

Mis-Quotations in the Arabic Text of the Qur'an?

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Muslims often say: "There are four gospels. Which one is the correct one?" Here is a response.

The Qur'an contains many parallel accounts of specific events, including:

- Adam's creation, the first sin and Satan's fall (2:30-39; 7:11-25; 15:28-43; 17:61-65; 18:50; 20:116-123; and 38:71-85),
- the story of Noah (7:59-64; 11:25-49; 23:23-30),
- Abraham and idol-worshippers (21:51-71; 26:70-82; 29:16-18, 24,25; 37:83-98),
- the story of Lot (11:77-83;15:61-75; 26:160-175; 27:54-58; 29:28-35),
- Moses' childhood (20:38-40; 28:7,11-13),
- Moses and the burning bush (20:9 -24; 27:7-14; 28:29-35),
- Moses, Pharaoh and the sorcerers (7:103-126; 20:65-73; 26:41-68; 44:17-32; 79:15-26),
- Instructions to the people of Israel (2:58,59; 7:161-162),
- the birth of John the Baptist (3:38-41; 19:1-15),
- the birth of Jesus (3:42-48; 19:16-34).

These passages differ in many details, but the comparisons below concentrate on direct speech quotes only.

Variant "direct speech" quotations from the same incidents:

The parallel verses below describe the same events. They were unique, discrete historical occasions (Allah sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden only once, Allah met Moses at the burning bush only once, etc.). Thus there is only one possibility of what actually happened. However in different suras of the Qur'an we find two or three versions of the same dialogue between those present. Since these are **all 'direct speech' quotations**, we would expect them to be identical, but the quotes differ. What did the speaker **actually** say? Which one is correct?

1) Allah speaks about the creation of Adam

15:28 Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from <u>sounding clay from mud molded into shape</u>	38:71 Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from <u>clay</u>
وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ	إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ طِينٍ

2) Allah's command to the angels regarding Adam

2:34 " <u>Bow down to Adam</u> "	15:29 " <u>Fall (you) down prostrating yourselves unto him.</u> "
أَسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ	فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

3) Allah's instructions to Adam and Eve

<p>2:35 "O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the garden and eat of the bountiful things therein as ye will, but approach not this tree."</p>	<p>7:19 "O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the garden and eat therein as ye will, but approach not this tree."</p>
<p>يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ</p>	<p>وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ</p>

4) Allah ejects Adam and Eve from Paradise

<p>7:24 He said: "Get ye down, one of you an enemy to another; and for you on the earth there shall be a habitation and provision for a season."</p>	<p>20:123 He said: "Get ye down from it all together one of you an enemy to another; but if as is sure there comes to you from Me guidance whosoever follows My guidance will not lose his way nor fall into misery.</p>
<p>قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ</p>	<p>قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَاِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَىٰ</p>

5) Noah's speech to his people

<p>7:59 We sent Noah to his people. He said: "O my people! Serve Allah! Ye have no other god but Him. Verily I fear for you the punishment of a dreadful day!"</p>	<p>11:25,26 We sent Noah to his people: "I have come to you as a plain warner: that ye serve none but Allah. Verily I fear for you the punishment of a grievous day."</p>
<p>لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ</p>	<p>وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ</p>

6) Allah's instructions to Noah

<p>11:37 Build the ark under Our eyes and Our Revelation; and address Me not regarding those that have done wrong; verily the y are to be drowned.</p>	<p>23:27 Build the ark under Our eyes and Our Revelation; <u>then when Our command comes and the oven boils over, make a way for two of every pair, and your household except those of them against whom there hath already gone forth the word;</u> and address Me not regarding who have done wrong; verily they are to be drowned.</p>
<p>وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحِينَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُّعْرَقُونَ</p>	<p>اصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحِينَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُّعْرَقُونَ</p>

7) Abraham questions his father and his people

<p>21:52 Behold he said to his father and his people: "<u>What are these images to which you are devoted?</u>"</p>	<p>26:71 Behold he said to his father and his people: "<u>What do you worship?</u>"</p>	<p>37:85 Behold he said to his father and his people: "<u>What is that which you worship?</u>"</p>
<p>إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ</p>	<p>إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ</p>	<p>إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ</p>

