

**MESSENGERS
OF PEACE**
A C A D E M Y



OPERATION SALAM
DA'WAH IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Module Five:

Revelation

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In this module

- Learn the literary miracle of the Qur'an
- Learn why the Qur'an has to be from Allah
- Learn about the uniqueness of Islam

Unit One: The Linguistic and Literary Miracle of the Qur'an

Most of what we know is based on the say so of others. This holds true for facts that we would never deny. For many of us these truths include the existence of Amazonian Indian tribes, photosynthesis, ultraviolet radiation, and bacteria. Let me elaborate further by using your mother as an example. How would you prove to me – a perfect stranger – that your mother did in fact give birth to you? As bizarre as this question sounds, it will help clarify a very important yet underrated source of knowledge. Some might say “my mother told me so”, “I have a birth certificate”, “my father told me, he was there”, or “I have checked my mother’s hospital records”. These responses are not unfounded, however they are based on the statements of other people. Sceptical minds may not be satisfied. They may try and salvage an empirical basis for their conviction by using the ‘DNA card’ or by referring to video footage. The conviction that your mother is who she says she is, isn’t based on a DNA home test kit. The reality is that most of us have not taken a DNA test. It is also not based on video footage as you still have to rely on the say so of others to claim that the baby is actually you. So how and why are we so sure?

This, admittedly quirky example, brings to light an important source of knowledge, testimony.

Many of our beliefs are based on a form of reasoning which begins with a collection of data, facts or assertions, and then seeks the best explanation for them. Let's welcome your mother back briefly again. She is heavily pregnant with you inside her womb and the due date was last week. Suddenly, her waters break and she starts having contractions so your father and the relevant medical staff safely assume that she's started labour. Another example, some years on, your mother notices an open packet of biscuits and crumbs around your mouth and on your clothes. She infers that it was you who opened the packet and helped yourself to some biscuits. In both examples, the conclusions are not necessarily true or indisputable, but they are the best explanations considering all of the facts available. This thinking process is known as inference to the best explanation.

So why have I introduced the above scenarios? Because using the concepts and principles from these examples, this unit will put forward the case that the Qur'an is an inimitable expression of the Arabic language, and that its inimitability is best explained by God. What is meant by inimitability is that no one has been able to produce or emulate the Quran's linguistic and literary features. This can include- but is not limited to- its unique literary form and genre, in the context of sustained eloquence. Though this assertion seems quite disconnected to what I have elaborated on so far, consider the following outline:

The Qur'an was revealed in Arabia to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in the 7th century. This period was known as an era of literary and linguistic perfection. The 7th century Arabs were socialised into being a people who were the best at expressing themselves in their native tongue. They would celebrate when a poet rose amongst them and all they knew was poetry. They would start with poetry and end in poetry. The cultivation of poetic skills and linguistic mastery was everything for them. It was their oxygen and life blood; they could not live or function without the perfection of their linguistic abilities. However, when the Qur'an was recited to them they lost their breath, they were dumbfounded, incapacitated, and stunned by

the silence of their greatest experts. They could not produce anything like the Qur'anic discourse. It got worse. The Qur'an challenged these linguists par excellence to imitate its unique literary and linguistic features. They failed. So they resorted to boycott, war, murder, torture and a campaign of misinformation. In fact, throughout the centuries there have been experts who have acquired the tools to challenge the Qur'an and they too have testified that the Qur'an is inimitable, and appreciate why the best linguists have failed.

How can a Non-Arab or non-expert of the Arabic language appreciate the inimitability of the Qur'an? Enter now the role of testimony. The above assertions are based on an established written and oral testimonial transmission of knowledge from past and present scholars of the Arabic language. If this is true, and the best people placed to challenge the Qur'an failed to imitate the Divine discourse, then who was the author? This is where testimony stops, and where the use of inference begins. In order to understand the inference to the best explanation, the possible rationalisations of the Qur'an's inimitable nature must be analysed. These include that it was authored by an Arab, a Non-Arab, Muhammad ﷺ or God. Considering all of the facts that will be discussed in this essay, it is implausible that the Qur'an's inimitability can be explained by attributing it to an Arab, a Non-Arab or Muhammad ﷺ. For that reason, God is the inference to the best explanation.

The main assumptions in the above introduction is that testimony is a valid source of knowledge and inference is a suitable and rational method of thinking to form conclusions about reality. This essay will introduce the epistemology of testimony, and elaborate on the use of testimonial transmission in a way that is rational. It will highlight the effective use of inferring to the best explanation, and apply both concepts to the Qur'an's inimitability. This unit will conclude that God is the best explanation for the fact that no one has been able to imitate the Divine book. This will be achieved without the reader requiring any knowledge or expertise of the Arabic language.

To postulate God as the best explanation for the inimitability of the Qur'an may assume His existence. This may be the case, however, it is not the scope of this unit

to attempt to prove The Divine. Nevertheless, the point can be made that a previous conviction in God is not necessary, this will be discussed at the end of this module.

The Epistemology of Testimony

What is testimony?

Epistemology comes from the Greek words ἐπιστήμη (epistimi) which means knowledge and understanding, and λόγος (logos) meaning 'the study of'. Epistemology therefore refers to the study of knowledge and belief. Its concerns are focused on answering the following questions: what are the conditions of knowledge? What are the sources of knowledge? How is knowledge justified? What makes a proposition or set of beliefs true?

Testimony is a branch of epistemology "concerned with how we acquire knowledge and justified belief from the say-so of other people"[Benjamin McMyler. Testimony, Truth and Authority. Oxford University Press. 2011. p. 3]. Therefore, one of the key questions it tries to answer is how do we gain "knowledge on the basis of what other people tell us." [The Epistemology of Testimony. Edited by Jennifer Lackey and Ernest Sosa. Clarendon Press: Oxford. 2006, p. 2.] Assistant Professor Benjamin McMyler provides a summary of testimonial knowledge,

"Here are a few things that I know. I know that the copperhead is the most common venomous snake in the greater Houston area. I know that Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo. I know that, as I write, the average price for gasoline in the U.S is \$4.10 per gallon...All of these things I know on the basis of what epistemologists call testimony, on the basis of being told of them by another person or group of persons." [pg. 10]

McMyler's summary seems quite intuitive and highlights why we claim knowledge solely based on testimonial transmission. The world being a sphere is a striking example. The belief that the world is a sphere is – for most of us – not based on mathematics or science. It is purely centred on testimony. Your initial reactions

may entail the following statements “I have seen pictures”, “I have read it in science books”, “All my teachers told me”, “I can go on the highest mountain peak and observe the curvature of the Earth”, and so on. However, upon intellectual scrutiny, all of our answers fall under testimonial knowledge. Seeing pictures or images is testimonial because you have to accept the say so of the authority or person who said it is an image of the world. Reading and learning this fact from science textbooks is also due to testimonial transmission, as you have to accept what the authors say as true. This also applies when referring to your teachers. Attempting to empirically justify your current conviction by standing on the highest peak, is still based on testimony. Many of us have never done such a thing, and therefore assuming that it will provide us evidence for the roundness of the Earth is based ultimately on the say so of others. Even if you have, it does not in any way prove the roundness of the Earth. Standing on a peak will only indicate that the Earth has some form of curvature – and not a complete sphere. In summary, for the majority of us, the fact that the world is round is not based on anything else apart from testimony.

