

Ahmadiyya beliefs about Quran questioned

Introduction

"A prerequisite for any constructive dialogue is that both communities should not learn about each other through sources that are unsympathetic, critical, or even hostile: they should rather try to formulate an honest idea as to how the other faith is seen in its own authentic scriptures and as practiced by those who are truly committed to it."¹

The team at ChristianityExplained.net unanimously agrees with Dr Jamal Badawi's view on how Christians and Muslims should relate with each other. Therefore, the following questions are directed to Ahmadiyya Muslims and based on quotes made by their own leaders, the Quran and the hadith. It is hoped that these questions and future answers given in response to them will contribute towards a better understanding between the two communities.

Ahmadiyya beliefs about the Quran

Claim 1: Not a single letter of the Quran has changed.

Here is a quote from the main, official Ahmadiyya website²:

*"The text of **the Holy Quran has remained unchanged over the past 1400 years**. The millions of copies of the Quran circulating in the world today **are all identical down to a single letter**. And this is not strange since God says in the Holy Quran that He Himself will guard this book: "Surely it is We Who have revealed the Exposition, and surely it is We Who are its guardians" (15:10)³*

The same website, however, contains these statements in a different article:

*"**But by degrees variety crept into the many transcripts from this compilation⁴**, and the Caliph Othman was persuaded to apply a trenchant remedy. Zeid [the chief amanuensis of the Prophet] was appointed to the recension of his former work [of seeking out the various Suras as they were written on palm leaves, tablets, and the minds of men]; and **as the differences were mainly of dialect and expression**, a syndicate was nominated of three Coreish [Quraish] authorities to act as final judges in the matter. The various readings were searched out from all the provinces of the Empire, and the new collection was assimilated to the pure Meccan dialect in which Mahomet had given utterance to his inspiration.*

*Transcripts were then multiplied, and forwarded to the chief cities as standards for reference. **All previous copies were called in, and committed to the flames**. The recension of Zeid has been handed down unaltered. So carefully has it been followed, that there is but one and the same Coran in use throughout the vast bounds of the Mahometan world. **Various readings are almost unknown. The few limitations are almost entirely confined to the vowel forms and the diacritical points**, which, having been invented at a later period, formed no part of the original or of Zeid's recension."*

*Professor Theodor Nöldeke writes, "**Slight clerical errors there may have been**, but the Qur'an of Othman contains none but genuine elements....*

". . . Mushaf of Othman"— held by the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, is the earliest existing written version of the Qur'an."⁵

¹ Jamal Badawi and Harry Almond, *Bridgebuilding Between Christian and Muslim* (Newberg, Ore.: Barclay Press, 1982), 1-2.

² All quotes from the alislam website were accessed on 4th November 2019

³ <https://www.alislam.org/articles/about-holy-quran/>

⁴ This refers to the very first compilation of the Quran, collected under the first Caliph, Abu Bakr. The master copy was stored with the Prophet's widow, Hafsa, who was daughter of the second Caliph, Omar. It is no longer available.

⁵ <https://www.alislam.org/library/articles/Muslim-Sunrise-Spring-2010.pdf>

Questions regarding claim 1:

A)

Why does the main Ahmadiyya website contain contradictions regarding the preservation of the Quran? In one place it says, *'the Quran has remained unchanged over the past 1400 years'* and all Qurans today are *'identical down to a single letter'*. In another place we read, *'...variety crept into the many transcripts from the first compilation done under Abu Bakr.... the differences were mainly of dialect and expression', . . . (Today) 'various readings are almost unknown. The few limitations are almost entirely confined to the vowel forms..',* (referring to Qur'an of Othman) *'Slight clerical errors there may have been...'*

B)

The first compilation of the Quran has not survived. Only about half of the Quran of Othman, believed to be the second compilation has survived today.⁶ *If 'variety crept into the many transcripts from the first compilation',* the same could have happened after the second compilation. A proverb says, *"a chain is as strong as its weakest link."* Is the early history of the collection of the Quran including the burning of all the previous copies the weakest link?

