

## Orientalists and the Hesitation of Plagiarism in the Holy Quran

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**Abstract:** There are numerous references and sources including the pre-Islamic era poems considered for the Holy Quran by western Quran researchers. The most disputed one is the poems of Imrau Al-Qais, according to effect on the prophet's thoughts and formation of the Holy Quran. But the documental and textual investigation of these poems shows that this claim is groundless according to the attributions of the claimed poems to the owner and weaknesses in structure and the lack of proportion with social and cultural situation of pre-Islam Arabs.

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### 1. Introduction

Among Islamic scientists, no one disturbed the similarity of the Holy Quran verses with the poems of Imrau Al-Qais up to now. Ancient references have narrated the poems attributed to Imrau Al-Qais without any critical comment, and philologists have used them as attestors for the better achievement of Arab words' meaning until that their poems reached to Islamic interpretation for clarifying the meanings of Quran simple substances. But amongst western researches, individuals such as Tisdall, Louis Cheikho, AnisShorrosh have discussed the subject of Quran plagiarism from the pre-Islamic culture especially the pre-Islamic poems. According to them, the poems of Imrau Al-Qais are very similar to the Holy Quran verses according to the text.

#### Tisdalsays:

“it is sometimes said in the East at the present day that Muhammad not only adopted many of the ancient habits and religious rites of the heathen Arabs and incorporated them into Islam but that he was also guilty of plagiarism in borrowing parts of certain verses of Imrau Al-Qais, an ancient Arabic poet” (Tisdall, 1905.p.11).

Shorrosh refers in his book to the story of Imral Al-Qais's daughter that when Fatima, Muhammad's daughter, recited this verse: the Hour has come near and the Moon has split asunder. (Q.54:1) the daughter of the poet said to her that it was my father 's poem and your father stole it and pretended that he received from God(Shorrosh,1998,p.193).

Parallel to them, researchers such as “Taha Hossein”, “David Margoliouth” (He in the article “Arabic Poem Roots” with reasons such as: lack of writing vogue in pre-Islamic era, lack of poems transaction until writing era, presence of narrators accused to lie, absence of any poetical activity related

to this era in discovered inscriptions and ... has seriously doubted pre-Islamic poem). “Mostafa Sadegh Rafe'eī” (He in his book “History of Arab Tradition” has tried to explain the reasons of poems’ plagiarism in Islamic era in details. According to him: underestimation of some Arab tribes in comparison with others because of poems possession, citation to poetic sources, evidences made by some of speakers and schismatics as well as retaliationists and historians and finally poems made by some narrators are main reasons of Arabic poem plagiarism). discussed the matter of the pre-Islamic poems and have basically doubted it. But since the previous researches have not independently review the considered subject and mostly brought up relations, therefore the present research is about to consider the discussed matter independently as possible.

#### 1- Pre-Islamic state and pre-Islamic poem (from narration to writing):

Pre-Islamic era that relates to the pre-Islamic era is an era in which Arabs' life was very primary and devoid of culture and civilization. The reason of calling this era as Ignorance, Jāhiliyya, is the diction of Quran (Q.2:154). Ignorant persons were wild individuals and savagery habits and causes were so stable in them that became as their nature and essence. It is obvious that such nature and essence is incompatible with civilization and is in opposite direction with it so that all their usual goals in life were wandering from here to there and attacking other tribes while such a goal is opposite to peace and dwelling which are the most important basis of civilization. (Ibn Khaldoon, 2009, vol.1, pp.285 & 286) In general Arabs were culture-escaping kins and they would reproach and scorn those ones who tend to read and write and they would call them bookish. Now, among such a kin how can one talk about poem

and literature and culture and accept that in the condition of the lack of culture and far from civilization, great and elocutionist poets appear and compose such sustainable poems. For sure poem needs an appropriate ground and cultural environment and Arabia deserts with that harsh condition could not be an appropriate ground for appearance of such significant and educated poets.