So far the discussion about testimony undeniably brings to light its indispensable nature. Knowledge is impossible without it. Professor of Epistemology C. A. J. Coady summarises the points made so far, and lists some of the things that are solely accepted on the basis of testimonial transmission, “...many of us have never seen a baby born, nor have most of us examined the circulation of the blood nor the actual geography of the world nor any fair sample of the laws of the land, nor have we made the observations that lie behind our knowledge that the lights in the sky are heavenly bodies immensely distant...”[C. A. J. Coady. *Testimony: A Philosophical Study*. Oxford University Press. 1992, p. 82.]

Formulating an Argument

In order to articulate a coherent argument for the Qur’an’s Divine authorship, the testimonial transmission concerning its inimitability must be established with the necessary background information. Since there are competing testimonies

concerning the Qur'an's inimitability, the background information must be presented to rationally justify the testimony in favour of the Qur'an's uniqueness.

This information includes the fact that the Qur'an presents a linguistic and literary challenge, that the 7th century Arabs achieved mastery at expressing themselves in the Arabic language, and their failure to imitate the Qur'an. Once this is established, adopting the testimony in favour of the inimitability of the Qur'an would be the rational choice, as it provides the basis to accept them. The testimonies that disagree with the Qur'an's uniqueness are reduced to absurdity, as they deny that which has been established (to be explained later). Once the testimonial transmission is adopted, the competing explanations for the Qur'an's inimitability must be assessed in order to make an inference to the best explanation; the Qur'an was produced either by an Arab, a Non-Arab, Muhammad ﷺ or God. A summary of the argument is as follows:

1. The Qur'an presents a literary and linguistic challenge to humanity.
2. The 7th century Arabs were best placed to challenge the Qur'an.
3. The 7th century Arabs failed.
4. Scholars have testified to the Qur'an's inimitability.
5. Counter scholarly testimonies are not plausible as they have to reject the established background information.
6. The possible explanations for the Qur'an's inimitability are an Arab, a Non-Arab, Muhammad ﷺ or God.
7. It could not have been produced by an Arab, a Non-Arab or Muhammad ﷺ .
8. Therefore, the best explanation is that it is from God.

The remaining part of this essay will elaborate on the premises above.

1. The Qur'an presents a literary and linguistic challenge to humanity

“Read in the name of your Lord”.[Qur'an 96:1] These were the first words of the Qur'an revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ over 1400 years ago. Muhammad ﷺ , who was known to have been in retreat and meditation in a cave outside Mecca, had

received revelation of a book that would have a tremendous impact on the world we live in today. Not being known to have composed any piece of poetry and not having any special rhetorical gifts, Muhammad ﷺ had just received the beginning of a book that would deal with matters of belief, legislation, international law, politics, ritual, spirituality, and economics in an entirely new genre and literary form.

The unique literary and linguistic features of the Qur'an have been used by Muslims to articulate a number of arguments to substantiate their belief that the book is from the Divine. The inability of anyone being able to imitate the Qur'an developed into the Muslim theological doctrine of the Qur'an's inimitability or al-'ijaz al-Qur'an. The word 'ijaz is a verbal noun that means "miraculous" and comes from the verb 'ajaza which means to render incapable, or to make helpless. The linguistic meaning of the term brings to light the theological doctrine that the Arab linguistics par excellence were rendered incapable of producing anything like it. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti the 15th century, the prolific writer and scholar, summarises this doctrine,

"...when the Prophet brought [the challenge] to them, they were the most eloquent rhetoricians so he challenged them to produce the [entire] likes [of the Qur'an] and many years passed and they were unable to do so as Allah says, Let them then produce a recitation similar to it, if indeed they are truthful. Then, [the Prophet] challenged them to produce 10 chapters like it where Allah says, Say, bring then ten chapters like it and call upon whomever you can besides God, if you are truthful. Then, he challenged them to produce a single where Allah says, Or do they say he [i.e. the Prophet] has forged it? Say, bring a chapter like it and call upon whomever you can besides God, if you are truthful...When the [Arabs] were unable to produce a single chapter like [the Qur'an] despite there being the most eloquent rhetoricians amongst them, [the Prophet] openly announced the failure and inability [to meet the challenge] and declared the inimitability of the Qur'an. Then Allah said, Say, if all of humankind and the jinn gathered together to produce the like of the Qur'an, they could not produce it - even if they helped one another..."[al-Suyūṭī. Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān. 2:311-312.]

According to classical exegetes, the various verses in the Qur'an that issue a challenge to produce a chapter like it, daringly call for the linguistic experts of any era to imitate the Qur'an's linguistic and literary features. The tools needed to meet this challenge are the finite grammatical rules, literary and linguistic devices, and the twenty eight letters that make-up the Arabic language; these are independent and objective measures available to all. The fact that it has not been matched since it was first revealed does not surprise most scholars familiar with the Arabic language and that of the Qur'an.

2. The 7th century Arabs were best placed to challenge the Qur'an

The Qur'an posed a challenge to the greatest Arabic linguists, the 7th Century Arab. The fact that these Arabs reached the peak of eloquence is affirmed by western and eastern scholarship. The scholar Taqi Usmani asserts that for the 7th century Arab "eloquence and rhetoric were their life blood." According to the 9th century biographer of the poets, al-Jumahi "verse was to the Arabs the register of all they knew, and the utmost compass of their wisdom; with it they began their affairs, and with it they ended them." The 14th century scholar Ibn Khaldun highlights the importance of poetry in Arab life, "It should be known that Arabs thought highly of poetry as a form of speech. Therefore, they made it the archives of their history, the evidence for what they considered right and wrong, and the principal basis of reference for most of their sciences and wisdom."

There was a socialisation and a highly influential social environment concerning the use of language. The literary critic and historian Ibn Rashiq illustrates this, "Whenever a poet emerged in an Arab tribe, other tribes would come to congratulate, feasts would be prepared, the women would join together on lutes as they do at weddings, and old and young men would all rejoice at the good news. The Arabs used to congratulate each other only on the birth of a child and when a poet rose among them." The 9th century scholar Ibn Qutayba defined poetry as the Arabs saw it, "the mine of knowledge of the Arabs, the book of their wisdom the truthful witness on the day of dispute, the final proof at the time of argument."

