

A Christian's Guide to The Koran, Lesson 11, The Academic Approach

Yes, you can question the Koran intellectually, academically.

I mean, for example, how reliable are the memories of early Muslims, once they were given a "download" by Muhammad? Well, how long do you remember a sermon, even a good one, from Sunday morning? And is it possible you would ever remember it verbatim? How long did these Koran-carriers hold on to their piece of the "revelation" before the collectors came to retrieve it?

But, says the Muslim, that's all a part of the miracle. You do believe in miracles, don't you?

But, but, how did Muhammad remember every word the angel said? He could not write. He could only hear and recite. So many words, so many ideas. How get it all right?

Man, it's a miracle, don't you get it?

It's hard to impress a person who believes in miracles. I am confident, especially in the circles in which I travel these days, that if I were to announce that I had received a visitation from an angel, any angel, people would gather 'round to hear every word the angel said. And I'd be an instant star.

It happens...

Be ready for these arguments when you next talk to a Muslim. Koran, they say, is a miraculous book. You must take this miracle by faith, much as you, Christian, take so much of your own beliefs.

Anyway, Muhammad died in 632. But the earliest biographical material about him came forth in 750, and the original of that is lost. We have parts of it from a work in 834. In other words, two hundred years after his death! The Hadiths (collections of sayings and doings attributed to Muhammad) also have no sources available until well over 200 years after his death. And we know precious little about him before his appearance as the "Messenger of God."

We simply must accept him by faith. And one point five billion persons on the planet do just that!

Even so, it's fair to add the historical argument (isn't it?) that the originally corrected Koran was not accepted without question. Earlier scholars, even conservative Muslims, agreed that parts of the Koran were lost or perverted. This is the very same argument that modern Muslims, and the Koran itself, use against us. Perversion. Corruption. For them it is a known fact. They finally had to level the accusation elsewhere, and Christians became the owners of this lie. More of this in another article.

But, yes, academically, evidentially, there was no definite form to the Koran before the ninth century. There is absolutely no documentary evidence from the seventh and eighth centuries. No Korans from that period. No "hadiths" either.

Academically speaking, the Koran was a product of multiple authors from different times and places. In fact, the sources of these writings have been well documented by scholars.

Academically (I know you tire of hearing this word, but I am making a point), one could say that the Koran and the Hadith were nothing more than Muhammad's tool used to force non-arabs to "submit" (the meaning of the word Islam) not to God, but to himself. By using an elevated Arabic language, one which he claimed was handed down from heaven itself, a copy of which was still in the heavenlies, and everything else about the religion that was also Arabic, he was able little by little to convince at least Arabia that they were the center not only of this world, but the other one too. When that nation had submitted, it would only be a matter of time, and much blood, before he would convince all the nations. That still seems to be the plan. Islam. Submit!

Islam, the academics say, was born out of Arab cultural imperialism. Everything Arabic is good. Everything that is not Arabic is either bad or at least suspect. We shall now bow to Mecca, take pilgrimages to Mecca, believe that Mecca, not Rome, not Jerusalem, is the heart of all.

Yes, academically, you can say all of the above, and I suppose I would have to agree. But that is not the approach I take at present to deal with this issue. Believers in miracles and in an unlimited God can believe God for anything, can they not?

Let us take the Muslim at his own word, and approach him from it. Let us speak as people who believe in the supernatural, and visit every point of their story with light from heaven, not human reasoning. The fact is that God is visiting Muslims in these days. How often have you heard of late that Jesus Himself has appeared to Muslims and invited them to His heart? If it was a supernatural occurrence that brought all this upon the world, then in many cases it will take a supernatural occurrence to bring men out.

My personal plan is to walk through the Koran, armed with the knowledge that God has already spoken to His people a clear and definite word, and shine the light of God's revelation on Koranic sayings. I invite you to walk with me, if you are so armed, and so intended. Any Muslim who walks with us must first pray through Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, for the illumination that only He can give. When the Light dawns, you will be faced with another miracle, the greatest of them all, the changing of the human heart.