**Apologetics and Islam**

**Outline**

**I. Positive Apologetics of Islam and the Qur’an**

**II. Islamic criticism of the Bible and of Christianity**

**III. Apologetic Issues in the Qur’an**

**I. Positive Apologetics of Islam and of theQur’an**

As a rule, Islamic apologetics has been a response to Christian apologetics.

In a recent debate, Shabir Ally proved that the Qur’an is inspired by God using numerology.

**A. The word yom is in the Qur’an 365 times.**

Response: The Arabic year is 360 days and the Arabs are the people to whom the book was written.

**B. The number 19 and multiples thereof show up many times in the Qur’an.**

Sura 74:30 19 angels as guardians over the fire (hell)

The first ayat of the Qur’an (In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful) is made up of 19 letters in the Arabic.

114 Suras in the Qur’an 19x6 (Although there was a debate about two of the suras)

The first revelation to Muhammad 76 letters (19x4) The 19th from the last chapter of the Qur’an has 19 verses and 209 letters (19x11).

Response: The number of verses and the numbers of the suras were not even in the original. This is your best evidence?

In 1972 an exciting manuscript find of the oldest known Qur’an was found in Sanaa, Yemen. The manuscript has been dated AD 705-715.Were Muslims happy about this? Definitely not!!!

Why? Sura 20 and 21 were missing, The text skips from Sura 26 to Sura 37!

Bottom line, the Qur’an has evolved over time!!! See below for more on the Sanaa manuscript.

**C. Muhammad’s ministry is the fulfillment of Jewish and Christian Prophecy.**

a. Deuteronomy 18:15-18 15The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet *like me from among your own brothers*. You must listen to him. 16For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.“ 17The Lord said to me: "What they say is good. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet *like you from among their brothers*; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

Deut 17:15 (brother ≠ foreigner) “do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite.”

Deut 34:10—“Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt”

Like Moses = miraculous signs and wonders, which Mohammed never did, but Jesus clearly did.

b. Deut 33:1-2This is the blessing that Moses the man of God pronounced on the Israelites before his death. 2 He said:

 “The LORD came from Sinai

 and dawned over them from Seir;

 he shone forth from Mount Paran.

 He came with myriads of holy ones

 from the south, from his mountain slopes.”

 Muslims claim: Sinai = Moses

 Seir = Jesus

 Paran = Mohammed

 Paran is nowhere near Mecca (Hab 3:3)

Seir is the capital of Edom. There is no association at all between Jesus and Seir.

c. Isa 21:7 ”when he sees…riders on donkeys or riders on camels, let him be fully alert”

 Muslim claim: riders on donkeys = Jesus, riders on camels = Mohammed. Context: fall of Babylon!

d. Jn 14:16— Muslim apologists calim parakletos 🡪 periclytos (praised one) (Muhammad means the praised one)—without any MS supp. Moreover, 14:26 shows the helper is *the Spirit.* Jn 16—The helper to abide forever. (M is dead.) 14:26—Helper to be sent in Jesus’ name; but no Muslim would allow this! Besides, Acts 1:5—helper to come in not many days – not in the 7th century!

**D. Other evidence that the Qur’an is inspired:**

a.Because of the beautiful Arabic, spoken by an illiterate Quraish Arab.

My resonse: If one reads the Qur’an in translation, it is nearly inpenetrable. It is very hard to translate and very hard to follow. It may very well be beautiful poetry, as the Arab culture was entirely oral and relied on poetry to remember things.

Qur’an perfect and pure Arabic?

clear pure, perfect Arabic?

Sura 12:1-2 “These are the verses of the Scripture that makes thing cleat—We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur’an so that you may understand.”

Sura 13:37 “…judgment in the Arabic language”

Sura 16:103 “We know very well that they say, “It is a man who teaches him,’ but the language of the people they allude to is foreign, while this revelation is in clear Arabic.”

Sura 41:41-44 foreign speech to an Arab?

Arthur Jeffery (1892-1959), professor of Semitic languages first at the School of Oriental Studies in Cairo and then at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, found hundreds of foreign words in the Qur’an, as recorded in his book Foreign Vocabulary in the Qur’an (1938).

The Qur’an is written in difficult, classical Arabic (in the Quraysh dialect) sprinkled with Hebrew, Greek, Egyptian, Syriac, Christian Aramaic, Christian Ethiopic

One reason Muslims do not want the Qur’an translated is that much of it is impenetrably difficult to understand.

b. Because of all the positively changed lives under the influence of Islam.

