

The Quran Speaks

BAHIS SEDQ

© 2013 Bahis Sedq

All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the author.

This edition published by
Dog Ear Publishing
4010 W. 86th Street, Ste H
Indianapolis, IN 46268

www.dogearpublishing.net



ISBN: 978-145751-887-4

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Printed in the United States of America

*This book is dedicated to the hope and vision
of a world undistracted by religious divisions—
a truly wonderful world!*

CONTENTS

Author's Note	vii
1 The Quran Speaks	1
2 The Contradictions Challenge	9
3 Muhammad: The Last Prophet	31
4 The Quran: A Scientific Miracle	81
5 The Quran and Justice	119
6 The Quran and Women	137
7 The Sword Verses	155
8 The Jews of Medina	175
9 The Glorious Quran	195
10 The "Satanic" Verses	211
11 Undistracted by Religion	227
Notes	231
Appendix	269
References	301
Index	303

THE CONTRADICTIONS CHALLENGE

Do they not ponder over the Quran? Had it been from any other than Allah, surely there would have been many contradictions in it. (4:82)¹

Allah's word cannot of course be contradictory, but, that said, it goes to the Quran's credit that it is not hesitant to embrace the above challenge.

To assess the claim, we shall split the discussion into three categories: internal inconsistencies, mathematical deficiencies, and scientific discrepancies. Absolutely none of these contradictions can be attributed to Allah. One therefore expects the Quran to clear the hurdle with ease.

INTERNAL INCONSISTENCIES

Internal inconsistencies are particularly embarrassing, as they tend to show that the author has not presented his ideas coherently enough, or even that he lacks the ability. No such errors are expected from the Quran, but let us take some instances where it appears to come perilously close to crossing the line.

- ***“A day with your Lord”***

The Quran tells us:

He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth, and the report of this administration ascends (to be presented) before Him in a Day whose length, according to your reckoning, is a thousand years. (32:5)²

It seems surprising that the affairs of the world should take a thousand years to be presented to Allah,* but this timeframe is repeated (albeit in a different context) in the following verse:

These people are demanding of you to hasten the chastisement. Allah will never fail to fulfill His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon. (22:47)³

This verse was revealed in response to taunts by disbelievers who could not understand the delay in the punishment they were threatened with.† They were informed that a day with Allah is equal to one thousand years and so they must wait! But what is perplexing is that this timeframe undergoes a dramatic change in the following verse:

A demander has demanded a torment (the torment) which must befall. It is for the disbelievers. There is none to avert it.

* According to Yusuf Ali (who is somewhat supported by Hilali-Khan, but not by Pickthall who agrees with Maududi) this verse refers to the affairs being presented to Allah “in the end.”

† Regarding verse 22:47, even Yusuf Ali and Hilali-Khan do not suggest that the timeframe mentioned in the verse has relevance to the affairs being presented to Allah “in the end.”

It will come from that God who is the Owner of the Steps of Ascent. *The angels and the Spirit ascend to His presence in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years.* So have patience, O Prophet, a graceful patience. (70:1–5)⁴

Apart from having to reconcile the two divergent timeframes disclosed by the Quran, the question also is: Why should it take the “angel and the Spirit” fifty thousand years “to ascend to His presence”? Particularly when the Quran also tells us:

And if My servants ask you, O Prophet, concerning Me, tell them that I am quite near to them. I hear and answer the prayers of the suppliant, when he calls to Me. (2:186)⁵

Is this a contradiction, or is the Quran simply being playful?*

- ***Believers versus nonbelievers***

The Quran expresses the confidence that just twenty believers with fortitude are sufficient to overcome two hundred nonbelievers and that a hundred of them will overpower a thousand:

O Prophet stir the believers to the fight. If there be twenty men among you who show fortitude, they will overcome two hundred men, and if there be a hundred such men of you, they will overcome a thousand of the deniers of the Truth, for they are a people who lack understanding. (8:65)⁶

What is a little surprising, though, is that this ratio changes significantly in the very next verse:

Now that Allah has lightened your burden, He has noticed that you are still weak; so if there be a hundred steadfast men among you, they will overcome two hundred men and if there be a thousand such men, they will overcome two thousand by

* Elsewhere, the Quran informs us that those who defied Allah’s commands in the past were visited with chastisement. Could it be that they suffered for crimes committed a thousand years earlier (that being the timeframe for the affairs of the world to be presented to Allah)? Or possibly fifty thousand years earlier (that being the time “the angels and the Spirit” take to “ascend to His presence”)?

Allah's permission. But Allah is with those people alone who show fortitude. (8:66)⁷

One may try to explain the apparent discrepancy on the basis of the words "Now that Allah has lightened your burden, He has noticed that you are still weak," but the fact is that both verses deal with the steadfast believers (i.e., those who have fortitude). Had verse 66 referred to the ordinary believers and verse 65 to the more steadfast believers, one may have more readily appreciated the significant imbalance.

It may be that the two verses were revealed on different occasions and put together at the time the Quran was compiled, on account of the fact that they cover the same subject. The Quran may not have come up with both in the same breath.

- ***Inheritance shares***

The Quran is not expected to address all situations regarding inheritance. It therefore focuses on only a few, which then form the cornerstones of the Islamic law on inheritance.

One scenario specifically addressed by the Quran is that of the person who "leaves no children and no parents behind" but is succeeded by one or more siblings:

... And if the deceased, whether man or woman (whose property is to be divided as inheritance) leaves no children and no parents behind but has one brother or one sister alive, each of the two will be entitled to one-sixth of the whole but in case the brothers and sisters are more than one then the total share of all of them will be one-third of the whole after the fulfillment of the will and the payment of the debt (if any) provided that it is not injurious (to the heirs).^{*} This is the Commandment of Allah and Allah is All-Knowing and Lenient. (4:12)⁸

This verse allows no doubt. The inheritance shares it identifies can be stated with exactitude:

* The words "provided that it is not injurious (to the heirs)" suggest that the maximum aggregate share of 1/3 can stand further reduced, which exacerbates the contradiction with verse 4:176 (discussed below).

- If only one brother survives: 1/6
- If only one sister survives: 1/6
- If more than one brother/sister survives: 1/3

Does this verse apply only to half brothers and half sisters from the side of the mother alone? There is absolutely no mention of that in the above verse, but Muslim scholars are adamant that this is how it needs to be read. Maududi, for instance, informs us:

All the commentators are agreed that in this verse brothers and sisters refer to *half* brothers and *half* sisters *from the side of the mother alone.*⁹

Mohammed Pickthall goes a step further and adds the limitation in the translation itself (albeit parenthetically, which is a technique employed to signify words that are not part of the Quranic text):

And if a man or a woman have a distant heir (having left neither parent nor child) and he (or she) have a brother or a sister (*only on the mother's side* then ...).