Navid Kermani, a writer and expert in Islamic studies, explains the extent the Arabs had to study to master the Arabic language, which indicates that the 7th century Arab lived in a world that almost worshipped poetry, “Old Arabic poetry is a highly complex phenomenon. The vocabulary, grammatical idiosyncrasies and strict norms were passed down from generation to generation, and only the most gifted students fully mastered the language. A person had to study for years, sometimes even decades under a master poet before laying claim to the title of poet.

Muhammad ﷺ grew up in a world which almost religiously revered poetic expression.”

The 7th century Arab lived in a socio-cultural environment that had all the right conditions to facilitate the unparalleled expertise in the expression of the Arabic language.

3. The 7th century Arabs failed

In light of the above, the 7th century Arabs were best placed to challenge the Qur’an as they reached the peak of eloquence and the pinnacle of linguistic mastery.

Notwithstanding their linguistic abilities they collectively failed to produce an Arabic text that matched the Qur’an’s linguistic and literary features. The linguistics expert Professor Hussein Abdul-Raof asserts, “The Arabs, at the time, had reached their linguistic peak in terms of linguistic competence and sciences, rhetoric, oratory, and poetry. No one, however, has ever been able to provide a single chapter similar to that of the Qur’an.” During an interview with Angelika Neuwrith, the distinguished Professor of Qur’anic studies, she argued that the Qur’an has never been successfully challenged by anyone, past or present,

“...no one has succeeded, this is right...I really think that the Qur’an has even brought Western researchers embarrassment, who weren’t able to clarify how suddenly in an environment where there were not any appreciable written text, appeared the Qur’an with its richness of ideas and its magnificent wordings.”

Labid Ibn Rabi'ah, one of the famous poets of the Seven Odes, embraced Islam due to the inimitability of the Qur'an. Once he embraced Islam he stopped composing poetry. People were surprised for "he was their most distinguished poet." They asked him why he stopped composing poetry, he replied, "What! Even after the revelation of the Qur'an?"

Professor of Arabic and that of the Qur'an, E.H. Palmer argues that the assertions made by academics like the one above should not surprise us. He writes, "That the best of Arab writers has never succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Qur'an itself is not surprising."

Scholar and Professor of Islamic Studies M. A. Draz, affirms how the 7th century experts were absorbed in the discourse that left them incapacitated, "In the golden age of Arab eloquence, when language reached the apogee of purity and force, and titles of honour were bestowed with solemnity on poets and orators in annual festivals, the Qur'anic word swept away all enthusiasm for poetry or prose, and caused the Seven Golden Poems hung over the doors of the Ka'ba to be taken down. All ears lent themselves to this marvel of Arabic expression."

The number of testimonial transmissions from the 7th century, that affirm the Arabs inability to produce anything like the Qur'an, excludes any doubt in this context. It would be unreasonable to dismiss the fact that the Arabs were incapacitated. Similar to what was mentioned in the section on eyewitness testimony, the narratives that conclude the Arab's failure to imitate the Qur'an has reach the status of mutawatir. There exists a large number of experts who have transmitted this knowledge via varying chains of transmission, and many of them never met each other.

4. Scholars have testified to the Qur'an's inimitability

There have been a multitude of scholars from western, eastern, religious and non-religious backgrounds who have testified to the Qur'an's inimitability. Below is a

non-exhaustive list of the scholarship that forms the testimony that the Qur'an cannot be emulated,

~ Professor of Oriental Studies, Martin Zammit: “Notwithstanding the literary excellence of some of the long pre-Islamic poems...the Qur'an is definitely on a level of its own as the most eminent written manifestation of the Arabic language.”

~ The scholar Shah Waliyyullah: “Its highest degree of eloquence, which is beyond the capacity of a human being. However, since we come after the first Arabs we are unable to reach its essence. But the measure which we know is that the employment of lucid words and sweet constructions gracefully and without affectation that we find in the Tremendous Qur'an is to be found nowhere else in any of the poetry of the earlier or later peoples.”

~ Orientalist and litterateur A.J. Arberry: “In making the present attempt to improve on the performance of predecessors, and to produce something which might be accepted as echoing however faintly the sublime rhetoric of the Arabic Koran, I have been at pain to study the intricate and richly varied rhythms which – apart from the message itself – constitutes the Koran's undeniable claim to rank amongst the greatest literary masterpieces of mankind.”

~ Scholar Taqi Usmani: “None of them was able to compose even a few sentences to match the Qurānic verses. Just think that they were a people who according to 'Allāmah Jurjāni, could never resist ridiculing the idea in their poetry if they heard that there was someone at the other end of the globe who prided himself on his eloquence and rhetorical speech. It is unthinkable that they could keep quiet even after such repeated challenges and dare not come forward...They had left no stone unturned for persecuting the Prophet ﷺ. They tortured him, called him insane, sorcerer, poet and sooth-sayer, but failed utterly in composing even a few sentences like the Qurānic verses.”

~ Al-Isfahani: “Know that the inimitability of the Qur'an... is concerned either with

its eloquence, its rhetorical devices, or its sense.”

~ Imam Fakhr al-Din: “It is inimitable because of its eloquence, its unique style, and because it is free of error.”

~ al-Zamlakani: “Its word structures for instance, are in perfect harmony with their corresponding scales, and the meaning of its phraseology is unsurpassed, such that every linguistic category is unsurpassed in the case of every single word and phrase.”

Professor Bruce Lawrence: “As tangible signs, Qur’anic verse are expressive of an inexhaustible truth, they signify meaning layered with meaning, light upon light, miracle after miracle.”

~ The highly acclaimed Professor and Arabist Hamilton Gibb: “Like all Arabs they were connoisseurs of language and rhetoric. Well, then if the Koran were his own composition other men could rival it. Let them produce ten verses like it. If they could not (and it is obvious that they could not), then let them accept the Koran as an outstanding evidential miracle.”

The above confirmations of the inimitability of the Qur’an are a small sample from the innumerable testimonies available to us.

Testifying to the Qur’an’s inimitability does not imply accepting its Divinity. A valid contention concerning academic testimonies on the Qur’an’s inimitability, is the fact that if these scholars agree that the Qur’an cannot be imitated, then why have they not concluded it is a Divine text? The problem with this contention is that it conflates testifying to the Qur’an’s inimitability with inference to the best explanation. The argument I am presenting in this essay does not conclude the Divinity of the Qur’an from the statements of scholars. Rather, it is the best explanation to elucidate the inimitability of the Qur’an came from God. Whether these scholars accept the inference, or the Divinity of the Qur’an, is irrelevant. The statements of the scholars are used as evidence for the Qur’an’s inimitability and

not that it is best explained by God. The argument infers from the text's inimitability, and not from conclusions the scholars may have drawn from the fact that it cannot be imitated. It must be pointed out that these scholars may have not been presented with an argument that presents an inference to the best explanation, or, they have not reflected on the philosophical implications of the Qur'an's inimitability. These academics may even hold non-negotiable naturalistic presuppositions that deters them from concluding anything metaphysical or outside of the physical world.

