

Bible & Koran

How do they differ?

And Why?

Opening remarks



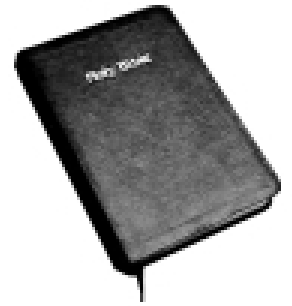
- More will be said about the Koran than the Bible because the Koran is less well known.
- This is a comparison of two books, not teachings, although teaching must be mentioned.
- I will not spend much time on specific errors in the Koran (grammatical, scientific, historical, etc.), although they are legion.
- The Koran does not come off well in this presentation, but not through prejudice.

First Glance @ the Koran



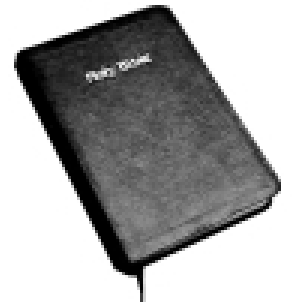
- Spelled in various ways: Qur'an, Kuran, Koran, Qur'ān, Coran or al-Qur'ān
 - Koran means “recitation”
- Central religious text of Islam
 - Verbatim word of God – dictated to Mohammed by the angel Jibril (Gabriel)
 - Considered by Muslims the only uncorrupted Holy Book
 - Dictated over 23 yrs (A.D. 610 – 632)
 - Compiled into single book by first Caliph Abu Bakr
 - Final revelation of God to the world (Muslim view)
- Finest piece of literature in Arabic (Muslim view)

First Glance @ the Koran



- Divided into 114 Suras (or chapters)
 - No particular chronology or logic in arrangement of material (although the order of recitation is generally known)
 - Earlier suras were written in Mecca (three periods), later, and longer, suras in Medina
 - Generally arranged with longer chapters first, shorter chapters afterwards

First Glance @ the Koran



- The Arabic verse of the Koran resembles other Arabic poetry, and may be derived from it.
- It must be read in Arabic during Friday prayers
 - It is considered untranslatable
 - Translations amount to retellings, useful, but not the word of God

First Glance @ the Koran



- All this emphasis on Arabic raises a question.
- Does the word of Allah belong to the Arabs only?
- Muhammad almost made this claim.

“Love the Arabs for three things: Because I am an Arab, the Kuran is in Arabic, and the language of the people of the paradise is Arabic.”

Significance of the Koran in Islam



- In Islam the Koran is more analogous to Jesus than to the Bible – with one significant twist.
 - Koran is the revelation of God’s Will (commandments and law).
 - It is like Jesus in that Muslims believe it is through the Koran that God’s Word entered the world. (emphatically *not* flesh)
 - It is unlike Jesus in that He is the revelation of God in human form! (God becoming man is heresy in Islam)



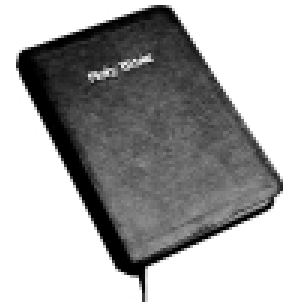
- **The Unity**
- In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
- **[112.1]** Say: He, Allah, is One.
[112.2] Allah is He on Whom all depend.
[112.3] He begets not, nor is He begotten.
[112.4] And none is like Him.

Place of the Koran in Islam



- Called the central religious text in Islam
- But the Koran is surprisingly limited in the scope of its authority.
 - Problem: no context for anything it says.
 - Context, and the proper meaning, has to come from elsewhere.
 - Arabic is notoriously dependent upon context for meaning.
 - Example: Sura 111

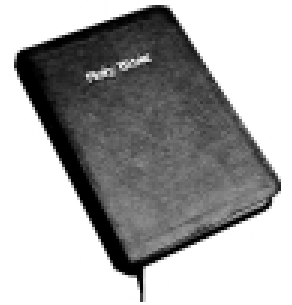
Sura 111



- The Flame
- In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
- [111.1] Perdition overtake both hands of Abu Lahab, and he will perish.
- [111.2] His wealth and what he earns will not avail him.
- [111.3] He shall soon burn in fire that flames,
- [111.4] And his wife, the bearer of fuel,
- [111.5] Upon her neck a halter of strongly twisted rope.

- Abu Lahab was Muhammad's uncle and the leader of the opposition against him. His wife carried out a campaign of persecution against Muhammad and the believers. Like all descriptions of Heaven and Hell, the rope of thorns is an allegory.

Sources of context



1. **Hadith:** an account, or news

- As short as one sentence, or up to a page in length.

2. **Sira:** biography of Mohammad

Sunnah: all that Mohammad did and said, believed to be contained in the Hadith and Sira.

Together these many books give Islamic scholars the context for interpreting the Koran.

