

Authenticity of the Bible — An Appraisal of the Internal and External Evidences

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The authenticity of the Bible is a matter of extensive debate thought the history. And while judging the authenticity of any significant book, one have to judge its text internally and secondly how the book have been transmitted thought ages. As far as the text is concerned, many discrepancies and factual and historical mistakes have been pointed on even by the Jewish and Christian scholars. The issue of its recording and safe transmission has no different story. First the system of writing scribes and script of the Hebrew language in which torah was revealed to mosses had not been evolved with the time of David (C. 1000 BCE) secondly the scarcity of writing tools led to certain impediments in to safe transmission. Thirdly different kind of mistakes during the process of copying. Fourthly reluctance and reservations of the Jewish Rabbis to make the Bible accessible to the common man. And lastly, absence of continued political stability and independence of Jewish people.

The authenticity of the Bible has never remained without doubts. It is a matter of fact that no reliable manuscript of Torah (Pentateuch)/ O.T. of Before Common Era (BCE) could ever have been discovered. Codex Sinaitcus, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrines etc., which have been recovered so far, belong to the period of centuries after the advent of The Common Era (CE). It is also to be noted that no book of the Old Testament (OT) of the Bible can be claimed to have been written by the person to whom it has been ascribed. Torah is attributed to Moses and Moses lived in the 13th century BCE. Yet there is no evidence of Torah having

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- 26 Surah Al-Mu'minun 23:91
- 27 Surah Al-anbiya 21:22
- 28 Surah As-Saffat 37:95
- 29 Surah Al-ar-Ra'd 13:16
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contrasting grounds. The prime common ground between the schools of thought is that both are theistic religions. But that seems to be the only ideology, that is common between the two. The major difference between the Hindu and Muslim perception of God is the common Hindus' belief in the philosophy of Pantheism. Pantheism considers everything, living and non-living, to be Divine and Sacred. The common Hindu, therefore, considers everything as God. He considers the trees as God, a snake as God and even human beings as manifestations of God. Islam, on the contrary, exhorts man to consider himself and his surroundings as examples of Divine Creation rather than as divinity itself. Muslims therefore believe that everything is God's and not God itself.

the heavens and the earth magnifies Him; He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا
خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ 32

There is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them and what is after them, and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge save such as He wills. His throne comprises the heavens and earth; the preserving of them oppresses Him not; He is the All-High, the All-Glorious.

"People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, and say not as to God but the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers, and say not, 'Three.' Refrain; better is it for you. God is only one God. Glory be to Him - (He is) above having a son."³³

After analyzing the concepts of God presented in the two major world religions, we can compare the two and find common and

A believer loves, and is grateful to God for the bounties He bestowed upon him, but being aware of the fact that his good deeds, whether mental or physical, are far from being commensurate with Divine favors, he is always anxious lest God should punish him, here or in the Hereafter. He, therefore, fears Him, surrenders himself to Him and serves Him with great humility. One cannot be in such a mental state without being almost all the time mindful of God. Remembering God is thus the life force of faith, without which it fades and withers away.

The Quran tries to promote this feeling of gratitude by repeating the attributes of God very frequently. We find most of these attributes mentioned together in the following verses of the Quran:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ - هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ - هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ - 31

He is God; there is no god but He, He is the Knower of the unseen and the visible; He is the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate. He is God; there is no God but He. He is the King, the All-Holy, the All-Peace, the Guardian of Faith, the All-Preserver, the All-Mighty, the All-Compeller, the All-Sublime. Glory be to God, above that they associate! He is God the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belongs the Names Most Beautiful. All that is in

which you associate, I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth; a man of pure faith, I am not of the idolaters." 30

The Believer's Attitude: In order to be a Muslim, i.e., to surrender oneself to God, it is necessary to believe in the oneness of God, in the sense of His being the only Creator, Preserver, Nourisher, etc. But this belief - later on called "Tawhid Ar-Rububiyyah is not enough." Many of the idolaters knew and believed that only the Supreme God could do all this. But that was not enough to make them Muslims. To tawhid ar-rububiyyah one must add tawhid al'uluhiyyah, i.e., one acknowledges the fact that is God alone who deserves to be worshipped, and thus abstains from worshipping any other thing or being.

Having achieved this knowledge of the one true God, man should constantly have faith in Him, and should allow nothing to induce him to deny truth.

When faith enters a person's heart, it causes certain mental states which result in certain actions. Taken together these mental states and actions are the proof for the true faith. The Prophet said, "Faith is that which resides firmly in the heart and which is proved by deeds."

The feeling of gratitude is so important that a non-believer is called 'kafir,' which means 'one who denies a truth' and also 'one who is ungrateful.'

powerful Creators? A moment's thought shows that this is not feasible.

The Quran summarizes this argument in the following verses:

"God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him: For then each god would have taken of that which he created and some of them would have risen up over others." ²⁶ And Why, were there gods in earth and heaven other than God, they (heaven and earth) would surely go to ruin." ²⁷

The Oneness of God the Quran reminds us of the falsity of all alleged gods. To the worshippers of man-made objects, it asks:

"Do you worship what you have carved yourself?" ²⁸

"Or have you taken unto you others beside Him to be your protectors, even such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves?" ²⁹

To the worshippers of heavenly bodies it cites the story of Abraham:

"When night outspread over him he says a star and said, 'This is my Lord. "

But when it set he said, 'I love not the setters.' When he saw the moon rising, he said, 'This is my Lord.' But when it set he said, 'If my Lord does not guide me I shall surely be of the people gone astray.' When he saw the sun rising, he said, 'This is my Lord; this is greater.' But when it set he said, 'O my people, surely I quit that

The Creator must be of a different nature from the things created because if he is of the same nature as they are, he will be temporal and will therefore need a maker. It follows that nothing is like Him. If the maker is not temporal, then he must be eternal. But if he is eternal, he cannot be caused, and if nothing outside him causes him to continue to exist, which means that he must be self-sufficient. And if he does not depend on anything for the continuance of his own existence, then this existence can have no end. The Creator is therefore eternal and everlasting: 'He is the First and the Last.'

He is Self-Sufficient or Self-Subsistent or, to use a Quranic term, Al-Qayyum. The Creator does not create only in the sense of bringing things into being, He also preserves them and takes them out of existence and is the ultimate cause of whatever happens to them.

"God is the Creator of everything. He is the guardian over everything. Unto Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth." ²⁴

"No creature is there crawling on the earth, but its provision rests on God. He knows its lodging place and its repository." ²⁵

God's Attributes If the Creator is eternal and Everlasting, then His attributes must also be eternal and everlasting. He should not lose any of His attributes nor acquire new ones. If this is so, then His attributes are absolute. Can there be more than one Creator with such absolute attributes? Can there be for example, two absolutely