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Front cover: San Markand Mosque, Central Asia, circa A.D. 1660.

Special thanks to Sam Shamoun for his assistance in gathering together various articles that refute Islam.

Islam Part 4: Miscellaneous Issues

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1. Brief introduction to Muslim claims for the Quran

The Quran is held to be God's perfect and final revelation to mankind. It was revealed by God to Muhammad over a 23-year period through the medium of the angel Gabriel. The first revelation took place in the year A.D. 610 to Muhammad at the age of forty. This lasted until the latter's death in A.D. 633.

The Quran consists of 114 chapters called suras which are placed haphazardly, having no chronological sequence. This is due to the fact that Muhammad died unexpectedly, having failed to produce a chronological order of the chapters in the Quran.

Below we present some of the claims made by Muslims in support of the Quran's divine origin and our response to them.

A. Perfect preservation of text

The Quran has been transmitted with no variant readings, being virtually identical to the codices compiled by Muhammad's companions.

B. Perfect eloquence

This argument is made stronger when one realizes that Muhammad, according to Islamic traditions, was illiterate. This makes it impossible for Muhammad to be the author of a Book considered by Muslims to be the epic of Arabic poetry and eloquence.

C. Scientific accuracy of the text

It is presumed that not only does the Quran contain no demonstrable errors of science, but foretold certain facts only recently discovered. For instance, the Quran accurately lays out the different stages of embryonic development centuries before modern science ever discovered them.

This is supposedly documented by a French doctor, Maurice Bucaille, in his work titled *The Bible, Quran and Science*.

D. The challenge of the Quran

In S. 2:23 the Quran challenges unbelievers:

“And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, *Then produce a Sura like thereun to; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) Besides God, if your (doubts) are true*” (Y. Ali).

Accordingly, this challenge to produce a sura like it has never been met for nearly 1,400 years, affirming the divine origin of the revelation.

1a. Response to claims

A. To assume that the preservation of a text proves its inspiration is fallacious since every book that has been preserved accurately would be the word of God.

Besides, the Quran is not free from variant readings since thousands of conflicting readings existed during the caliphate of Uthman (d. A.D. 658), Islam's third leader. This has been documented by Arthur Jeffery's work *Materials for the History of the Text of the Quran*.

B. Eloquence does not prove inspiration since there are records of men who, in spite of certain handicaps, were able to produce masterpieces that have stood the test of time. One example is the blind poet Homer who produced two Greek classics, *Odyssey* and *Illiad*.

C. Again the claim that a book containing accurate scientific information qualifies it as the word of God would make all documents that contain no factual errors God's word.

Furthermore, a careful analysis of the Quran indicates that it is far from being free from scientific errors. For instance, in S. 18:86 we are told that the sun sets in a muddy spring; that men were transformed into apes and swine (S. 2:65; 5:60; 7:166).

Finally, the work done by Dr. Maurice Bucaille is far from being an unbiased critique of the Bible and the Quran. Bucaille often has to mistranslate and twist certain words of the Quran in order to arrive at his conclusions. An excellent response to Bucaille's work is Dr. William Campbell's *The Quran and the Bible in Light of History and Science* available from Middle East Resources, P.O. Box 96, Upper Darby, PA 19082.

D. This challenge of the Quran to produce a sura like it is purely subjective, since no matter what is produced a Muslim can never acknowledge that the challenge has been met. This stems primarily from the Quran itself which disallows any possibility whatsoever for it to be defeated:

“But if ye cannot—AND OF A SURETY YE CANNOT—then fear the Fire whose fuel Is men and stones,—which is prepared for those who reject faith” (S. 2:24, Ali).

Hence, to even attempt to meet the challenge defeats the purpose, seeing that a devout Muslim will never admit to the criteria being met.

2. Muslim claims for Muhammad's prophethood

A. Muhammad's integrity

Presumably, Muhammad was the epitome of virtue and honesty. His life was exemplary, a model for humanity to follow.

B. Advent foretold in previous Scriptures

The Quran claims that Muhammad's advent was foretold by God to both Moses and Jesus, as well as to their followers (S.7:156–157; 61:6).

Two prophecies often pointed out by Muslims to prove that Muhammad is predicted in the Holy Bible are [Deuteronomy 18:15–20](#), the Prophet like Moses; and Jesus' promise to the disciples that another Comforter was to arrive in [John 14:16–17, 26; 15:26](#), and [16:7](#).