Even if we consider what has reached to us as the pre-Islamic poem related to this era, we should know that Arabs would consider poem as a means for showing animosity toward each other and allegories with that, to seek for superiority to others, divide their life and properties, outstrip each other and compete, praise and eulogize someone and find faults with someone.(Al-Yaqoubi,no date,Vol.1,p.262) Therefore most of what we call pre-Islamic literature is not the pre-Islamic at all and is made up after Islam advent for sure and in fact is an Islamic literature that shows Moslems' life and their tendencies and desires so more than pre-Islamic life and it can undoubtedly be expressed that what has remained from pre-Islamic literature is so few and do not show any aspect of pre-Islamic era and do not indicate anything and they do not reserve to be trusted for extracting real pre-Islamic literal displays.(Hossein,1993,p.63) Many of poems of that era have been extinguished for several reasons among which, two reasons have more importance and effect than others: first reason: lack of collection, since we know that Moslems tended to collect Traditions and poems about a century after Islam and in that duration, many of poem narrators and other knowers and aware persons passed away for sure; and also scattering of Arab tribes in far borders caused that many of news related to island and their homeland, especially ceremonies related to idolatry and the pre-Islamic overweening get wipped off the memories; and the second reason is: Islam manifestation that generally opposed against idolatry and methods of that concept. Therefore, it should be inevitably confessed that pre-Islamic traces diminished and disappeared with Islam manifestition. (Al-Hout, 2011, pp.403&404) Nevertheless there is no doubt that a part of idolatry poem was remained in spite of Moslems prevention and efforts for collecting Quran and remained traditions, because its results are clear in Moslems' commentary resources. While the number of Moslems, in other parts of the world, was increasing, explanation of words and simple subjects of Quran seemed necessary therefore again attention to old poems was considered and made Moslems to collect the most famous pre-Islamic stories. Therefore narration and poem narrators became in vogue and from this point, conversion of poem narrators became prevalent because these narrators were completely acquainted with poem and would

compile most of what was desirable for linguists of the time so that the means for poem plagiarism was prepared and reinforced. Especially because among Arabic poems narrators, there were some accused with forgery and falsehood.

Amongst them, Hammād, the narrator, can be named who was accused with infidelity and researchers have doubted his narrations and said that Hammād, the narrator, has ruined Arab's poems in such a way that it cannot be repaired. He is a man aware of Arab's poem and its styles and contents. He would always make a poem instead of its poet in his own style or would enter it in his poem and others would also narrate from him. In this way, poems of old poets were damaged by impurity and mixture and no one but a critic scientist can recognize the real ones and where is such a person? (Isfahani, 1950, pp.78 & 79) Another contemporary narrator was Barzakh Arouzī who was also well-known for forgery and falseness. Ibn'eNadim says: "since Barzakh would tell a lot of lies because he had some memorized things and was a narrator and even he would narrate something from someone and later from another one." Jonād can also be named who would mix poems and read them with errors and in a wrong way. (Ibn Nadim, 2002, pp.121 & 155). It is also probable that some of Jewish-born Moslems plagiarized some poems from pre-Islamic era Jewish and maybe it is why Mofaqaldabbī has not mentioned a poem from Jewish because it seems that he was not certain about its originality (Zaif,1985,409-411).

It is understood from what was said that poem in pre-Islam era and even after that was not written and collected for a long time, because Moslems used all their efforts first to write and collect their divine book and after that for sure the prophet's Traditions. Therefore they should have paid attention to poem narrations from late first Hegira century. For sure, the pre-Islamic poem was not safe from distortion after passing ups and downs of this route and with presence of forgers and motivations for forgery.

## 2- Imrau Al-Qais:

Imrau Al-Qais Ibn Hejr Ibn Hāres Ibn Amro Ibn Hojr Ibn Ako Al-merār Ibn Amrau Ibn Moaviyya Ibn Hāres Ibn Youre Ibn Thawre Ibn Marta<sup>c</sup> Ibn Moaviayya Ibn Thawren Akbar, is considered as one of the first class pre-Islamic poets and greatest poet of that era and he was from BanīAsad tribe and from Akololmirar dynasty and he was from Haire area. He passed his childhood in Yamameh or Bahrain which were in Iran's territory on that time. His holiness, Ali, knew him as the poet of poets and mentioned him as "Malik Al-dalil"(Razi,2006,Hikmat no.455)Imrau Al-Qais was the last king of Kandi dynasty who passed away in 540 AD(Ayati,1999,p.18). Islam's prophet was born about 570 A.D, so it is clearly

obvious that Imrau Al-Qaishas passed away years before him.

There are also other Imrau Al-Qaises that were attributed to compose poems in the pre-Islamic history including: Imrau Al-QaisIbn Bahr, Imrau Al-Qais Ibn Bekr Kandi, Imrau Al-Qais Ibn Hamam Kalabi, Imrau Al-QaisIbnAmroKandi, Imrau Al-Qais Ibn Kalkāb Aghili and Imrau Al-QaisIbn Malik Hemairi Amodi, (Amodi, 1961, pp.6-9) and after Islam manifestation, other Imraul Qaises were emerged in history books. Abou Amro, Asmaei, Khalid Ibn Kolsum, and Muhammad Ibn Habib have narrated about Imrau Al-Qaisand from all this narrations, Abou Saeid Sokri has made a good complex and could handle the work and Abou Al-abbas Ahval has also made it but didn't complete it and IbnSekkit has also made it(Ibn Nadim, 1905, p.11).