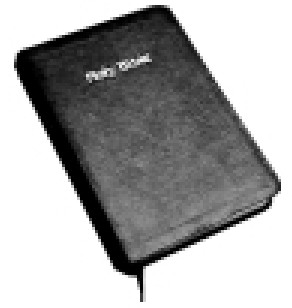
Most of the rituals and practices of Islam come from the Sunnah (example: the Hajj)

Hadiths: Accounts



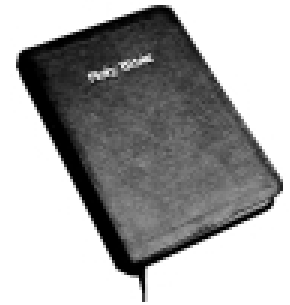
- Al-Bukhari (d. 870 C.E.) [A collection of 7658 hadiths (ahadith).] (nine large printed volumes)
- Muslim (d. 875 C.E.) [A collection of 7748 hadiths.] (eight large printed volumes)
- Abu Daud (d. 875 C.E.) [A collection of 5276 hadiths.]
- Al-Tirmizi (d. 892 C.E.) [A collection of 4415 hadiths.]
- Al-Nasai (d. 915 C.E.) [A collection of 5776 hadiths.]
- Ibn Maja (d. 886 C.E.) [A collection of 4485 hadiths.]

Siras: Biographies



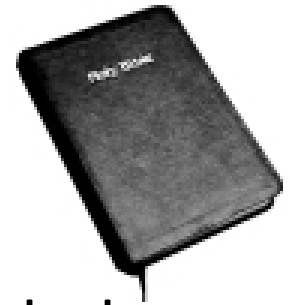
- Muhammad ibn Ishaq (d. 773 C.E.) via ibn Hisham's (d. 840 C.E.) recension, *Sirat Rasul Allah*. (English translation 798 pages.)
- Muhammad ibn Sa'd (d. 852 C.E.), *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, (English translation, 1097 pages.)

Koran's place in Islam summarized



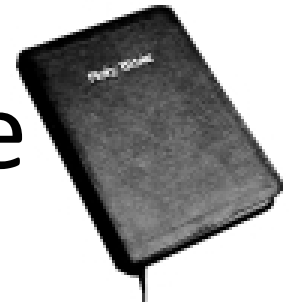
- Islam is 10% Koran and 90% traditions (Hadith & Sira)
 - Koran is like a picture frame, setting boundaries
 - Traditions (Hadith and Sira) paint the picture
- This approach inescapably puts Mohammad at the centre of Islam.
 - His life is the interpretation of the Koran
 - His life is also the standard for what Muslims may say and do

Koran's place in Islam summarized



- Muslims who knowingly compare the Bible with the Koran alone are essentially misrepresenting their own faith.
 - The Koran has plenty of offensive passages, but the most offensive are found in the Sunnah. (example: female circumcision)
- The Hadith and Sira (the Sunnah) are also essential parts of their Canon.
 - The amount and complexity of the written material limits in-depth knowledge of the Islam to a relative handful of scholars
- Lay people are encouraged to memorize and recite the Koran, but understanding it is of secondary importance.

Koran contradicts the Bible



- Sura 5:17,72 teaches that only unbelievers say Jesus is the Messiah, or that Jesus is God.
- Sura 5:116 Then God says: “Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to mankind: ‘Worship me...as god beside God?’” “Glory be to you,” he answers, “I could never have claimed what I have no right to. If I had ever said so, you would have surely known it.”
- Mark 14:61-62 “Are you the Christ . . . ?

Koran contradicts the Bible



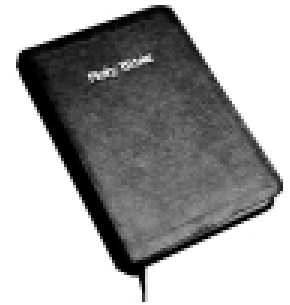
- Sura 5:75 “The Messiah, son of Mariam is but an apostle”
- Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Koran contradicts the Bible



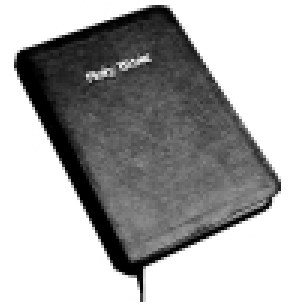
- Koran denies Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection
- It teaches a look-alike substitute hung on the cross while Jesus was taken directly to heaven.
- Thus the atonement is implicitly denied
 - Koran denies need for atonement
 - God does not demand sacrifice, simply submission
 - Koran denies original sin; man has power in himself to submit and to obey
- Matt. 16:17 "Blessed are you, Simon"

Bible & Koran contrasted



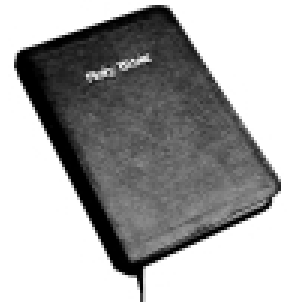
- The Bible
 - Many authors over many years (1,500 years)
 - Many styles of writing (stories, poetry, legal matters, prayers, songs, exhortation, reproof, prophecy, parables, allegories, visions, historical)
 - Yet, one over-arching story line and one purpose for that story.
- John 20:31 “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Bible & Koran Contrasted



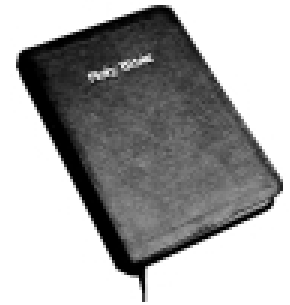
- Koran: written by one author in one-third of one lifetime.
- No plot development, no coherence, no forward movement
 - The connection between the verses of the Koran have been compared to the connection between grains of sand or beads on a necklace.
 - One author called it “a badly digested compilation of materials, derived from a variety of sources, true and false, historical and mythical.”

