

Biblical accounts, which parallel known second century heretical Talmudic and Apocryphal documents. And while we wonder how these very human documents found their way into a supposedly non-human scripture, we are introduced to scientific peculiarities which have also found their way into its pages. These problems all point away from a divine authorship and toward a more plausible explanation: the Qur'an is simply a collection of disparate sources borrowed from surrounding pieces of literature, folk tales, and oral traditions present during the seventh and eighth centuries, and accidentally grafted in by unsuspecting later compilers of the Abbasid period."

Y V Z M

The oldest surviving Qur'an fragments were discovered by accident in 1972, during the restoration of the Mosque of Sana'a in Yemen. Workers found a paper grave between the mosque's inner and outer roofs. While it looked to be an unappealing pile of old parchment in Arabic, fused together over the millennia, and gnawed at by rats and insects, it was really a stash containing Qur'ans. Seven years later, the curator of the mosque managed to interest a German scholar in the discovery.

The best investigative study of the Sana'a find was conducted by Toby Lester. Writing for the Atlantic Monthly, he reports: "Some of the parchment pages from the paper grave seem to date back to the eighth century, making them the oldest Qur'ans in existence. What's more, some of these fragments reveal intriguing aberrations from the standard text—devastating in that Muslims are told that the Qur'an, as it has reached us today, is the perfect and unchanging Word of God—letter for letter how he wrote it."

The first scholar to examine the Yemeni fragments was Gerd Puin, a specialist in Arabic calligraphy and Qur'anic paleography. His inspection revealed unconventional verse orderings, textual variations, and artistic embellishments. Scripture was written in a rare and early Hijaz Arabic script. And newer scripts were very clearly written over earlier, worn-out versions. Therefore, the text evolved. It wasn't simply revealed in its entirety to the prophet Muhammad in the early seventh century, as alleged.

More than 15,000 sheets of the Yemeni Qur'an's have been flattened, cleaned, treated, sorted, and assembled. They await further examination in Yemen's House of Manuscripts. Yet that is something Islamic authorities seem unwilling to allow. Puin suggests, "They want to keep this thing low-profile, as we do, although for different reasons."

Puin, and his colleague Graf von Bothmer, an Islamic historian, have published short essays on what they discovered. They continue to feel that when the Yemeni authorities realize the implications of the find, they will refuse further access. Von Bothmer, however, in 1997 shot 35,000 microfilm pictures

of the fragments, and has brought the pictures back to Germany. The texts will soon be scrutinized and the findings published freely—a prospect that pleases Puin. “So many Muslims have this belief that everything between the two covers of the Qur’an is Allah’s unaltered word. They like to quote the textual work that shows that the Bible has a history and did not fall straight out of the sky, but until now the Qur’an has been out of this discussion. The only way to break through this wall is to prove that the Qur’an has a history too. The Sana’a fragments will help us accomplish this.”

In his article on the Yemeni fragments, Toby Lester quoted many of the same scholars Jay Smith referenced in his Cambridge debate. A second perspective on their insights, and what this find might mean for Islam, is important as we are navigating perilous waters. One such expert was Andrew Rippin, a professor of religious studies at the University of Calgary, and a man at the forefront of Qur’anic studies. He said, “The impact of the Yemeni manuscripts is still to be felt. Their variant readings and verse orders are all very significant. Everybody agrees on that. These manuscripts say that the early history of the Qur’anic text is much more of an open question than most have suspected. The text was less stable, and therefore had less authority, than has been claimed.”

Stephen Humphreys, a professor of Islamic studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara, says, “To historicize the Qur’an would in effect delegitimize the whole experience of the Muslim community. The Qur’an is the charter for the community, the document that called it into existence. If the Qur’an is a historical document, then the whole Islamic struggle of fourteen centuries is effectively meaningless.”

The Encyclopedia of Islam says: “The closest analogue in Christian belief to the role of the Qur’an in Islam is not the Bible, but Christ. If Christ is the Word of God made flesh, the Qur’an is the Word of God made text.” Questioning its sanctity or authority is thus considered an outright attack on Islam.

The prospect of a Muslim backlash has not completely deterred the critical and historical study of the Qur’an. In 1996 the Qur’anic scholar Günter Lüling wrote in *The Journal of Higher Criticism*: “The wide extent to which both the text of the Qur’an and the official Muslim account of Islamic origins have been distorted has been unsuspectingly accepted by Western Islamicists until now.” In 1994, the journal *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* published a study by Yehuda Nevo of the Hebrew University, detailing seventh- and eighth-century religious inscriptions on stones in the Negev Desert. Dr. Nevo said, “These pose considerable problems for the traditional Muslim account of the history of Islam.” That same year, and in the same journal, Patricia Crone, a historian of early Islam currently based at the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton, published an article in which she argued that elucidating problematic passages in the Qur’anic text is only possible by “abandoning the

conventional account of how the Qur'an was born."

Patricia Crone collaborated on a book with Michael Cook, called *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*. They claim that the Qur'an came into being later than is now believed. "There is no hard evidence for the existence of a Qur'an in any form before the last decade of the seventh century, and that only includes inconsistent and sparse quotations from inside the Dome of the Rock." Hagarism, however, came under immediate attack from Muslims for its heavy reliance on hostile, non-Islamic sources.

Gerd Puin says, "My idea is that the Qur'an is a kind of cocktail of texts that were not understood even at the time of Muhammad. Many may even be a hundred years older than Islam itself. Within the Islamic traditions there is a huge body of contradictory information."

Crone agrees: "The Qur'an is a scripture with a history like any other, except we don't know this history and tend to provoke howls of protest when we study it. Nobody would mind the howls if they came from Westerners, but Westerners feel deferential when the howls come from other people. Muslims shout: 'Who are you to tamper with our legacy?'"

Personally, I share William Muir's perspective. Many consider Muir to be Islam's foremost scholar. He contends: "The Qur'an is the most stubborn enemy of Civilization, Liberty, and Truth which the world has yet known."

But Muslims would rather be indoctrinated than investigate. The truth frightens them, as do facts and rational thought. They routinely reject all non-Islamic study of the Qur'an. Unable to refute the assault on their holy books with facts, history, or reason they simply assail the messengers of news they do not want to hear.

An Egyptian doctor who edited *Prophet of Doom* explained: "Their response is psychological. It is what you'd expect from someone who has been told that their religion is a delusion. The revelation triggers a defense mechanism of anger. This what I faced every time I tried to discuss Islam with them. Our only hope is that Muslims learn to contain their anger and then make use their minds. But I'm afraid that will not be tolerated by those who benefit from imposing Islam. If Islam suddenly disappears, Muslim clerics and kings, dictators and terrorists, would lose their power and funding. A million Islamic clergy, dictators, and terrorists would instantly be out of work."

Here is an example of how they respond. In 1987, in the *Muslim World Book Review*, an Islamic apologist, Parvez Manzoor, wrote: "The Western enterprise of Qur'anic studies is a project born of spite, bred in frustration and nourished by vengeance. The Western man, coordinating the powers of the State, Church and Academia [now there's a delusional thought], launched his most determined assault on the citadel of Muslim faith with arrogance, reckless rationalism, and a world-domineering fantasy of sectarian fanaticism, joined in an unholy conspiracy to dislodge the Muslim Scripture from

its firmly entrenched position as the epitome of authenticity and moral unsailability. The ultimate trophy that the Western man sought by his daredevil venture was the Muslim mind itself. [Yes, we would like to open it.] In order to rid the West forever of the 'problem' of Islam, Muslim consciousness must be made to despair of the cognitive certainty of the Divine message revealed to the Prophet. Only a Muslim confounded of the historical authenticity or doctrinal autonomy of the Qur'anic revelation would abdicate his universal mission and hence pose no challenge to the global domination of the West. Such, at least, seems to have been the tacit, if not the explicit, rationale of the assault on the Qur'an."

These boys have a vivid imagination. Like their prophet and god, they see conspiratorial plots being hatched everywhere. And nowhere is there a word of reason to refute any adverse claim. Muslims are so used to lying and being lied to they have become paranoid and delusional. It is part of their every day life, the perceived cause of all their troubles. If Western doctors inoculated Muslim children against disease, imams preach that they are infecting them with HIV. When Americans deliver food to feed starving families, the clerics claim the food is drugged so as to make Muslims barren. When it doesn't rain, it's a CIA plot. It's pathetic. Yet to believe a scheme as deceptive and delusional as Islam one's mind has to be corroded, so it's not surprising.

But in a way, Manzoor was right. The motivation for exposing the Qur'an (at least mine) was "spite, bred in frustration and nourished by vengeance." The spiteful and frustrated vengeance of the 9/11 terrorists motivated me to learn why Muslims were killing us. And Manzoor was also correct in displaying his panicked paranoia over the Qur'an. By showing it to be a fraud, the curse of Islam can be removed from the world. But then, alas, Manzoor and clerics like him would have to get a real job.

Another Muslim scholar, Abu Zaid, protests: "The Qur'an is a literary text, and the only way to understand, explain, and analyze it is through a literary approach. This is essentially a theological issue." While Zaid may not like Prophet of Doom, that was precisely the tact I took—analyzing the Qur'an based upon what it said theologically. But free speech is not tolerated in Islam, nor are contrarian views. In 1995 Abu Zaid was officially branded an apostate, a ruling that was upheld by Egypt's highest court. Yet Zaid steadfastly maintains that he is a pious Muslim.

Abu Zaid sought to refute the charges of apostasy, but in the face of death threats and relentless public harassment he fled Cairo for Holland, calling the affair: "a macabre farce." Sheikh Youssef Badri, the cleric whose preaching inspired much of the opposition to Zaid, was ecstatic. "We are not terrorists; we have not used bullets or machine guns, but we have stopped an enemy of Islam from poking fun at our religion.... No one will even dare to think about harming Islam again." Sorry sheikh, not everyone is so easily dissuaded.

"Abu Zaid seems to have been justified in fearing for his life and fleeing. In 1992 the Egyptian journalist Farag Foda was assassinated by Islamists for criticizing Egypt's [terrorist organization called the] Muslim Brotherhood. In 1994 the Nobel Prize-winning novelist Naguib Mahfouz was stabbed for writing an allegorical novel, structured like the Qur'an, but presenting 'heretical' conceptions of Allah and Muhammad." Algerian Mohammed Arkoun, a professor emeritus of Islamic Thought at the University of Paris, said: "Deviating from the orthodox interpretation of the Qur'an is a very sensitive business with serious implications. Millions refer to the Qur'an to explain their actions and to justify their aspirations." And therein lies the problem.