5. Counter scholarly testimonies are not plausible as they have to reject the established background information

In light of the above, the testimonial transmission concerning the inimitability of the Qur'an would be the most rational to adopt. This does not mean there is a complete consensus on the issue, or that all scholarship asserts that the Qur'an is unchallenged. There are some, although in the minority, scholarly opinions that contend with the Qur'an's inimitability. If valid testimony doesn't require a unanimity, why would someone accept one testimonial transmission over another? The testimony concerning the Qur'an's inimitability is more reasonable, due to the fact that it rests on strong background knowledge. This background knowledge is what has been discussed in premises 1, 2 and 3. These premises highlight the fact that the Qur'an presents a literary and linguistic challenge to humanity. The 7th century Arabs were best placed to challenge the Qur'an, yet these linguistic masters failed to meet this challenge.

Adopting the counter testimonies commits the fallacy of *reductio ad absurdum*. The reason that these testimonies lead to absurdity, is because an explanation is required to answer why those who were best placed to challenge the Qur'an failed to do so. Possible explanations would include rejecting the validity of this established history, or claiming a greater understanding and appreciation of classical Arabic than the 7th century linguist masters. These explanations render the counter testimonies without a rational basis. Rejecting the established history would require a remaking of the history of Arabic literature. Assuming superior

linguistic abilities than the 7th century specialists is debased by the fact that these experts had a relatively homogenous linguistic environment. These environments are areas where the purity of the language is maintained, and there is a limited amount of linguistic borrowing and degeneration. Contemporary Arab linguistic environments suffer from excessive linguistic borrowing and degeneration. Therefore, to claim superiority over a people coming from a culture that had the fertile ground for linguistic perfection, is untenable.

Notwithstanding the weakness of these contentions, when an analysis of the work of the scholars who testify against the Qur'an's inimitability is performed, the results conclude the linguistic meagreness of this type of scholarship. An example of its inadequacy can be found in the work of the highly acclaimed German orientalist and scholar Theodor Nöldeke. Nöldeke was an academic critic of the linguistic and literary features of the Qur'an, and therefore obviously rejected the doctrine of the Qur'an's inimitability. However, his criticism actually brings to light the unsubstantiated nature of such claims. For instance, Nöldeke remarks that, "the grammatical persons change from time to time in the Qur'an in an unusual and not beautiful way (nicht schöner Weise)."

The Qur'anic linguistic feature that Nöldeke refers to is actually the effective rhetorical device known as *iltifāt* or grammatical shifts. This literary device enhances the text's literary expression and it is an accepted, well researched part of Arabic rhetoric. One can find references in the books of Arabic rhetoric by al-Athir, Suyuti and Zarkashi.

These grammatical shifts include: changes in person, change in number, change in addressee, change in tense, change in case marker, using a noun in place of a pronoun and many other changes. The main functions of these shifts include the changing of emphasis, to alert the reader to a particular matter, and to enhance the style of the text. Its effects include creating variation and difference in a text, to generate rhythm and flow, and to maintain the listener's attention in a dramatic way.

Chapter al-Kawthar provides another good example of the use of grammatical shifts,

“Verily, We have granted you The Abundance. Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice. For he who hates you, he will be cut off.”

In this chapter, there is a change from the first person plural “We” to the second person “...your Lord”. This change is not an abrupt shift; it is calculated and highlights the intimate relationship between God and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The use of “We” is used to emphasize the Majesty, Power and Ability of God. This choice of personal pronoun calls attention to, and stresses the fact, that God has the Power and Ability to grant Muhammad ﷺ “...The Abundance”. Whereas “Your Lord” has been used to indicate and emphasise intimacy, closeness and love. The word “Your Lord” has a range of meanings that imply master, provider, and the One that cares. This is an apt use of language, as the surrounding concepts are about prayer, sacrifice and worship; “Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice“.

Furthermore, the purpose of this chapter is also to console Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as using such intimate language enhances the psycholinguistic effect.

Theodor Nöldeke’s criticism of the Qur’an was not only a personal value judgement, but exposed his crude understanding of the classical Arabic language. It also confirmed his inability to reach the level of expertise that was attained by 7th century Arabs. These grammatical shifts contribute to the dynamic style of the Qur’an and are obvious stylistic features and an accepted rhetorical practice. The Qur’an uses this feature in such a way that conforms to the theme of the text while enhancing the impact of the message it conveys. It is not surprising that Professor Neal Robinson in his book *Discovering the Qur’an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text* concludes that the grammatical shifts used in the Qur’an, “...are a very effective rhetorical device.”

To conclude, counter testimonies testifying against the Qur'an's inimitability do not hold water due to the need to explain why the best placed Arabs failed to challenge the Qur'an. Rejecting established historical narratives and assuming a superior appreciation of the classical Arabic language, renders the counter testimonials as indefensible.

6. The possible explanations for the Qur'an's inimitability are an Arab, a Non-Arab, Muhammad ﷺ or God

To articulate the Divine origins of the Qur'an without referring to specifics about the Arabic language, the use of testimony and inference are required. What has been discussed so far is that there is a valid testimonial transmission that the Qur'an is inimitable, and that the possible explanation for its inimitability can be explained by attributing its authorship to an Arab, a Non-Arab, Muhammad ﷺ or God.

However, it can be argued that there are other possible competing explanations, but we do not know what they are. This assertion commits a type of fallacy that some have called "the fallacy of the phantom option". If there are genuine competing explanations then they must be presented on the intellectual table for discussion. Otherwise, this kind of reasoning is no different to claiming that the leaves do not fall from trees because of gravity, but due to another explanation that we do not know about.

7. It could not have been produced by an Arab, a Non-Arab or Muhammad ﷺ

An Arab?

There are a few key reasons why the Qur'an could not have come from an Arab. Firstly, they achieved unparalleled linguistic and literary mastery yet they failed to challenge the Qur'an and the leading experts of the time testified to the inimitable features of the Qur'an. One of the best linguist of the time, Walid Ibn al-Mughira, exclaimed,

“And what can I say? For I swear by Allah, there is none amongst you who knows poetry as well as I do, nor can any compete with me in composition or rhetoric – not even in the poetry of jinns! And yet, I swear by Allah, Muhammad’s speech [meaning the Qur’an] does not bear any similarity to anything I know, and I swear by Allah, the speech that he says is very sweet, and is adorned with beauty and charm.”

Secondly, the Arab polytheists in the 7th century initially accused the Prophet ﷺ of being a poet. However, none of the poets came out to expose Muhammad ﷺ as being one of his teachers. This was an easier thing to do than going to war and fighting the Muslims. The very fact that Muhammad ﷺ was successful in his message shows that he succeeded in showing the poets and linguists of the time that the Qur’an is indeed a supernatural genre. If the Qur’an was not inimitable, any poet or linguist could have come out and produced something better or similar to the Qur’anic discourse. The expert in Islamic studies Navid Kermani makes this point clear, “Obviously, the prophet succeeded in this conflict with the poets, otherwise Islam would not have spread like wildfire.”