There is some truth in this in that the pagan/polytheistic culture of the Arabian peninsula was improved by a monotheism with a strong moral sense. There is some truth in Islam, but most or all of what is good in Islam is hijacked from Judaism.

c. Because of the rapid spread and the great number of conversions.

We can acknowledge that there are positive reasons for people to be attracted to Islam, but this is not proof that its teachings are from God.

The political and military spread of Islam was truly and amazingly rapid. However, the spread of the religion outside of Arabia was not nearly so rapid. Many conversions were “at the edge of the sword,” and the political and economic advantage which followed political domination was, arguably, the chief reason for the conversions over the next several hundred years. Once Islam is established as the majority, extreme forms of persecution is the main reason for the continued success of the religion.

d. So many converts. At edge of sword, political advantages, tax advantages. Extreme persecution once converted if leaving.

**II Islamic Criticism of the Bible and of Christianity**

Islam has a big problem.

A. The Qur’an says that the Old and New Testaments are inspired and are to be obeyed by the people of the book. In fact, they use the prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments to support belief in the Qur’an. But….

B. If the Old and especially the New Testament, as we have received them are true, then Muhammad cannot be a prophet.

For example, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are specifically and definitely denied. Sura 4:157 And for their saying: We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of Allah, and they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them as such.

They are caught between a rock and a hard place.

Sura 5:47 The people of the Injil [gospel] shall rule in accordance with Allah’s revelations with are found there. Anyone who does not rule in accordance with Allah’s revelations there are wicked.

Also, “the people of the book” (ie Jews) are told to follow the Old Testament teachings. Sura 6:91-92 says that Allah sent the Book of Moses “And this is the book which we sent down”

Sura 3:83 We believe in Allah and that which is revealed to us, and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and the prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we submit.

Sura 29:46 And dispute ye not with the people of the book but say: We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and that which came down to you.

So, why do Muslims say the Bible is corrupted? Because they HAVE to.

Is the evidence consistent with the claim that the New Testament has been corrupted? Consider the Rylands Papyrus or the Washington Manuscript, etc.

Consider the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were in existence 700 years before Muhammad wrote the words above. When were they corrupted?

Which verses are corrupted? What is the evidence for this corruption? This charge has only been made more recently when the apologetic issue came into focus. Early Muslims never made this charge.

Are the accounts in the four gospels of Jesus’ crucifixion all made up? What about Tacitus and Josephus?

What about the Qur’an?

We already mentioned the Sanaa manuscript.

Uthman (580-656) ordered all Qur’ans burned except the single version he created, in an attempt to remove all differences.

The Ibn Masud Codex (from Kufa) has 150 variants from the standard Qur’an in Sura 2 alone!

L. Bevan Jones: “While it may be true that no other work has remained for twelve centuries with so pure a text, it is probably equally true that no other has suffered so drastic a purging.”

[of course something like that happened in Christianity in the creation of the Byzantine text in about AD 700 or so, but as far as we know, no effort was made to burn all other manuscript lines and we have dozens of varying text from before the Byzantine text]

It is worth noting that, although Muslim apologists spend great time and energy on disproving the reliability of the Bible, they completely avoid studying the history and reliability of the Qur’an.

It is ironic that the Christians have devoted vast energy to studying biblical manuscripts in an effort to produce an accurate and reliable Greek and Hebrew text.

The irony is that Muslims do not do this. They are completely uninterested in establishing a reliable Qur’anic text, the result being that any fair analysis will prove that the Qur’an suffers in its textual reliability in comparison to both the Old and the New Testament. Muslim attacks only increase the resulting reliability of the Christian scripture.

Muslims assume that they have a perfect Arab original, and therefore it is impious and perhaps even blasphemous to study the textual evidence. Christians believe the originals are inspired but that the copiers were not perfect. Evidence simply does not support the Muslim positon.

“In particular, let us ask why some of the oldest manuscripts are not photographically reproduced and made available to the public and the scholars. Why not start with the Topkapi manuscript in Istambul, the Taschkent manuscript, and the two old manuscripts in Cairo and Damascus? They are not Uthmanic manuscripts as some believe, but they are quite old.”7 The Muslim’s response inadvertently substantiates the thesis of the Christian article when he remarks, “Firstly, when we have a Qur’anic text right from the time of the Prophetand know the variant readings associated with it beforehand, why do they need the superfluous work of going through the manuscripts to check out variant readings?”