I agree with Lester: "Despite its repeated assertions to the contrary, the Qur'an is extremely difficult for contemporary readers—even highly educated speakers of Arabic—to understand. It makes dramatic shifts in style, voice, and subject matter from verse to verse. It assumes a familiarity with language, stories, and events that seem to have been lost even to the earliest Muslims, which is typical of a text that initially evolved through oral tradition. Its inconsistencies are easy to find: Allah is referred to in the first and third person in the same sentence; divergent versions of the same story are repeated at different points in the text; and divine rulings contradict one another. The Qur'an, anticipating this criticism, defends itself by asserting the right to abrogate its own message: 'Allah blots out or confirms what He pleases.'" Every independent scholastic review of the Qur'an gives Allah failing marks.

Toby Lester went on to write: "As Muslims came into contact with literate people during the eighth century, the wars of conquest were accompanied by theological challenges, in which Christians and others latched on to the confusing literary state of the Qur'an as proof of its human origins. So Muslim scholars found themselves fastidiously cataloguing the problematic aspects of Allah's Book. These include: incomprehensible vocabulary, omitted words, foreign words, grammatical incongruities, contradictions, historical inaccuracies, scientific errors, and deviant texts. Yet for complicated political reasons, the official Islamic doctrine became that of *i'jaz*, or the 'inimitability' of the Qur'an. As a result, 'Allah's Book' is recited in Religious Arabic by Muslims worldwide, the overwhelming majority of whom do not understand any form of the language." Rather than defend the Qur'an rationally and objectively, they hide under the cover of an arcane language virtually no one understands.

After studying the Yemenite parchments, Gerd Puin speaks with disdain about the traditional willingness, on the part of Muslim and Western scholars, to accept the conventional understanding: "The Qur'an claims for itself that it is 'mubeen,' or clear, but if you just look at it, you will see that every fifth sentence or so simply doesn't make sense. Many Muslims will tell you otherwise, of course, but the fact is that a fifth of the Qur'anic text is just incomprehensible. This is what has caused the traditional anxiety regarding

translation. If the Qur'an is not comprehensible, if it can't even be understood in Arabic, then it's not translatable into any language. That is why Muslims are afraid. Since the Qur'an claims repeatedly to be clear but is not—there is an obvious and serious contradiction. Something else must be going on." You would have to search long and hard for a better summary of the Qur'an from a more knowledgeable source.

Stephen Humphreys, writing in *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, concisely presented the nature of the historical vacuum surrounding the formation of Islam. "If our goal is to comprehend the way in which Muslims of the late 8th and 9th centuries understood the origins of their society, then we are very well off indeed. But if our aim is to find out what really happened in terms of reliably documented answers about the first century of Islamic society, then we are in trouble."

In his *Atlantic Monthly* article, Toby Lester reported: "The person who, more than anyone, has shaken up Qur'anic studies in the past few decades is John Wansbrough, formerly of the University of London. Puin is 're-reading him now' as he prepares to analyze the Yemeni fragments. Patricia Crone says that she and Michael Cook 'did not say much about the Qur'an in Hagarism that was not based on Wansbrough.' Anybody engaged in the critical study of the Qur'an must contend with Wansbrough's two main works—*Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* and *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*.

"Wansbrough applied the entire arsenal of 'instruments and techniques of Biblical scholarship—form, source, and redaction criticism—to the text.' He concluded: 'The Qur'an evolved only gradually in the eighth century, during a long period of oral transmission when Jewish and Christian sects were arguing volubly with one another well to the north of Mecca and Medina, in what are now parts of Syria, Jordan, Israel, and Iraq. The reason that no Islamic source material from the first century or so of Islam has survived,' Wansbrough said, 'is that it never existed.' Wansbrough's theories have been contagious in scholarly circles, but Muslims have found them deeply offensive. Parvez Manzoor has described Wansbrough and others as 'a naked outburst of psychopathic vandalism.'" Another messenger lies wounded by Islam's intolerant tongue while his facts lay undisputed.

The hostility experienced was not unique. One of his most famous predecessors was a prominent Egyptian government minister, and university professor, Taha Hussein. He is considered by many Muslims to be the Dean of Arabic Studies. "Hussein devoted himself to understanding pre-Islamic Arabian poetry and ended up concluding that much of that body of work had been fabricated well after the establishment of Islam in order to lend outside support to Qur'anic mythology." This confirms that the Qur'an's vocabulary was defined and its grammar was established by fabricated sources.

Recently, the Iranian journalist and diplomat Ali Dashti, in his *Twenty Three Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Muhammad*, took his fellow Muslims to task for not questioning the traditional accounts of Muhammad's life, much of which he called "myth-making and miracle-mongering." Ali is right. What's more, it's obvious.

Lester explains: "Such work has not come without cost, however: Taha Hussein, like Nasr Abu Zaid, was declared an apostate in Egypt; Ali Dashti died mysteriously just after the 1979 Iranian revolution. Muslims interested in challenging doctrine must tread carefully. 'I would like to get the Qur'an out of this prison,' Abu Zaid has said of the prevailing Islamic hostility, 'so that it becomes productive for our culture, which is now being strangled.' Yet the majority of Muslims are unlikely to question the orthodox approach to the Qur'an and Islamic history." There is something distasteful about being killed, I suppose.

Y V Z M

The first thing Muslims would discover by exposing the Qur'an to rational, historic, scientific, and linguistic scrutiny is that Arabic didn't exist when the Qur'an was allegedly scribed by the Pen on Heavenly Tablets. Scholars have determined that written Arabic evolved relatively recently from Aramaic by way of Syriac. The earliest trace of Syriac turned Arabic is found, ever so appropriately, on a gravestone. The earliest document is the Qur'an itself.

By way of background, the Aramaic and Syriac languages had fewer consonants than Arabic; so, during the 7th century new letters were created by adding dots to existing ones in order to avoid ambiguities. Diacritics indicating short vowels were introduced, but they are only used so that the Qur'an can be recited. There are two types of written Arabic. Classical or Religious Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. It differs from Modern Standard Arabic in style and vocabulary, much of which is archaic—antiquated beyond understanding.

Arabic inscriptions were virtually unknown prior to the birth of Islam in the seventh century. The Nabataeans, living in modern-day Jordan, wrote with a highly cursive Aramaic alphabet that some believe eventually evolved into Classical Arabic. The first inscriptions in what could be called an Arabic alphabet are also found in Jordan. They were carved by Syriac Christians. Scholars suggest that a range of inscriptions in northern Arabia, datable to the fifth century A.D., exhibit a group of dialects which may be the ancestors of Arabic as we know it, although they cannot be termed Arabic any more than Anglo-Saxon could be termed English. The dialects of pre-Islamic South Arabia are a separate language within the Semitic family, and are not in any sense ancestors of the Qur'anic language.

As evidence that written Arabic was unknown in Mecca during Muhammad's lifetime, Ishaq, the first to write on behalf of Islam, tells us: Ishaq:85 "The

Quraysh found in the corner [of the Ka'aba's foundation] a writing in Syriac. They could not understand it until a Jew read it for them. It read: 'I am Allah the Lord of Mecca. I created it on the day that I created heaven and earth and formed the sun and moon.'" This was "found" as the crumbling Ka'aba stones were being restacked. The Tradition is the final Sunnah event prior to Muhammad's battle with the cave-dwelling spirit that became the Qur'an's initial revelation. Yet no Arab could read the script from which written Arabic was derived and Allah's "Book" was allegedly written. As always, the Islamic scripture does a better job destroying Islam than does any scholar.

Here's the bottom line: Arabic, especially in written form, is a recent phenomenon linguistically. Not only wasn't it one of man's earliest languages, it was derived from a language that predated it by 3,000 years. There is no evidence that written Arabic existed in Mecca when the Qur'an was handed down. Therefore, it couldn't have been the language of Allah if, as the Qur'an and Hadith attest, written scrolls were given to Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus prior to the time written Arabic was conceived. And that would make Allah a liar and the Qur'an a fraud.

There is more you should know about the difference between the Classical Arabic of the Qur'an and the language spoken by Arabs today. First, there is a wide gap between written Arabic and all varieties of the spoken language. The spoken dialects aren't used in writing. The modern colloquial dialects are not mutually intelligible. In nations where Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is used, speakers must learn a local colloquial Arabic dialect to communicate as their native language and then gain a greater or lesser fluency with MSA as an educated and commercial language.

Second, there are major differences between Modern Standard Arabic and Religious Arabic. Classical Arabic only survives in some questionable poetry and in the Qur'an. Being schooled in MSA does not prepare a student to understand the Qur'an, as its form of Arabic is substantially different than MSA and massively different than spoken dialects. For example, Muslims are required to take classes called Tagweed, every year for ten years just to learn how to recite the Qur'an. But even then, they don't know what the words mean. The situation is similar to contemporary Italian and Latin. Being literate in one does not make one literate in the other.

The biggest differences between Religious and Standard Arabic are word order, grammar, and vocabulary. Classical Arabic is always verb-subject-object, rather than the more familiar subject-verb-object. If someone aims to learn Arabic he or she would have to learn MSA, Classical, and at least one local dialect. To make matters worse, Arabic has a wicked property—diglossia—a phenomenon in which two forms of one language are used side by side. One variety is formal; the other is mostly oral.

This brings us to a shocking conclusion. Less than three percent of the

world's population speaks Arabic, and almost all of them need to have the Qur'an translated into MSA before they can understand it. Thus the Islamic apologists who scream that the Qur'an must remain in Religious Arabic are saying that they only want an infinitesimal fraction of three percent of the world's population to understand it. Fortunately, you know why.

The Qur'anic headaches get worse, not better. During the Qur'an's first century, the emerging Arabic alphabet did not have diacritical points, and letters were omitted. The text Uthman canonized, if this actually occurred, was a bare consonantal text with no marks to show verse endings, to distinguish consonants, or vowels. Without them it is impossible to comprehend the intended meaning of the text. In the introduction to his translation of the Qur'an, Dawood said, "Owing to the fact that the Kufic script in which the eighth and ninth century Qur'ans were originally written contained no indication of vowels or diacritical points, variant readings are recognized by Muslims as of equal authority."