What about today’s Arab? To assert that a contemporary Arabic speaking person can emulate the Qur’an is unfounded. A few reasons substantiate this point. Firstly, the Arabs in the 7th century were better placed to challenge the Qur’an, and since they failed to do so, it would be unreasonable to assert that a linguistic impoverished modern Arab surpass the abilities of their predecessors. Secondly, modern Arabic has suffered from greater linguistic borrowing and degeneration than the classical Arabic tradition. So how can an Arab who is a product of a linguistically degenerated culture be on par with an Arab who was immersed in an environment of relative linguistic purity? Thirdly, even if a contemporary Arab learns classical Arabic, his linguistic abilities could not match someone who was immersed in a culture that mastered the language.

A Non-Arab?

The Qur'an could not have come from a Non-Arab as the language in the Qur'an is Arabic, and the knowledge of the Arabic language is a pre-requisite to successfully challenge the Qur'an. This has been addressed in the Qur'an itself,

“And indeed We know that they (polytheists and pagans) say: ‘It is only a human being who teaches him (Muhammad).’ The tongue of the man they refer to is foreign, while this is a speech in clear Arabic.”

The classical exegete Ibn Kathir explains this verse to mean, “how could it be that this Qur'an with its eloquent style and perfect meanings, which is more perfect than any Book revealed to any previously sent Prophet, have been learnt from a foreigner who hardly speaks the language? No one with the slightest amount of common sense would say such a thing.”

What if a Non-Arab learns the language? This would make that person an Arabic speaker and I would refer to the first possible explanation above. However, there are differences between native and non-native speakers of languages as various academic studies in applied linguistics and similar fields have concluded. For instance, in the English language, there are differences between native and non-native speakers in reliably discriminating between literal and idiomatic speech. Differences exist between English speakers with one non-native parent and those with native parents. The speakers with one non-native parent would exhibit worse linguistic performance on certain tasks than those with native parents. Even in cases of non-native speakers having indistinguishable linguistic competence with native speakers, there are still subtle linguistic differences. Research conducted by Kenneth Hyltenstam and Niclas Abrahamsson, *Who can become native-like in a second language? All, some, or none?* concluded that competent non-native speakers exhibit features that are unperceivable except under detailed and systematic linguistic analysis. Therefore, to conclude that the Qur'an, with its inimitable features and it being a linguistic masterpiece, is a product of a Non-Arab, or non-native speakers, is untenable.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ ?

The Qur'an could not have been produced by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as he was an Arab, and all the Arabs failed to challenge the Qur'an. Also, it is pertinent to note that the Arab linguists at the time of revelation stopped accusing the Prophet ﷺ of being the author of the Qur'an, after their initial false assertion that he became a poet. Professor Mohar Ali writes, "It must be pointed out that the Qur'an is not considered a book of poetry by any knowledgeable person. Nor did the Prophet ever indulge in versifying. It was indeed an allegation of the unbelieving Quraysh as the initial stage of their opposition to the revelation that [ﷺ] had turned a poet; but soon enough they found their allegation beside the mark and changed their lines of criticism in view of the undeniable fact of the Prophet's being unlettered and completely unaccustomed to the art of poetry-making, saying that he had been tutored by others, that he had got the "old-worst stories" written for him by others and read out to him in the morning and evening."

Significantly, the Prophet ﷺ was not considered a master of the language and did not engage in the craft of poetry or rhymed prose. Therefore, to claim that he somehow managed to conjure up a literary and linguistic masterpiece is beyond the pale of rational thought. Kermani writes, "He had not studied the difficult craft of poetry, when he started reciting verses publicly...Yet Muhammad's recitations differed from poetry and from the rhyming prose of the soothsayers, the other conventional form of inspired, metrical speech at the time."

The scholar Taqi Usmani similarly argues, "Such a proclamation was no ordinary thing. It came from a person who had never learned anything from the renowned poets and scholars of the time, had never recited even a single piece of poetry in their poetic congregations, had never attended the company of soothsayers. And far from composing any poetry himself, he did not even remember the verses of other poets."

Further to this, the established Prophetic traditions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (also known as ahadith, plural; and hadith, singular) are in a distinct style to that of the Qur'an. Dr. Draz argues the difference between the Qur'anic style and the Prophet's ﷺ ,

“When we consider the Qur'anic style we find it the same throughout, while the Prophet's own style is totally different. It does not run alongside the Qur'an except like high flying birds which cannot be reached by man but which may 'run' alongside him. When we look at human styles we find them all of a type that remains on the surface of the earth. Some of them crawl while others run fast. But when you compare the fastest running among them to the Qur'an you feel that they are no more than moving cars compared to planets speeding through their orbits.”

The difference between styles may not have much rational force in light of poets and spoken word artists. Poets and spoken word artists maintain key stylistic differences between their normal speech and their work over a long period of time. Thus, to use this as an argument to disprove that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ authored the Qur'an is weak. Nevertheless, Draz's conclusions are not entirely subjective. If we take his meaning for the word “style” to include use of vocabulary, word length and other features, then it can bring to light interesting academic research that affirms Draz's conclusions. Research entitled Author discrimination between the Holy Quran and Prophet's statements by Halim Sayoud, used a range of linguistic experiments to investigate differences between the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions found in Sahih al-Bukhari. Sayoud performed multiple studies known as global and segmental analyses, and concluded that, from a linguistic perspective, the two books he was analysing must have had different authors, “Results of all experiments have led to two main conclusions:

(1) First, the two investigated books should have different authors;

(2) Second, all the segments that are extracted from a unique book appear to have a certain stylistic similarity.

Consequently, we can conclude, according to this investigation, that the Qur'an was not written by the Prophet Muhammad and that it belongs to a unique author too."

Some of the results that forms the basis of this conclusion include,

~ Words composed of a single letter are much more frequently used in the Qur'an than in the hadith found in Sahih Al-Bukhari.

~ The hadith found in Sahih al-Bukhari uses much shorter words than the Qur'an.

The number of short words in the hadith is 62.31%, whereas, in the Qur'an, it is only 53.76%.

~ The number of long words in the Qur'an is 34.42%, whereas, in the hadith found in Sahih al-Bukhari, it is only 29.51%.

~ The Qur'an contains approximately a double number of words with nine and ten letters than the hadith. This fact shows that the Qur'an vocabulary contains more "very-long" words (very-long stands for more than eight letters) than the hadith.

~ Most importantly, 62% of the hadith words are untraceable in the Qur'an and 83% of the Qur'an words are untraceable in the hadith. This conclusion of differing vocabulary is also reinforced by the above mentioned results.