The Quran is very clear about a number of facts. Allow me to list them. Fact one: God's Word cannot contain err, and cannot change. Allah is said to preserve the Quran in Surah 15:9; 41:41-42;[33] 85:21-22; 56:77-78[34] and later the words of Allah are said to be *unalterable*: "there is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of Allah..."[35] and "...none can change His Words..."[36] Let's stop here for a moment. *If* the Quran is true, then what Allah inspires cannot change, and cannot be corrupted. So we ask the obvious question: are the Torah and the Gospels said to be inspired? Any Muslim who knows the Quran, knows the answer.

Surah 3:3 tells us that Allah "...sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, Confirming what went before it; And he sent down the Torah and the Gospels." Typical of every mention of the Torah and the Gospels, there is no word about textual corruption. Surahs 3:7, 21, 23, 48, 84, 65, 93, 184, 199; 4:44, 51, 136; 5:15, 43-49, 57-59, 66-69, 113; 6:91, 154; 10:37; 11:17; 16:43; 17:2; 20:133; 21:7, 33; 23:49; 26:196; 32:23; 41:42-45; 46:10-12; 54:43; 57:27; 80:11-16; and 87:18-19 all *confirm*, rather than *repudiate* the Torah and Gospels.[37] Surah 5:43-49 for example starts off with a revealing passage:

But why do they come to thee for decision, when they have Torah before them? Therein is the plain command of Allah; yet even after that they would turn away.

It is plain that the author of the Quran believed the text of the Torah was fine in the seventh century. The same fact is echoed in the following verses, while verses 66, and 68-69 make it crystal clear that the problem with the Jews was their refusal to "stand fast by the Torah, The Gospel, and all the revelation[38] that has come to you from the Lord.[39]" Verse fifteen records that they "pass over" the truths of Allah. The Quran commands the Jews to remedy their misunderstandings by a study of the Torah: "Bring ye the Torah and study it, if ye be men of truth."[40] Further evidence of the integrity of the text is found in Surahs 16:43; 21:7; and 46:10, 12 where Muhammad's detractors are told to "ask of those who possess the Message"[41] as a confirmation of the Quran.

For a Muslim to be in accordance with the Quran in his *theology*, he cannot maintain that the Torah and the Scriptures are corrupted - unless the corruption took place *after* the Quran was written. Even then, the corruption would theoretically be disallowed.

Three more Muslim criticisms:

1.Christianity is tritheism.

2. It is not just for one person to suffer for the sins of another.

3. The biblical descriptions of Abraham, Moses, David, Samson and others are scandalous and certainly are not accurate.

1. Christianity is tritheism.

I would not engage a Muslim in this debate because, arguably, the trinity is difficult to defend based on logic.

The rejection of trinity in the Qur’an is probably a reaction to Catholic/Coptic near tritheism. They called Mary “The mother of God.” This is why Muhammad is so strong about God not having a consort or a son.

Muslim: Only Allah is eternal. Yet, the Qur’an teaches that both Allah and the Qur’an are eternal and uncreated.

2. It is not just for one person to suffer for the sins of another.

The Qur’an includes the idea of substitutionary sacrifice

a. Ishmael’s death averted by sacrifice of a ram. 37:107

b. In the feast of Id al Fitr a goat is killed for purification of the faithful.

c. Shia: Muhammad’s grandson Husayn was murdered as a “ransom for the people for Mankind.”

Response: Jesus did this willingly. We will admit that the message of the cross is a stumbling block to Jews and Muslims alike (1 Cor 1:18f)

3. The biblical descriptions of Abraham, Moses, David, Samson and others are scandalous and certainly are not accurate.

Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Esau, David are presented in an unflattering way in the Hebrew Bible. Therefore these are not accurate descriptions of these prophets.

Jesus was executed. Allah would never allow one of his prophets to be executed in this shameful way.

Response: Which account is more likely to be correct?

a. The one recorded two thousand years closer to the events?

b. The one which does not appear to be a classic white-wash. The natural human tendency is to remove not to add embarrassing material about their heroes.

c. The claim is that these stories were changed. If so, when? Before the Dead Sea Scrolls? If so, then why would Muhammad command the Jews to obey their inspired scriptures?