For example, without the diacritical points the following words would be indistinguishable: repent, plant, house, girl, and abide, as are rich and stupid. There are thousands of Arabic words like these in which the meaning changes depending upon the placement of the diacritical marks. Yet the Qur'an was neither revealed nor initially scribed with these designations. Thus men had to guess as to what Allah was trying to say. The Qur'an cannot be letter for letter as Allah revealed it, because without the diacritical points and vowels, the identity of most letters is missing.

The principles of sound Arabic demand that words have diacritical points and their letters should be written in complete form. It is inconceivable that God would have revealed a book in such an inferior condition. To demonstrate the magnitude of this problem, try to establish the meaning of the following sentences extracted from this page with vowels removed along with one out of every five consonants and punctuation: ltrs r ssng h smlst pncpls snd rc lngg mnd tt wrd hv dctcl pts nd hr ltrs shd be wtt n mplt fm t s nmprhnb th gd wl hv rvd bk n ch n nrr cndn t. Now, imagine trying to do this without having an intelligible text right before your eyes. Then, to equate this challenge to deciphering the Qur'an, remove every fifth word and replace some of those that remain with an unknown vocabulary. This is what you would have left: r ssng h a dg h snd rc lngg tt wrd hv dctcl nd hr ltrs shd be n mplt fm @\$%&*! th wl hv rvd bk n ch n nrr cndn. Try to make sense of that.

Our Muslim brethren claim the eloquence of the Qur'an, the supremacy of its language and the beauty of its expression, is conclusive evidence that it was revealed by Allah. "Forget the content," they say. "The inimitability of the Qur'an lies in its stylistic use of the Arabic language." Yet how can this be if there are so many omissions and errors pertaining to acceptable principles of style, literary expression, and grammatical rules? We even find many words that don't have any meaning whatsoever and aren't found in any language.

Simply stated: much of the vocabulary no one understands, and much of the text is oblique, obscure, and senseless.

But even so, the eloquence of any book cannot be an evidence of the greatness of the scripture or proof that it was revealed by God. What must be important to God in communicating to man is not manifest in style, but substance—the power, truth, clarity, and usefulness of the revelation. And this is where the Qur'an fails so miserably.

Speaking of style over substance, in his *Comprehensive Commentary on the Qur'an*, E.M. Wherry, wrote: "Though it be written in prose, the Qur'an's sentences generally conclude in a long continued rhyme. And for the sake of rhyme the sense of what is being communicated is often interrupted. Unnecessary repetitions too frequently made, appear still more ridiculous in a translation, where the ornament, such as it is, for whose sake they were made, cannot be perceived. However, the Arabians are so mightily delighted with this jingling, that they employ it in their most elaborate compositions, which they also embellish with frequent passages of, and allusions to, the Qur'an. It is probable the harmony of expression which the Arabians find in the Qur'an considerably contributes to making them relish the doctrine and efficacy of argument which, had they been nakedly proposed without this rhetorical dress, might not have so easily prevailed." He is saying that Muhammad's militants, like Hitler's minions, were stupefied. Beguiled by a twist of phrase, they were unable to see the base and vile nature of the words themselves. The Qur'an is Islam's equivalent of rap music.

Stealing a page from *Mein Kampf*, Wherry concludes: "Very extraordinary effects are related to the power of words well chosen and artfully placed, whose power can ravish or amaze. Wherefore much has been ascribed to the best orators. He must have a very bad ear who is not uncommonly moved with the very cadence of a well-turned sentence; and Muhammad seems not to have been ignorant of the enthusiastic operation of rhetoric on the minds of men. For this reason he has not only employed his utmost skill in reciting his pretend revelations. The sublimity of style might seem worthy of the majesty of that being whom he gave out to be the author of them as he tried to imitate the prophetic manner of the Old Testament. Yet it was only in the art of oratory wherein he succeeded, strangely captivating the minds of his audience. Some thought it the effect of witchcraft and enchantment, as the Qur'an itself so often complains."

Wherry's conclusion squares quite nicely with Muhammad's confessions: Bukhari:V6B60N662 "Allah's Apostle said, 'Some eloquent speech is as effective as magic.'" Bukhari:V9B87N127 "The Prophet said, 'I have been given the keys of eloquent speech and given victory with terror so the treasures of the earth were given to me.'"

The Qur'an is like a Christmas tree. Decorated in its holiday finery it appears beautiful, but the tree is dead. Worse, everything it stands for is pagan,

even Satanic. The festival, its date, tree, ornaments, and exchange of presents all date back to the time when they were used to celebrate Lucifer's birthday. Trimmings can be deceiving. (The Messiah was born on the Feast of the Tabernacles, in September.) The Winter Solstice was the birthday of Tammuz, the Babylonian sun god—and all sun gods thereafter. Lucifer wasn't called the Morning Star for nothing.

But the ornamentation of the Qur'an was only superficial. The document is severely flawed. Jalal al-Suyuti dedicated a hundred pages of his *Itqan* to explain the difficult vocabulary. Under the title "Foreign Words of the Qur'an," he suggests that Religious Arabic is incomprehensible. "No one can have a comprehensive knowledge of the language except the Prophet." (*Itqan* II: p 106)

Jalal al-Suyuti states: "Muhammad's Companions, in whose dialect the Qur'an was given, failed to understand the meaning of many words, and thus they said nothing about them. When Bakr was asked about the Qur'anic statement 'and fruits and fodder,' he said, 'What sky would cover me or what land would carry me if I say what I do not know about the book of Allah?' Umar read the same text from the rostrum, then said, 'This fruit we know, but what is fodder?' Then he was asked about the Qur'anic text in chapter 13 discussing Mary and he had no response. Ibn Abbas [the most prolific source of Islamic Hadith] said that he did not know the meanings of Qur'an verses like 69:36, 9:114, and 18:9." Suyuti suggests that only Muhammad knew what they meant. Ibn Warraq in his scholastic anthologies on Islam compiled thick tomes of linguistic analysis of the Qur'an's hopelessly incoherent condition.

Next we learn that the Arabic found in the Qur'an was not as sound as Muslims infer. In the *Itqan*, Suyuti speaks explicitly about things which no one expected to find in the Qur'an—defects which shouldn't occur in any Arabic book. For example: "The word 'after' was used twice in the Qur'an so as to mean 'before.' As in this saying: 'We have written in the Psalms after the reminder' (Qur'an 21:105) while He meant 'before.' Also in this saying, 'The earth after that He has extended' (Qur'an 79:30) while Allah meant 'before'" Suyuti wrote: "The Qur'an means: 'Do not those who believe "know" that had Allah willed, He could have guided all mankind', but Allah said, 'Do not those who believe "despair" instead of writing "know" as He meant. The Qur'an says in chapter 2:23: '... your martyrs', but it means, '... your partners.' The martyr is supposed to be the person who is killed, but here it means 'your partners.' In chapter 20 on Joseph the word 'bakhs' (too little) is meant to be 'haram' (forbidden or sacred). In surah 46, Mariam, the phrase, 'I certainly will stone you' is interpreted to mean, 'I certainly will curse you', and not, 'I will kill you' as its literal meaning suggests."

In another illustration from *Itqan*, Jalal al-Suyuti claims, "In the Rahman chapter the Qur'an says: 'The "nagm" stars and the trees bow themselves.' Here the Qur'an does not mean by 'the stars' but the plants which do not have trunks. This is the far-fetched meaning." There are hundreds of similar examples, but there is no need to belabor the point.

As you have read, the Qur'an claims that it is pure Arabic. But this is not

true. First the erroneous claim: 046.002 "And before it the Book of Musa was a guide: and this [Qur'an] is a Book verifying (it) in the Arabic language." 039.027 "We have coined for man in this Qur'an every kind of parable in order that they may receive admonition. (It is) a Qur'an in Arabic, without any crookedness (therein)." 041.003 "A Scripture Book, whereof the verses are explained in detail; a Qur'an in Arabic, for people who have knowledge." Then... 041.044 "Had We sent this as a Qur'an (in the language) other than Arabic, they would have said: 'Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (a foreign tongue, a Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger) an Arab?' Say (to them, Muhammad): 'It is a Guide to those who believe; and for those who do not believe it, there is a deafness in their ears, and a blindness in their (eyes)!'" While the purpose of these Qur'an quotes was to confirm Allah's Arabic claims, consider the number of words the translators had to add inside the parenthesis for Allah's message to make any sense.

The Qur'an's Arabic assertion is not true. There are many foreign words or phrases which are employed in the Qur'an. Arthur Jeffrey, in his book *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an* devoted 300 pages to this study. One must wonder why so many foreign words were borrowed, as they refute the Arabic claim and put doubt on whether "Allah's language" was sufficient to explain what Muhammad intended. According to Alphonse Mingana in his *Syriac Influence on the Style of the Qur'an*, almost all of the religious terms found in Allah's book were derived from Christian Syriac. These include the words Muhammad used for: priest, Christ, judgment, scribes, parable, salvation, infidel, sacrifice, resurrection, heaven, garden, angel, holy spirit, soul, sign, verse, proof, God, prayer, fast, sin, pagan, hanif, Muslim, idolatry, Qur'an, faith, creation, grace, and even the zakat tax. The proper names of Biblical personages found in the Qur'an are used in their Syriac form rather than Hebrew or Arabic. These include: Solomon, Pharaoh, Isaac, Ishmael, Israel, Jacob, Noah, Zachariah, Mary, John, Jonah, and Isa for Yahshua. The words for demons, the path, disciple, and Muhammad's first "god," Ar-Rahman are Persian. Rahman is a derivative of the Persian name for the Devil.

Adam and Eden are Akkadian words from Mesopotamia. A more correct term for "Adam" in Arabic would be basharan or insan, meaning "mankind." "Eden" should have been janna in Arabic, which means "garden." Yet the foreign words were repeated over twenty times. Abraham, sometimes recorded as Ibrahim, comes from the Assyrian language. The correct Arabic equivalent is Abu Raheem.

Harut and Marut are Persian names for angels. The Persian "sirat" meaning "the path" was repeated thirty times yet it has an Arabic equivalent, alta-reeq, which was not used. The Persian "hoor" meaning "disciple" has the Arabic equivalent, tilmeeth. Guess which one Allah selected?