2a. Response to claims

A. An examination of Muhammad's life opens up many questions which need to be addressed. For example, the Quran itself testifies that Muhammad was a sinner in suras 4:105–

107, 9:48, 40:55, 47:19, and 48:1–2. In fact, in S. 80:1–10 Muhammad is rebuked for ignoring a blind man’s request focusing instead on a wealthy Arab noble.

We are also told that Muhammad was allowed to take his adopted son’s divorcee as his wife in S. 33:36–38. To make matters more difficult, Muslim historians such as al-Baidawi indicate it was Muhammad who was the cause of the divorce in the first place.

Another questionable aspect of his life is the fact that he took a nine-year-old girl by the name of Aisha to be his bride. This becomes more astonishing when we realize that Muhammad was 56 years old at the time (Bukhari vol. 7:64).

B. There are no predictions of Muhammad in the Bible since the prophecies in question do not refer to him at all. The first prophecy is referring to Christ, who truly was the Prophet like Moses (cf. [John 1:45](#), [5:46](#); [Acts 3:20–26](#)).

The second prophecy refers to the advent of the Holy Spirit, who arrived shortly thereafter on the day of Pentecost, empowering the church of Christ to carry out the great commission of world evangelism (cf. [Luke 24:49](#); [Acts 1:8](#), [2:1–47](#)).

For a more in-depth critique of the above Muslim claims consult John Gilchrist’s *Is Muhammad Foretold in the Bible?* available from South Asian Friendship Center, P.O. Box 607673, Chicago, Ill., 60660

3. Muslim view of the Bible

Muslims believe that God in the past revealed inspired books to certain prophets for their respective communities to follow. These books include the Book of Abraham, the Law of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the Gospel of Jesus (S. 5:44–47; 21:105; 87:18–19).

Yet, Muslims presume that these books became corrupt in time and no longer reflect the original revelations. It therefore became necessary for the Quran to be given in order to expose the corruptions and verify all that remained intact in the previous scriptures.

In response to this, it must be reiterated that nowhere in the Quran does it ever say that the Bible has ever been corrupted. In fact, the Quran affirms that an uncorrupted Bible existed during the time of Muhammad (S. 2:113; 3:79, 93–94; 5:44–48; 28:48–49; 32:23; 53:36).

We currently have in our possession copies of the Holy Bible dating before, during and after the time of Muhammad that are virtually identical to the Bible we have today. This destroys the Muslim myth of Bible corruption since the Quran testifies to the authority and preservation of the biblical text.

In fact, the Quran commands Muhammad to verify his message by appealing to the book of the Judeo-Christian communities in S. 10:94

4. The nature of God contrasted

A. Muslim perspective

God is absolutely One, allowing for no plurality in the Being of God. In fact, to assume a plurality is to commit the unpardonable sin called *Shirk*, association of partners with Allah (S. 4:116).

It is not surprising then, to find that the God of Islam is not a Triune Being of Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

“Say: He is Allah (Arabic term for God), the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; *He begetteth not, nor is He begotten*; And there is none like unto Him” (S. 112:1–4).

This verse will not only not allow for plurality, but denies God as Father since he “begetteth not,” i.e. has no children. Nor will it allow for God in the flesh, the Son Incarnate, since he cannot be “begotten.” Hence, the first two Persons of the Christian Godhead are eliminated in Islam.

Finally, in Islam the Holy Spirit is not God but the Angel of revelation, Gabriel. Hence, to assume that Muslims and Christians worship the same God is simply erroneous seeing that the Muslim deity is a singularity within unity.

B. Christian perspective

The God of the Holy Bible is a perfect Tri-Personal Being, a plurality within an indivisible unity. God exists in three distinct, yet inseparable Persons; each Person being fully God, each existing in perfect harmony and unity ([Matthew 28:18–20](#)).

The Bible affirms God as:

- The Father—[1 Peter 1:2](#)
- The Son—[Titus 2:13](#); [2 Peter 1:1](#)
- The Holy Spirit—[Acts 5:3–4](#); [Hebrews 9:14](#)
- Yet, all the while still one God—[Deuteronomy 6:4](#); [Galatians 3:20](#).

Note: It should be pointed out that the Quran misrepresents the Trinity by presuming that Christians worship three gods consisting of Father, Mary the mother, and Jesus their Son (cf. S. 4:171; 5:73, 116).

So embarrassing is this fact that Muslim translator A. Yusef Ali deliberately added the term trinity into his translation of the text of 4:171 and 5:73, when the word is not even in the Arabic original.

This is done in a deliberate attempt to deceive non-Arabic speaking readers into thinking that the Quran attacks the trinity when in reality it is attacking a corrupt form of tritheism.

