

The Authorship of the Quran

What does the Qur'an say about its own sources?

Overwhelmingly the Qur'an itself claimed its author was God the Creator. The writing style suggests authority that could only come from God, either by direct statement or by addressing to His audience. "Say O Mohammad..." is often the address. Also we find the statements made by Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) himself are totally consistent with the statement that he is not the author. He claimed that the Qur'an was simply dictated to him. The Qur'an itself also negates in many places, quite clearly and conclusively, that it has come from any other source than divine revelation.

How can we verify the claim by Prophet Mohammad that he was not the author of the Qur'an?

Usually a person is challenged when he claims authorship of a piece of work. It is not usual when someone says "I'm not the author" that someone says "prove you aren't the author". The witness of the person alone that he is not the author should suffice to make the point he is not claiming credit.

Was there any benefit in Prophet Mohammad claiming God's authorship?

We can investigate the possibility that perhaps there is some possibility of this. To do this we have to ask ourselves what kind of benefit would accrue to the prophet by claiming untruly that this Qur'an is coming from God when he is actually the author of it. We know that people get something, not when they disclaim, but when they claim something to their credit, claiming "I did this or I did that". In the case of Prophet Mohammad and the Qur'an, he made it quite clear he was actually a disclaimer rather than a claimer. So what possible benefit would they be after from this kind of claim?

Does that mean those multiple times he refused authorship Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) had lied?

This assumption is inconsistent with everything we know about the prophet and his life. One of the usual ways to examine this issue would be to look at his material wealth and possessions before he was a prophet and afterwards, to see if he had benefited materially in any way by claiming he was a prophet. 15 years before he commenced his prophethood he married a very rich woman called Hatice. He was a very successful and well-liked merchant and he was living financially very comfortably. When we compare this with what happened to him after he started his prophethood we see a direct contrast. He suffered financially a great deal. At times he had to go through extreme hunger and had few personal possessions. So it is clear he gained no material benefit from his claim.

What documentation is there to his relative financial status?

In both Bochari and Muslem, Aisha stated that often for a period of a month or two they would go without a fire being lit and as a consequence they couldn't even have a hot meal. When asked how they survived, Aisha stated that they lived on water and dates. Some of his neighbours would send him goat or camel milk so that he would supplement these foods. This was not a temporary sacrifice which he made up for later, even after the victories of Islam he continued the same simple life in which his self imposed deprivation continued. Ch 33 V28 describes the situation of the household of the prophet as having some unease from self imposed poverty, when there is some wealth for his followers. Hafsa his wife was asked about the bedding of the prophet. She said his body was supported simply by a piece of canvass folded over. She recalled that one night she thought she would make this more comfortable for him. She folded the canvass

four fold. When he woke up for early Morning Prayer he asked what she had done. When she explained he said no don't do this as this comfort may make him sleep through and not wake up for the late night prayer. This occurred at a time when Islam was on the rise and if he had wanted to live like a king he could have.

As an example of this, one time one of his famous companions, Omar, entered into his room. Omar started crying and the prophet said "what's wrong". Omar said he saw the prophet lying on a mat and there were marks on his body from the floor. Omar looked in the room and all he found was a hand full of barley to eat in the corner of the room. The prophet said "Why are you crying Omar?" He said "O prophet of God, the King of Byzantium lives in all kinds of luxury with rivers flowing under their palaces and you, the last messenger and most select of his followers, are living in such dire need. Why don't you pray to God to make it a little easier and to provide us with more?" When the prophet heard that instead of lying he sat up. He said "Omar are you still in any doubt about this matter (of faith)? "Ease and comfort in the afterlife are much better than what we can have here." Another companion of the prophet by the name of Aman Bashir said, he once saw the prophet twitching and squirming for the whole day because of hunger. The prophet could not even find enough bad quality dates to fill his stomach. A famous companion of the prophet Abu Hyah said that the prophet never had a full stomach and especially for the three consecutive days before he died (as narrated in Muslem and Ahmed). This is the sort of life the prophet lived. What kind of material gain did he receive from his denial of the authorship?

How did his assets before his prophetic actions compare to those afterward?

It was mentioned earlier that Khatijah was reasonably rich women. He was a successful merchant and he was in charge of all her trade. He developed a wide variety of trade skills and developed a reputation for honesty. Khatija was his only wife from the age of twenty-five until he was fifty. He had a close and loving relationship with her. Her relationship with him was strong, and everything she owned was put at his disposal. After Khatija died (he was 50 she was 65) her wealth became his. At the time of his death according to Bochari, Moslem and Acter Middy his shield was held as collateral in the hand of a businessman for some barley the prophet had bought from him. Aisha said when he died there was nothing edible in the household except some barley (narrated in Bochari and Moslem). According to Bachari when the prophet died he left nothing behind, no dollar, no cent. He left no person in bondage nor did he leave anything except two things. These two items were his white garment and his sward. In fact there was a piece of land, which was mistakenly claimed by historians to be owned by the prophet. The land had been dedicated to the poor so that the income of that land could only be used to support the orphans, the poor and the needs of his household. No one ever claimed that land on behalf of Prophet Mohammad as it was considered to be the property of the poor. This is consistent with what he stated. Prophet Mohammad said "We prophets are not supposed to leave any material possessions behind us when we die." Anything that is left must be spent as a charity. That action reflects not only his deeds but also what he taught the believers, not to be extravagant in their lives and to keep their lives focussed on the here after. As narrated in Abu Doud when people talk about his suffering and hardships, he could have had many possessions at his disposal but chose to live like any other poor. "What do I have to worry about this life. My struggle in this life is like I am travelling and I stop to rest under a tree" the prophet claimed. "Afterwards we get up and continue to travel." Getting back to the question what did he have to gain by claiming untruly or unjustifiably that he was not the author of the Qur'an and that he was the prophet sent by God to guide humanity.

What about other intangible benefits such as power and leadership?

Lets look at this question logically. There is no disagreement even among his critics that Prophet Mohammad was one of the greatest leaders of history. Some regard him as the greatest leader in history. A person with these qualities and these talents could quite easily draw a following. In fact it would be easier for him to claim leadership through these qualities than to claim prophethood. To claim prophethood is

difficult as many people do not understand what is going on. The issue of revelation and angels talking to you is all a bit hard to believe, but it is easy to agree that this is a great leader.

It is also accepted that the Qur'an was the most eloquent of documents. Ever since it was made no one has ever claimed they were able to match the eloquence of the Qur'an in beauty, style and wisdom. If he wrote it, then he was that smart that there could be no greater leader. A claim of possession of this Qur'an could do nothing but improve his credibility as a leader.

How does Prophet Mohammed's character relate to these worldly desires?

Prophet Mohammed's character was not egotistical and arrogant. We cannot separate power and prestige from each other. People who want power and prestige also want the material wealth that goes with this. When you look at the lifestyle of the prophet you find it an amazing example of humility and humbleness. He always sat on the ground and ate from the same pot as the poor and down trodden. He mixed socially more with the poor and needy than the rich who could give him political support. He always gratefully accepted any invitation to eat from anyone. He asked people not to stand up when he entered, as he did not wish to glorify himself. He would sit where a place was available and not thrust himself forward. He would sit amongst the others, and those who did not know him, could not pick him out.

Once a person came to visit the prophet after hearing of his greatness. The man was trembling so the prophet patted him on the back and said "take it easy, I am only the son of a woman who used to eat dry bread." At one time when travelling the time came for himself and his companions to get food. He volunteered to go and collect wood. They were surprised that such a great man would do such an act. He said "I know you could do that for me, but I hate to have any distinction over you. I want to work also, and be one of you." One time he passed by a number of young girls who were singing and were making poetry. One of them said, "Among us is a prophet who knows what will happen to us in the future". He said "No, don't say that about me, continue on with your other poetry".

In his own life time it is quoted that he frequently discussed important matters with his companions. On many occasions he accepted their opinion on matters not decided by revelation, even though on some occasions these decisions were against his personal opinion. These are all clear examples from his life that demonstrate that the prophet was not one who sought personal glory.

Is there evidence in the Qur'an that Prophet Mohammad did not aspire to be a prophet?

The Qur'an attests to the fact that Prophet Mohammad did not seek personal leadership or even to be a prophet. There are several citations and passages in the Qur'an to support this assertion. In Ch 28 V86 it says, "You have not expected that the book would be given to you, but it is a mercy from Your Lord". In Ch 6 V 50 Prophet Mohammad is instructed "Say O Mohammad to the people, I tell you not I have the treasures of God, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed unto me." Similarly in Ch 7 in V 188 the Qur'an states "Say O Mohammad to the people, I have no power over any good or harm to myself, except as God wills. If I had knowledge of the unseen, I would have multiplied all good and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith. " The Qur'an made it clear that he only knew of the future what God revealed to him. In Ch 46 V9 it states "Say O Mohammad I am not a bringer of a new fangled doctrine amongst the apostles, nor do I know what will be done to me or to you, I only follow that which is revealed unto me. I am only a warner, open and clear." One clearer example is in Ch 18 V110 states "I am only a human like yourselves, it has been revealed to me that Your God is one God."

These are but a few of many citations in the Qur'an. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) also forbade people making his graveyard a place of worship. He said "don't you over praise me just as the Christian have overpraised Prophet Jesus (PBUH) for I am only the servant of God and His messenger".

Summary

All that is known about the prophet, what he said and did, strongly point to the fact that he was not the author of the Qur'an.

http://saif_w.tripod.com/explore/iman/quran/authorship_of_quran.htm