The Persian word "Jinn" meaning "demon" is used consistently throughout the Qur'an. Entire surahs are dedicated to Satan's allies. Yet there is an Arabic equivalent, Ruh. Going the other way, Islam's decadent heaven is

called by the Persian word “firdaus” meaning “the highest or seventh heaven” rather than the Arabic equivalent, jannah.

Some of the Hebrew words are: heber, Sakinah for Yahweh’s presence, maon, taurat, jehannim, and tufan, which means deluge. The Greek word “Injil,” which means “gospel” was borrowed, even though there is an Arabic equivalent, bisharah. Iblis, the Qur’anic name for Lucifer or Satan, is not Arabic. It is a corruption of the Greek word Diabolos. Muhammad said that believing in the “Day of Resurrection” was a third of his message, yet he chose a Christian Syriac derivative of an Aramaic word, Qiyama, for resurrection rather than the Arabic one.

The Qur’an is fixated on stripping the Messiah of his divinity and of the sacrifice he made to save mankind. You’d think that Allah would at least get his name right. But Christ’s Qur’anic name, “Isa,” is erroneously applied. Isa is the Arabic equivalent of Esau, the name for the twin brother of Jacob. The correct Arabic name for Yahshua would be Yesuwa, yet the “all-knowing” Allah doesn’t mention it. And this mistake is unlike the erroneous translations of the Bible. God got his name right in Hebrew; the English translators erred. Even Arabic speaking Christians in the Middle East use the name Yesuwa for “Jesus.” Only Muslims use Isa.

By way of recap, we’ve learned that the Qur’an wasn’t, as Allah claims, a book memorialized on heavenly tablets, but instead was comprised of an evolving text. The oldest Qur’ans differ from one another and from today’s version. We discovered that the original written copies were devoid of diacritical points, so most words were chosen on the basis of educated guesses. Their meanings were interpreted two centuries after the Qur’an was revealed orally. It’s not pure Arabic as Allah claims, as there are a plethora of foreign words. There are also missing words, wrong words, and meaningless words. And most important of all, the leading authority of the initial script of the Qur’an, studying the oldest fragments says: “One out of every five verses is indecipherable—meaningless in any language.”

Moving on, let’s see if what is left is accurate historically and scientifically. Allah’s claim, “This Qur’an must be the Word of Allah or they would have found fault in it” is torn asunder if it contains obvious errors of fact.

A number of online websites were kind enough to chronicle a plethora of errors, so I have elected to present some of their findings. Let’s start with the historical blunders. The Qur’an claims that the Samaritans enticed Israel to make a golden calf when Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. Yet the term “Samaritan” hadn’t been coined when the events depicted in Exodus unfolded. The Samaritan people could not have existed during the life of Moses as they didn’t become a nation until 800 years later. The city of Samaria was founded by King Omri in 875 B.C. and the Samaritans became a “people” just after the tribes of Israel were dispersed by the Assyrians in the

seventh century B.C. Thus Qur'an 20:85-7, and 95-7 are erroneous.

In surahs 7:124 and 26:49 we find Pharaoh admonishing his sorcerers because they believed in the superiority of Moses' power over them. Pharaoh threatens his magicians with cutting off their hands and feet on opposite sides (Qur'an 5:33), and then says they will all die on the cross by crucifixion. But there were no crosses in those days. Crucifixion was first practiced by the Assyrians in 519 B.C. under the rule of Darius I. Encyclopedia Britannica reports: "Crucifixion did not exist any earlier than about 500 B.C." Muslim scholar, Malik Farid, in his translation of the Qur'an, says in footnote 1033, "Incidentally, the verse shows that even as early as in the time of Moses the punishment of death by crucifixion was in vogue" Rather than admit the Qur'an contained a historical blunder, a Muslim rewrote history to bail his god out.

Another interesting historical glitch occurs when Allah erroneously calls Mary the sister of Aaron in surah 19:28, and the daughter of Imran (the Biblical Amran) in 66:12. While Miriam and Mary are the same name, the first Miriam, the sister of Aaron and the daughter of Amran, died 1500 years before Mary, the mother of Yahshua, was born. (18:28; 66:12; 20:25-30) Hearing Muslims explain away the spectacular coincidence that both Mary and Miriam had a brother named Aaron and a father named Amram sounds identical to the way Catholics perform etymological gymnastics to explain away the fourteen Bible passages that clearly state Mary had other children.

Another difficult passage concerns Haman. In the Qur'an he is a servant of Pharaoh and built a high tower to ascend up to the God of Moses (surah 28:38; 29:38; 40:25,38). Yet the Babel tower dates 750 years earlier and is Babylonian, not Egyptian. The name Haman is brought to us by Esther. She writes about what became Persia 1,100 years after Pharaoh. While Muslim apologists say it is simply another Haman, the name is not Egyptian, but uniquely Babylonian.

Surah 17:1 claims Muhammad went to the "farthest mosque" during his Night's Journey. Consistent with the Hadith, Muslims believe this was the either the Jewish Temple or the Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem. But neither existed in 620 A.D. The last Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., and the Dome of the Rock was not built until 691, 59 years after Muhammad's death! There are a host of other chronological breakdowns. One of my favorites is Allah's insistence that Nimrod was a contemporary of Abraham.

This ignorance of history and earlier Scripture speaks of a certain isolationism, which one would expect if the stories had been transmitted orally in an environment distant from that in which they originated. Although Muslims attempt to talk their way out of Mary being called a brother of Aaron, the misplaced and mistimed tower of Babel, and Samaritans at the time of Moses, they just throw in the towel without a fight and proclaim world history wrong when it comes to crucifixion.

As impossible as it is to reconcile these Qur'anic mumblings with the historical record, the "setting place of the sun" and the tales of Alexander the Great are more challenging still. Surah 18:86 states, "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 Dhu al Qarnayn..." The sun does not set in a muddy spring. There are no extraterrestrials living where the sun goes to bed, and no human—and that would include Alexander the Great—has ever visited with such creatures.

In the continuing story of the Islamicized version of the Greek conqueror, we learn that Alexander's power was given to him by Allah. Muslims contend, as the Hadith confirms, that he was an Islamic prophet. He was even credited with building an enormous wall of iron and brass between two mountains, which was tall enough and wide enough to keep an entire army at bay. Muhammad claimed that a hole was cut in the wall during his lifetime. Yet it is simple to test these claims because Alexander lived in the full light of history. We know that he was a great general whose debauchery and drunkenness contributed to his untimely death. He was an idolater, actually claiming to be the son of the Egyptian god Amun. The temple drawing depicting Alexander worshiping the sun god Amun is still present in Egypt. To say that he was an Islamic prophet, and that Allah was the agent for his power, is historically inaccurate. And why is there is no evidence anywhere that Alexander built a wall of iron and brass between two mountains, a feat which would have proven him to be one of the greatest builders and engineers in history? It's one thing that the Qur'an has no prophecies—predictions of things that are to come—but it can't even get the past right.

Moving from history to science, surahs 16:15; 21:31; 31:10; 78:6; 88:19 tell us that Allah threw down mountains like tent pegs to keep the earth from shaking. For illiterate men this would sound logical, since mountains are large and therefore, their weight would seemingly have a stabilizing effect. Yet the opposite is true. Mountains were built up, not thrown down. Rather than create stability they are the result of instability. Colliding tectonic plates push up the earth's surface forming all non-volcanic mountains.

Surah 16:66 says that cow's milk comes from between the excrement and the blood of the cow's abdomen. That doesn't make sense, and it isn't true. In surah 16:69 we're told that honey comes out of a bee's abdomen. That's not true either. Then, surah 6:38 claims all animals and flying beings form communities like humans. While some do, most don't. Take for example spiders, where in some species the female eats the male after mating. That's not exactly a community like ours. Qur'an 25:45 maintains that the sun moves to create shadows. In other surahs it is shown orbiting and swimming. Even the moon was said to be effaced and racing the sun.

Other statements make no sense at all. Surah 4:59 states, "Greater surely than the creation of man is the creation of the heavens and the earth; but most men know it

not." This implies that greatness is only measured by size. Yet we have learned that the complexity of life is much greater than the simplicity of all stars and dirt combined. Surah 65:12 reads, "It is Allah who has created seven heavens and as many earths." Where might we find the other six earths? If these refer to the planets in our solar system, then they are short by two or three depending upon how one looks at Pluto.

Meteors, and even stars are said to be missiles fired at eavesdropping Satans and Jinn who seek to listen to the reading of the Qur'an in Heaven (15:16-8; 37:6-10; 55:33-5; 67:5; 72:6-9 & 86:2-3). Are we to believe that Allah throws meteors (which are made up of carbon dioxide or iron-nickel) at non-material devils who listen to heavenly council? Are we to believe that there is a Jinn convention each time there's a meteor shower? I don't think so.

Adlibbing on the Bible, Allah stammers. He claims king Solomon was taught the speech of birds and the language of ants (27:16-9). In addition to birds and ants, Jinn were forced to work for Solomon, making him whatever he pleased, such as palaces, statues, large dishes, and brass fountains (34:11-3). A malignant jinn was even commissioned to bring the Queen of Sheba's throne in the twinkling of an eye (27:38-44).

Following Solomon's lead, in the 105th surah, Allah claims to have used birds to drop clay pebbles on Abraha's army. But according to the historical record, his troops withdrew after smallpox broke out, not because they were dirty.

Qur'an 18:9-25 tells the story of "some youths and a dog who sleep for 309 years with their eyes open and their ears closed" which is a cleaver trick in itself. The object was to show Allah's ability to keep people and dogs without food or water for as long as he likes. In actuality the whole story was pilfered from a 6th century Syriac Christian manuscript: The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

In surahs 2:65-6 and 7:163-7, Allah turns people who break the Sabbath into apes for their disobedience. Darwin must have been confused because he had it the other way around.

In Qur'an 11:81 and 15:74 the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are turned upside-down with angelic wings. There are as many errors in the accounting as there are sentences. We know this because these cities have been unearthed. The Bible's account is accurate. The Qur'an's is not.

