

THE AMAZING QURAN (PART 4 OF 9)

Rating: 5.0

Description: A series of articles compelling the reader to ponder over the marvels of the Quran. Part 4: The burden of proof lies on the one who claims the Quran to be false.

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You Did Not Know This Before!

Undoubtedly, there is an attitude in the Quran which is not found anywhere else. It is interesting how when the Quran provides information, it often tells the reader, "You did not know this before." Indeed, there is no scripture that exists which makes that claim. All of the other ancient writings and scriptures that people have doge give a lot of information, but they always state where the information came from.

For example, when the **Bible** discusses ancient history, it states that this king lived here, this one fought in a certain battle, another one had so many sons, etc. Yet it always stipulates that if you want more information, then you should read the book of so and so because that is where the information came from. In contrast to this concept, the Quran provides the reader with information and states that this information is something new. Of course, there always exists the advice to research the information provided and verify its authenticity. It is interesting that such a concept was never challenged by non-Muslims fourteen centuries ago. Indeed, the Makkans who hated the Muslims, and time and time again they heard such revelations claiming to bring new information; yet, they never spoke up and said, "This is not new. We know where Muhammad got this information. We learned this at school." They could never challenge its authenticity because it really was new!

Proof of Authenticity: An Approach

It must be stressed here that the Quran is accurate about many, many things, but accuracy does not necessarily mean that a book is a divine revelation. In fact, accuracy is only one of the criteria of divine revelations. For instance, the telephone book is accurate, but that does not mean that it is divinely revealed. The real problem lies in that one must establish some proof of the source of the Quran's information. The emphasis is in the other direction, in that the burden of proof is on the reader. One cannot simply deny the Quran's authenticity without sufficient proof. If, indeed, one finds a mistake, then he has the right to disqualify it. This is exactly what the Quran encourages.

Once a man came up to me after a lecture I delivered in South Africa. He was very angry about what I had said, and so he claimed, "I am going to go home tonight and find a mistake in the Quran." Of course, I said, "Congratulations. That is the most intelligent thing that you have said." Certainly, this is the approach Muslims need to take with those who doubt the Quran's authenticity, because the Quran itself offers the same challenge. And inevitably, after accepting its challenge and disclosing that it is true, these people will come to believe it because they could not disqualify it. In essence, the Quran earns their respect because they themselves have had to verify its authenticity.

An essential fact that cannot be reiterated enough concerning the authenticity of the Quran is that a person's inability to explain a phenomenon on himself does not require his acceptance of the phenomenon's existence or another person's explanation of it. Specifically, just because one cannot explain something, it does not mean that one has to accept someone else's explanation. However, the person's refusal of other explanations reverts the burden of proof back on himself to find a defensible answer. This general theory applies to numerous concepts in life, but fits most wonderfully with the Quranic challenge, for it creates a difficulty for one who says, "I do not believe it." At the onset of refusal one immediately has an obligation to find an explanation himself if he feels others' answers are inadequate.

This familiarity with the information will give the person "the edge" when future discoveries are made and additional information is presented. The important thing is that one deals with the facts and does not simply discard them out of empathy and disinterest.

Exhausting the Alternatives

The real certainty about the truthfulness of the Quran is evident in the confidence which is prevalent throughout it; and this confidence comes from a different approach—*"Exhausting the alternatives."* In essence, the Quran states, "This book is a divine revelation; if you do not believe it, then what is it?" In other words, the reader is challenged to come up with some other explanation. Here is a book made of paper and ink. Where did it come from? It says it is a divine revelation; if it is not, then what is its source? The interesting fact is that no one has yet come up with an explanation that works. In fact, all alternatives have been exhausted. As has been well established by non-Muslims, these alternatives basically are reduced to two mutually exclusive schools of thought, insisting on one or the other.

On one hand, there exists a large group of people who have researched the Quran for hundreds of years and who claim, "One thing we know for sure—that man, Muhammad may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, though he was a prophet. He was crazy!" They are convinced that Muhammad was fooled somehow. Then on the other hand, there is a group which alleges, "Because of this evidence, one thing we know for sure is that that man, Muhammad was a liar!" Ironically, these two groups never seem to get together without contradicting.

In fact, many references on Islam usually claim both theories. They start out by stating that Muhammad was crazy and then end by saying he was a liar. They never seem to realize that he could not have been both! For example, if one is deluded and really thinks that he is a prophet, then he does not sit up late at night planning, "How will I fool the people tomorrow so that they think I am a prophet?" He truly believes that he is a prophet, and he trusts that the answer will be given to him by re-

velation.

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