**III. Apologetic Issues in Islam and the Qur’an**

1. **World View Issues**
2. **Historical Errors**
3. **Scientific Errors**
4. **Satanic Verses and Abrogation**

A. World View Issues Is Islam a better religion than Christianity?

**Islam and women**

**Works salvation**

**Predestination**

**Fate: Problem of Pain and Suffering**

**Islam: God unapproachable.**

Islam and women:

**“Men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to support them. Good women are obedient… If they are rebellious, rebuke them, beat them, and send them to bed.”**

 **-- 4:34**

**“Marry women of your choice, two, three, or four.” -- 4:3**

 **Sexual relations with captive female slaves is acceptable**

 **23:5,6 70:30**

Islam, Sin and Works Salvation

**“Surely good deeds take away evil deeds” (11:114).**

***Kabira* (big sins)—murder, adultery, drunkenness, disobeying parents, neglecting Ramadan or Friday prayers, gambling, dancing, shaving the beard, forgetting the Koran after reading it, usury… Forgiveness with repentance.**

***Saghira* (little sins)—deceit, anger, lust. Forgiveness if greater sins are avoided and good deeds are performed.**

***Shirk*—association (of other gods with Allah). No forgiveness.**

**Salvation by own effort**

 **(40:9, 39:61, 7:43)**

**Charity atones for sins**

 **(2:271,277)**

* **Earn grace.**
* **Earn favor of Allah.**
* **Earn salvation.**
* **Earn paradise.**

**Islam: Salvation is earned through the efforts of those who were pre-selected by Allah to inhabit a very sensual paradise.**

**Christianity: Salvation is granted by the grace of a loving God to those who, through faith and repentance and baptism accept that love.**

**Predestination**

**In Islam, Allah determines everything, even who will choose to follow him.**

**2:142, 6:39 6:125 Inshallah No free will.**

Islam on Pain and Suffering.

Islam: Inshallah

Christianity: Compassion

B. Historical Errors

* **Ishmael = Isaac 37:102**

**Qur’an: Abraham offered Ishmael on the mountain.**

* **2 trees in Eden = 1 tree 20:120**

**Conflate the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil**

* **Noah’s 4th son drowns 11:43**

**Did not get on the ark**

* **Zechariah silent 3 days (not 9 months) 3:41**
* **Pharaoh’s magicians repent 20:70**
* **Judges 7 / 1 Sam 17 conflated 2:249**

**Gideon confused with David and Goliath**

* **Jesus’ childhood miracles 3:49, 5:110,**

3:49 5:110 Jesus makes a clay bird, breathes on it and it comes to life.

3:46 Jesus speaks while still in the cradle.

In Surah 28:35-42 for example, we see Pharaoh commanding Haman (a Persian ruler born about a thousand years later…oops…) to build a tower that closely resembles the Biblical account of the tower of Babel (which was erected hundreds of years before) all in the time of Moses.

C. Scientific Errors

**23:14—*Creation from the clot of blood***

**“Then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then from that clot we made a lump; and we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh.”**

***36:4, 23:14 Man deposits child into the mother***

**18:86—*Traveling west…***

**“… till, when he reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring.”**

**Muslim authors quoted this as authoritative well into the Middle Ages.**

**21:32-33—*Sun and stars orbit the earth* "Each one is travelling in an orbit with its own motion" (Qur'an 21:33; 36:40).**

**12:4 *11 planets?* (No. This is a vision of Joseph and his 11 brothers bowing to him)**

**34:9, 52:44—*Piece of sky falls and kills someone***

Finally, there is one recent work, written by a French surgeon named Maurice Bucaille, that attempts to vindicate the divine origin of the Qur'an by showing its supposedly remarkable affinity with modem science. After citing a number of examples, Dr. Bucaille concludes that

*…it is inconceivable for a human being living in the seventh century A.D. to have made statements in the Qur'an on a great variety of subjects that do not belong to his period and for them to be in keeping with what was to be known only centuries later. For me, there can be no human explanation to the Qur an.8*

D. Satanic Verses: The doctrine of Abrogation.

Sura 6:34 “no one can alter Allah’s promises”

Sura 6:115 “No one can change His words”

Sura 10:64 “There is no changing the promises of Allah”

To abrogate is to annul or cancel.

Sura 2:106 *None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: Knowest thou not that Allah Hath power over all things?*

Surah 16:101

*When We substitute one revelation for another,- and Allah knows best what He reveals (in stages),- they say, "Thou art but a forger": but most of them understand not.*

Sura 53:19 In “a moment of weakness” Muhammad said: “Have you thought of Al-lat, al Uzza and AManat? These are exalted intermediaries whose intercession is to be hoped for.” Later abrogated, of course.