Moving on to theological errors, Qur'an 5:116 represents Christians as worshipping Mary as the third member of the Trinity. The Qur'an says: "Allah will say, O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people, Make me and my mother idols beside Allah?" It was not until the seventeenth century—a thousand years after the Qur'anic revelation—that Alphonsus Liguori, (1696-1787) wrote his book, *The Glories of Mary*, in which he hoodwinked Catholics into promoting Mary to her present-day status. Interestingly, an insignificant and heretical sect called the Cholloridians held this view, and lived in the Middle East at the time of the Qur'an's compilation in the eighth century. While this might

have been be the source for such a gross error, an all-knowing God should have been aware of a core tenet of the Christian faith. But Allah got the whole of Christ's message and mission wrong.

In an effort to show the scientific accuracy of the Qur'an, Muslim's are quick to say that the embryology revealed in it was beyond what man had discovered for himself. However, Muslims are completely unaware that all of the information in the Qur'an about embryology had already been revealed many centuries before. Furthermore, it has all been shown to be scientifically inaccurate—as is the totality of the Sunnah on this subject. The alleged “genius” of the Qur'an is found in its repetitive stories concerning the stages of formation of a fetus (surahs 22:5; 23:12-4; 40:67; 75:37-9; & 96:1-2). According to these surahs it passes through four stages, starting with torab, which means dust. Using a little hocus pocus, Muslims scholars translate torab as sperm, just to keep Allah from looking foolish. It becomes nutfah and alaqa. Though no one seems to know what the words “nutfah” or “alaqa” mean. Many have tried, contending that they are something which clings, a clot, an adhesion, an embryonic lump, and even chewed-up meat. The alaqa then creates motgha and uncreated motgha. But no one has a clue what motgha means. So some brilliant scholar suggested: “bones that are finally covered by flesh.” The alaqa to bone stage is also in Qur'an 23:13-4 which introduces us to: “We made him a nutfah (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge) in the safe lodging. Then We made the nutfah into an alaqa (piece of thick coagulated blood), then a motgha (little lump of bones clothed in flesh).” A more accurate translation would be: “I haven't got a clue.”

Yet even the translators' wishful interpretations are inaccurate. Neither sperm nor dust becomes a “lump or adhesion.” There is no clotting stage during the formation of a fetus. “The thing which clings” does not stop clinging to become “chewed meat,” but remains clinging for nine months. And the skeleton is not formed independent of flesh. In fact, muscles form several weeks before there are calcified bones, rather than arriving later as the Qur'an implies. It is, therefore, ironic to hear the above accounts cited as proof by modern day apologists of the Qur'an's divine authority, when in fact, once the truth is known, the very science which they hope to harness for their cause proves to be their undoing.

Before we leave professor Allah's lecture on gestation, I'd like to repeat what Muhammad had to say about such things: Bukhari:V4B55N549 “Allah's Apostle, the true and truly inspired said, ‘As regards to your creation, every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for the first forty days, and then he becomes a clot for another forty days, and then a piece of flesh for forty days. [Four months, not nine.] Then Allah sends an angel to write four words: He writes his deeds, time of his death, means of his livelihood, and whether he will be wretched or blessed. Then the soul is breathed into his body. So a man may do deeds characteristic of the people of the Hell Fire...but he enters

Paradise. A person may do deeds characteristic of Paradise...but he will enter the Hell Fire.” It’s easy to see where Allah got his material and why he was so confused.

In surah 16:4, one of Allah’s twenty-five variant creation accounts, says, “He has created man from a sperm-drop,” But this was understood 2,000 years before Allah’s book was revealed. The Bible says, “Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother’s wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother.” (Genesis 38:9) Another Qur’anic assertion, that “man was created from the dust of the earth” was recorded in Genesis a few millennia before Muhammad ennobled his town’s rock idol.

Muslim doctors, like Ibn-Qayyim, were first to blow the whistle when they saw the Qur’anic material mirrored by a much earlier Greek doctor named Galen. He lived in 150 A.D. In 1983 Basim Musallam, Director of the Center of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge, concluded, “The stages of development which the Qur’an and Hadith established for believers agreed perfectly with Galen’s account. In other words when it comes to embryology, the Qur’an merely echoes the scientific knowledge man had already discovered 450 years earlier.”

The Qur’an is wrong when it states: “He is created from a drop emitted, proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs.” This echoes the error of Hippocrates who believed semen originated from all the fluid in the body, starting from the brain down the spinal chord, before passing through the kidneys, testicles and penis. While Hippocrates error is understandable, Allah’s is not.

In addition to factual errors, grammatical mistakes are prevalent and frequent. And while that wouldn’t be a big deal if we were talking about the Bible, it destroys the Qur’an. Yahweh never claimed that the Bible was inerrant. He knew better because he inspired men to write it with an imprecise tool called language. Allah wasn’t that smart. He claimed that his Qur’an was perfect because he says he wrote it himself. A single deficiency in a book claiming to be written by God, and dictated letter for letter as Muhammad memorialized it, is sufficient to destroy its credibility. But as you have grown to expect, grammatical errors abound. In surah 2:177, the word sabireen should be sabiroon because of its position in the sentence. In 7:160, the phrase “We divided them into twelve tribes,” is written in the feminine plural: “Uthnati ashrat asbaataan.” To be grammatically correct, it should have been written in the masculine plural: “Uthaiy ashara sibtaan,” as all human plurals are automatically male in Arabic.

In surah 4:162, the phrase “And (especially) those who establish regular prayer” is written as “al Muqiyhina al salaah,” which again is in the feminine plural form, instead of the masculine plural. The following phrases, “(those who) practice regular zakat, and believe in Allah” are both correctly written in the masculine plural form. So the first phrase is simply a grammatical error. Qur’an 5:69 uses the title al Sabioon, referring to the Sabians, but it should be al Sabieen. And then

we have schizophrenia. Allah refers to himself in first and third person, singular and plural, in the same surah. Subjects, verbs, and objects are routinely omitted from Allah's sentences and dangling modifiers abound.

While there are scores of examples, copyediting Allah is hardly entertaining. So for those who are still in doubt as to whether the Qur'an is subject to grammatical errors, consider the insights of one of the last Muslim scholars to write before such revelations became a dead sentence. Dashti said: "The Qur'an contains sentences which are incomplete and not intelligible; foreign words, unfamiliar Arabic words, and words used with other than the normal meaning; adjectives and verbs inflected without observance of the concords of gender and number; illogically and ungrammatically applied pronouns which sometimes have no referent [dangling modifiers]; and predicates which in rhymed passages are often remote from the subjects... To sum up, more than one hundred Qur'anic aberrations from the normal rules and structure of Arabic have been noted." (Ali Dashti, *Twenty Three Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Muhammad*, p 48)

The Qur'an contains so many grammatical errors, Muslim's defend it by finding similar errors in pre-Islamic poetry. What they don't know, however, is that this poetry was fabricated for the specific purpose of defending the Qur'an. Egyptian scholar Taha Hussein, said, "The vast quantity of what is called pre-Islamic poetry has nothing to do with the pre-Islamic literature, but it is fabricated after Islam. Thus our research will lead us to a very strange conclusion; that this poetry cannot be used in interpreting the Qur'an." (Fil-Adab al-Jaheli, Taha Hussein, *Dar al-Ma'aref*, p. 65-7)

Y V Z M

As we analyzed the Qur'an's bastardization of the Biblical patriarchs, I suggested that Muhammad garnered much of his errant material from Jewish oral traditions—the Talmud, Midrash, Targum, and other apocryphal works. Here is proof as revealed by Abraham Geiger in 1833, and further documented by Jay Smith and Dr. Abraham Katsh, of New York University (*The Concise Dictionary of Islam*, Katsh; *The Bible and the Qur'an*, Jomier; *Studies, Sell; Islam*, Guillaume).

I'll begin with Smith's analysis. "Possibly the greatest puzzlement for Christians who pick up the Qur'an and read it are the numerous Biblical stories which bear little similarity to the original accounts. The Qur'anic versions include distortions, amendments, and some bizarre twists. So where did these stories come from, if not from the previous scriptures?

"Upon investigation we discover that much of it came from Jewish apocryphal literature, the Talmud in particular. These books date from the second century A.D.—about seven hundred years before the Qur'an was canonized. By comparing stories we destroy the myth that the Qur'an was inspired by God. The similarities between these fables, or folk tales, and the stories which

are recounted in the Qur'an, are stunning."

It's ironic in a way. By plagiarizing fairytales and claiming that they were divinely inspired histories, Muslims actually destroyed the credibility of the book they were trying to bolster. And by writing such nonsense, the Jews loaded the gun Muslims are using to kill them.

The Talmudic writings were compiled from oral folklore in the second century. They evolved like the Islamic Hadith. As Jews became more numerous and urbanized, clerics and kings desired a more comprehensive set of laws and religious traditions to help them control their subjects. So Jewish rabbis set an example for Islamic imams. They created laws and traditions and artificially traced them back to Moses via the Torah. Then to help make the medicine go down, the rabbis coated their new commands in a syrupy slew of fanciful tales. Very few Jews consider the Talmudic writings authoritative, and none consider them inspired. They are only read for the light they cast on the times in which they were conceived.

So how did these uninspired Jewish Talmudic writings come to be included in the Qur'an? There are two ways, equally likely. After being hauled into captivity by the Babylonians, many Jews elected to stay. In fact, in 1948 when Israel became a state, the fourth largest concentration of Jews was in Iraq. So the Persians who canonized the Qur'an in the eighth and ninth century would have had ample access to them. And we know that Yathrib was principally a Jewish community. According to the Qur'an and Sunnah, Muhammad bought oral scripture recitals from the Jews before he robbed, banished, enslaved, and killed them.

Some scholars believe that the Islamic compilers of the eighth to ninth centuries merely added this body of literature to the nascent Qur'anic material to fill it out and make it seem more like scripture because scores of Qur'anic tales have their roots in second century Jewish apocryphal literature. Since the devil is in the details, I beg your patience as we work our way through them.

One of the Qur'an's Cain and Abel stories is found in surah 5:30. It begins much as it does in the Biblical account with Cain killing his brother Abel, though Allah doesn't seem to recall their names in this rendition. Yet the moment one unnamed brother kills the other, the story changes and no longer follows the Biblical trail. The Qur'an's variant was plagiarized from books drafted centuries after the Old Testament had been canonized, after even the New Testament was written: the Targum of Jonathan-ben-Uzziah, The Targum of Jerusalem, and The Pirke-Rabbi Eleazar. All three are Jewish myths composed from oral traditions between 150 to 200 A.D.

