than Allah they would have found therein much incongruity. [4:82]

For over 1400 years, the Qur'an has been used to construct sound systems of social justice, economics, politics, legislation, jurisprudence, law, international relations, and scientific inquiry. Unlike scriptures from other religious traditions, the Qur'an does not contain a single error or inconsistency, whether scientific or otherwise. In fact, the Qur'an contains clear verses regarding the atomic theory of matter, relativity, planetary orbits, embryology, chemistry, physics, cosmology, animal and plant biology. Consider the following:

Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?

And We have set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them, and We have made therein broad highways (between mountains) for them to pass through: that they may receive Guidance.

And We have made the heavens as a canopy well guarded: yet do they turn away from the Signs which these things (point to)!

It is He Who created the Night and the Day, and the sun and the moon: all (the celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course. [21:30-33]

And He it is Who spread the earth and made in it firm mountains and rivers, and of all fruits He has made in it two kinds; He makes the night cover the day; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect. [13:3]

Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay); Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then we developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the best to create! [23:112-14]

He created you (all) from a single person: then created, of like nature, his mate; and He sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs: He makes you, in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness, such is Allah, your Lord and Cherisher: to Him belongs (all) dominion. There is no god but He: then how are ye turned away (from your true Centre)? [39:6]

... there does not lie concealed from your Lord the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heaven, nor any thing less than that nor greater, but it is in a clear book. [10:61]

Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour [Dukhaan], so He said to it and to the earth: Come both, willingly or unwillingly. They both said:

We come willingly. [41:11]

The word used in the above verse for vapour is "Dukhaan." In Arabic, the word *Dukhaan* denotes a gaseous mass. This is in complete harmony with the modern scientific discovery that planets and galaxies came into existence through variations in the density of the helium and hydrogen gases that made up the primordial elements of the universe. It was impossible for the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him and his progeny), who was an unlettered man with no formal schooling, to have deduced these miraculous findings on his own. Many of these scientific findings were discovered in the 20th century; and yet the Qur'an spoke of them over 1400 years ago!

The Qur'an also deals with the foundations of belief, morality, the history of humanity, worship, knowledge, wisdom, the attainment of spiritual perfection, and the relationship between Allah and His creation. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a living, perfect miracle. Through it, Allah penetrates deep into the hearts, and speaks directly to the soul.

*When the heaven is cleft asunder,
When the planets are dispersed,
When the seas are poured forth,
And the sepulchres are overturned,
A soul will know what it hath sent before (it) and
what it left behind.
O man! What hath made thee careless concerning thy
Lord, the Bountiful,
Who created thee, then fashioned, then proportioned
thee?*

*Into whatsoever form He willed, He casteth thee.
Nay! but you give the lie to the judgment day,*

*Lo! there are above you guardians,
Generous and recording,
Who know (all) that ye do.
Lo! the righteous verily will be in delight
And lo! the wicked verily will be in hell;
They will burn therein on the Day of Judgment,
And will not be absent thence
Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Day of
Judgment is!
Again, what will convey unto thee what the Day of
Judgment is!*

*The day on which no soul hath power at all for any
(other) soul. The (absolute) command on that day
is Allah's.*

[The Cleaving Asunder, 82]

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for those who understand. (3:190)

Unlike other religious scriptures, the Qur'an constantly appeals to one's reason. The Qur'an's wisdom reflects a certain reality. It guides to the Truth. It does not call upon the reader to accept a blind or dogmatic ideology. Rather, it presents the reader with the existential truths of existence, and calls upon the individual to acknowledge the beauty and majesty of Allah and His creation. Consider the following incident from the life of the Prophet Abraham (May Allah's peace be upon him and his progeny):

And thus did We show Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure.

So when the night over-shadowed him, he saw a star; said he: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said: I do not love the setting ones.

Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said: If my Lord had not guided me I should certainly be of the erring people.

Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: Is this my Lord? Is this the greatest? So when it set, he said: O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allah).

Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists.

And his people disputed with him. He said: Do you dispute with me respecting Allah? And He has guided me indeed; and I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him, unless my Lord pleases; my Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge; will you not then mind?

And how should I fear what you have set up (with Him), while you do not fear that you have set up with Allah that for which He has not sent down to you any authority; which then of the two parties is surer of security, if you know?

Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who go aright.

And this was Our argument which we gave to Ibrahim against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing.

[6:75-88]

Criterion for Truth

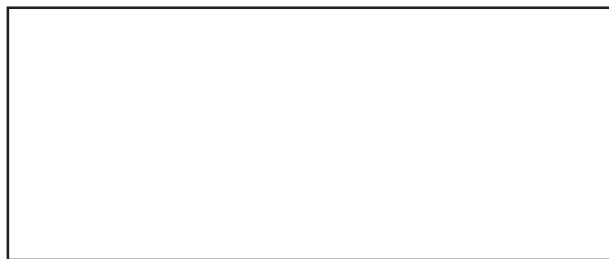
In light of the wisdom of Islam that has just been presented, take some time to consider the following:

- Are the teachings of your belief system rationally tenable?
- Is your belief system universally applicable?
- Does your belief system enhance your progress towards spiritual perfection?
- Who is the creator of your belief system? Is he a creation or is he the Creator?
- Has your belief system been corrupted by superstitions, myths, or man-made philosophies?
- Does your belief system concur with the discoveries of modern science?
- Could a human being have invented your belief system?

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Excerpts from

The Qur'an

At a Glance



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