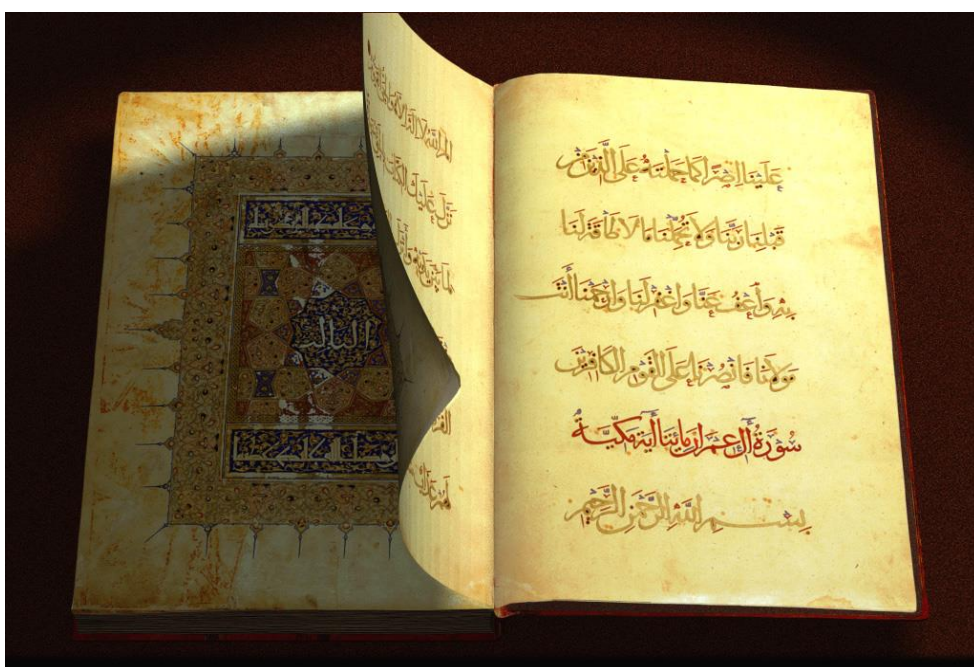




AL KITAB
The Renaissance Project

Al Kitab

An Introduction



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Introduction

It was more than a crime; it was an abomination against the gods the people of Mesopotamia held so dearly. For with a strike of a hammer, the little boy known as Abraham had turned their gods into rubble. Revenge in this case is not best served cold; rather, revenge would be served hot. His punishment was to be burned alive as part of a great spectacle. Surely his God, the one and only, would save him from his peoples' wrath?

The next part of this story is similar among the monotheistic religions of Islam and Judaism. Abraham would escape the fire unharmed; a so called miracle. In fact, miracles are a common theme in all three of the world's monotheistic religions. If one was to scour through the holy scriptures, prophets seem to be blessed with "miracles". But what are they?

Miracles are supernatural events that defy the laws of nature. They simply cannot be explained without reverting to divine intervention. If one were to believe the stories of monotheistic religions, many of God's prophets had been blessed with miracles. Whilst Moses could split the seas with a strike of a staff and Jesus could heal the blind and the deaf with a single touch, Mohammad's miracle is a six hundred page book communicated, as claimed, by the Almighty. The book is held with such high regard in the Muslim world. It is at the core of Islamic faith, is memorized by millions, has never been altered, and has no equal. But why is this so? What makes this book so special? Why is it regarded as a miracle?

In the following three volumes of Al Kitab, I will set out to answer these questions using the framework presented below:

The Four Pillars: What Makes the Quran Special?

1 Content

The framework starts with content as a first pillar. The Quran sets forth an impressive range of guidelines, ethical standards and laws that cover all aspects of life. Furthermore, these guidelines are thought to be in harmony. In other words, the Quran is comprehensive with its content, yet it has no contradictions. This is echoed in the Quran through the following verses

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۚ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا (18,54)

"We have explained in detail in this Qur'an, for the benefit of mankind, every kind of similitude: for man is the most contentious being"

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا (4,82)

"Do they not, then, ponder over the Qur'an? Had it been from someone other than Allah, they would have found in it many inconsistencies"

It's a remarkable feat that an ancient document could cover such a comprehensive range of topics in the most intellectual of ways, the adherence to which pushed a group of unorganized, uneducated nomad Arabs to lead the world for several centuries.

The Four Pillars (cont'd)

2 Language

But perhaps the strongest piece of evidence cited in support of the divinity of the Quran is its language and tone. Its words, stories and flowing melody possess a hypnotic power that captivates its audience in the most unique ways. Its language has never and could never be matched. The brilliance of expression, grammar, vocabulary, and rhythm has mesmerized Arabic speakers since its inception.

“اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ” (39,23)

“Allah has revealed the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, (Yet) repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts soften to the celebration of Allah's praises

3 Symmetry

Hidden away and often ignored is the perfect symmetry one can find when examining the book.

“الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا” (18,1)

“Praise be to Allah, who revealed the Book to His servant and did not leave in it any crookedness”

4 Scientific Knowledge

Finally, the Quran describes a series of scientific facts that have only been discovered in modern times. What makes this astonishing is that the book was written 1400 years ago. One cannot fathom how anyone could make such predictions.

Alone, each of these four pillars makes this book remarkable. However, It is only when you combine all four pillars into the same book do you start comprehending what a miracle it truly is. To establish effective guidelines, ethics, and laws covering all aspects of life devoid of contradiction, and to do so in a language that surpasses any other document ever written while ensuring perfect symmetry and infusing the texts with advanced scientific facts is nothing short of extraordinary. It is an impossible task that cannot be repeated by any human of this age, let alone a nomad living in an isolated desert fourteen centuries ago. There can be no other explanation; it is simply breath taking. A fact that has prompted Allah to declare a challenge in the following verses:

“أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتِطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ” (10,13)

“Or they will say he forged it (the Quran), Say” Then come up with ten forged chapters like it, and call upon whomever you can, apart from Allah, if you are truthful

“وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ” (2,23)
“فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْزَنُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ ۖ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ” (2,24)

“If you are in doubt as to what we have revealed to our Servant, then produce a Sura (Chapter) similar to it and call upon your witnesses other than Allah if you are truthful. “If you are not able to do so, and surely you wont be able to do so, then guard yourselves against the Fire whose fuel is men and stones prepared for the unbelievers”

I have set my life's purpose to explore three of these ideas in more detail (the linguistic aspect has been covered by many before me). It is perhaps befitting to start this journey with the most relevant pillar of this age; science. Despite common perceptions in the western world, science and religion are not always at odds. In fact they complement one another to a great degree.