~ The above results are statistically valid.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ experienced many trials and tribulations during the course of his Prophetic mission. For example, his children died, his beloved wife Khadija passed away, he was boycotted, his close companions were tortured and killed, he was stoned by children for hours in Taif, he engaged in military campaigns, though the Qur'an's literary nature remains that of the Divine voice and character. Nothing in the Qur'an expresses the turmoil and emotions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It is almost a psychological and physiological impossibility to go

through what the Prophet ﷺ went through, and yet none of the emotions are expressed in the literary character of the Qur'an.

Is the Qur'an the result of Muhammad's ﷺ genius?

There have been some commentators and scholars who have claimed that the best explanation for the inimitability of the Qur'an is Muhammad's ﷺ genius. Therefore, some argue that God is not the best explanation, when presented with this possibility. They maintain that Qur'an being the result of Muhammad's ﷺ genius is a simpler and more probable explanation, than a supernatural being. Thus, according to the rules of inference, the conclusion the Qur'an was authored by Muhammad ﷺ is the best explanation.

This contention is groundless. From a literary perspective, the Qur'an is known as a work of unsurpassed excellence. However, its verses were at many times revealed for specific circumstances and events that occurred during the period of revelation. Each verse was revealed without revision or deletion, yet were compiled together to create a literary masterpiece. In this light, the explanation that the Qur'an is a result of the Muhammad's ﷺ literary intelligence is obviously unfounded. All literary masterpieces written by geniuses have undergone revision and deletion to ensure literary perfection, yet the Qur'an was revealed instantaneously and remained unchanged. An example to highlight this point is the work of the highly acclaimed poet Abu at-Tayyib Ahmad ibn al-Husayn al-Mutanabbi al-Kindi. Al-Mutanabbi was considered as the greatest of all Arab poets and an unparalleled genius. Therefore, some have made the conclusion that since his work was unparalleled, and that he was a genius, it follows the Qur'an is from a genius because it is unparalleled too. This reasoning doesn't logically follow because Al-Mutanabbi would correct his work and produce various editions until he was satisfied with his poetry. This was obviously not the case with Muhammad ﷺ as he did not edit, amend, or change the Qur'an once it was revealed. This can only mean that the Qur'an was not a result of a genius, because literary genius require editions to their work.

A central argument that dismisses the assertion that the Qur'an was a consequence of the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ genius, concerns the existence of blueprints for human expressions, and the tools required to replicate them. All types of human expression – whether the result of a genius or not – can be imitated if the blueprint of that expression exists, given that the tools are available for us to use. This has been shown to be true for various human expressions, such as art, literature and even complex technology. For example, artwork can be imitated even though some art is thought to be extraordinary or amazingly unique. But in the case of the Qur'an we have its blueprint – the Qur'an itself – and the tools at our disposal – the finite words and grammatical rules of the classical Arabic language. Yet no one has been able to imitate its eloquence, unique literary form and genre.

To conclude, attributing the authorship of the Qur'an to genius, specifically Muhammad's ﷺ genius, is unfounded. A literary genius edits, amends and improves their work. This was not the case with the Qur'an. All human expressions can be imitated if we have the blueprint and the tools at our disposal. This has been shown for literary genius such as Shakespeare and Al-Mutanabbi. Therefore, if the Qur'an was a result of Muhammad's ﷺ genius, the Qur'an should have been imitated.

8. Therefore, the best explanation is that it is from God

Since the Qur'an could not have been produced by an Arab, a Non-Arab and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, then it follows that the best explanation is that it came from God. God provides the best explanation for the Qur'an's inimitability because the other explanations are untenable in light of the available knowledge. A possible disagreement with this conclusion is that God is assumed to exist in order for the above inference to work, therefore it begs the question concerning the existence of the Divine. Although it will make the argument easier to appreciate, it can work without any previous conviction in the existence of the Divine, but this argument is best articulated to fellow theists.

Conversely, the point can be made that a previous conviction in God's existence is not necessary, and that the inimitability of the Qur'an is a signpost to the existence

of the Divine. If a human being (an Arab, a Non-Arab and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) could not have produced the Qur'an – and all possible explanations have been exhausted – then who else could be the author? It must be something that has greater linguistic capacity than any known text producer. The intuitive conclusion is that the concept that describes a being that has a greater linguistic capacity than any human is the concept of God. God is indeed greater. Therefore the inimitability of the Qur'an provides a rational basis for God's existence, or at least a signpost to the transcendent.

Alternative Inferences

Alternative inferences could include the fact that the inimitability of the Qur'an is best explained by a higher being or that it could have come from the devil. These alternative inferences are unlikely hence they have not been incorporated into the central argument presented in this essay. Nevertheless, addressing them here will demonstrate why they have not been included in the main discussion. Postulating the Qur'an is from a higher being seems to be a semantic replacement for God. What is meant by "a higher being"? Is not the best explanation of a higher being, God himself? If by "a higher being" implies a greater linguistic power, capacity and ability than a human, then who can best fit that criteria than God Himself? Claiming that the Qur'an is from a higher being but a lesser one than God, does not devalue that at least one of the best explanations is God. For the sake of intellectual pedantry, even if "a higher being" and "God" are both best explanations, it still follows that one of the best explanations is that the Qur'an is from the Divine. Nonetheless, I still maintain that God is a better explanation than a higher being because of other supporting intellectual arguments. These include positive arguments for God's existence, the absurdity of attributing to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ the characteristics of a liar, other Qur'anic arguments for its Divine authorship, and the fact that the Qur'an claims it is from the Divine.

Theistic responses to this discussion usually entertain the possibility of the devil being the author of the Qur'an. This explanation is unsustainable. The Qur'an could not have come from the devil, or some type of spirit, because the basis of their

existence is the Qur'an and revelation itself. Their existence is based upon revelation and not empirical evidence. Therefore if someone claims that the source of the Qur'an is the devil, they would have to prove his existence and ultimately having to prove revelation. In the case of using the Qur'an as the revelation to establish the devil's existence then that would already establish it as a Divine text, because to believe in the devil's existence would presuppose the Qur'an to be Divine, and therefore this contention is self-defeating. If however, the revelation that is referred to is the Bible, the Bible must be shown to be a valid basis to justify the belief in the devil. In light of contemporary studies into the textual integrity and historicity of the Bible this is unfeasible. Further to this, a content analysis of the Qur'an would strongly indicate that the book is not the teachings of the devil, as the Qur'an rebukes him and promotes morals and ethics not in line with an evil worldview.

Unit Two: Claim to Prophethood

Divine facilitation is proportionate to human need. God makes acquisition easier as the need of humans increase. Air, water, and sunlight are necessary for human survival, and thus God has granted their acquisition to all without hardship. The greatest human need is to know the Creator, and thus, God has made it easy to know Him. The evidence for God, however, differs in its nature. In its own way, everything in creation is evidence of its Creator. Some evidence is so obvious that any lay person can immediately 'see' the Creator, for instance, the cycle of life and death. Others 'see' the handiwork of the Creator in the elegance of mathematical theorems, universal constants of physics, and the development of the embryo:

“Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day,- there are indeed signs for men of understanding.” [Quran 3:190]

Like the existence of God, human beings need evidence to establish the truth of prophets who spoke in His name. Muhammad, like the prophets before him, claimed to be God's final prophet to humanity. Naturally, the evidence for his veracity is diverse and numerous. Some are obvious, while others are apparent only after deep reflection.