Significance of Abrogation



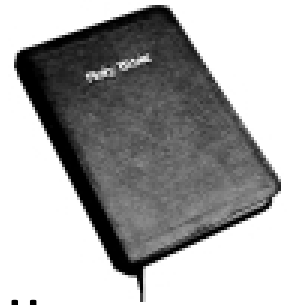
- Abrogate: to abolish, or annul
- In the Koran later pronouncements void earlier statements on the same issues.
- Sura 2:106 When we cancel a message, or throw it into oblivion, we replace it with one better or one similar. Do you not know that God has power over all things?
- Abrogation explains the apparent contradictions between the peaceful verses and the violent verses.
 - Mecca passages, earlier and more accommodating
 - Medina passages, Mohammad grows strong and vengeful, also lustful.

Sura 9:5



- (The “Sword” Verse)
- ... fight and slay the Pagans wherever
- ye find them, and seize them,
- beleaguer them, and lie in wait for
- them in every stratagem (of war); but
- if they repent, and establish regular
- prayers and practise regular charity,
- then open the way for them ...

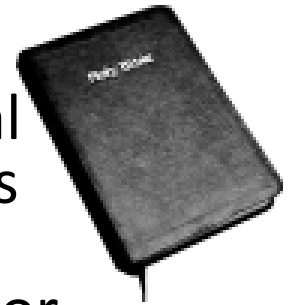
Bible & Koran Contrasted



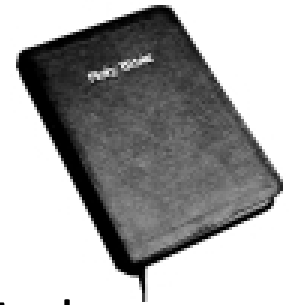
- Bible: no other book in the world is so well designed for effective translation
 - Its matter exceeds in value by a hundred times over the manner in which it is expressed
 - Hebrew poetry (O.T.) is especially designed for translation without loss of meaning or beauty.
- Koran: no other book in the world loses so much through translation.
 - Once you remove the poetic sound that is truly moving to Arabic speakers, little is left.
 - “The matter, stripped of its gaudy attire, appears to the ordinary reader insufferably dull and commonplace.”

Of all books..., the Koran is the most powerful rival of the Bible, but falls infinitely below it in contents and form.... Whatever is true in the Koran is borrowed from the Bible; what is original, is false or frivolous. The Bible is historical and embodies the noblest aspirations of the human race in all ages to the final consummation; the Koran begins and stops with Mohammed. The Bible combines endless variety with unity, universal applicability with local adaptation; the Koran is uniform and monotonous, confined to one country, one state of society, and one class of minds. The Bible is the book of the world, and is constantly travelling to the ends of the Earth, carrying spiritual food to all races and to all classes of society; the Koran stays in the Orient, and is insipid to all who have once tasted the true word of the living God.

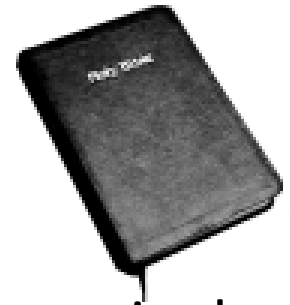
Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)



A list of ancient heresies



- **Arians:** Jesus did not always exist, inferior to the Father
- **Sabellians:** modalism
- **Ebionites:** Jewish Christians who insisted on following the O.T. law.
- **Nestorians:** separated Christ's human and divine natures
- **Eutychians:** Christ's human nature subservient to his divine nature
- **Monophysites:** Christ's human nature absorbed by His divine nature
- **Marianites:** emphasized Mary even beyond the modern R.C.C.
- **Collyridians:** early church times, this group worshipped Mary as a goddess



- Philip Schaff, in his History, IV, 159, notes that the nominal Christians who inhabited Arabia at the time of Muhammad belonged mostly to the various heretical sects that were expelled from the Roman Empire during the doctrinal controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. “We find there traces of Arians, Sabellians, Ebionites, Nestorians, Eutychians, Monophysites, Marianites, and Collyridians or worshippers of Mary...it was a very superficial and corrupt Christianity which had found a home in those desert regions...” The sinful use of force by the relatively orthodox theologians to exile the heretics from the Empire resulted in the creation of a large and fertile field for Islam to take root and grow.

The ultimate test!



- Koran: by 800 A.D. it held sway over the most advanced and sophisticated civilizations the world had ever known (Persian, Greek, Indian, Roman, Egyptian)
- Bible: around 800 A.D. The Bible entered northern Europe, renowned for the primitive, brutal nature of its savage tribes.
- 1800 A.D. – the situation was exactly reversed. The Bible, and the faith taught in it, made the difference!