C)

If *"variety crept into the many transcripts from the first compilation"*, why was there a need for the second compilation under Othman? They could just have recalled the many copies and continue to use the original.

D)

The history of how the Quran was collected depends on Hadith that were not written down by Muhammad's followers immediately after his death but several generations later.⁷ For example, Bukhari put together his Hadith collection approximately 240 years⁸ after the death of Muhammad. Only one volume survives from the 11th century. All 9 volumes are only surviving completely from the 16th century. Why should we trust such stories that have been compiled so late after events happened, especially in light of what Mirzha Ghulam Ahmed wrote here:

*"Most Ahadith, even when authentic, are at best useful probabilities. 'Surely conjecture avails nothing against truth.' (10:37) ..."*⁹

E)

The second and final collection of the Quranic verses into one single book, about half of it is believed to have survived until today, happened about 20 years after Mohammad's death. Why did that not happen during his life time already, since that was his main task? All the later confusion and fights over who has the right version could have been avoided.

F)

When commissioning the work on the second compilation of the Quran, Othman ordered, *"In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Quran, then write it in the dialect of Quraish as the Quran was revealed in their tongue."*¹⁰ How is this possible since to write in an Arabic dialect one needs diacritical marks and they were only invented in the late 8th century to early 9th century. Does Bukhari write from his perspective, 240 years later since in 7th century Arabic writing was done only in 'rasms' (consonantal text)?

G)

Ibn Masud, the first of four Quran teachers recommended by Mohammad¹¹ opposed the new official version of the Quran with the following words: *'The Prophet taught me to recite 70 Surahs which I had mastered before Zaid had*

⁶ https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/oldest-koran?fb_comment_id=755916767820753_961525370593224

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith#Hadith_and_Quran

⁸ <https://sunnah.com/bukhari>

⁹ Izala-e-Auham, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 3, pp. 452-456, quoted here: <https://www.alislam.org/library/articles/Promised-Messiah-and-The-Holy-Quran.pdf>

¹⁰ Bukhari, VI, No.510

¹¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 5, p.96, Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p.488, According to Ibn Abi Daud's *Kitab al-Masahif*, Ibn Masud only includes 111 surahs in his Quran. See also this Ahmadiyya blog about him: <http://aaiil.org/text/biog/biog/ibnmsd.shtml>

even become a Muslim. How can you order me to recite the readings of Zaid, when I recited from the very mouth of the Prophet some 70 Surahs? Am I to abandon what I acquired from the very lips of the Prophet?' ('Masahif' by Ibn Abi Dawud) What happened to Ibn Masud?

H)

Islamic tradition claims that the Quran is eternal not created. Which position do Ahmadiyyas hold? If it is eternal, do you believe in two eternals, God and the Quran? If it is created, has God at any time been without his word?

I)

What do you think of the research by Tayyar Altıkulaç, a Turkish Muslim scholar, one of the foremost Islamic early manuscript expert, who says the Mushaf of Othman held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is not the actual Quran of Othman but has to be dated later?¹²

J)

Since the earliest six Qur'anic manuscripts (i.e. the Topkapi, Samarkand, Ma'il, Houseini, Petropolitanus, and Sana'a) though extant from around 8th century, are not complete and do not agree completely with the present day 'Hafs' standard text of most Qurans, where did the scholars at Al Azhar in Cairo go to for the finalized canonical text, dated 1924?

K)

Your main website states, '*that various readings (of the Arabic Quran) are almost unknown.*' What do you think about new research that compared over 30 other Arabic Qur'anic texts from the 9th and 10th centuries, containing over 59,000 discrepancies between them and the canonical Hafs text?¹³

L)

What is your opinion on Dr Daniel Brubaker's book "Corrections in Early Qur'ān Manuscripts: Twenty Examples" published on 21 May 2019¹⁴? He provides photographic evidence of 7th to 10th century Quran manuscripts concerning consonantal variants. They are known as 'Rasm', or the actual lettered Arabic script which make up the Arabic words. He does not refer to different Qira'at, or Ahruf variants.