The Qur'an says: 005.031 "Then Allah sent a raven who scratched the ground to show him how to hide the shame of the dead body of his brother. 'Woe is me!' said he; 'Was I not even able to be as this raven, and to hide the dead body of my brother?' Then he

became full of regrets." We find a striking parallel in Talmudic sources. The Targum of Jonathan-ben-Uzziah says: "Adam and Eve, sitting by the corpse, wept not knowing what to do, for they had no knowledge of burial. A raven came up, took the dead body of its fellow, and having scratched at the ground, buried it thus before their eyes. Adam said, 'Let us follow the example of the raven,' so taking up Abel's body, he buried it at once." Apart from the contrast between who buried whom, the two stories are otherwise uncannily similar. We can only conclude that it was from here that Muhammad, or a later compiler, obtained his "scripture." A Jewish fable came to be repeated as a historical fact in the Qur'an.

Yet that is not all. We find further proof of plagiarism of apocryphal Jewish literature; this time in the Jewish Mishnah Sanhedrin. The Qur'an reads: 005.032 "On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person—unless it be in retaliation for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew all mankind: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all humanity." The Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5 says: "We find it said in the case of Cain who murdered his brother, the voice of thy brother's blood cries out [this is a quote from Genesis 4:10, but not the rest...], and he says, it does not say he has blood in the singular, but bloods in the plural. It was singular in order to show that to him who kills a single individual, it should be reckoned that he has slain all humanity. But to him who has preserved the life of a single individual, it is counted that he has preserved all mankind."

There is no Qur'anic connection between the previous verse, 31, and that which we find in the 32nd. What does the murder of Abel by Cain have to do with the slaying or saving of the whole people as there were no other people? Yet a rabbi's comments on the verse are repeated almost word-for-word in the Qur'an. The muses of a mere human become the Qur'anic holy writ, and were attributed to God. That's real embarrassing.

Speaking of embarrassing, I'd like to share something directly related to this Qur'an passage. The largest commercial radio station in the United Kingdom asked me to spend two hours speaking about the relationship between fundamental Islam and terrorism. Over the course of the interview, the station received several hundred phone calls and emails from irate Muslims. One woman, toward the end of the program, said, "You are typical of Americans who speak about things that you know nothing about. You don't understand Islam or the Qur'an. You've taken everything out of context and have interpreted it too literally." She went on to explain, "Islam is nonviolent because the Qur'an says: 'If anyone kills a person, it is as if he killed all mankind and if anyone saves a life, it is as if he saves all of mankind.'"

Forgetting for a moment that the entire quote was pilfered verbatim from Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5, proving that Qur'an 5:32 was plagiarized not inspired, the Islamic apologist omitted the core of the verse and all of what follows.

She misquoted the Qur'an by omitting from the verse, its exemption for murder: "except in retaliation or the spread of mischief." The "spread of mischief" is "non-Islamic behavior" and a "mischief maker" is anyone who does not "submit to and obey Allah and his Apostle." Then she took the verse out of context by not completing the point Allah was making. The next verse flows from the previous one. Qur'an 5:33 is violent, murderous, and intolerant: "The punishment for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and who do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified, or their hands and their feet shall be cut off on opposite sides, or they shall be exiled. That is their disgrace in this world, and a dreadful torment is theirs in Hell." Then: Qur'an 5:34 "Except for those who came back (as Muslims) with repentance before they fall into your power."

In trying to defend Islam and the Qur'an, the Muslim woman quoted a verse that was inspired by Jewish folklore rather than Muhammad's god. Then she did what she falsely accused me of doing; she misquoted the Qur'an and took it out of context. But worst of all, she tried to deceive the millions who were listening to the show into believing that Islam, the Qur'an, and its god were peaceful when the very passage she selected required Muslims to "punish" and "disgrace" non-Muslims with: murder, torture, mutilation, enslavement, or exile so that Allah might "torment them in Hell."

It's hard to know if the woman had been deceived or if she was intent on deceiving. Both are equally bad, and both are symptomatic of Islam. And lest I forget, the next caller angrily told me, "I pledge to kill you to save mankind from you." Trying to save Muslims from the deception of Islam and non-Muslims from the terror it inspires, requires patience and love.

Moving on, in surah 21:51-71, we find one of the Qur'an's many stories of Abraham. It says that Abraham confronted his people and his father because of the idols they worshiped. After an argument between Abraham and the people, they depart and Abraham breaks the smaller idols, leaving the largest one intact. When folks see this, they call Abraham and ask if he's responsible, to which he replies that it must have been the larger idol who axed the little guys. After challenging the mutilated idols to speak, the locals reply, "You know full well that these idols do not speak!" To which Abraham gives a taunting retort, and they throw him into a fire. Then in the 69th verse, Allah commands the fire to be cool, making it safe for Abraham, and he miraculously walks out unscathed.

There are no parallels to this story in the Bible. But there is an equivalent in a second century book of Jewish folktales called *The Midrash Rabbah*. In its account, Abraham breaks all the idols except the biggest one. His father and the others challenge him on this, and he claims the bigger idol smashed the smaller ones. The enraged father doesn't believe his son's account, and takes him to a man named Nimrod, who throws him into a fire. But God made it cool, and he walked out unscathed. The similarity between these stories is

unmistakable. Second century Jewish folklore and myth is repeated in the Qur'an as if it were divinely inspired scripture.

The next example is even more incriminating. In the 27th surah, named "Ants," the Qur'an makes up a story along the lines of something you'd expect to see in a children's fairytale. Come to find out, that's where it came from. "In 27:17-44 Allah tells a story about Solomon, a Hoopoe bird, and the Queen of Sheba. Let's compare the Qur'anic account with one taken from Jewish folklore, the II Targum of Esther, which was written nearly five hundred years before the creation of the Qur'an." (Tisdall and Shorrosh)

027.017 "And before Solomon were marshaled his hosts of Jinns and men, and birds, and they were all kept in order and ranks. And he took a muster of the Birds; and he said: 'Why is it I see not the Hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees? I will certainly punish him with a severe penalty, or execute him, unless he brings me a clear reason (for absence).' But the Hoopoe tarried not far: he (came up and) said: 'I have compassed (territory) which you have not compassed, and I have come to you from Saba with tidings true. I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne.' (Solomon) said: 'Soon shall we see whether you have told the truth or lied! Go you, with this letter of mine, and deliver it to them: then draw back from her, and (wait to) see what answer she returns.' (The queen) said: 'You chiefs! Here is delivered to me—a letter worthy of respect. It is from Solomon, and is as follows: "In the name of Allah, Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim: Be you not arrogant against me, but come to me in submission (Islam, the true Religion)."' She said: 'You chiefs! Advise me in (this) my affair: no affair have I decided except in your presence.' They said: 'We are endued with strength, and given to vehement war: but the command is with you; so consider what you will command.' She said, 'But I am going to send him a present, and (wait) to see with what (answer) return (my) ambassadors.' So when she arrived, she was asked to enter the lofty Palace: but when she saw it, she thought it was a lake of water, and she (tucked up her skirts), uncovering her legs. He said: 'This is but a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass.'"

From: II Targum of Esther: "Solomon gave orders 'I will send King and armies against you (of) Genii [jinn] beasts of the land the birds of the air.' Just then the Red-cock bird, enjoying itself, could not be found; King Solomon said that they should seize it and bring it by force, and indeed he sought to kill it. But just then, the cock appeared in the presence of the King and said, 'I had seen the whole world (and) know the city and kingdom of Sheba which is not subject to you, My Lord King. They are ruled by a woman called the Queen of Sheba. Then I found the fortified city in the Eastlands (Sheba) and around it are stones of gold and silver in the streets.' By chance the Queen of Sheba was out in the morning worshipping the sea, the scribes prepared a letter, which was placed under the bird's wing, and away it flew, and (it) reached the Fort of Sheba. Seeing the letter under its wing Sheba opened it and read it. 'King Solomon sends to you his Salaams. Now if it please you to come and ask after my welfare, I will set you high above all. But if it please you not, I

will send kings and armies against you.' The Queen of Sheba heard it, she tore her garments, and sending for her Nobles asked their advice. They knew not Solomon, but advised her to send vessels by the sea, full of beautiful ornaments and gems...also to send a letter to him. When at last she came, Solomon sent a messenger to meet her...Solomon, hearing she had come, arose and sat down in the palace of glass. When the Queen of Sheba saw it, she thought the glass floor was water, and so in crossing over lifted up her garments. When Solomon seeing the hair about her legs, (He) cried out to her..."

There are only two rational options available to us. If Solomon really marshaled devils, spoke to birds, and castles were made of glass, then both the Qur'an and Targum could have been inspired writings. But if this is not historically or scientifically accurate, then the Qur'an is a fake, a rotten job of plagiarism, nothing more. This counterfeit alone is sufficient to prove that the Qur'an is a colossal forgery. If you are Muslim reading these words, wake up.

One of the most documented and damaging facts about the Qur'an is that Muhammad used heretical Gnostic Gospels and their fables to create his "scripture." The Encyclopedia Britannica comments: "The Gospel was known to him chiefly through apocryphal and heretical sources."

The odd accounts of the early childhood of "Jesus" in the Qur'an can be traced to a number of Christian apocryphal writings: the Palm tree which provides for the anguish of Mary after Jesus' birth (surah 19:22-6) comes from The Lost Books of the Bible; while the account of the infant Jesus creating birds from clay (surah 3:49) comes from Thomas' Gospel. The story of the baby 'Jesus' talking (surah 19:29-33) can be traced to an Arabic apocryphal fable from Egypt named The first Gospel of the Infancy of Christ.

The source of surah 3:35 is the book called The Protevangelion's James the Lesser. From it, Allah has Moses' father beget Mary and then show his disappointment for having a girl. The source of surah 87:19's fictitious "Books of Abraham" comes from the apocryphal Testament of Abraham. The fantastic tale in surah 2:259 that God made a man "die for a hundred years" with no ill effects on his food, drink, or donkey was from The Jewish Fable. The false notion in surah 2:55-6 and 67 that Moses was resurrected came from the Talmud. The errant account of Abraham being delivered from Nimrod (surahs 21:51-71; 29:16; 37:97) came from the Midrash Rabbah.

