

The Quran's Challenge

“And if you doubt any part of what We have revealed, upon Our servant [Muhammad], then produce a chapter of its like, and call upon any other than Allah to bear witness for you - if what you say is true!” (Quran chapter 2, verse 23)

The Prophet Muhammad, the Last Messenger, was sent to the people as a mercy, a guide and a warner. He came to affirm the noble prophets, who came before him, and their belief in the oneness of Allah, and to abrogate, update and complete their messages to mankind. With Muhammad, as with all of the previous prophets, many people would disbelieve in them, and deny the truth of their claims. Allah sent clear signs with his messengers, as a proof against such false accusations that would confirm the truth of what they brought. These proofs were miracles.

To Moses, who brought the way of Islam to the Israelites, Allah gave among other things the staff, with miraculous powers of turning it into a snake, causing water to flow from the rock, and splitting the sea into two. Likewise, Prophet Jesus, had the ability to speak whilst only a baby, and the ability to return the dead to life. A clear evidence to the people of his time that indeed, he was an messenger from Allah. Prophet Muhammad, the Last Messenger, was similar to his predecessors. He too, was rejected by many people, and he too was sent with miracles that confirmed his position beyond all doubt. However, the prophethood of Muhammad was different to his predecessors, and so was the nature of the main miracle that Allah gave to him. Muhammad was the final prophet for all mankind to come – his message was complete.

His miracle was not temporary, like those of Moses and Jesus, which could only be directly believed in by those who saw them. Today, no Christian can bring the dead man back to life, and no Jew can demonstrate the staff as a proof for their belief. Rather, we as Muslims believe in these miracles, because they are narrated in the Holy Quran, which is itself the miracle that proves for all mankind the truth of the message of Islam. In this way, the proof of Islam is complete for all time to come, for it lies in the Book itself.

The challenge has been made clear. If anyone denies that the Quran is true, all they have to do is produce one *surah* (chapter) which is like it. If the Quran was not from Allah, then a person should be able to bring another chapter that matches or betters the style, meaning and structure of the Quran. The Arabs at the time of Muhammad could not so, nor for 1400 years, has anyone ever done this.

The Quran achieves this unique and matchless expression of the Arabic language by developing its own literary form, unique genre and employing an abundance of eloquent features unmatched by any text, past or present. Furthermore, the Quran chooses the most perfect words, word order, particle, pronoun and rhythm to enhance the intended effect.

This however is not directly witnessed by non-Arab readers. To appreciate the miracle of the Quran, one needs to reflect upon its history. The Arabic spoken 1400 years ago was at its most pure, so if the people at the time were challenged, and they failed – then who is the author?

This miracle of language is beyond the minds of men, which is proven by the fact that there is no other similar text, even of the smallest size, in existence on the face of the earth. Furthermore, compared to any prose or poetry in existence, the Quran is far superior in its depth, eloquence and character. Indeed, throughout the ages, the Quran has been used as the measure and reference against which all works of Arabic literature have been gauged.

This challenge of the Quran stands now, as it did at the time of the Prophet. In those days when the mastery of Arabic language was at its peak, it was enough for the Arabs to just hear the recitation of the Quran, and then embrace Islam, as did Umar ibn al-Khattab and others. Even the disbelievers of the Muhammad's tribe, the Quraysh, acknowledged this much; that the Quran was an unnatural phenomenon. This way, we see that the proof of the Quran, the foundation of the way of life of Islam, stands as a challenge for all mankind.

The opponents of Islam, are well versed in the history of Islam. But they resort to misinterpreting Islamic teachings, discrediting Islam, or physically oppressing Muslims. They know of the challenge in the Quran, yet they ignore it or cover it up, as they cannot match it. If indeed they were able to, they would have publicised it throughout the world, instead of spending so much time and energy in suppressing Islam through other ways.