God says in the Quran:

“...Is it not enough (for them to know) that your Lord is witness unto everything?”
[Quran 41:53]

Divine witness by itself is sufficient without any other evidence. God's witness for Muhammad lies in:

(a) God's past revelations to earlier prophets which prophesize Muhammad's appearance.

(b) God's Acts: the miracles and 'signs' He gave to support Muhammad's claim.

How did it all begin in the early days of Islam? How were the first believers convinced he was God's prophet?

The first person to believe in the prophethood of Muhammad was his own wife, Khadijah. When he returned home trembling out of fear after receiving divine revelation, she was his solace:

“Never! By God, God will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your relatives, help the poor, serve your guests generously, and assist those hit with calamities.” [Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

She saw in her husband a man God would not humiliate, because of his virtues of honesty, justice, and helping the poor.

His closest friend, Abu Bakr who had known him all his life and was almost the same age, believed the moment he heard the words, ‘I am God’s Messenger’ without any additional confirmation other than the open book of his friend’s life.

Another person who accepted his call on merely listening to it, was ‘Amr b. Abasa. He says:

“I used to think before Islam that people were in error and they were on nothing. They worshipped idols. In the meantime, I heard of a man preaching in Makkah; so I went to him...I asked him: ‘Who are you?’ He said: ‘I am a Prophet.’ I again said: ‘Who is a Prophet?’ He said: ‘God sent me.’ I said: ‘What did He send you with?’ He said: ‘I have been sent to join ties of relationship, to break the idols, and to proclaim the unity of God so nothing is associated with Him (in worship).’ I said: ‘Who is with you in this?’ He said: ‘A free man and a slave (referring to Abu Bakr and Bilal, a slave, who had embraced Islam by that time).’ I said: ‘I intend to follow you.’” [Saheeh Muslim]

Dimad was a desert healer who specialized in mental illnesses. On his visit to Makkah he heard the Makkans say that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was insane! Confident of his skills, he said to himself, 'If I were to come across this man, God might cure him at my hand.' Dimad met the Prophet and said: 'Muhammad, I can protect (one) who suffers from mental illness or under sorcery, and God cures one whom He so desires at my hand. Do you desire to be cured?' The Prophet of God responded, starting with his usual introduction to his sermons:

“Indeed, praise and gratitude is for God. We praise Him and ask for His help. He who God guides, none can lead astray, and he who is led astray cannot be guided. I bear witness no one deserves worship but God, He is One, has no partners, and Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.”

Dimad, stuck by the beauty of the words, asked him to repeat them, and said, 'I have heard the words of diviners, sorcerers, and poets, but I have never heard such words, they reach the depth of the oceans. Give me your hand so I may pledge my allegiance to you on Islam.' [Saheeh Muslim]

After Gabriel brought the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad, Khadijah, his wife, took him to visit her old cousin, Waraqa bin Nawfal, a biblical scholar, to discuss the event. Waraqa recognized Muhammad from the prophecies of the Bible and confirmed:

“This is the Keeper of Secrets (Angel Gabriel) who came to Moses.” [Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

The face can be a window to the soul. Abdullah bin Salam, the chief rabbi of Medinah at the time, looked at the face of the Prophet when he arrived in Medinah, and exclaimed:

“The moment I looked at his face, I knew it was not the face of a liar!” [Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

Many of those around the Prophet who did not accept Islam did not doubt in his veracity, but refused to do so for other reasons. His uncle, Abu Talib, aided him throughout his life, confessed to the truthfulness of Muhammad, but refused to break off from the religion of his ancestors out of shame and social status.

A Logical Analysis of His Claim

As discussed earlier, Muhammad made the claim, 'I am God's Messenger.' Either he was true in his claim or he was not. We will begin by assuming the latter and investigate all possibilities raised by skeptics of past and present, discussing some of their misconceptions. Only if all other possibilities are exhausted can one reasonably claim that the only possibility left is that he was true in what he claimed. We will also look at what the Quran has to say on the matter.

Was He a Liar?

Is it possible for a liar to claim for a period of 23 years with unwavering certitude that he is a prophet like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that there will be no more prophets after him, and that the scripture he has been sent with will remain his lasting miracle till the end of time?

A liar will falter sometimes, perhaps with a friend, maybe with his family members, somewhere he will make a mistake. His message, delivered over two decades, will contradict itself sometimes. But what we see in reality is that the scripture he brought declares freedom from internal inconsistencies, his message remained consistent throughout his mission, and even in the midst of a battle, he proclaimed his prophethood!

His life story is preserved book open for everyone to read. Before Islam, he was well-known to his own people to be trustworthy and reliable, an honest man, a person of integrity, who did not lie. It was due to this reason they named him "Al-Ameen", or "The Trustworthy" He was strongly opposed to lying and warned against it. Is it possible for him to tell a consistent lie for 23 years, a lie so

monstrous that it would make him a social outcast, when he was never known to have lied even once about anything? It's simply against the psychology of liars.

If one was to ask why a person would make claim to prophethood and lie, their answer might be one of two:

- 1) Fame, Glory, wealth and status.
- 2) Moral progress.

If we were to say that the Muhammad claimed prophethood for fame glory and status, we would see that what actually occurred was the exact opposite.

Muhammad, before his claim to Prophethood, enjoyed a high status in all aspects” He was of the most noble of tribes, of the most noble of families, and was known for his truthfulness. After his claim, he became a social outcast. For 13 years in Makkah, he and his followers faced excruciating torture, which led to the death of some of his followers, ridicule, sanctioning, and excommunication from society.

There were many other ways which a person could gain fame in the society of that time, mainly from valor, and poetry. If Muhammad had made the claim that he himself authored the Quran, as will be explained later, that would have been enough for his name and poetry to be engraved in gold and hung inside the Ka'bah for eternity, people from all over the world hallowing him. Rather, he proclaimed that he was not the author of his revelation, and that it was from the One high above, causing him to be ridiculed in his time until ours.