In surah 17:1 we have the report of Muhammad's "journey by night from the sacred mosque to the farthest mosque." From later Traditions we know this verse refers to him ascending up to the seventh heaven, after a miraculous night journey (the Mi'raj) from Mecca to Jerusalem, on an "ass" called Buraq. Yet we can trace the story back to The Testament of Abraham, written around 200 B.C., in Egypt, and then translated into Greek and Arabic centuries later.

The source of the devilish encounter in the Jewish court depicted in the 2nd surah is found in chapter 44 of the Midrash Yalkut. The Qur'anic myth in

7:171 of God lifting up Mount Sinai and holding it over the heads of the Jews as a threat to squash them if they rejected the law came from the apocryphal book *Abodah Sarah*.

The making of the golden calf in the wilderness, in which the image jumped out of the fire fully formed and actually mooed (7:148; 20:88), came from *Pirke Rabbi Eleazer*. The seven heavens and hells described in the Qur'an came from the *Zohar* and the *Hagigah*. Muhammad utilized the apocryphal Testament of Abraham to teach that a scale or balance will be used on the day of judgment to weigh good and bad deeds in order to determine whether one goes to heaven or hell (42:17; 101:6-9).

Neither the Jewish nor Christian apocryphal material is canonical or inspired. They have always been considered to be heretical by believers and literate people everywhere. For this reason scholars find it suspicious that the apocryphal accounts should have made their way into a book claiming to be the final revelation from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Another analogous account is that of *The Secrets of Enoch* (chapter 1:4-10 and 2:1), which predates the Qur'an by four centuries. What Allah didn't steal from the Jewish fable, he borrowed from an old Persian book entitled *Arta-i Viraf Namak*. It tells how a pious young Zoroastrian ascended to the skies, and, on his return, related what he had seen, or professed to have seen.

The Qur'anic description of Hell resembles the portrayals in the *Homilies of Ephraim*, a Nestorian preacher of the sixth century," according to Sir John Glubb, although I'm convinced most of hell's torments came from the abuse Muhammad suffered in the desert as a youth.

The description of Paradise in suras 55:56, 56:22, and 35-7, which speak of the righteous being rewarded with wide-eyed houris, or virgins, who have eyes like pearls has interesting parallels in the Zoroastrian religion of Persia, where the maidens are quite similar. The rivers in the Persian Paradise flow with wine as well. Bukhari:V4B54N469 "Allah's Apostle said, 'The first batch who will enter Paradise will be like a full moon; and those who will enter next will be like the brightest star. Their hearts will be as the heart of a single man, for everyone of them shall have two wives from the houris, each of whom will be so beautiful, pure and transparent that the marrow of the bones of their legs will be seen through the flesh. They will never fall ill, and they will neither blow their noses, nor spit. Their utensils are silver, their combs are gold, the fuel used in their centers will be aloe, and their sweat will smell like musk.'"

Muhammad, or whoever compiled the Qur'an, incorporated parts of the religion of the Sabians, Zoroastrianism, and Hinduism into Islam. He adopted such pagan rituals as: worshiping at the Ka'aba, praying five times a day towards Mecca, the zakat tax, and fasting in Ramadhan.

This caustic brew of uninspired ingredients may be why Clair Tisdall, in her *Original Sources of the Qur'an*, wrote: "Islam is not an invention, but a concoction; there is nothing novel about it except Mohammed's mixing old

ingredients in a new panacea for human ills and forcing it down by means of the sword." She went on to say: "Islam's scriptures came to reflect the carnal and sensual nature of its founder. Islam therefore may aptly be compared with: 'that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed,' which, receiving into its bosom the waters of many streams that united form a basin that turns them into one great Sea of Death, from whose shores flee pestilential exhalations destructive to all life within reach of their malign influence. Such is Islam. Originating from many different sources, it has assumed its form from the character and disposition of Muhammad; and thus the good in it serves only to recommend and preserve the evil which renders it a false and delusive faith, a curse to men and not a blessing. Muhammad's concoction has turned many of the fairest regions of the earth into deserts, deluged many a land with innocent blood, and has smitten with a moral, intellectual, and spiritual blight every nation of men which lies under its iron yoke and groans beneath its pitiless sway."

It's hard to imagine a more adept description of the poisons that oozed from Muhammad's soul or a more adept summation of Islam's legacy. Tisdall went on to write: "While the devout Muslim believes that the rituals and doctrines of Islam are entirely heavenly in origin and thus cannot have any earthly sources, scholars have demonstrated beyond all doubt that every ritual and belief in Islam can be traced back to pre-Islamic Arabian culture. In other words Muhammad did not preach anything new. Everything he taught had been believed and practiced in Arabia long before he was ever born. Even the idea of 'only one God' was borrowed from the Jews and Christians."

Carlyle's dictum on the Qur'an was also enlightened: "It is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook, a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite. Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through it." Samuel Zwemer, in *The Influence of Animism on Islam* wrote: "In no monotheistic religion are magic and sorcery so firmly entrenched as they are in Islam; for in the case of this religion they are based on the teaching of the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet." In other words, it's Satan's book.

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Islamic dictionaries, websites, and commentaries are consistent when they describe the nature of the elements which compose Islam. The scholastic summation proclaims: "As Islam solidified as a religious and a political entity, a vast body of exegetical and historical literature evolved to explain the Qur'an and the rise of the empire. The most important elements of which are Hadith, or the collected sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad; Sunnah, or the body of Islamic social and legal custom; Sira, or biographies of the Prophet; and Tafsir, or Qur'anic commentary and explication. It is from these Traditions—compiled in written form in the eighth to tenth centuries—that all

accounts of the revelation of the Qur'an and the early years of Islam are ultimately derived."

You've seen the following clerical proclamation before, but it's worth repeating: "The Qur'an is one leg of two which form the basis of Islam. The second leg is the Sunnah of the Prophet. What makes the Qur'an different from the Sunnah is its form. Unlike the Sunnah, the Qur'an is quite literally the Word of Allah, whereas the Sunnah was inspired by Allah but the wording and actions are the Prophet's. The Qur'an has not been expressed using any human words. Its wording is letter for letter fixed by Allah. Prophet Muhammad was the final Messenger of Allah to humanity, and therefore the Qur'an is the last Message which Allah has sent to us."

This is what Islamic clerics and scholars had to say about Bukhari's Hadith Collection: "Sahih Bukhari is a collection of sayings and deeds of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), also known as the Sunnah. The reports of the Prophet's sayings and deeds are called Hadith. Bukhari lived a couple of centuries after the Prophet's death and worked extremely hard to collect his Hadith. Each report in his collection was checked for compatibility with the Qur'an, and the veracity of the chain of reporters had to be painstakingly established. Bukhari's collection is recognized by the overwhelming majority of the Muslim world to be one of the most authentic collections of the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). Bukhari Abu Abdallah Muhammad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim bin al-Mughira al-Ja'fai was born in 194 A.H. and died in 256 A.H. His collection of Hadith is considered second to none. He spent sixteen years compiling it, and ended up with 2,602 Hadith (9,082 with repetition). His criteria for acceptance into the collection were amongst the most stringent of all the scholars of Hadith."

While there is no question Bukhari's collection is sound religiously, its complete lack of chronology limits its usefulness. If you are interested in a subject like taxes or jihad you could turn to the appropriate chapter and read what Muhammad had to say about such things. But without the grounding of time, circumstance, constituents, and place, you'd be forced to take everything you read out of context. That's why every accurate and unbiased presentation of the Muhammad of Islam must be based upon the biographical and historical Hadith collections compiled by Ishaq and Tabari. They, and they alone, enable a person to speak with authority about Islam without taking Muhammad's example and scriptures out of context.

Quite recently, however, there has been a new movement afoot in the Islamic world. Cleric and king have come to recognize they have a problem. The Qur'an and Sunnah are repulsive—so are their prophet, god, and religion. They do not stand up to scrutiny. While they have been able to fool politicians and the media by repeating "Islam is a peaceful religion," and they have been able to cower religious leaders by threatening them, it hasn't worked on everyone. Enough Americans have learned the truth to put the Islamic power brokers in a terrible bind.

So, those who benefit from Islam have deployed a new strategy. They proclaim that the Qur'an may not be translated out of the arcane language only

0.0003% understand. Imagine that; they want 99.9997% of those who listen to the surahs being recited to have no earthly idea of what is being said. In Classic Arabic, the verses have a good beat and the rhyme sounds heavenly. And if the only people who are authorized to interpret them all benefit from Islam, who is going to confess that the words are hellish?

In this regard, the Qur'an is no different than rap music. Its cadence and rhyme are seductive while its lyrics are often corrupting. And the Qur'an works the same way, too. Those who listen are fleeced.

While disguising the Qur'an's evil intent via a language few understand solves one problem, the Islamic establishment still needs to deal with the vile message of the Sunnah. It's one thing to say Allah's jingle is too majestic to be translated, but Muhammad's words were written in prose.

To fix this problem, Islamic officials unveiled a different strategy during my earliest debates with them. They said that they were "unaware" of Tabari's History. When that didn't fly, they protested saying, Tabari isn't "approved." Then they claimed that it was just a "history book and not a collection of Hadith." Some even said that it contained "unauthorized material." While that's not true, it created confusion and served their interests.

Their rejection of Tabari is unsound for several reasons. First, Ishaq's original manuscripts have been lost, so Tabari is the oldest unedited account of Muhammad's life and the formation of Islam. Second, Tabari is nothing but a collection of Hadiths. Everything I quoted came complete with a chain of transmitters. In fact, Tabari's isnads are more complete than Bukhari's. And third, the Hadith Tabari compiled are no different than those arranged a century earlier by Ishaq, or by his near contemporary, Bukhari. They were all pumping from the same well—digging out of the same pit.

So why do you suppose Islamic officials ganged up on their best source? Because it was translated into English and available, while the others were not; that's why. In each debate I urged listeners to go to the S.U.N.Y. Press website and buy Tabari and then read it for themselves. That was easy enough. If what I was quoting was accurate, everything Muslims were saying about their religion was a lie. America would know the truth. And if I misrepresented Tabari's message, I promised to go away, never to be heard from again.