While some of those corrections are simply copyist errors that can be detected by a comparison with other manuscripts, with other corrections such a detection is not possible.

Memorization of the Quran by many since earliest times does not provide a solution to the problem. The reason why the Quran had to be written down and collected into one book in the first place was partly because people memorized the Quran differently.

Claim 2: The Quran agrees with principles of physical medicine

Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement wrote:

"...When I looked at the Holy Qur'an, keeping in mind the books that dealt with physical medicine, I discovered that the Holy Qur'an sets out in an excellent manner the principles of physical medicine." [Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 23, pp. 102-103]¹⁵

¹² <https://iqsaweb.wordpress.com/2017/06/26/tayyar-altikulac-and-his-contributions-to-quranic-manuscript-studies/>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=31&v=k4rrtCPj2gM

¹³ See this link for photographic evidence: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lqQBvtUWvo>

¹⁴ This link provides a summary of it including the photographic evidence: <https://christianityexplained.net/to/muslims/quran-unchanged-really/> Here is a video on the same subject: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEBfRGa6Er4> The book can be ordered here: [amazon.co.uk/gp/product/1949123030/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i0](https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/1949123030/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i0)

¹⁵ Quoted here: <https://www.alislam.org/library/articles/Promised-Messiah-and-The-Holy-Quran.pdf>

Questions regarding claim 2:

A)

Surah 86:8-9 says that Semen originates between the backbones and the ribs or the kidney. Is this true or is it simply borrowing from 5th century B.C. Hippocrates? Is Semen not produced and originated from the seminal vesicle, which is located in the pelvis?¹⁶

B)

Embryology was known long before Mohammad's time by Aristotle (1000 years before Mohammad). In his book 'Developments of animals' Aristotle describes that the embryo is connected with the navel cord to the placenta.¹⁷ Galen, a Greek scientist wrote about 500 years before Mohammad.¹⁸ He too talked about the developments of embryos in different steps. Is it true that both men describe these processes much more scientifically and with more details than Mohammad?

C)

Surah 23:13-15: *Verily, We created man from an extract of clay; Then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe depository; Then We fashioned the sperm into a clot; then We fashioned the clot into a shapeless lump; then We fashioned bones out of this shapeless lump; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed it into another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators.*

One single embryological level, known as 'Mesoderm' proves that it is divided at the same time into flesh (muscles) and bones. Therefore, is it not wrong to say that flesh comes after the bones? If the Quran was God's word, how is it possible to contain such a clear mistake?

Claim 3: There is no disagreement between Islam and science

"There truly is no dissonance between Islam and modern Science."¹⁹

(Professor Abdus Salam)

Questions regarding claim 3:

A)

Surah 18:87: *Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a pool of murky water, and near it he found a people. We said, 'O Dhu'l Qarnain, either punish them, or treat them with kindness.'*

Was this belief, when one reaches the setting of the sun, it sets in a muddy spring not only held by superstitious people?

B)

Surah 16:67: *And surely in the cattle too there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is in their bellies, from betwixt the faeces and the blood, milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it.*

How can cow's milk come from between the excrement and the blood of the cow's abdomen, instead of mammary glands in the udder?

C)

Surah 16:70: *'Then eat of every kind of fruit, and follow the ways of thy Lord that have been made easy for thee.'* There comes forth from their (bees) bellies a drink of varying hues. Therein is cure for men. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who reflect.

¹⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semen>

¹⁷ see part 734 A: 'detailed development of the embryo'. See also part 745.

¹⁸ The book is entitled, "De naturalibus facultatibus" (About natural abilities).

¹⁹ <https://www.alislam.org/library/articles/Islam-and-Science-Concordance-or-Conflict.pdf> page 11

How comes that finished honey comes out of bees bellies rather than from passing nectar on to other bees that keep chewing it in their mouths?²⁰

D)

Surah 6:39: *There is not an animal that crawls in the earth, nor a bird that flies on its two wings, but they are communities like you. We have left out nothing in the Book. Then to their Lord shall they be gathered together.*

Would this include spiders, where in some species the female eats the male after mating has taken place? Is that a community like ours?

