

Book Review: **History Testifies to the Infallibility of the Qur'an**

Reviewed by Jim Romaine

HISTORY TESTIFIES TO THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE QUR'AN, by Fr. Lousy Fatah and Prof. Shetha Al-Dargazelli, Kuala Lumpur, published by A.S. Noordeen.

Dr. Fatoohi has a Ph.D. in Historical Astronomy and Prof. Al-Dargazelli has a Ph.D. in Physics. Neither claims to be a biblical or Qur'anic scholar. Both are followers of the Sufi Tariqa Aliyyah Qadiriyyah Casnazaniyyah. One of the highlights of this work is the Appendix, which outlines the origin and teachings of the *tariqa*. I found this section very helpful and believe that if the authors had written the entire book dealing with that topic alone it would have been a more useful study.

The book is easy to read. One of the greatest lacks, however, is that there is no index of any kind. Its main theme is the comparison and contrast of certain elements in the history of Israel found in the Old Testament and in the Qur'an. The authors state there is a renewed interest in the study of the Old Testament history because of the 'growing amount of information retrieved by archaeological excavations'; yet, at the same time, they claim that scholars have totally neglected another ancient independent source from the seventh century, viz., the Qur'an. Perhaps this is because scholars do not consider the Qur'an a valid 'independent scriptur-

al source', as it did not appear until more than 1600 years after the events referred to in the Old Testament.

The authors make many claims for the Qur'an. 'The Qur'an implies that the Bible is an inauthentic account of the truth.' The Qur'an 'does not contain any internal discrepancy' and is 'free from claims that fly in the face of external evidence. There is not a single Qur'anic statement that is contradicted by a single established historical fact.' This is truly an amazing statement since authors have found more than one thousand such historical, scientific and grammatical errors in the Qur'an. The book references several biblical scholars, mostly liberals, and rehashes several old and flawed theories.

It is unfortunate that the authors are inconsistent themselves when they address the same subjects in the Qur'an. The book opens with a chapter on the inconsistencies in the Bible. They make a very helpful statement about their view of the Bible in chapter four under the 'Qur'anic Verdict on the Bible'. They openly state that they believe the Bible we have is not to be equated with the books mentioned in the Qur'an as given to Musa and Isa, because the Bible contains material outside the times of Musa and Isa. Yet, the Qur'an itself makes reference to

events and people outside the Pentateuch and the Gospels and treats them as true events of history. The material supporting the testimony of the Qur'an and its infallibility does not address any of the problems in the Qur'an itself. Here everything is taken at face value and assumed to be true. But there are problems in the Qur'an, too. For instance, in Surah 18: 83-86, the Qur'an states that the sun was 'found setting in a muddy spring'. In Surah 28:8,38 Haman, the minister of Ahasueras, is said to be the minister of Pharaoh. In Surah 20:85-88 it says that the Samaritans made the Golden Calf in the wilderness. Surah 10:3 says the world was created in six days, but Surah 41:9-12 says two days plus four days plus two more days giving a total of eight days. And what are we to make of the grammatical and lexical problems in the Qur'an, which claims to be pure and clear Arabic? Finally

there is no mention of the problem of abrogation in the Qur'an. In Surah 22:52 we read, 'Allah abolished that which Satan proposeth. Then Allah established His revelations.' Does this mean some verses were originally proposed by Satan and then Allah established His verses? We have at least one example in the Qur'an of this in Surah 53:18-23. How many more could there be? This is an interesting question because the Qur'an says 'no one can change Allah's true word'. Yet Allah Himself changes it at will.

Perhaps before being so minutely critical of the Bible, our Muslim friends need to be honest about their own book and how they look at it. Then we shall be able to take them more seriously. All in all, the book was interesting to show the bias of the authors but presented no new material.