The Prophet was the husband of a wealthy tradeswoman, and he enjoyed the comforts of life available to him at his time. But after his claim of prophethood, he became of the poorest of people. Days passed without stove fire being lit in his house, and at one time, hunger drove him to the mosque in hope of some provision. The leaders of Makkah in his time offered him the riches of the world in order for him to leave his message. As a response to their offer, he recited the verses of the Quran 41:1-38.11. The Following are some of these verses:

“(As for) those who say: ‘Our Lord is God,’ and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend upon them, saying: ‘Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised. We are your guardians in this world's life and in the hereafter, and you shall have therein what your souls desire and you shall have therein what you ask for. A hospitable gift from one Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!’ And who is better in speech than one who calls to God, works righteousness, and says, ‘I am of those who has submitted in Islam?’ Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate. And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint,- none but persons of the greatest good fortune.” [Quran 41:30-35]

If one were to say that Muhammad lied and claimed prophethood in order to bring moral and religious reform to a society ridden with ills, this argument is futile in itself, for how can one bring moral reform through a lie. If Muhammad was so keen to uphold and preach upright morals and worship of One God, then could he have lied himself in doing so? If we say that this is not possible, the only answer is that he was speaking the truth. The only other possibility is that he was insane.

Was He Insane?

Someone who has dealt with mentally ill knows people can be identified by their symptoms. Muhammad displayed no symptom of insanity at any time in his life. No friend, wife, or family member suspected or abandoned him due to insanity. As for the effects of revelations on the Prophet, such as perspiration and the likes, it was due to the intensity of the Message which he had to bear and not due to any epileptic fit or instance of insanity...

Quite to the contrary, Muhammad preached for a long time and brought a Law unknown in its completeness and sophistication to ancient Arabs. If the prophet was insane, it would have been obvious to those around him at one point in a period of twenty three years. When in history did an insane man preach his message to worship One God for ten years, three of which he and his followers spent in exile,

and eventually became the ruler of his lands? Which insane man has ever won the hearts and minds of people who met him and earned the respect of his adversaries?

More so, his closest companions, Abu Bakr and Umar were recognized for their abilities, nobility, skills, and finesse. They were willing to sacrifice anything for the religion he brought. On one occasion, Abu Bakr, brought all his material possessions to Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and when asked what he left for his family, responded, 'I left for them God and His Messenger!'

Abu Bakr, a merchant by profession, after being elected the ruler of all of Arabs after Muhammad, spent a mere two dirham on himself and his family!

Umar became the ruler of Arabia after Abu Bakr and conquered Syria, Egypt, and subdued the Persian and Roman Empires. He was a man known for his scrupulous justice. How can someone suggest these people were following a mentally deranged individual?

God suggests: stand before God without bias or pre-conceived beliefs, and discuss it with another person or think about it yourself, this prophet has no madness, he is as stable today as you had known him for forty years.

“Say: ‘I counsel you one thing only: Be (ever conscious of) standing before God, whether you are in the company of others or alone; and then bethink yourselves (that) there is no madness in (this prophet,) your fellow-man: he is only a warner to you of suffering severe to come.’” [Quran 34:46]

The Makkans of old rejected his call out of tribal partisanship, and they were not truthful in their accusations of his insanity. Even today, many people refuse to accept Muhammad as a prophet simply because he was an Arab and self-gratify themselves by saying he must have been insane or worked for the devil. Their hatred for Arabs translates into their rejection of Muhammad, even though God says:

“Nay, but he (whom you call a mad poet) has brought the truth; and he confirms the truth of (what the earlier of God’s) message-bearers (have taught).” (Quran 37:37)

Although the pagan Arabs knew Muhammad all too well, but they still through accusations of insanity at him, for they considered his religion a sacrilege against the tradition of their forefathers.

“And when our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, they say, ‘This is not but a man who wishes to avert you from that which your fathers were worshipping.’ And they say, ‘This is not except a lie invented.’ And those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them, ‘This is not but obvious magic.’ And We had not given them any scriptures which they could study, and We had not sent to them before you, (O Muhammad), any warner. And those before them denied, and they (the people of Makkah) have not attained a tenth of what We had given them. But they (i.e., the former peoples) denied My messengers, so how (terrible) was My reproach.” [Quran 34:43-45]

Was He A Poet?

God mentions their accusation in the Quran and responds to it:

“Or do they say (of you), ‘A poet for whom we await a misfortune of time?’ Say, ‘Wait, for indeed I am, with you, among the waiters.’ Or do their minds command them to (say) this, or are they a transgressing people? Or do they say, ‘He has made it up?’ Rather, they do not believe.” [Quran 52:30-32]

God describes the poets of that time so the Prophet can be compared with them:

“And as for the poets - (they, too, are prone to deceive themselves: and so, only) those who are lost in grievous error would follow them. Art thou not aware that they roam confusedly through all the valleys (of words and thoughts), and that they (so often) say what they do not do (or feel)? (Most of them are of this kind -) save those who have attained to faith, and do righteous deeds, and remember God

unceasingly, and defend themselves (only) after having been wronged, and (trust in God's promise that) those who are bent on wrongdoing will in time come to know how evil a turn their destinies are bound to take!" [Quran 26:224-227]

Arabian poets were the furthest from the truth, speaking of wine, womanizing, war, and leisure, unlike the Prophet who invites to good manners, serving God, and helping the poor. Muhammad followed his own teachings before anyone else unlike the poets of old or philosophers of today.

The Quran which the Prophet recited was unlike any poetry in its style. The Arabs of the time has strict rules in regards to rhythm, rhyme, syllables and endings to each verse of poetry. The Quran did not conform to any of the rules which were known in the time, but at the same time, it surpasses any type of text which the Arabs had ever heard. Some of them actually became Muslims after hearing only a few verses of the Quran, due to their certain knowledge that the source of something so beautiful as it could not be any created being.

Muhammad was never known to have composed a poem before Islam or after prophethood. Rather, the Prophet had a sever dislike for it. Compilations of his statements, called Sunnah, have been diligently preserved and are completely different in its literary content than the Quran. The store-house of Arabic poetry do not contain any couplets by Muhammad.

Was He A Sorcerer?

Prophet Muhammad never learned or practiced sorcery. On the contrary, he condemned the practice of sorcery and taught his followers how to seek protection against it.

Sorcerers have a strong relationship with the devil. Their partnership allows them to deceive people. Devils propagate lies, sins, obscenities, immorality, evil, and they destroy families. The Quran clarifies those upon whom the devils descend:

“Shall I inform you upon whom the devils descend? They descend upon every sinful liar. They pass on what is heard, and most of them are liars.” [Quran 26:221-223]

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was known and recognized to be a man of integrity true to his word who was not known to have ever lied. He commanded good morals and fine manners. No sorcerer in world history has brought a scripture like the Quran or a Law like his.



Questions for critical reflection

1. How can someone living in the 21st century and not knowing Arabic, still appreciate the linguistic beauty of the Qur'an?
2. A caller to Allah, must allocate certain amount of time during the day to reflect our the message of the Qur'an.
3. Ibn Al-Qayyim writes: “The need for messengers is a necessity. In fact, it is above and beyond all needs. The world is not in greater need than it is for messengers.” - Discuss

Summary

- ✓ The Qur'an is inimitable.
- ✓ The Qur'an could not have been produced by the Prophet.
- ✓ The Prophet's character and speech demonstrated he was a Messenger of Allah.