5. The person of Christ contrasted

A. Muslim perspective

Jesus was only a messenger of God sent to preach the pure Abrahamic monotheism that was eventually perfected by Muhammad, the religion of al-Islam. He was neither God or the Son of God, and to assume such is utter blasphemy (S. 5:17, 72; 9:30).

In fact, in order for God to have a son implies that he also has a wife. This indicates that Muhammad’s understanding of sonship was purely carnal, implying that God had to have sexual relations in order to beget a son (S. 6:102; 72:3).

Christ is also given certain titles and attributes which he alone shares in the Quran, some of which include:

- He is the Word of God—[3:39](#), [45](#); [4:171](#)

- A spirit from God—4:171
- A sign and mercy to man—19:21; 21:91
- Virgin born—19:16–21
- Author of Life—3:49; 5:110—c.f. 15:28–29
- Sinless—19:19

Finally, according to the Quran Christ did not die nor was he crucified but ascended alive into heaven. From there, he will return as the final judge, ushering in the end of the age (S. 3:55; 4:157–159; 43:57, 61).

B. Christian perspective

The biblical Jesus, which is the Jesus of history, was God the Son who for our sake became a perfect man ([Matthew 1:23](#); [John 1:1–3, 14](#)).

The title, Son of God, is not to be understood in a carnal sense, but is used to assert a distinction between the first two Persons of the God-head. Furthermore, it is also used to indicate the intimate love and communion Christ has shared with the Father from eternity ([John 17:5, 24](#)).

The Bible also teaches that Jesus came as a sacrifice for our sins, that through him we might receive forgiveness and assurance of salvation ([Mark 10:45](#); [John 1:29, 3:16, 10:27–28](#)).

After dying for sinners on the cross, he was resurrected on the third day to immortal glory ([Mark 16:6–8](#); [Luke 24:33–43](#); [John 20:24–29](#); [Acts 1:1–3](#)).

From there he ascended to heaven where he now intercedes for believers. He shall also come again to receive them into glory, as well as to judge the nations ([John 14:1–3](#); [Acts 1:9–11, 3:20–21](#); [Hebrews 1:3, 7:24–25, 9:11–12](#); [Revelation 1:7–8, 17–18](#)).

Hence, because of the perfect work of Christ, believers are guaranteed eternal life seeing that Christians have a perfect savior who perfectly saves all who come to him ([John 6:39–40](#); [1 Timothy 1:15](#)).

This is something of which no Muslim can ever be assured, since he depends on his imperfect works to justify him before a holy God.

Therefore, Christians should fast and pray that God would illuminate Muslims in order that they might see and accept Jesus as their personal savior. After all, “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” ([James 5:16](#)).

Folk Islam

By Dr. Jim Romaine

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But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God, the Eternal King.
When He is angry, the earth; the nations cannot endure His wrath.
Tell them this: These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth,
will perish from the earth and from under the heavens ([Jer 10:10, 11](#)).

Introduction

The subject of Folk Islam is a vast mosaic. It is far too great a subject to try to cover in one article, so I have limited myself to just one area of Folk Islam, the animistic elements of Folk Islam and I have had to limit myself to only a few representative subjects in that area. Animism and pre-Islamic heathenism is so pervasive in Islam that it is hard to say where it begins or ends.

One could also take each of the Five Pillars of Islam, the SALAT (daily prayers), the SWAM (fast), the ZAKAT (alms), and the HAJJ (pilgrimage), but this is something Samuel Zwemer did very well in his books *The Influence of Animism on Islam* and *Studies in Popular Islam*. I highly recommend these books to you for your careful study.

Finally, as I sought to lay out some of the beliefs and practices of Folk Muslims, I have hinted at ways to approach Folk Muslims with the gospel message, but I have not discussed this at length as that is a whole other subject and worthy of its own study. With these exclusions in mind I trust that the reader will allow for some editorial judgements and practical limitations.

Definitions

Islam

What does Islam mean? Recently Muslims have said that Islam means peace. But this is not true and Christians must not succumb to this kind of Muslim propaganda. To believe this would be naive, and it contradicts Muslim dictionaries, philosophers and theologians. Prior to the rise of international Islamic terrorism, almost all Muslims defined Islam as submission and obedience. But recently to make Islam more acceptable in non-Muslim democratic countries. Muslims have tried to change the meaning of Islam. They say they base their claim on the Arabic meaning of Islam. But the Arabic word for peace is *salaam* and the Arabic root of Islam is ASLAMA—to submit.