**Sura an-Najm (Star) 53:19-22**

|  |
| --- |
| Now tell me about Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat,The third one, another goddess.What! For you the males and for him the females!That indeed is an unfair division. |

Surah 2:219:

*They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: "In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit." They ask thee how much they are to spend; Say: "What is beyond your needs." Thus doth Allah Make clear to you His Signs: In order that ye may consider-*

Later abrogated by the ayah Surah 5:93 was revealed to stop drinking wine.

*O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (Dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination, - of Satan’s handiwork: Eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper.*

The earlier passages in the Qur’an in which Christians and Jews are considered also OK are abrogated by the later ones. The ones which are nice are abrogated by the violent ones.

Praying toward Jerusalem abrogated by praying toward Mecca.

Only four wives abrogated in the case of Muhammad. 33:50 and 33:52

One *hadith* in particular addresses abrogation. It cites Abu al-A‘la bin al-Shikhkhir, considered by theologians to be a reliable source of knowledge about the Prophet's life, as saying, that "the Messenger of God abrogated some of his commands by others, just as the Qur'an abrogates some part of it with the other."[[17]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn17) Muhammad accepted that God would invalidate previous revelation, often making ordinances stricter.[[18]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn18)

How does the theological debate over abrogation impact contemporary policy formulation? While not all terrorism is rooted in Islam, the religion is an enabler for many. It is wrong to assume that more extreme interpretations of religion are illegitimate. Statements that there is no compulsion in religion and that jihad is primarily about internal struggle and not about holy war may receive applause in university lecture halls and diplomatic board rooms, but they misunderstand the importance of abrogation in Islamic theology. It is important to acknowledge that what university scholars believe, and what most Muslims—or more extreme Muslims—believe are two different things. For many Islamists and radical Muslims, abrogation is real and what the West calls terror is, indeed, just.

During the lifetime of Muhammad, the Islamic community passed through three stages. In the beginning from 610 until 622, God commanded restraint. As the Muslims relocated to Medina (623-26), God permitted Muslims only to fight in a defensive war. However, in the last six years of Muhammad's life (626-32), God permitted Muslims to fight an aggressive war first against polytheists,[[52]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn52) and later against monotheists like the Jews of Khaybar.[[53]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn53) Once Muhammad was given permission to kill in the name of God, he instigated battle.

Chapter 9 of the Qur'an, in English called "Ultimatum," is the most important concerning the issues of abrogation and jihad against unbelievers. It is the only chapter that does not begin "in the name of God, most benevolent, ever-merciful."[[54]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn54) Commentators agree that Muhammad received this revelation in 631, the year before his death, when he had returned to Mecca and was at his strongest.[[55]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn55) Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari (810-70), compiler of one of the most authoritative collections of the *hadith*, said that "Ultimatum" was the last chapter revealed to Muhammad[[56]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn56) although others suggest it might have been penultimate. Regardless, coming at or near the very end of Muhammad's life, "Ultimatum" trumps earlier revelations.

Because this chapter contains violent passages, it abrogates previous peaceful content. Muhsin Khan, the translator of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, says God revealed "Ultimatum" in order to discard restraint and to command Muslims to fight against all the pagans as well as against the People of the Book if they do not embrace Islam or until they pay religious taxes. So, at first aggressive fighting was forbidden; it later became permissible (2:190) and subsequently obligatory (9:5).[[57]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn57) This "verse of the sword" abrogated, canceled, and replaced 124 verses that called for tolerance, compassion, and peace.[[58]](http://www.meforum.org/1754/peace-or-jihad-abrogation-in-islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn58)

Other notes:

Muhammad visited jinn towns and some jinn converted to Islam (Sahih Muslim 26.5559)

“There are 146 references to Hell in the Qur’an. Out of this, only 6% of those in Hell are there for moral failings—murder, theft, etc. The other 94% of the reasons for being in Hell are for the intellectual sin of disagreeing with Muhammad, a political crime. Hence, Islamic Hell is a political prison for those who speak against Islam (Glazov & Warner, 2007).” - Sujit Dass

The Five Pillars of Islam

shahada- the confession

salat- ritual prayers offered 5 times a day

zakat- obligatory charity

Ramadan- a month of fasting

The Haj- pilgrimage to Mecca

The 5 Pillars do not appear until the 9th century (Rippin, Muslims, vol.1, London, Routledge, 1990:86)

The unofficial 6th pillar of Islam is jihad