Why so? And could the Quran not have made the addition itself?* The following verse at least answers the first question:

People seek your verdict on (the inheritance left by) a childless person. Say, "Allah gives His verdict: *if a person dies childless and leaves behind a sister, she shall get half of his inheritance, and if the sister dies childless, her brother shall inherit her property; and if the deceased leaves behind two sisters, they shall inherit two thirds of the inheritance; and if the number of the brothers and sisters is more than two, the share of each brother shall be double that of each sister.* Allah makes His Commandments plain to test you lest you should go astray. Allah has perfect knowledge of everything." (4:176)¹⁰

Like verse 4:12, which was quoted earlier, this verse addresses inheritance in the context of a childless person and spells out the

* For instance (taking Maududi's translation as template): "And if the deceased, whether man or woman (whose property is to be divided as inheritance) leaves no children and no parents behind but has one *half* brother or one *half* sister alive *from the mother's side*, each of the two will be entitled to one-sixth of the whole ..."

shares of brother(s) and sister(s) who may survive the deceased. Let us see how it compares with 4:12, however.

<i>Surah An-Nisa</i>	Inheritance share if one brother survives	Inheritance share if one sister survives	Collective inheritance share if more than one brother/sister survives
Verse 12	1/6	1/6	1/3
Verse 176	The whole	1/2	2/3 or the whole*

The incompatibility between the two verses is too glaring to be missed. They clearly dictate shares contradictorily to one another, and significantly so.†

This thus explains the difficulty faced by Muslim scholars, who must make adjustments to avoid the contradiction. These scholars therefore have reached some kind of consensus that verse 4:12 refers to “half brothers and half sisters from the side of the mother alone.” The fact that there is no mention of “half brothers and half sisters” in the Quran poses a difficulty but at least avoids the glaring contradiction. Moreover, if one is at all to read words into the Quran, it makes sense to ensure that the end result would not contradict yet other verses. Based on this sound principle, Muslims scholars had to clarify not just that verse 4:12 applies to half brothers and half sisters but also that they should be “from the side of the mother alone.”

* Two-thirds applies if only sisters survive the deceased, but if there should also be a brother among the survivors, then the whole property (and not just 2/3 of it) would be inherited by the brothers and sisters.

† Verse 4:12 then also includes the feature, which is missing in verse 4:176, that the deceased should have no surviving parents—which makes things more complicated, considering that verse 4:176 reserves a larger share for brothers and sisters (even though the parents may also possibly be alive) than does verse 4:12 (which applies when the parents do not survive the deceased). This only compounds the difficulty.

But where does this leave the Quran? Revered by many as a masterpiece of articulation!

This difficulty would not have arisen but for verse 176, which was revealed in response to a specific question posed to the Prophet: “People seek your verdict on (the inheritance left by) a childless person.” This does explain Quran’s annoyance with needless questioning:

O Believers, do not ask questions concerning such things which, if made known to you, would only vex you, but if you will ask such questions at the time when the Quran is being sent down, they will be made known to you. (5:101)¹¹

And though the Quran also explains on another occasion that it has been sent down piecemeal rather than all at once so that “whenever they brought to you an odd thing (or a strange question) We sent its right answer to you in time and explained it all in the best manner,”¹² on this occasion at least, it seems to have fallen short of “the best manner.”

- ***Creation of the heavens and the earth***

The Quran announces the order in which the universe was created, first the earth and then the heavens:

O Prophet, say to them, “Do you deny that God, and set up others as equals with Him, Who created the earth in two days? He indeed is the Lord of all creation. He set mountains over the earth (after its creation) and bestowed blessings on it, and provided in it means of sustenance adequately according to the needs and demands of all those who ask. This was done in four days. *Then he turned to the heaven, which was only smoke at that time.* He said to the heaven and the earth: ‘Come into being whether you like it or not.’ They both said: ‘We do come in submission.’ *Then in two days He made the seven heavens,* and in each heaven He ordained its law, and We adorned the lower heaven with lights and made it fully secure. Such is the design of the One who is the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.” (41:9–12)¹³

The sequence is repeated in verse 2:29¹⁴ but is somehow reversed in the following verses, which tell us that the earth was created after the heavens:

Are you (O men,) harder to create, or is the heaven? Allah built it: He raised its vault high and gave it balance, and covered its night and brought forth its day. *After that He spread out the earth from within it.* He brought out its water and its pasture, and set the mountains in it, as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle. (79:27–33)¹⁵

Maududi is aware of the discrepancy* and offers the following explanation:

Among the earliest commentators the dispute has been going on for ages as to what was created first according to the Quran, the earth or the heavens. One group of them argues on the basis of this verse and verse 29 of *Al-Baqarah* that the earth was created first. The other group argues from verses 27–33 of *An-Naziat* that the heavens were created first, because there it has been clearly stated that the earth was created after the heavens. But the fact is that nowhere in the Quran has the mention of the creation of the universe been made to teach Physics or Astronomy, but while inviting towards belief in the doctrines to *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, like countless other Signs, the creation of the heavens and the earth also has been presented as food for thought. For this purpose it was not at all necessary that the chronological order of the creation of the heavens and the earth should have been presented, and it should have been told whether the heavens were created first or the earth.¹⁶

* In contrast, Yusuf Ali evades the issue by use of the word “moreover” (instead of “then” and “after that”) in the referred verses, but is not supported by Hilali-Khan or by Pickthall, who agree with Maududi’s translation. Interestingly, the revised translation based on Yusuf Ali’s interpretation (as noted in endnote 14) reads: “It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth; *Then* he turned to the heaven And made them into seven firmaments.” (2:29) But even in the original translation, the sequence in which the creation of the earth and the heaven is narrated does differ between verses 41:9-12 and 2:29, on the one hand, and verses 79:23-33, on the other. So the discrepancy is visible in Yusuf Ali’s original translation as well, though not as pronounced!

One may, however, empathize with Muslim scholars who seem perplexed, and have been for ages, whether, according to these Quranic verses, the heavens or the earth came into existence first. The debate would not have arisen but for a clear contradiction within the Quran.

- ***Destruction of Lot's tribe***

Lot was Abraham's brother and a prophet in his own right. The Quran tells us that his tribe was destroyed for practicing homosexuality. The following verses narrate the encounter between Lot and the angels who were tasked to carry out the destruction. The angels had presented themselves in the form of attractive men.

Afterwards when these envoys came to the house of Lot, he said, "You appear to be strangers." They answered, "Nay, but we have come to you with that concerning which these people had doubts. We tell you the truth that we have come to you with the truth. You should, therefore, depart with your people in the last hours of the night and you yourself should follow them in their rear; let none of you turn round to look behind; go straight where you are being bidden." And We informed him of Our decree that they shall be utterly destroyed by the next morning. And the people of the town rushed rejoicing to the house of Lot. He said, "Brethren! These are my guests: therefore do not dishonor me. Fear God and do not put me to shame." They replied, "Have we not forbidden you to plead for all and sundry?" At last Lot pleaded, "Here are my daughters, if you are bent on it." By your life, O Prophet, they were at that time so intoxicated with lust as to be quite beside themselves with passion. (15:61–72)¹⁷

According to this account, the angels disclosed their identity, the purpose of their visit, and the command that Lot must depart with his people in the last hours of the night, before the people of the town arrived at Lot's residence. Surprisingly, though, this sequence changes in the following narration:

And when Our Messengers came to Lot, he was greatly perturbed and distressed in mind because of their visit and said, "This is a day of woe!" (No sooner did the visitors come to him than) his people spontaneously rushed towards his house, for they had previously been addicted to wicked deeds. Lot said to them, "O my people, here are my daughters, who are purer for you. So fear God and don't degrade me by committing evil to my guests. What! Is there not a single good man among you?" They replied, "You know it well that we have no need of your daughters, and you also know what we want." Lot cried, "I wish I had the power to set you right or I could find some strong support for refuge." *Then the angels said, "O Lot, We are messengers sent by your Lord. They shall not be able to do you any harm. So depart from here with the people of your household in the last hours of the night. And look here: none of you should turn round to look behind; but your wife (who will not accompany you) shall meet with the same doom as they.** The morning has been appointed for their destruction—the morning has almost come." Accordingly, when the time of the execution of judgment came, We turned the habitation upside down and rained on it stones of baked clay, and each one of these stones had been specifically marked by your Lord. And such scourge is not far from the workers of iniquity. (11:77–83)¹⁸

The Quran may possibly afford it, but this kind of variation would be fatal to a witness's credibility in a court of law.

- ***Iblis (Satan): an angel or jinn?***

It may not ultimately matter whether Iblis is an angel or jinn, or perhaps both at the same time, but it is interesting to see how the Quran unfolds the truth. We may start with the following verses.

Just recall the time when your Lord said *to the angels*, "I am going to appoint a vice regent on the Earth." They humbly

* In contrast, verses 15:61-72 do not mention that the angels informed Lot that his wife would meet the same doom. Interestingly, verses immediately preceding 15:61-72 tell us that before visiting Lot, these angels visited Abraham and disclosed that Lot's wife would suffer the same fate as his tribe, but when recording the encounter with Lot, verses 15:61-72 omit this aspect, which is at variance with verses 11:77-83.

enquired, “Are you going to appoint such a one as will cause disorder and shed blood on Earth? We are already engaged in hymning Your praise, and hallowing Your name.” Allah replied, “I know what you do not know.” After this he taught Adam the names of all things. Then He set these *before the angels* and asked, “Tell me the names of these things, if you are right (in thinking that the appointment of a vice regent will cause disorder).” They replied, “Glory be to You. You alone are free from defect. We possess only that much knowledge which You have given us. Indeed, You alone are All-Knowing and All-Wise.” Then Allah said to Adam, “Tell them the names of these things.” When Adam told them the names of all those things, Allah declared, “Did I not tell you that I know those truths about the Earth and the Heavens which are hidden from you? I know what you disclose and what you hide.” *Then we commanded the angels, “Bow yourselves to Adam.” All bowed but Iblis refused to do so; he waxed proud and joined the defiers.* (2:30–34)¹⁹

The Quran appears to suggest in these verses that Iblis is an angel. Why else would a command addressed to the angels apply to him? This impression is then confirmed by the following verses, for much the same reason.

And remember when *We commanded the angels* “Bow yourselves before Adam,” *all bowed down but Iblis.* He replied, “Should I bow before the one whom you have created of clay?” (17:61)

Recall to mind the time when *We said to the angels:* “Bow yourselves to Adam,” then *all bowed down except Iblis,* who refused. (20:116)²⁰

The following account then introduces a slight variation by mentioning that Allah “created jinn from the flame of heat” but does not say that Iblis is one of them. He is still depicted as an angel.

We created man from dried clay of rotten earth, *and before that We had created jinn from the flame of heat.* Then recall to mind the time *when your Lord said to the angels* “I am going to create a man from dried clay of rotten earth. When I have brought him to perfection and breathed of My spirit into him, you should bow down before him all together.” *Accordingly all the*

angels bowed down except Iblis: he refused to join those who bowed down. The Lord said “O Iblis! What is the matter with you that you have not joined those who have bowed down?” He replied, “It does not behoove me to bow down before this man whom you have created from dried clay of rotten earth.” (15:26–33)²¹

Another notable twist emerges in the following accounts, in which Iblis claims that he is created from fire, but he is still clubbed with the angels:

Indeed, We planned your creation, then We shaped you, and then We said to the angels “Bow yourselves before Adam.” Accordingly all bowed save Iblis who did not join those who bowed themselves. Allah said “What prevented you from bowing down when I commanded you?” *He replied “I am better than he; Thou created me of fire and created him of clay.”* (7:11–12)

Accordingly, the angels prostrated themselves, all in obedience, but Iblis assumed arrogance, and became one of the disbelievers. The Lord said, “O Iblis, what has prevented you from prostrating yourself before him whom I have made with both my hands? Are you assuming arrogance, or are you one of the high ones?” *He replied, “I am better than him: You have created me from fire and him from clay.”* (38:71–76)²²

Finally, though, the Quran discloses that *Iblis* is actually one of the jinn:

Remember! When We said to the angels, “Bow down before Adam.” They bowed down but Iblis did not. *He was one of the jinns*, so he chose the way of disobedience to his Lord’s Command. (18:50)²³

The question is: Why did the Quran resort to such material variations, while describing one and the same occurrence? As for the status of Iblis (whether an angel or jinn), there may not be any necessary contradiction, if the jinn are but a subspecies of angels.

MATHEMATICAL ERRORS

The Quran is not expected to contradict the fundamentals of mathematics, such as the fundamental that it is not possible to divide a pie in shares that add up to more than one. We look at the Quran's discussion of inheritance shares again to see if it does.

As regards inheritance, Allah enjoins you concerning your children that: The share of the male shall be twice that of female. In case the heirs be more than two females, their total share shall be two-thirds of the whole and if there be only one daughter, her share shall be half of the whole. If the deceased has children, each of his parents shall get one-sixth of the whole, but if he be childless and his parents alone are his heirs, the mother shall have one-third of the whole. If the deceased has brothers and sisters also, the mother shall be entitled to one-sixth of the whole. The division of all these shares shall take place only after fulfilling the terms of the will and after the payment of the debt (if any). As regards your parents and your children, you do not know who is more beneficial to you. Allah has apportioned these shares and most surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. And you will get half of what your wives leave behind, if they be childless; but if they leave children, then your share shall be one-fourth of what they have left, after the fulfillment of their will and the payment of their debts (if any). As for them, they will be entitled to one-fourth of the inheritance left by you, if you are childless; but in case you leave behind children, their share will be one-eighth of the whole after the fulfillment of your will and payment of your debts (if any). ... (4:11–12)²⁴

It is interesting to see how this works in the case of a deceased man who is survived by his mother and father, three daughters, and one wife.* The above verses spell out the following shares:

Daughters: “Allah enjoins you concerning your children. ... In case the heirs be more than two females, their total share shall be *two-thirds of the whole*.”

* We assume that he leaves neither a will nor a debt, so the entire property is available for distribution amongst the heirs.

Parents: “If the deceased has children, each of his parents shall get *one-sixth of the whole*.”

Wife: “As for them (wife), they will be entitled to one-fourth of the inheritance left by you, if you are childless; but in case you leave behind children, their share will be *one-eighth of the whole*.”

In other words:

Daughters: $2/3$

Parents: $(1/6 + 1/6) = 1/3$

Wife: $1/8$

But doesn't this add to more than one, exactly what we concluded is not mathematically possible to achieve?

This distribution has understandably caused disagreements among Muslim scholars. Some propose that the wife and the parents must be given their full Quranic shares and the daughters would get what is left.

Others (including some prominent schools) give an interesting solution. Recognizing that the total adds up to more than one and realizing that the Quran gives no indication about who is to yield (as all three categories are entitled to the prescribed share “of the whole”), they offer the solution that all must get ratably less. In other words, in the situation described above, no one shall get the share prescribed by the Quran; this is a perfectly legitimate solution, except that it also acknowledges the stark deficiency in the Quranic articulation!

Is this an isolated instance, though? One certainly does not expect the Quran to routinely yield shares that exceed one in aggregate. Let us revisit verses 4:12 and 4:176 to find the answer. This time, we consider the case of a childless woman who is succeeded by her husband and one full brother. Here are the shares prescribed by the Quran:

Husband: “And you will get half of what your wives leave behind, if they be childless.” (4:12)

Siblings: “If a person dies childless and leaves behind *a sister*, she shall get half of his inheritance, and if the sister dies childless, *her brother* shall inherit her property, and if the

deceased leaves behind *two sisters*, they shall inherit two thirds of the inheritance.” (4:176)*

If the husband is to inherit one half (according to verse 4:12) and the full brother is to inherit the whole (in terms of verse 4:176), doesn't the total exceed one? The problem is barely avoided when only the husband and one full sister survive. They both inherit one half each, which adds to exactly one, but the equilibrium is disturbed once again if two full sisters along with the husband should survive the deceased woman. The following applies in that case: “and if the deceased leaves behind *two sisters*, they shall inherit two-thirds of the inheritance.” Can the husband be given one half and the sisters two-thirds at the same time?

This may also explain why Muslim scholars disagree so fiercely on inheritance shares, with different schools proposing entirely different solutions. There would be complete unanimity if the Quran were consistent with the fundamentals of mathematics.

SCIENTIFIC DISCREPANCIES

There are Muslim scholars who insist that the Quran is an absolute scientific miracle. We shall assess the claim at some length in Chapter 4, but for the moment, let us consider it unimaginable for God's word to contradict established scientific facts. Let us see if it does.

- ***Man created from a spurting fluid***

In Chapter 1, we noted the very first verses of the Quran, which seem scientifically inaccurate in telling us that man is created from a clot of congealed blood. Interestingly, the Quran then informs us:

* Recall that to avoid conflict, Muslim scholars have restricted the applicability of this verse to full brothers and sisters and the applicability of verse 4:12 (i.e., the portion quoted earlier under the sub-heading “Inheritance Shares”) to half brothers and half sisters from the mother's side only. Staying within the categorization suggested by Muslim scholars, we are taking the case of full brothers and sisters, to which verse 4:176 is said to apply.

Then let man at least consider from what he is created. *He is created from a spurting fluid that issues forth from between the backbone and the breastbones.* (86:5–7)²⁵

This is intriguing. There is first the issue whether man was created from a clot of congealed blood or from a spurting fluid (sperm). But once past that, the suggestion that sperm is emitted “from between the backbone and the breastbones” poses an additional challenge, considering that if one draws a line between any part of a man’s breastbones and any part of the backbone, the organs that actually produce and emit this fluid are missed every which way.²⁶

We must, though, rule out the possibility that Maududi (and not the Quran) got it so wrong. Following are translations by Yusuf Ali and Hilali-Khan:

Now let man but think from what he is created! He is created from a drop emitted. *Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs.* (Yusuf Ali)

So let man see from what he is created! He is created from a water gushing forth. *Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs.* (Hilali-Khan)

Both translations agree that according to the above verses, sperm issues forth from “between the backbone and the ribs/breastbones.” Interestingly, Pickthall translates the same verses as follows:

So let man consider from what he is created. He is created from a gushing fluid. That issued from *between the loins and the ribs.*

A closer look, however, reveals that Pickthall only cleverly hides the error—by resorting to an English word (loin) that covers within its range of meaning both the backbone and the genitals. The dictionary meaning of this word includes “the part of the body of a human or quadruped on either side of the backbone and between the ribs and hips” in addition to the more commonly understood meaning, namely “the reproductive organs.”²⁷ Pickthall is thus able to make the Quran look scientifically more accurate in English, but is he honest in doing so? Even the gain is

marginal, for it is still inaccurate to suggest that the fluid issues forth “from between the loins and the ribs.” As a matter of fact, the fluid issues forth only from the loins (i.e., the reproductive organs), and the organs all the way up to the ribs (which are quite needlessly implicated by the Quran) have little involvement.

It is to Maududi’s credit that he is not shy of confronting this embarrassing reality:

“*[S]ulb*” is the backbone and “*tara’ib*” the breast bone, i.e. the ribs.... although different parts of the body have their own separate functions, no part can perform its function by itself but only in coordination with the other parts. No doubt the seminal fluid is produced by the testes from where it is emitted through a particular channel. But if the stomach, liver, lungs, heart, brain, kidney etc. are not performing their respective functions rightly, the system of the production of the seminal liquid and its emission cannot work by itself.²⁸

The problem with the above verses is twofold. First, they inform us that sperm is emitted from organs that are actually unconnected with the whole process. Maududi tries to explain this particular deficiency, though if we are to accept his argument, it could just as well be said that the fluid is emitted from the brain or the heart—both, after all, are deeply involved in the larger scheme of things, as are many other organs. Second, the above verses omit mention of the organs that in fact are most directly involved. Maududi’s explanation does not address the latter issue at all.

- ***Sex of the fetus***

The Quran informs us how the embryo develops. According to it, determination of sex takes place after the limbs have been fashioned:

Does man think that he will be left to himself to wander at will? Was he not a mere sperm drop, which is emitted (in the mother’s womb)? Then he became a blood clot then Allah formed him and fashioned his limbs in proportion; *then from it*

He made two kinds, male and female. Has he not then the power to give life to the dead. (75:36–40)²⁹

It is of course true (as is apparent from miscarriages as well) that limbs are fashioned just before the embryo gives the first *outward* appearance of sex in the form of genitals. On this basis, it was believed for a long time that the sex of the fetus is determined after the limbs have been formed. We now know, however, that sex is in fact the first thing to be determined—at the very moment of conception, instantly upon the ovum being fertilized by the sperm. It is therefore interesting that the Quran chose to go with the belief of the time!*

- *Hearts to think*

For a long time, thinking and understanding were functions attributed to the heart, which may explain why the Quran too draws the same association:

Say to them, “Allah it is Who created you, and gave you the faculties of hearing and sight *and gave you the hearts to think and understand*, but you are seldom grateful.” (67:23)³⁰

It is Allah Who has endowed you with the faculties of hearing and seeing and *given you hearts to think*, but you do not show any gratitude. (23:78)³¹

And this is a fact that there are many jinns and human beings whom We have created (as if) for Hell. *They have hearts but they do not think with them*; they have eyes but they do not see with them; they have ears but they do not Hear with them. (7:179)³²

* It needs to be noted, though, that other translators are slightly less forthright. Consider Yusuf Ali’s translation, for instance:

Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)? Was he not a drop of sperm emitted (in lowly form)? *Then* did he become a leech-like clot; *then* did ((Allah)) make and fashion (him) in due proportion. *And of him* He made two sexes, male and female. Has not He, (the same), the power to give life to the dead?

Even according to the above translation, however, the sequence clearly reveals that sex is determined after the limbs have been formed.

In the same vein, the Quran also repeatedly tells us that the disbelievers will not understand, as their hearts (not minds) are sealed.³³

Is the Quran metaphorical? Possibly so, but it has to be said that the point could easily have been made without reference to hearts at all, which would then have avoided any contradiction.*

What is also interesting is the extent to which the other translators go in order to resist this association between thinking/understanding and the heart, only to yield in the end. Yusuf Ali, for instance, translates verses 67:23 and 23:78 without reference to the heart. In contrast, Hilali-Khan and Pickthall translate the same verses by omitting reference to thinking or understanding (except parenthetically in one case), while mentioning the heart—in other words, the exact opposite of Yusuf Ali—but all agree that in verse 7:179, the Quran is referring to “hearts wherewith they understand not.”³⁴

- *Creation in pairs*

Some Muslim scholars find it incredible that the Quran knew so long ago that plants depict male-female variation. They rely on the following verses to make the point:

He has created in pairs *every* kind of fruit, and He covers the day with the veil of night. Surely there are great Signs in these for those who reflect upon them. (13:3)

Glorified is He Who created in pairs *all* species, whether of the vegetable kingdom or of their own (i.e. human) kind, or of those things of which they know nothing. (36:36)

And We have created *everything* in pairs; may be that you learn a lesson from it. (51:49)³⁵

The Quran does, of course, state that Allah has created *everything* in pairs, but is this accurate? It is instructive to note the following facts:

* For instance: “Say to them, ‘Allah it is Who created you, and gave you the faculties of hearing and sight *and thinking and understanding*, but you are seldom grateful.’”

- A vast majority of plants do not have male and female distinction but are bisexual, in that they have male and female organs on the same plant.
- There are plant species that are entirely asexual.
- It is not true that every kind of fruit has male and female distinction (with the male fruit resulting in a male plant and the female fruit resulting in a female plant). Only fruits from plants that depict male-female distinction carry the attribute.
- Because the Quran tells us that Allah has “created everything in pairs,” including also the animal kingdom, it is relevant to mention that even in this category, there are species that do not have males and females and that adopt the asexual form of reproduction and multiplication.

The following passages from *Encyclopaedia Britannica* substantiate the above facts:

Among lower animals and plants, it [reproduction] may be accomplished without involving eggs and sperms. Ferns, for example, shed millions of microscopic, non-sexual spores, which are capable of growing into new plants if they settle in a suitable environment. Many higher plants also reproduce by non-sexual means. Bulbs bud off new bulbs from the side. Certain jellyfish, sea anemones, marine worms and other lowly creatures bud off parts of the body during one season or another, each thereby giving rise to population of new, though identical, individuals. At the microscopic level, single-celled organisms reproduce continually by growing and dividing successively to give rise to enormous populations of mostly identical descendants.³⁶

In most plant groups both sexual and asexual methods of reproduction occur. Some species, however, seem secondarily to have lost the capacity for sexual reproduction.³⁷

Individual plants may be either bisexual (hermaphroditic), in which male and female gametes are produced by the same organism, or unisexual, producing either male or females gametes but not both.³⁸

Asexual reproduction (i.e., reproduction not involving the union of gametes) ... occurs only in invertebrates, in which it

is common, occurring in animals as highly evolved as sea squirts, which are closely related to vertebrates. ... Hermaphroditism, in which one individual contains functional reproductive organs of both sexes, is common among lower invertebrates; yet separate sexes occur in such primitive animals as sponges, and hermaphroditism occurs in animals more highly developed—e.g., the lower fishes.³⁹

Biologists have so far “found some 2,000 living species in which they haven’t seen a trace of sexual behavior,”⁴⁰ when just one such species would have been enough to refute the Quranic claim.⁴¹ This is in addition, of course, to the vast majority of plants, which are bisexual (hermaphroditic) and do not therefore fit the statement that every kind of fruit and all species in the vegetable kingdom have been created in pairs.

People may not have known these facts at the time the Quran was revealed, but they are all well established today.

Regarding the question of how the Quran knows that some plants at least have males and females (even if it inaccurately extrapolates that to include all plants), the answer lies in the fact that date palms (the plant best known to the Arabs) carries this variation (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). This explains why the Arabs (incorrectly) thought that all living things, whether in the animal kingdom or among the plants, had male-female distinction.

*

The above discussion is not exhaustive of contradictions and discrepancies visible in the Quran but is perhaps enough to provoke thought. To close the discussion, it is worth reminding ourselves of the Quranic challenge that got us started in the first place. This time, we rely on Yusuf Ali’s translation:

Do they not consider the Qur’an (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy. (4:82)

- ⁶ Respectively, *Surab Al-Baqarah* verse 99 and *Surab Yusuf* verse 1. Yusuf Ali's translations: "We have sent down to thee Manifest Signs [*ayat*]; and none reject them but those who are perverse." "A.L.R. These are the symbols [or verses] of the perspicuous Book." Note: Perspicuous means "clearly expressed or presented; easy to understand; lucid."
- ⁷ Hilali-Khan: *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language*, p. 3
- ⁸ *Surab Al-Fajr* verses 1–5. Yusuf Ali's translation: "By the break of Day; By the Nights twice five; By the even and odd (contrasted); And by the Night when it passeth away; Is there (not) in these an adjuration (or evidence) for those who understand?"
- ⁹ Maududi: *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, note 1 to *Surab Al-Fajr*, Volume 6, p. 346
- ¹⁰ *Surab Al-Imran* verse 7. Yusuf Ali's translation: "He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: In it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, *but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah.*"
- ¹¹ Rogerson: *The Heirs of the Prophet Muhammad*, pp. 282–302. See also Aslan: *No God but God* pp. 130–131.
- ¹² *Surab Al-Imran* verse 105. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations *after receiving Clear Signs.*"
- ¹³ *Sura Al-Maidah* verse 51. Yusuf Ali's translation: "O ye who believe! take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust."
- ¹⁴ *Surab Al-Imran* verse 28. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Let not the believers Take for friends or helpers Unbelievers rather than believers: *if any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah* except by way of precaution, that ye may Guard yourselves from them."
- ¹⁵ Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*
- ¹⁶ A person exceeds the limit if he chooses to murder or assault another, as that is not compatible with equal liberty for all, but stays well within the limit if his preference for homosexuality (say) is merely directed towards others consenting individuals in the privacy of the home.
- ¹⁷ *Surab An-Noor* verse 2. Yusuf Ali's translation: "The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes: Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment."
- ¹⁸ E.g., *Surab At-Taubah* verse 33: "He is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Right way so that He may make it prevail over all other ways." (9:33) (Maududi) Yusuf Ali's translation: "It is He Who hath sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion."
- ¹⁹ The Quran mentions that the Prophet was an orphan and was poor, but few things about his early life are otherwise recorded.

Chapter 2: The Contradictions Challenge

- ¹ *Surab An-Nisa* verse 82. Yusuf Ali's translation appears later in the chapter.
- ² *Surab As-Sajdah* verse 5. Yusuf Ali's translation: "He rules (all) affairs from the heavens to the earth: in the end will (all affairs) go up to Him, on a Day, the space whereof will be (as) a thousand years of your reckoning."
- ³ *Surab Al-Hajj* verse 47. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Yet they ask thee to hasten on the Punishment! But Allah will not fail in His Promise. Verily a Day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning."
- ⁴ *Surab Al-Maarij* verses 1–5. Yusuf Ali's translation: "A questioner asked about a Penalty to befall the Unbelievers, the which there is none to ward off, (A Penalty) from Allah, Lord of the Ways of Ascent. The angels and the spirit ascend unto him in a Day the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years: Therefore do thou hold Patience, a Patience of beautiful (contentment)."
- ⁵ *Surab Al-Baqarah* verse 186. Yusuf Ali's translation: "When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me."
- ⁶ *Surab Al-Anfal* verse 65. Yusuf Ali's translation: "O Messenger, rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a

- hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding.”
- 7 *Surah Al-Anfal* verse 66. Yusuf Ali’s translation: “For the present, Allah hath lightened your (task), for He knoweth that there is a weak spot in you: But (even so), if there are a hundred of you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred, and if a thousand, they will vanquish two thousand, with the leave of Allah. For Allah is with those who patiently persevere.”
- 8 *Surah An-Nisa* verse 12. Yusuf Ali’s translation: “... If the man or woman whose inheritance is in question, has left neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left a brother or a sister, each one of the two gets a sixth; but if more than two, they share in a third; after payment of legacies and debts; so that no loss is caused (to any one). Thus is it ordained by Allah and Allah is All-knowing, Most Forbearing.”
- 9 Maududi: *The Meaning of the Qur’an*, note 23 to *Surah An-Nisa*, Volume 1, p. 316
- 10 *Surah An-Nisa* verse 176. Yusuf Ali’s translation: “They ask thee for a legal decision. Say: Allah directs (thus) about those who leave no descendants or ascendants as heirs. *If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child, she shall have half the inheritance: If (such a deceased was) a woman, who left no child, Her brother takes her inheritance: If there are two sisters, they shall have two-thirds of the inheritance (between them): if there are brothers and sisters, (they share), the male having twice the share of the female.* Thus doth Allah make clear to you (His law), lest ye err. And Allah hath knowledge of all things.”
- 11 *Surah Al-Maidah* verse 101. Yusuf Ali’s translation: “O ye who believe! Ask not questions about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble. But if ye ask about things when the Qur’an is being revealed, they will be made plain to you ...”
- 12 *Surah Al-Furqan* verses 32–33. Maududi’s translation: “The disbelievers say, ‘Why has not the entire Quran been sent down to this man all at once?’ Well this has been done to impress it deeply on your mind and (for the same object) We have sent it down piecemeal by degrees. And (there is another wisdom in this): *whenever they brought to you an odd thing (or a strange question) We sent its right answer to you in time and explained it all in the best manner.*” (25:32–33) Yusuf Ali’s translation: “Those who reject Faith say: ‘Why is not the Qur’an revealed to him all at once?’ Thus (is it revealed), that We may strengthen thy heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to thee in slow, well-arranged stages, gradually. *And no question do they bring to thee but We reveal to thee the truth and the best explanation (thereof).*”
- 13 *Surah Ha-Mim As-Sajdah* verses 9–12. Yusuf Ali’s translation: “Say: Is it that ye deny Him Who created the earth in two Days? And do ye join equals with Him? He is the Lord of (all) the Worlds. He set on the (earth), mountains standing firm, high above it, and bestowed blessings on the earth, and measure therein all things to give them nourishment in due proportion, in four Days, in accordance with (the needs of) those who seek (Sustenance). *Moreover He comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke.* He said to it and to the earth: ‘Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly.’ They said: ‘We do come (together), in willing obedience.’ *So He completed them as seven firmaments in two Days, and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command. And We adorned the lower heaven with lights, and (provided it) with guard. Such is the Decree of (Him) the Exalted in Might, Full of Knowledge.*”
- 14 *Surah Al-Baqarah* verse 29. Maududi’s translation: “He it is Who created for you all that there is on the Earth; *He then turned to the sky and ordered it into seven heavens.*” Yusuf Ali’s translation: “It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth; *Moreover His design comprehended the heavens, for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments.*” Interestingly, the revision to Yusuf Ali’s translation reads as follows: “It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth; *Then he turned to the heaven And made them into seven firmaments.*” (*The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*, Eleventh Edition (1430 AH/2009 AC) Amana Corporation, Maryland). This recognizes (more clearly than the original translation) that according to this verse, the earth was created before the heavens.
- 15 *Surah Naziat* verses 27–33. Yusuf Ali’s translation: “What! Are ye the more difficult to create or the heaven (above)? ((Allah)) hath constructed it: On high hath He raised its canopy, and He hath given it order and perfection. Its night doth He endow with darkness, and its splendour doth He bring out (with light). *And the earth, moreover, hath He extended (to a wide expanse); He draweth out therefrom its moisture and its pasture; And the mountains hath He firmly fixed. For use and convenience to you and your cattle.*”
- 16 Maududi: *The Meaning of the Qur’an*, note 14 to *Surah Ha Mim As-Sajdah*, Volume 4, p. 482

- 17 *Surah Al-Hijr* verses 61–72. Yusuf Ali's translation: "At length when the messengers arrived among the adherents of Lut, He said: 'Ye appear to be uncommon folk.' They said: 'Yea, we have come to thee to accomplish that of which they doubt. We have brought to thee that which is inevitably due, and assuredly we tell the truth. Then travel by night with thy household, when a portion of the night (yet remains), and do thou bring up the rear: let no one amongst you look back, but pass on whither ye are ordered.' And We made known this decree to him, that the last remnants of those (sinners) should be cut off by the morning. The inhabitants of the city came in (mad) joy (at news of the young men). Lut said: 'These are my guests: disgrace me not: But fear Allah, and shame me not.' They said: 'Did we not forbid thee (to speak) for all and sundry?' He said: 'There are my daughters (to marry), if ye must act (so).' Verily, by thy life (O Prophet), in their wild intoxication, they wander in distraction, to and fro."
- 18 *Surah Hud* verses 77–83. Yusuf Ali's translation: "When Our messengers came to Lut, he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless (to protect) them. He said: 'This is a distressful day.' And his people came rushing towards him, and they had been long in the habit of practicing abominations. He said: 'O my people! Here are my daughters: they are purer for you (if ye marry)! Now fear Allah, and cover me not with shame about my guests! Is there not among you a single right-minded man?' They said: 'Well dost thou know we have no need of thy daughters: indeed thou knowest quite well what we want!' He said: 'Would that I had power to suppress you or that I could betake myself to some powerful support.' (*The Messengers*) said: 'O Lut! We are Messengers from thy Lord! By no means shall they reach thee! now travel with thy family while yet a part of the night remains, and let not any of you look back: but thy wife (will remain behind): To her will happen what happens to the people. Morning is their time appointed: Is not the morning nigh?' When Our Decree issued, We turned (the cities) upside down, and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer, Marked as from thy Lord: Nor are they ever far from those who do wrong!"
- 19 *Surah Al-Baqarah* verses 30–34. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.' They said: 'Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?' He said: 'I know what ye know not.' And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: 'Tell me the nature of these if ye are right.' They said: 'Glory to Thee, of knowledge We have none, save what Thou Hast taught us: In truth it is Thou Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom.' He said: 'O Adam! Tell them their natures.' When he had told them, Allah said: 'Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?' And behold, We said to the angels: 'Bow down to Adam' and they bowed down. Not so Iblis: he refused and was haughty: He was of those who reject Faith."
- 20 Respectively, *Surah Bani Israil* verse 61 and *Surah Ta Ha* verse 116. Yusuf Ali's translations: "Behold! We said to the angels: 'Bow down unto Adam': They bowed down except Iblis. He said, 'Shall I bow down to one whom Thou didst create from clay?'; "When We said to the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves to Adam', they prostrated themselves, but not Iblis: he refused."
- 21 *Surah Al-Hijr* verses 26–33. Yusuf Ali's translation: "We created man from sounding clay, from mud molded into shape; And the Jinn race, We had created before, from the fire of a scorching wind. Behold! thy Lord said to the angels: 'I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud molded into shape; When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him.' So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together: Not so Iblis: he refused to be among those who prostrated themselves. ((Allah)) said: 'O Iblis! what is your reason for not being among those who prostrated themselves?' (Iblis) said: 'I am not one to prostrate myself to man, whom Thou didst create from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape.'"
- 22 Respectively, *Surah Al-Aaraf* verses 11–12 and *Surah Saad*, verses 71–76. Yusuf Ali's translations: "It is We Who created you and gave you shape; then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so Iblis; He refused to be of those who bow down. ((Allah)) said: 'What prevented thee from bowing down when I commanded thee?' He said: 'I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay.'"; "So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together: Not so Iblis: he was haughty, and became one of those who reject Faith. ((Allah)) said: 'O Iblis! What prevents thee from prostrating thyself to one whom I have created with my hands? Art thou haughty? Or art thou one of the high (and mighty) ones?' (Iblis) said: 'I am better than he: thou createdst me from fire, and him thou createdst from clay.'"

- 23 *Surah Al-Kahf* verse 50. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Behold! We said to the angels, 'Bow down to Adam': They bowed down except Iblis. *He was one of the Jinns*, and he broke the Command of his Lord."
- 24 *Surah An-Nisa* verses 11–12. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Allah (thus) directs you as regards your Children's (Inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is a half. For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; if no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers (or sisters) the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all cases) after the payment of legacies and debts. Ye know not whether your parents or your children are nearest to you in benefit. These are settled portions ordained by Allah. And Allah is All-knowing, All-wise. In what your wives leave, your share is a half, if they leave no child; but if they leave a child, ye get a fourth; after payment of legacies and debts. In what ye leave, their share is a fourth, if ye leave no child; but if ye leave a child, they get an eighth; after payment of legacies and debts. ..."
- 25 *Surah Al-Tariq* verses 5–7
- 26 Indeed, even the ovaries do not fall in this region—not that the verse is referring to them in any manner.
- 27 *The American Heritage Dictionary*: "1. The part of the body of a human or quadruped on either side of the backbone and between the ribs and hips. 2. One of several cuts of meat, such as tenderloin, taken from this part of an animal's body, typically including the vertebrae of the segment from which it is taken. 3. **Loins a.** The region of the hips, groin, and lower abdomen. **b.** The reproductive organs."
- 28 Maududi: *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, Appendix 1 to the commentary on *Surah Al-Tariq*, Volume 6, pp. 310, 313.
- 29 *Surah Al-Qiyama* verses 36–40
- 30 *Surah Al-Mulk* verse 23. Strictly speaking, the verse may only refer to "the hearts," and the words "to think and understand" are an extrapolation.
- 31 *Surah Al-Muminoon* verse 78
- 32 *Surah Al-Araf* verse 179
- 33 Reference may, for instance, be made to the following verses: 7:100–102; 26:10–17; 45:23; and 47:16–18.
- 34 Yusuf Ali translates verses 67:23 and 23:78 without reference to the heart:
 Say: "It is He Who has created you (and made you grow), and made for you the *faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding* little thanks it is ye give." (67:23)
 It is He Who has created for you (*the faculties of*) *hearing, sight, feeling and understanding* little thanks it is ye give! (23:78)
- Hilali-Khan translate with reference to the heart:
 Say it is He Who has created you and endowed you with *hearing (ears) and seeing (eyes) and hearts*. Little thanks you give. (67:23)
 It is He Who has created for you (the sense of) *hearing (ears), eyes (sight) and hearts (understanding)*. Little thanks you give. (23:78)
- Pickthall follows the same pattern as Hilali-Khan:
 Say (unto them, O Muhammad): He it is who gave you being, and hath assigned unto you *ears and eyes and hearts*. Small thanks give ye! (67:23)
 He it is Who hath created for you *ears and eyes and hearts*. Small thanks give ye! (23:78)
- What is common, of course, is that all three avoid any direct correlation between the heart and understanding, perhaps as that would make the Quran scientifically inaccurate. They however choose opposite routes. But when it comes to verse 7:179, there is no avoiding the issue:
 Many are the Jinns and men we have made for Hell: *They have hearts wherewith they understand not*, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle, nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning). (Yusuf Ali)
 And surely, We have created many of the jinn and mankind for Hell. *They have hearts wherewith they understand not*, and they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the truth). (Hilali-Khan)
 Already have We urged unto hell many of the jinn and humankind, *having hearts wherewith they understand not*, and having eyes wherewith they see not, and having ears wherewith they hear not. These are as the cattle—nay, but they are worse! These are the neglectful. (Pickthall)

- ³⁵ Respectively, *Surah Ar-Ra'ad* verse 3, *Surah Ya Sin* verse 36, and *Surah Adb-Dharyyat* verse 49. Yusuf Ali's translations: "And fruit of every kind He made in pairs, two and two: He draweth the night as a veil o'er the Day. Behold, verily in these things there are signs for those who consider!"; "Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge."; "And of every thing We have created pairs: That ye may receive instruction."
- ³⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 27, p. 233. For other *Encyclopaedia Britannica* editions, see under: Sex and Sexuality/Animals and plants/SEXUAL AND NOSEXUAL REPRODUCTION. Also: *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* (www.britannica.com) (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/536936/sex>) under "Sexual and nonsexual reproduction".
- ³⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 26, p. 616. For other *Encyclopaedia Britannica* editions, see under: Reproduction and Reproductive Systems/PLANT REPRODUCTION/Plant reproductive systems/GENERAL FEATURES OF SEXUAL SYSTEMS. Also: *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* (www.britannica.com) (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/498651/plant-reproductive-system/76161/General-features-of-sexual-systems>) under "General features of sexual systems".
- ³⁸ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 26, p. 617. For other *Encyclopaedia Britannica* editions, see under: Reproduction and Reproductive Systems/PLANT REPRODUCTION/Plant reproductive systems/GENERAL FEATURES OF SEXUAL SYSTEMS/The plant basis. Also: *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* (www.britannica.com) (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/498651/plant-reproductive-system/76163/The-plant-basis>) under the "The plant basis".
- ³⁹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 26, p. 636. For other *Encyclopaedia Britannica* editions, see under: ANIMAL REPRODUCTION. Also: *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* (www.britannica.com) (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/498613/animal-reproductive-system>) under "Animal Reproductive System".
- ⁴⁰ Millius: "Life Without Sex," p. 406
- ⁴¹ One such species on which quite a bit of research has been done is "Class Bdelloidea of the Phylum Rotifera [which] is the largest metazoan taxon in which males, hermaphrodites, and meiosis are unknown." Welch and Meselson: "Evidence for the Evolution of Bdelloid Rotifers Without Sexual Reproduction or Genetic Exchange," p. 1211

Chapter 3: Muhammad: The Last Prophet

- ¹ *Surah Al-Abzab* verses 50–52. These verses are quoted in full later in the chapter. Yusuf Ali's translation is deferred until then.
- ² Michael Hart, for instance, places him at number 1. (Hart: *The 100—A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*)
- ³ *Surah Al-Ankabut* verses 48–49. Maududi's translation: "(O Prophet) you did not read any book before this, nor did you write any with your hand. If it were so, the worshippers of falsehood could have been involved in doubt. These are in fact clear Signs in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge; and none deny Our revelations except the wicked." (29:48–49) Yusuf Ali's translation: "And thou wast not (able) to recite a Book before this (Book came), nor art thou (able) to transcribe it with thy right hand: In that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted. Nay, here are Signs self-evident in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge: and none but the unjust reject Our Signs."
- ⁴ *Surah Az-Zukhruf* verses 31–32. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Also, they say: 'Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some leading man in either of the two (chief) cities?' Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of thy Lord?"
- ⁵ *Surah Al-Alaq* verses 9–10. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Seest thou one who forbids—A votary when he (turns) to pray?"
- ⁶ *Surah Al-Lahab* verses 1–4. Yusuf Ali's translation: "Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he! No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains! Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of Blazing Flame! His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood—As fuel!"
- ⁷ Maududi, for instance, notes:
Before the proclamation of Prophet-hood, two of the Holy Prophet's daughters were married to two of Abu Lahab's sons, 'Utbah and 'Utaibah. After his call, when the Holy Prophet began to invite the people to Islam, Abu Lahab said to both his sons: "I would