E)

Surah 25:46: *Hast thou not seen how thy Lord lengthens the shade? And if He had pleased, He could have made it stationary. Then We make the sun a guide thereof.*

Rather than the sun moving to create shadows, is it not the earth which does the moving?

F)

Surah 65:13: *Allah is He Who created seven heavens, and of the earth the like thereof. The divine command comes down in their midst, that you may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah encompasses all things in His knowledge.*

Where are the other six earths?

G)

Questions regarding Surahs 15:17-19; 37:7-11; 55:34-35; 67:6; 72:7-10; 86:3-4

Do these passages teach that stars and meteors are the same? Are meteors and shooting stars missiles fired at eavesdropping jinn who seek to listen to the reading of the Qur'an in heaven? How can meteors made out of carbon dioxide be fired towards non material jinn?

H)

King Solomon was taught the speech of ants (S. 27:19-20). Yet, ants don't speak, but exchange pheromones as chemical signals between them, using their antennae. Did Solomon grow antennae?

I)

Surah 21:34 says the Sun and the Moon have the same orbits. Surah 36:41 says the Sun and Moon orbit the earth, one following the other. Surah 91:2-3 says the moon follows the Sun. How can this be true?

J)

Surahs. 16:16; 21:32; 31:11; 78:7-8; 88:20 are mentioning mountains. How can they be described as tent-pegs to keep the earth from shaking, to give it stability, when they are formed by volcanoes and tectonic plates? It is true that mountains can be described as having roots underground. However, that was already described in Job 28:9, Psalms 18:8 and Jonah 2:6.

K)

How can the maths presented in Surah 4:13-14 regarding inheritance be correct when the total sum adds up to more than 100%?

Inheritance for widow = $1/8$ + 3 daughter = $2/3$ + 2 parents = $1/3$, totalling $1\frac{1}{8}$ or 112.5%! Or (S.4:11-12 & 176) My mother = $1/3$, my wife = $1/3$, my two sisters = $2/3$ totalling: $4/3$ rds, or 133%!!

²⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/aug/10/how-bees-make-honey-ask-a-grown-up>

L)

In light of all the examples given, is the following statement correct: Most so called scientific miracles in the Quran are either read into the text, the facts were already known before Moahmmad's time, or they are plain wrong.

Claim 4: The Quran agrees with history

"This is the only philosophy which history supports."²¹

Questions regarding claim 4:

A)

Surah 12:21: *And they sold him (Joseph) for a paltry price, a few dirhems, and they were not desirous of it.* Why does the Quran mention Dirhams in the time of Joseph when that currency as well as all other coins did not exist until much later?²²

B)

The Qur'an says that the calf worshipped by the Israelites at mount Horeb was made by a 'Samiri' (Surah 20:86-88, 96-98). However, the term 'Samaritan' was not in existence until 722 B.C, several hundred years after the events recorded in Exodus.

C)

Surahs 7:125 and 26:50 speak about two Egyptian pharaohs, one in the time of Moses and the other in the time of Joseph, who mentioned the punishment of crucifixion. How is that possible since there is no historical or archaeological evidence that the ancient Egyptians executed people by crucifixion on a cross (not a stake)?

'Salib', the Arabic word for crucifixion and its various forms are used in the Qur'an to refer to a cross-shaped instrument of execution, as explained in the Ahmadiyya commentary on Surah 4:158.²³

D)

Surah 28:39 claims that the Egyptians baked [or burnt] bricks. Does the Quran here make a historical error since burnt bricks were not generally used in Egypt before the Roman period?²⁴

Answers to those over 30 questions, or comments about them are gratefully received via e-mail to:

info@christianityexplained.net

²¹ Referring to Ahmadiyya Philosophy of Revival of Religion: <https://www.alislam.org/book/revival-of-religion/ahmadiyya-philosophy-of-revival-of-religion/>

²² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirham>

²³ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/view/?page=726®ion=E52>

²⁴ *Manual of Egyptian Archaeology*, G. Maspero, H. Grevel, p. 4