The Islamic apologists knew what I was saying was not only true but devastating. They stopped debating me and started discrediting Tabari because they were aware of what I had discovered: the only English translation of Ishaq's Sira was out of print and nearly impossible to find. I searched for a year, ordering it from the largest booksellers, the publisher, even used bookstores. I searched libraries, too, but to no avail. Muslims check Ishaq out and burn it. Fortunately, a Christian couple who had listened to one of my debates found a copy in a university library. They photocopied the Sira—all 900 pages—and sent it to me.

The reason this is important is because those who benefit from Islam know that without a chronological presentation of Muhammad's words and deeds, they can get away with murder—literally. They can say whatever they like, and they do. Without Ishaq or Tabari, the Qur'an is senseless. Muslims can claim that the god of the Qur'an is the same as the God of the Bible when they are opposites. They can say Islam is peaceful even though it condemns peace and promotes war. They can argue that Muhammad only fought defensive battles, when his scriptures say he was a terrorist. They can posture the notion that Islam made the Bedouins better, when in fact it transformed them into bloody pirates and immoral parasites. They can claim that the Qur'an is Allah's perfect book; when, by any rational criterion, it's hideous.

To put this in perspective, being a Muslim without the information contained in the only chronological presentations of Muhammad's words and deeds would be like being a Christian without the Gospels. It would be impossible to be Christ-like without knowing Christ, his message and example. It would be like being a Jew without the Torah. All you'd have are prophets and psalms, and that's just not enough, not even remotely.

As you have discovered, the Qur'an isn't like any intelligent book. It's jumbled together without context or chronology, rendering it nothing more than a mean-spirited rant, a demented, delusional, and dimwitted tirade. Without the chronological Hadith collections of Ishaq and Tabari, Islam becomes whatever Islamic clerics and kings want it to be. So in their fiefdoms it's all about jihad. In the free world, it's all about peace.

To prove my point, I'd like to review Islam's Five Pillars to see if they stand without the Hadith collections found in the Sunnah. But before we begin, Islam provides an important clue. To find the Pillars, we must turn to the Hadith, not the Qur'an. And while I will conduct this analysis using the "approved" version of Islam's Five Pillars, there are competing scenarios we must consider. As you might expect, Muhammad himself couldn't decide what his priorities were—much less Allah's.

The most famous Islamic proclamations echo the Qur'an's incessant command to fight jihad in Allah's Cause. Muhammad established jihad's preeminence, claiming that fighting was the foundation upon which Islam's other pillars must stand. Under the title "Fighting In Allah's Cause—Jihad," we read: "Jihad is holy fighting in Allah's Cause with full force of numbers and weaponry. It is given the utmost importance in Islam and is one of its pillars. By Jihad Islam is established, Allah's Word is made superior (which means only Allah has the right to be worshiped), and Islam is propagated. By abandoning Jihad Islam is destroyed and Muslims fall into an inferior position; their honor is lost, their lands are stolen, their rule and authority vanish. Jihad is an obligatory duty in Islam on every Muslim. He who tries to escape from this duty, or does not fulfill this duty, dies with one of the qualities of a hypocrite."

The reason jihad supercedes the other pillars is because: Bukhari:V4B52N44 "A

man came to Allah's Apostle and said, 'Instruct me as to such a deed as equals Jihad in reward.' He replied, 'I do not find such a deed. Can you, while the Muslim fighter has gone out for Jihad, enter a mosque to perform prayers without ceasing and fast forever?' The man said, 'No one can do that.'" So Jihad is superior to endless prayer and fasting. But there was more: Bukhari:V4B52N46 "I heard Allah's Apostle saying, 'The example of a Mujahid [Muslim fighter] in Allah's Cause—and Allah knows best who really strives in His Cause—is like a person who fasts and prays without ever stopping. Allah guarantees that He will admit the Mujahid in His Cause into Paradise if he is killed, otherwise He will return him to his home safely with rewards and war booty.'" It's the Devil's rendition of the win-win scenario. And that leads us to the capper, the line that confirmed jihad was better than all of the Five Pillars combined: Bukhari:V4B52N50 "The Prophet said, 'A single endeavor of fighting in Allah's Cause is better than the world and whatever is in it.'"

From the very beginning, there was always a direct causal link between the religion of Islam and Islamic terror: Bukhari:V4B52N63 "A man whose face was covered with an iron mask of armor came to the Prophet and said, 'Allah's Apostle! Shall I fight or embrace Islam first?' The Prophet said, 'Embrace Islam first and then fight.' So he embraced Islam, and was martyred. Allah's Apostle said, 'A Little work, but a great reward.'" Consistent with this message, Bukhari:V1B2N25 "Allah's Apostle was asked, 'What is the best deed?' He replied, 'To believe in Allah and His Apostle Muhammad.' The questioner then asked, 'What is the next (in goodness)?' He replied, 'To participate in Jihad (religious fighting) in Allah's Cause.' The questioner again asked, 'What is the next (in goodness)?' He replied, 'To perform Hajj (Pilgrim age to Mecca in accordance with the Traditions of the Prophet.'" This is important because it establishes Three Pillars, with Jihad being the second most important.

The next rendition of Pillars eliminates the Hajj, which was number three above, and replaces it with the Khumus—Muhammad's share of stolen booty. Bukhari:V1B2N50 "They said, 'O Allah's Apostle, order us to do some religious deeds that we may enter Paradise.' The Prophet ordered them to believe in Allah Alone and asked them, 'Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah Alone?' They replied, 'Allah and His Apostle know better.' Thereupon the Prophet said, 'It means: 1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle. 2. To offer prayers perfectly. 3. To pay the Zakat obligatory tax. 4. To observe fast during Ramadhan. 5. And to pay the Khumus (one fifth of the booty to be given in Allah's Cause) to Allah's Apostle.'"

Contradictions aside and priorities confused, I promised to resolve Islam's absolute reliance on the Sunnah by analyzing the "officially recognized" Pillars. To begin: Bukhari:V1B2N7 "Allah's Apostle said: 'Islam is based on (the following) five (principles): 1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle.'" Let's tackle them one at a time. In its present order, the Qur'an's initial surah, the 2nd, (the 1st is an invocation, not a revelation as it speaks to god not to man) makes a transition from Ar-Rahman to Allah. But

as we read on, this changes. The Qur'anic God becomes Ar-Rahman again and then a nameless Lord. Without the chronology the Sira's Hadith provide, Muslims don't know who God is or how many of them there are. Furthermore, they know nothing about the "Apostle." Without the Sunnah, acknowledging him in the profession of faith is like a recording device asking to be credited for bringing you the songs of your favorite artist.

But it gets worse. The Qur'an orders Muslims to obey the Messenger. If you don't know what he ordered, that's impossible. The Qur'an alleges that it's entirely composed of Allah's commands, not Muhammad's, so you'd be out of luck. The Qur'an also tells Muslims that they must follow the Messenger's example, yet the only place that example is established is in the Sunnah. Therefore, Islam's First Pillar is utterly meaningless, and impossible to implement, without Ishaq and Tabari.

The Second Pillar is: "2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly." Once again, that's not feasible. The "compulsory congregational prayer" isn't described in the Qur'an. There aren't even any clues. In fact, the Qur'an says that there should be three prayers, none of which it depicts, and the Hadith demands five. The only explanation of the obligatory prostration is found in the Sunnah—and even then it's never described by the prophet himself. Muslims are performing a ritual without Qur'anic precedence. As such, the Second Pillar is rubble.

Let's see if the Third Pillar survives without the Sunnah. To find out, we turn to the Hadith: Bukhari:V1B2N7 "3. To pay Zakat." How is that possible when the terms of the Zakat are omitted from the Qur'an? The first to commit them to paper was Ishaq. A century later, Tabari referenced Ishaq's Hadith. The only reason Muslims can pay the Zakat is because Ishaq explained it to them. The Profitable Prophet Plan is bankrupt without the Sira.

Surely the Fourth Pillar will fare better: "4. To perform Hajj." Nope. That's impossible too. The only explanations of the Hajj are in the Sunnah. No aspect of the pilgrimage can be performed without referencing the Hadith. Muslims would be lost without it.

Do you suppose Allah will redeem himself and explain the final pillar in his "perfect, detailed, and final revelation to mankind?" Bukhari:V1B2N7 "5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan." Guess what? Allah forgot to explain the nature of the fast. Without the Hadith, Muslims would be expected to forgo eating during the entire month of Ramadhan. But that's not the way they observe the fast, for it's not the way it's explained in the Sunnah. As a matter of fact, without the Hadith, Muslims wouldn't know why Ramadhan was special. The only account of the initial revelation is in their Traditions—initially chronicled by Ishaq and then copied by Bukhari, Muslim, and Tabari.

Without Ibn Ishaq and those who copied and edited his arrangement of Hadith concerning Muhammad's words and deeds, there would be no Islam.

The Qur'an is senseless and the Five Pillars are meaningless. Faith is folly. And that's especially true since the lone individual responsible for Islam, Allah, and the Qur'an, preached: Bukhari:V9B88N174 "Allah's Apostle said, 'Far removed from mercy are those who change the religion of Islam after me! Islam cannot change!'"

The penalty for escaping Muhammad's clutches has always been high. Bukhari:V4B52N260 "The Prophet said, 'If a Muslim discards his religion, kill him.'" This was no ordinary prophet or religion. No, Muhammad was special. He was a terrorist and a pirate, and you don't find too many of those in religious circles. Bukhari:V4B52N220 "Allah's Apostle said, 'I have been made victorious with terror. The treasures of the world were brought to me and put in my hand.'"

Yes, Islam was the Profitable Prophet Plan. It was all about Muhammad, and he knew it. That is why he required his Sunnah, or example to be enacted as law. Tabari IX:82 "The Messenger sent [killer] Khalid out to collect taxes with an army of 400 and ordered him to invite people to Islam before he fought them. If they were to respond and submit, he was to teach them the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Prophet, and the requirements of Islam. If they should decline, then he was to fight them." His Sunnah has become the basis for Islamic law—the most repressive code on earth. And Muslims follow his example, which is why they are the most violent people on earth.

So it all comes down to this: If the Hadith Collections of Ishaq, Tabari, Bukhari and Muslim are true, Muhammad was the most evil man who ever lived, Allah was the most demented god ever conceived, and Islam was the most vile doctrine ever imposed on humankind. If, however, the Hadith Collections are untrue, then nothing is known of Muhammad, the conception of his god, or his formation of Islam. There is no rational reason to believe it, observe it, suffer under it, or die for it.