Islam, as a technical term to denote the system of beliefs and rituals based on the Koran, is derived from the recurrent use of the verb ASLAMA (submit, sc. oneself) in the Koran to denote the characteristic attitude of the true believer in relation to God (Gibbs, vol. 1, p. 176).

The testimony of prominent Muslim theologians underlines this definition. Abul A'la Mawdudi, probably one the most well known and respected Muslim philosophers and theologians of the last century wrote:

“Islam is an Arabic word meaning submission, surrender, and obedience. As a religion, Islam stands for complete submission and obedience to God, and this is why it is called Islam” (Mawdudi, p. 1).

Hammudah Abdalaati said:

“In the religious sense the word Islam means submission to the Will of God and obedience to His Law” (Abdalaati, p. 7).

“The term Islam in the lexicon of the Arabs means submission to God. The religion of Islam is the religion of submission to the will of the omnipotent and omniscient Creator, the only God” (Farah, p. 3).

Farah in his Glossary writes:

“Islam—literally submission, i.e. to Allah” (Farah, p. 411).

“Islam is a religion based upon surrender (TASLIM) to the Will of the One God or Allah and upon the knowledge of His Unity” (Nasr, p. 3).

In the early days of Islam, those who faced Muslim invaders were given two choices—surrender or die. Those who chose to surrender were given the choice of converting to Islam or paying the JIZYA which is a protection tax extracted from those who consent to living in submission to Islamic law. These people were called the *AL-DHIMMA* or *DHIMMIS*. This illustrates the true meaning of Islam, to surrender.

Surah 113:1–5 indicates that Muhammad, himself, lived in constant fear ... (and) sensed the influences of evil ... He was especially afraid of envy (Abd Al-Masih, p. 13, 14). (All Quranic quotations are from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation, *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an* 1989 edition unless contained within a quotation.)

Say, I seek refuge With the Lord of the Dawn.
From the mischief Of created things;
From the mischief Of Darkness as it over spreads;
From the mischief Of those who practice Secret Arts;
And from the mischief Of the envious one As he practices envy.

This early Makkan Surah provides the antidote to superstition and fear... (Yusuf Ali p. 1, 715). Does this sound like a religion of peace and serenity?

The testimony of Muslims themselves shows that neither Islam nor the Qur'an is able to remove or remedy the fear of evil spirits. Just the opposite, they increase these fears and assist in the worship of spirits by their teachings. They allow Muslims to continue worshiping ancient spirits and ancestors and add new ones to those they already worshiped.

These definitions are important because they provide us with the key to understand Islam. The key to understand Islam is the word Islam. Islam means to submit and a Muslim is one who submits. In Islam the relation of the believer to Allah is that of a slave to his master. This relationship is characterized by unquestionable obedience, fear, and doubt and is further exaggerated in Folk Islam.

In Christianity, the believer's relationship to God is that of a child to his Father, [1Jn 3:1](#). It is a relationship characterized by love and trust, [1Jn 4:9, 10](#). The Bible teaches that we do not need to fear the unknown, just the opposite.

“Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” ([Jos. 1:8](#)).

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me” ([Ps. 23:4](#)).

“And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” ([Matt. 10:28](#)).

The Bible teaches that God is our Father, God loves us, protects us, and casts out all fear. ([1Jn 4:18](#)).

“How different from Muhammad is our Lord Jesus who said, ‘Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; ... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid’ ” ([John 14:27](#)) (al-Masih, p. 14).

The Islamic understanding of Allah does not give a Muslim peace and rest because he stands before an incomprehensible god who, as a dictator, does what he wills. He leads one person aright and sends another to hell. He is not a personal God as in Christianity. The individual

Muslim has no personal relationship with Allah. He cannot say to him, “You are my Father.” Allah in Islam is not a Redeemer or a Savior. Therefore, man is forced to search for whatever other powers and assistance he may find; thus, the occult enters into every aspect of Islam (al-Masih, p. 5).

Islam is a legalistic system that is rigid and unyielding. Islam gives neither peace nor hope to either the orthodox Muslim or the Folk Muslim. The orthodox Muslim lives under the tyranny of the Shari’a Law and the Folk Muslim lives in constant fear of spirits, powers, and the unknown. The Qur’an predicts this kind of hopelessness (Sura 45:24, 25).

And they say: “What is there but our life in this world?
We shall die and we live, And nothing but Time can destroy us.”
But of that they have no Knowledge: they merely conjecture:
And when our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them,

Their argument is nothing but this: they say, “Bring (back) our forefathers, if What ye say is true!”