Imrau Al-Qaiscomplete work was first published in Paris (1837 AD) and the basis of the work was Shantamary narration from six great pre-Islamic poets.

### 3- A glance on Imrau Al-Qais' s poem

The claim of adaptation of Quran from Imrau Al-Qaispoems in fact is related to some verses of holy Quran that are verses: 1, 29, 31, and 46 from 54; verse 96 from 21; verse 31 from 29; verse 59 from 27 and verse 1 from 92.

Some of ImraulQais' s poems are mentioned as sample:

القمر وانشق الساعه دنت

نفر و قلبي صاد غزال عن

Danat Al-SāatVanshq Al-Qamar an qazalinsādaqlabivanafar

او صافه فى حرث قد احور

حور بعينيه الطرف ناعس

Ahvarqadhorto fi ausāfehināa<sup>c</sup>so Al-ṭarf bi aynayhaḥavar

زيته فى العيد يوم مر

فقر فتعاطي ماني فر

Marryayaumo Al-īde fi zinatihifarramānifataā<sup>c</sup>tifaa<sup>c</sup>qar

فاتك ظلام من بسهام

فتر

المحظوظ كهشيم كنى Bisihamin men lihazinfātikinfataraknikahashim

Al-muhtazir

ساعه عنى غاب ما اذا و

كانت

امرو ادهي الساعه Vaidha ma ghabaānnisāa<sup>c</sup>onkānat Al-

Sāatadh, amarr

و جنته على الحسن كتب

مختصر سطرا المسك بسحق

Katab Al-hosnoa<sup>c</sup>lāvijnatihibisahiq Al-

miskṣaṭranmukhtasar

الدجى فى يسرى الاقمار عاده

فريات

بالقمر يسرى الليل

Ādat Al-aqmāryasri fi Al-dujāfaraya Al-lailayrisribilqamar

طرته من الليل وبالضاحي

زهر شى كم ذاتنور فرقه

Bi al-dohava al-lail men ṭorqihifarqahoudha al-nnoorkamsha<sup>c</sup>inzahar

العذرا شق اذا فلت

القمر وانشق الساعه

دنت

Qolto<sup>c</sup>idhshaqqa al-<sup>c</sup>idhārkhaddahoDanat Al-SāatVanshq Al-Qamar

.(Tisdall,1905,p.11)

### 4- Moslems viewpoint in relation to Quran adaptation from ImrauAl-Qaispoems:

Some of Moslem researchers have studied and reviewed Imrau Al-Qais' spoems and finally presented results from their studies, relying on which we can reject viewpoints of orientalists. Some of their reasons are as following:

Accurate study of these poems shows that attributing such poems to Imrau Al-Qaiswho is called father of Arab' s poem, one who was unique for fluency on words and poem music and rhyme composing looks unlikely(Zaif,p.266).

نبعى الطرف ناعس او صافه فى حرث قد احور  
حور

Ahvarqadhorto fi ausāfehināa<sup>c</sup>so Al-ṭarf bi aynayhaḥavar

TahaHossein divides Imrau Al-Qais' spoems in two parts: 1- what is related to his life stories 2- what seems independent. Then he talks about the first part: poems related to stories are forgery because the stories themselves are forgery, while bygones have also found that as Abou Al-faraj considered his ode in praise of Samouel as a forgery and says that this poem and also praises of Samouelgreatnesses are made by one of his grandchildren called Daram. About second part he says: weakness and trouble are obvious in these odes which are not related to his life. Imrau Al-Qaiswas originally from Yemen while his poems' language is Ghoraishian and they have glaring difference. Even if we accept that Goraishian language had supremacy and popular in sixth century, how can Imrau Al-Qaiscompose poems in a language that still lacked enough formality and popularity (Hossein,1993,vol.1,pp.207-210).

Hisham Kamil writes: expressing monotheism in some of his poems and his belief in reviving in the Day of Judgment is extremely imaginary. Such a mode is very surprising for a poet whose poets reveal moral decline and impudence (Camille,1967,pp.180-181).

Muhammad Hadi Marifat says: Zinkler Tisdall in his book, Main Sources of Quran, relies on a story which the summary of that is as follows: Imraul Qais's daughter when heard her holiness Faṭima

reading “Al-Qamar” chapter of Quran said: this is one of my father’s odes that your father took from him and claimed it was descended to him by God. But the reason of falsehood of this story is that Imrau Al-Qais was dead in 540 AD i.e. 30 years before prophet’s birth (570 AD) now if we consider that her holiness Faṭimah was born 5 years after prophet (609 AD) in 614 AD, the groundlessness of this story becomes clear. Because if her holiness Faṭimah had read this verse against a crowd she should be at least 10 years old and if we suppose that Imrau Al-Qais’s daughter was at least 10 years old at the time of her father’s death, so she was about 94 years old (i.e. from 530 AD to 624 AD) when hearing this verse while the pre-Islam women would live less than that (Ma’refat, 2006, pp.288-289).

### **5- Criticizing and reviewing plagiarism of Quran from Imrau Al-Qais’ spoems:**

5-1- In this group of Imrau Al-Qais’ spoems which are claimed to be plagiarized by Quran, the weakness of style, inaccuracy of meaning and lightness of some of compositions is evident. This situation is strange for a poet called Master of Poets and father of Arab poem:

In these distiches what is the meaning of Al-ssāah and approaching to that? If the meaning of it is doomsday, pre-Islam Arab did not believe in resurrection and doomsday! In general residents of the peninsula before emerge of Islam can be categorized in some groups according to believes and faiths: a) agnostics of creator and uprising and repetition: this group would deny creator of the world as well as resurrection and return; b) agnostics of uprising and repetition: this group admitted the world creator and beginning of the creation but they would deny uprising and repetition; c) praisers of angels: this group would worship angels to ask them for intercession; d) Jewishes, Christians, and Sabians: who were not considered as pre-Islam Arabs and in fact they were migrants who have migrated to Arabia peninsula; e) believers of unification and resurrection: who were few (Kalbi, 1985, pp.4-6) and it seems very unlikely that the poet talk to his audience just for this few number of unification and uprising content. But if the meaning of Al-ssāah is visiting sweetheart, as some suppose, then what can be the meaning of moonsplitting right after that because Arabs use the disc of complete moon as simile for beauty of sweetheart’s face. And basically what is the beauty of moon splitting to be used as simile for sweetheart’s face. It should be added to all these that moon splitting happened in the time of the Holy Prophet and not in the pre-Islam era to be used in poems.

5-2- Ghoraih pagans were the most knowledgeable people and the most learned about

Arab’s poem and its starts and endings and also the most eager ones for denying the prophet; nevertheless none of them made such an accused about the prophet that he had taken Quran from Imrau Al-Qais’ spoems. Also when God says: ”And it is not the word of a poet; little is it that you believe” (Q.69:41) none of them expressed opposition or contrast. People like Valid Ibn Moghayrah Makhzumi, who was a powerful eloquent and was one of dignified and famous Arab chiefs, confess that: What a wonderful word Muhammad says! I swear it’s not poet and not magic and he’s not mad it’s just the God’s word. he also passing the prophet heard some verses of Chapter 23 that is read at the prayers time, said: I swear God, I heard Muhammad something’s which were not human’s words and not jin’s I had a special sweetness. (Ibn Hisham, 1976, vol.1, p.288) Also to feil Ibn Amro Dousi who was considered a poetic and knowledgeable man after hearing prophet’s words, went to his tribe hastily and told them: “... swear to God I have never heard such a charming and interesting word and never found more valuable subjects” (IbnHisham, 1976, vol. 2, pp.24-28).

5-3- in this distich: Bisiham in men lihaz in fātikin fatara knikahas him Al-muhtazir

Has him Al-muhtazir has no meaning. Because hashim Al-muhtazir means a plant which is destroyed by ships trampling. (Ibn Manzour, 2012, Vol.4, p.203) then what is the relation between that and its escape and what is the quasi? Weather it ran while it is has him Al-muhtazir? Comparing this simile and the simile present in divine words: (O.31:54) clearly shows the weakness of the first one and the strength of the later. The holy verse is different from that hemistich in meaning and order; in the poem distich only the likened has him Al-muhtaziris mentioned and is used in an inappropriate place; because simulating a person to dried plant gathered by pen owner for his ships has no meaning and this simile is only appropriate for a nation that is destroyed as it is used in the verse.

5-4- in distich: Marrayaumo Al-īde fi zinatihifarramānifataātifaāqar

The feast day passed me trimmed and adorned then throw me and take me and slathered me

Indecency of the style is obvious, because fataāti is used afterfarramāni, so if it throws him what has it taken, taātimeans taking something, why it catches what it has thrown away? It is necessary to catch something and then throw it away not throw it and then catch it. After this distich there is Bisihamin men lihazinfātikinfataraknika has him Al-muhtazir((s)) he throws arrows of eye arrows toward him) if so, therefore fataātifaāqaronly makes the

style ugly and the meaning demoted, since if the meaning of a<sup>c</sup>qar (slew) is offering sacrifice. it is only used for camel and horse, it is said that: to slay she-camel and to slay horse and slew in the meaning of slaughter is only used for camel and horse and if the meaning of a<sup>c</sup>qar is being injured so this distich denotes intellectual throw with eye arrows and not a real throw of an object, and if so the style is weak and the interpretation is indecent and foul.

5-5- What is the meaning of Danat Al-Sāat (the hour drew nigh) in the distich? And in which the pre-Islam feast slaves would trim and adorn themselves? Can we verify that Imrau Al-Qaissays:lihazinfātikin and use a single adjectivefātikin for the plural noun of lihazin?

5-6- In the Holy Quran there is the verse: "soon shall the hosts be routed and they shall turn their backs. Nay the hour is their promised time and the hour shall be more grievous and bitter (Q.54:45-46) (Ibn Manzour, 2012, Vol.4, pp.45 & 46). Here there are two threats the worst is resurrection therefore it is correct to say: it shall be more grievous and bitter, but nothing is mentioned in the poem distich that shows superiority of something to another thing.

5-7- the holy Quran is not descended in Hebrew or Syriac language but in Arabic, therefore there is no fault or defect if there are some similarities between some words or compounds. Because Quran was descended to challenge Ghoraish pagans and told them: you talk with these words and utter them but you cannot bring something like Quran according to strength and commands. Therefore similarity in some of the words and compounds does not mean citation or adaptation as it is clear.

5-8- suppose that attributing these distiches to Imrau Al-Qais correct, distiches is not more than ten and if we accept that Quran has cited from this ten distiches in ten verses so where did the other six thousands verses come from.

5-9- it is more likely that in poems attributed to Imraul Al-Qais, warranty industry was used. In a way that the poet or better to say the narrator has used Quran verses amidst the distiches but in a way that they are not considered Quran verses and this is an industry that has been considered from the just beginning and is assumed as literal arrays.

Any effort for make doubts for others about miracle and eloquence of Quran is just a disappointing and defeated effort. There were two firm and strong factors among Ghoraish pagans to make others doubtful about holy Quran, first factor: they talk in Arabic and there were great poets and orators among them, and second factor: their refractory tendency for turning off the Gods light and turning away from his way. But in spite of all these, they could not hide it or deny the miracle and

eloquence and strength of Quran, but they attributed its miracle to magic and fore saying that no one knows it clearly. Any kind of doubt and hesitation about miracle and eloquence of Quran is a kind of lie and idle talk, because the most superior individuals of this doubt who were Ghoraish pagans, remained astonished against Quran verses, then how succeeding Arabs none of which knew anything about sentence vowels or structure of ode, can have doubt let alone to oppose and contest with one of the famous suspends of Quran: (Q. 8:61).

### Conclusion

Encountering with the theory of plagiarism of Quran from pre-Islam poems, two positions can be taken: even reject this theory with transcribed, intellectual, textual, and documental reasons offered by Moslem researchers and present in this research or we should accept that there are signs of pre-Islam poem in holy Quran and there are similarities between these two, if so we should know that it is only regarding utilization in both languages of Quran and poem that means holy Quran and pre-Islam poems are in the same direction in using some words and vogue phrases in language custom because anyone who talk with the language of a kin, should move in the same way of that kin in utilization of terms. It does not mean that he has accepted the content load of that culture but it is used as a sign for transaction of considered concept to the audience and it may have no attention to the incentive of principal legislator or believing in the culture that made enactment of these terms necessary. Quran, according to the sense of [in language of people] for creating its purpose and just for convergence with current custom in utilization of terms and short statements, has used some terms and this is not a sign of weakness or forgery of the text in any language but it is a strength point for higher efficiency of that text, and it is the same in Quran language. Quran has talked with Arabs of its age and with their language and has observed their speech methods to provide comprehension possibility for them: (Q.14:4)). In relation with content similarities it should also be mentioned that Quran has adopted four ways: signing, rebuilding, rejecting, correcting and did not completely accept whatever or-Islam Arabs believed, but in some places rejected and in others corrected and wherever necessary established a culture and wherever it was based on humans nature it did not sign. If in pre-Islam poems there are signs of monotheism, uprising, creation order and ..., naturally these are matters in conformity with human's nature that were heard by human before Quran, through other prophets and divine books too and their restatement by Quran context shows the

comprehensiveness of Quran culture and Quran transcendental transactions not citation and signs of forgery in holy text.

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