

# On the Inimitability and Authenticity of the Qur'an

By: AbdulRaheem Greene

Indeed the Day of Judgement is a promised day when Allah, the Almighty, the Just and Wise will take mankind to task for what they uttered concerning Him, His Prophets and His revelation. He knows all that is secret and hidden, and is fully aware of those who gather to plot against the Truth. And verily they plot and plan, and Allah is the best of planners, and the plans of the disbelievers will come to naught, and for sure Allah will gather the criminals all together in hell. What an evil end.

There are several points I wish to raise and clarify. First I would like to reassure all the Muslim readers and inform the Christian readers that the claims of Joseph Smith that: *"On this side of the Atlantic the Muslims are trying to attack me concerning the Dome of the Rock, the Qibla, and the problem between the Kufic and Ma'il scripts. So far I have stood my ground at Speaker's Corner, and at the university, and I still wait for a credible defence"* is somewhat short of the truth. Let me introduce myself. I am Abdurraheem Green. I reverted to Islam about nine years ago, and was educated in a Roman Catholic Monastic School. I have been speaking at speakers corner now for about eight years. Last summer I first encountered Joseph as he started shouting challenges at me when I produced a Photostat of a page of the Tashkent copy of the Qur'aan. He also challenged me on the issue of *hadith*, and I gave what seemed to me a satisfactory answer to the second issue. Now since I had just come from Kuwait, and had visited there the library of the *Islamic Heritage Society* and talked to Sheikh Mohammed Shaibani, an expert on ancient Arabic manuscripts, and had inquired about the existence of an original 'Uthmanic text, which I had heard existed, and he showed me a replica of the whole Tashkent Qur'aan, and presented me with some copies of parts of the pages. I asked him specifically concerning its authenticity, and he considered that it was undoubtedly one of the *"Uthmanic"* Qur'aans. I felt this would further confirm the already well established fact of the authenticity of the Qur'aanic text. When Joseph challenged me concerning the Kufic script I was unable to answer because the issue was unfamiliar to me, so that following week I researched the issue and found that his claims were wrong. When he came next the Sunday I was prepared, and answered his questions, but Joseph just would not give up, he kept repeating himself as if repeating his arguments enough times would somehow make his erroneous statements into a valid argument. This became so bad that even one the non-Muslims in the audience said about Joseph: *"This man is just arguing against himself."* (This is all on video tape by the way.) Having observed Joseph's rather obdurate behaviour, and having decided that I was talking to a brick wall, I reminded my audience of the various dirty Christian missionary tactics, and their endless plots against the true religion of God, and how they were inspired by Paul to *"lie for the greater glory of God."* At which stage Joseph beat a hasty retreat. Hardly *"standing one's ground"*, unless by that he means the type of standing when one tries to get a obstinate donkey to move and it won't.

Since this time various Christian Societies have challenged various Muslim societies to debates, including Nottingham and London School of Economics and I have been called in to deal with the issue. However my condition was that both speakers should be given the chance to speak for one and a half hours each, and that responses and

questions and answers should also take another two to three hours. The reason for this is so that the various complicated issues could be dealt with properly and in a non-confrontational manner and thus some real semblance of truth arrived at. Suddenly the Christians started backing out. Smith himself refused on the grounds that it would not hold the public attention, there by exposing his real intent. When he was challenged in public in Speaker's Corner, pathetic excuses started to emerge like *"I haven't got time"* and *"I'll do it under the condition that you only bring one piece of archeological evidence, one piece of manuscript evidence and one primary source."* How pathetic can you get?

By the way, concerning the issue of the Kufic script, I quoted Nadia Abbot, an expert in ancient Arabic literary papyri: *"We can no longer draw a chronological demarcation line between what are commonly termed Kufi and Naskhi scripts, nor can we consider the latter as a development of the former. This...now demands more general recognition. Our materials show that there were two tendencies at work, both of them natural ones."* (N. Abbot, ***The Rise of the North Arabian Script and its Koranic Development.***) The second source I quoted was information contained in a translation of the Qur'aan by A. J. Arberry (a Christian Orientalist), who clearly confirms the authenticity of the Qur'aanic text. The book further confirmed that it was originally written in the Kufic script. I quote: *"The reproduction on the front of this jacket shows part of the Koran in Kufic script, from a MS, in the British Museum. This script is the MOST ANCIENT FORM OF CALLIGRAPHY IN WHICH THE QUR'AAN WAS WRITTEN."*

Now, the issue of inimitability of the Qur'aan and what are the rules. Firstly it must be in Arabic, because the nature of the challenge is concerning aspects of the Arabic language. (By the way, your comments on Arabic grammar reflect rather poorly on your knowledge of the history of the Arabic language. Yes, Arabic was spoken before the Qur'aan, but it was only with the advent of Islam, and due to the need to preserve the understandings of the meanings of the Arabic of the Qur'aan that books and treaties began to be written using the Qur'aanic Arabic as the *de facto* standard. Now if these *"mistakes"* that you referred to are the same as those mentioned by Shorrosh, then I have heard them answered, and in fact the mistakes were on his side. I rather remember in one of Shorrosh's debates with Deedat, his attempts, plus I think fifteen other Arab Christians scholars, to rival the Qur'aan caused the Arabs in the crowd break into fits of laughter. Perhaps someone more versed in Arabic will be able to answer this issue specifically. So please do post these so called *"errors"*.) Secondly, the miraculous quality of the Qur'aan is not merely in its eloquence, beauty, and rhetoric but in its very structure. I don't wish to repeat what our brother has already mentioned, so I will only mention this, and I take from a letter I wrote to my father, so its not intended to be comprehensive, but rather brief and understandable.

Indeed many of the Arabs entered into Islam just from hearing the Qur'aan, because for them it was a conclusive proof of its Divine origin. They knew that no man could produce such eloquence. **The challenge of the Qur'aan for man to produce its like is not, as some suppose, merely like the uniqueness of Shakespeare, Shelly, Keats, or Homer.** The Qur'aan differentiated itself in its very structure. Poetry in Arabic falls into sixteen different *"Bihar"* and other than that they have the speech of soothsayers, rhyming prose, and normal speech. The Qur'aan's form did not fit into any of these categories. It was this that made the Qur'aan inimitable, and left the pagan Arabs at a

loss as to how they might combat it as Alqama bin Abdulmanaf confirmed when he addressed their leaders, the Quraish:

*"Oh Quraish, a new calamity has befallen you. Mohammed was a young man the most liked among you, most truthful in speech, and most trustworthy, until, when you saw gray hairs on his temple, and he brought you his message, you said that he was a sorcerer, but he is not, for we seen such people and their spitting and their knots; you said, a diviner, but we have seen such people and their behavior, and we have heard their rhymes; you said a soothsayer, but he is not a soothsayer, for we have heard their rhymes; and you said a poet, but he is not a poet, for we have heard all kinds of poetry; you said he was possessed, but he is not for we have seen the possessed, and he shows no signs of their gasping and whispering and delirium. Oh men of Quraish, look to your affairs, for by Allah a serious thing has befallen you."*

These are the sixteen *Al-Bihar* (literally "Seas", so called because of the way the poem moves, according to its rhythmic patterns): *At-Tawil, al-Bassit, al-Waafir, al-Kaamil, ar-Rajs, al-Khafeef, al-Hazaj, al-Muttakarib, al-Munsarih, al-Muktatab, al-Muktadarak, al-Madeed, al-Mujtath, al-Ramel, al-Khabab*. **So the challenge is to produce in Arabic, three lines, that do not fall into one of these sixteen *Bihar*, that is not rhyming prose, nor like the speech of soothsayers, and not normal speech, that it should contain at least a comprehensible meaning and rhetoric, i.e. not gobbledygook.** Now I think at least the Christian's "Holy spirit" that makes you talk in tongues, part of your "*Tri-Unity*" of God should be able to inspire one of you with that!

A simple, mostly objective - and admittedly partly objective - challenge. "...and if you cannot do it, and certainly you cannot do it, then fear the fire whose fuel is men and stones." This will therefore prove that it is from Allah, and thus that its contents are accurate, including the fact of its revelation to Mohammed etc. . . . and not a composition of a group in some remoter historical period. As for the acceptance of all of this, well let's take it one step at a time. First meet the challenge. At least you will have answered the Creator's challenge and you can have some sort of excuse, if you can do it. Then present it to the world. Now I don't think this would compare to what happened to Salman Rushdie, because he wrote nothing except a vile and insulting book. The Qur'aan does not say: "*Write some nasty, unfounded lies against Mohammed and that will prove that the Qur'aan is not from Allah*", rather the Qur'aan challenges you to bring a *Surah* like it. Now I don't think anyone will try to kill you for that, since you are only doing what the Qur'aan asks! And even if the Muslims were after your blood, so what if Jesus has died for your sins? It amazes me that someone who "*knows he is going to Paradise*" should be so afraid of death, rather seek it, if what you say is true! The issue of the "*Satanic Verses*" was known and debated amongst the Muslim scholars themselves a thousand years ago without a death threat being issued against any of them. Anyhow, I don't want to go into the issue of the *fatwa* now, or the *Satanic Verses* - perhaps another time. The Muslim scholars have never balked at a serious rational and intellectual challenge, what we are not very tolerant about is the use of gutter language and pure insults hurled against the Prophet of God, and his family. In fact Joseph's stuff poses much more interesting challenge than the "*Satanic Verses*" issue, partly because this avenue (i.e. archaeology, etc.) is a comparatively new area for Muslims. However from what I have read and heard the Muslims have more than been up to the challenge, and have

answered nearly all of Smith's stuff really quite well. Indeed I think that upon reading Joseph's e-mail it is his defense that is looking decidedly weak.

In your attempt to dismiss Abu Omar you keep repeating assertions made by Humphries, Wansborough and Rippin that do not support your argument. It is a classical example of deception - using information that is in essence true to make an assertion that is quite different from that which the information itself states. Concerning Rippin it is true that what is now practiced as Islam is something rather different from what was revealed to Mohammed. It is **not true** that this means the Qur'aan is different from that which was revealed to Mohammed. What we need to do is draw a distinction between the Islam that Mohammed taught, the true Islam, and that which the Muslims have innovated and added on. In fact I spend a lot of time giving lectures to the Muslims concerning the very same issue, and that is that we need to return to the Qur'aan and authentic Prophetic traditions (not those stories invented about him) to be upon the correct and original guidance that Mohammed was upon.

Concerning Wansborough and Humphries, if what you say about them is true, then they are either liars, idiots or plain ignorant - in either case we have no business with their feeble meanderings in the light of the existence of a number of complete Qur'aanic manuscripts existing from seventy to one hundred years after the death of the Prophet. This assertion that the Qur'aan was composed two to three hundred years after the time of Mohammed is simply unfounded in the face of the undeniable existence of at least one complete manuscript dated at the latest 72 A.D. (but is probably earlier.). The only genuine question mark that Smith has been able to raise from all of this material is over the authenticity of the Tashkent and Topkapi manuscript's attribution to 'Uthmaan. If his only line of argument is the Kufi script issue, then even that does not stand. In fact it was only on reading what Abdurrahman Lomax had to say that has made me reconsider this particular issue! Finally I must thank you for helping expose to the world just how feeble and unfounded the arguments against Islam are. I'm sure many people will be guided to Islam because of it!

**"They plot and plan, but verily Allah is the best of planners."**