Islam is not a religion in the sense of the word as Westerners understand religion. Bassam Madany writes:

“Islam is more than a religion. This reality is not easily recognized by the average American since his understanding of this subject is limited by an individualistic concept of religion, namely, a system of belief and a code of ethics and that are limited to the life of the individual, his family and his or her house of worship... But Islam is much more than a religion. A leading expert on the history of the Arabs and of Islam, was the late Lebanese/ American scholar, Philip Hitti. He taught at Princeton University for almost fifty years. His book, *Islam: a Way of Life*, has three parts, Part I: Islam as Religion; Part II: Islam as State; and Part III: Islam as Culture.”

“Where the needs of ordinary Muslims have been excluded from the theological expression of Islam, as under radical reform movements, Folk-Islam beliefs and practices have frequently been tolerated because Islam is, in itself, more than simply a religious system. As a way of life, accommodation to the needs of adherents is inevitable” (Musk, p. 237).

Islam is filled with divisions, conflicts, contradictions and syncretism. Nevertheless, Muslims love to talk about their supposed peace and unity. Some of these divisions are between sects, Sunnis, Shias, Sufis and Folk Muslims, some between ethnic groups, Turks, Arabs, African-Americans, Indonesians, Kurds, Kazaks, and some between political or ideological groups. There are as many divisions among Muslims as there are among Christians or any other religious belief. A Muslim once told me there were almost as many forms of Islam as there were Muslims!

The words Samuel Zwemer wrote over sixty years ago are just as true today as they were then:

“The student of Islam will never understand the common people unless he knows the reasons for their curious beliefs and practices... Witchcraft, sorcery, spells and charms are the background of native Moslem psychology to an extent that is realized only by those who have penetrated most deeply into the life of the people... Not only does superstition prevail among the vast majority of Muslims with literature on magic, the universal sale of amulets, charms, talismans, magic-squares and the practice of

geomancy, but in the very source-books of Islam, the Koran and the Traditions, these practices nearly always find their origin or their justification... Their doctrine of God includes the magic use of His names and attributes... In no monotheistic faith are magic and sorcery so firmly established as in Islam..." (Zwemer, 1939, p. viii, ix).

Forty-five years later J. Christy Wilson once again underlined this point:

"If we are to appreciate the practical out workings of the Muslim religion, which now claims one-sixth of the human race as adherents, we need to understand folk Islam" (Parshall, p. 9).

Folk Islam

Folk Islam, also known as Popular or Low Islam, which influences probably 90 percent of all Muslims, is a pragmatic belief system that seeks to deal with the problems and questions of the ordinary Muslim's everyday life. Folk Islam centers on powers and forces, problem solving and remedies of daily life, not philosophical or doctrinal teaching.

Folk Muslims—those who are doctrinally Muslims but practically animist. Folk Muslims confess Allah but worship spirits and are more concerned with magic than with Muhammad (Love, p. 2).

Folk Islam is a mixture of orthodox Islam, local indigenous beliefs, and animism. Animism is the belief that all objects are filled with unseen personal spirits and impersonal forces and powers. These spirits and powers have influence and control of human lives. It is important to discover which forces and powers are present around us and what we must do to appease them or influence them. The essence of animism is the power they use and the control of it positively or negatively.

In Folk Islam there is little effort to develop a single, coherent system of beliefs. Folk Islam is very localized in its beliefs and will vary greatly from place to place and culture to culture, but the central pagan and animistic beliefs are basic to all Folk Muslims.

The Folk Muslim does not want to know about the unity of Allah. He wants to know: How can I survive in this world? Why am I sick? What should I do to get well? What about life-cycle rites? Birth, naming, circumcision, marriage, and death, are major rites of passage. Puberty, military service and life crises—sickness, disasters, and war are lesser rites. These all provide the focus of attention for Folk Muslims and increase their fears. Its adherents exist in a world filled with fear. Some of the main fears listed by Muslims are fear of the unknown, fear of evil spirits, fear of the lack of power and of those who have power, fear of death, fear of the future, fear of inequality, fear of the meaninglessness of life, fear of sickness and its results, fear of a crisis or natural disaster, and fear of rejection and shame.

In short Folk Muslims fear the past, the present, and the future, the known and the unknown. "Fear is the continual, strong force that moves the mystic towards animistic and, at times, esoteric practices" (Parshall, p. 121). Fear is the first key word to understand Folk Islam. What would you say to a Folk Muslim about fear? How would you present the gospel of peace to a Folk Muslim? (Cf. [Jos. 1:9](#); [Ps. 18:2](#); [23](#); [27:1](#); [Lk. 2:10](#); [Jn 14:27](#)).

Paul Hiebert wrote:

