

# The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

## IS ARABIC A HOLY OR SUPERIOR LANGUAGE?

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Many Muslims hold the opinion/belief that by virtue of the final scripture being revealed in Arabic that there is in some way a marked preferment for it, or that it is the best of all languages and in some circles, it is believed that it is the language of the Heavens.

This view is unsustainable from an analysis of the Quran. In fact, it becomes apparent **that no distinctions of any sorts** are made with regards **any language** and Arabic in this context is no exception.

### 030:022

“And of His signs is the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Indeed! herein indeed are signs for men of knowledge”

One of God's great signs are indeed the variances in human languages.

Unfortunately, Muslim focus remains very 'Arabic-centric' when clearly all languages are of the signs of God and belong to Him. No doubt Arabic is an important language to learn / master as the final scripture has been revealed in thus. Hence, any study (or as the Quran claims 'Tadabbur' 4:82, 23:68, 38:29, 47:24 i.e. research / ponder intently till the matter is clear) is aided.

This is no different for a Biblical scholar mastering the intricacies of Greek to aid a study of the Septuagint or learning Latin to grasp the relevance / message of later Latin vulgates. Or further still, mastering Hebrew to understand the original text in more detail.

God's message with regards the Arabic tongue is clear. The Quran was **ONLY** revealed in Arabic so that the people to whom the message was being revealed (i.e. Prophet Muhammad <sup>(pbuh)</sup> and his contemporaries) clearly understood it (12:2; 44:58; 43:3). This indeed, so that the messenger may be a witness against them and impart the message to them with utmost clarity so that there was left no reason to deny it. This was no different for all the messengers that preceded him. They only brought the message of God in languages of their own people so that they could make the message and its arguments absolutely clear to them (14:4; 46:12).

014:004

"And We did not send any messenger **but with the language of his people**, so that he might explain to them clearly; then God makes whom He pleases err and He guides whom He pleases and He is the Mighty, the Wise"

Even though the final message was intended to be a timeless document for all mankind, its primary deliverance was in Arabic so that the Prophet could warn his own mother town and the immediate towns around him (42:7).

042.007

"And thus have We revealed to you an Arabic Quran, that you may warn the mother city (**Arabic: ummal-qura**) and those around it (**Arabic: (waman) hawlaha**), and that you may give warning of the day of gathering together wherein is no doubt; a party shall be in the garden and (another) party in the burning fire"

أَوْ حِينًا إِلَيْكَ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِنُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَنُنذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ

hawlaha      ummal-qura

[Illustration - Joseph Islam](#)

Note the Arabic term '**hawlaha**' in the above verse which clearly refers to an immediate vicinity and the terms usage can be attested from other parts of the Quran. In this case it is the immediate vicinity around the mother town which is what is being referred to and not the whole planet. If the Quran needed to be explained to a Chinaman it would need to be translated into Chinese!

Indeed, this makes perfect sense as the message would be understood in a specific Arabic dialect only by the mother town where Prophet Muhammad<sup>(pbuh)</sup> was a contemporary and the surrounding areas. For a non-Arabic speaker in a foreign land, the message would need to be translated in order for them to understand it clearly and seek guidance from it.

Please take note of Surah Ash-Shua'ra (26), the same **Arabic** sentence has been used.

'Inni la kum rasul ameen, fataqulaah watioun'

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ۖ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

(I am a faithful messenger to you, so fear God and obey me).

The **same** Arabic sentence has been used for **Prophets Noah** (26:106-107), **Hud** (26:125-126); **Saleh** (26:143-144); **Lut** (26:162-163) and **Shuaib** <sup>(pbwt)</sup> (26:178-179) one after the other. **Not one** of these messengers ever delivered this sentence in Arabic but rather in their **own languages to their own people**. Therefore it is **the message which is important, not the language it is delivered in** for the Quran itself is a translation from other tongues into Arabic.

For example, one notes of all the dialogue captured in the Quran, of Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus <sup>(pbwt)</sup>, different messengers, angels, Iblis (Satan), Pharaoh, even of an ant (27:18) and a Hoopoe bird (27:22). All this speech has been captured and translated by God Himself for an Arabic audience to grasp the message and its wisdom. If God can translate the speech of others throughout history to make the message clear to an Arab audience then why can't non-Arabic speakers focus their endeavours to understand the message in their own languages?

This is ratified a few verses later in 26:195-196, in that the message exists in the scriptures of old, which also connects with the Quran maxim: that we reveal nothing to the messenger that we have not revealed before (41:43).

### **SO WHY DID GOD CHOOSE ARABIC FOR THE FINAL REVELATION? Is it because it is special or holy?**

The Quran itself answers this question aptly and succinctly. If the Quran was not revealed in Arabic, the contemporaries of the Arabian Prophet would have argued as to why the communications were in a language that they could not understand. Furthermore, it would have made no sense to them to have a revelation in a foreign tongue delivered to an Arabian Prophet.

#### **041:044**

“And if We had made it a Quran in a foreign tongue, **they would certainly have said: Why have not its communications been made clear? What! a foreign (tongue) and an Arabian!?** Say: It is to those who believe a guidance and a healing; and (as for) those who do not believe, there is a heaviness in their ears and it is obscure to them; these shall be called to from a far-off place”

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## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

All languages belong to God and the variances in them are signs from God, but how many Muslims sadly put away the Quran because of the tacit belief that the Quranic message can never be truly grasped without erudite knowledge of the classical Arabic in the Quran. How many Muslims also hold the unsupported belief that in some way the Arabic language is far superior to any other?

Despite the lack of objective criteria required to validate such a position due to all languages possessing unique variances and richness of structure, the Quran itself negates such a concept. Why not Aramaic, Hebrew, Thamudic, or any other language from the Semitic stock? Why are they not superior or holier or why not the first language given to Adam? <sup>(pbwt)</sup> After all, many great Prophets spoke to their audience with the same message in them.

#### **002:002**

ALIF LAM MIM ' Dhalaika (this) Kitab (book / scripture) La (no) Raiba (doubt) Fi'hai (in it) Huda (guidance) Mutaqeen (Those God conscious)

One can only expect to extract 'Huda' (guidance) if one is aware of what they are reading and understand it. Further still, how can an honest Muslim ever filter the religious thought of another human being, relative, academic or scholar without establishing a reference point in knowledge for themselves? A filtering point (i.e. a true grasp of the Quranic message for themselves in any way / language possible) to filter from?

If this standard or verification point is not set, one would simply succumb to the blind following of certain schools of thoughts / sects and established religions. How could one ever assess an Islamic doctrine or the veracity of a belief if they possessed no reference point to judge from. This reference point can only be established by one's own ardent study of the scripture and in one's own language.

**"We have made this Quran EASY to understand / remember" (54:17; 22; 32; 40)**

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