8) Abraham's people justify their idol worship

<p>21:53 They said: "<u>We found our fathers worshipping them.</u>"</p>	<p>26:74 They said: "<u>No, but we found our fathers doing this.</u>"</p>
<p>قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ</p>	<p>قَالُوا بَلْ وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا كَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ</p>

9) The angels' instructions to Lot

<p>11:81 Now travel with thy family while yet a part of the night remains and let not any of you look back: <u>except thy wife: to her will happen what happens to the people.</u></p>	<p>15:65 “Then travel with thy family while yet a part of the night remains and <u>do thou bring up the rear:</u> let no one amongst you look back <u>but pass on whither ye are ordered.</u>”</p>
<p>فَأَسْرِبْ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنكُم أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَمْرَاتَكَ إِنَّهُ مُصِيبُهَا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ</p>	<p>فَأَسْرِبْ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنكُم أَحَدٌ وَامْضُوا حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُونَ</p>

10) Moses sees the burning bush

<p>20:10 He said to his family: “<u>Wait!</u> Verily, I have seen a fire, <u>perhaps</u> I may bring you from there some <u>burning brand,</u> or <u>find some guidance at the fire.</u>”</p>	<p>27:7 when Musa (Moses) said to his household: “Verily! I have seen a fire, I <u>will</u> bring you from there some <u>information,</u> or I will bring you a <u>burning brand,</u> that you may warm yourselves.”</p>	<p>28:29 He said to his family: “<u>Wait,</u> Verily I have seen a fire; <u>perhaps</u> I may bring you from there some <u>information,</u> or a <u>branch from the fire</u> that you may warm yourselves.”</p>
<p>فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّي آتِيكُم مِّنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى</p>	<p>إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا سَأَتِيكُم مِّنْهَا بِخَبْرٍ أَوْ آتِيكُم بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ</p>	<p>قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّي آتِيكُم مِّنْهَا بِخَبْرٍ أَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ</p>

11) Allah speaks to Moses at the burning bush

<p>27:9, 10 “O Moses! Verily I am Allah <u>the Exalted in Might the Wise!</u> Throw down your stick!”</p>	<p>28:30, 31 “O Moses! Verily I am Allah <u>the Lord of the Worlds!</u> Throw down your stick!”</p>
<p>يَا مُوسَى إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ</p>	<p>يَا مُوسَى إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَأَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ</p>

12) Allah instructs Moses about the leprous hand

20:22 “Now draw thy hand close to thy side : it shall come forth white without stain	27:12 “Now put thy hand into thy bosom and it will come forth white without stain	28:32 “ Move thy hand into thy bosom and it will come forth white without stain
<p>وَاضْمَمِ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ</p>	<p>وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ</p>	<p>اسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ</p>

13) The sorcerers challenge Moses

7:115 They said: “O Moses! Wilt thou throw or shall we be the throwers ?”	20:65 They said: “O Moses! Wilt thou throw or shall we be the first who throw ?”
<p>قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ</p>	<p>قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ أَوْلَ مَنْ أَلْقَى</p>

14) The sorcerers repent

7:120-122 But the sorcerers fell down prostrate in adoring, they said: “We believe in the Lord of the worlds . The Lord of Moses and Aaron .”	20:70 So the sorcerers fell down prostrate in adoration: they said “We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses .”
<p>وَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ</p>	<p>فَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدًا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَى</p>

15) Pharaoh's threat to the sorcerers

<p>7:123 Pharaoh said: “Believe ye <u>in</u> him before I give you permission? Surely <u>this is a trick which ye have planned in the city to drive out its people: but soon shall ye know (the consequences).</u></p>	<p>20:71 He said: “Believe ye <u>on</u> him before I give you permission? <u>Surely this must be your leader who has taught you magic! Be sure I will cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides and I will have you crucified on trunks of palm-trees:</u></p>
<p>قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَكْرْتُمُوهُ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَتُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ</p>	<p>قَالَ آمَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَأُقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلافٍ وَلَا أَصْلَبَنَّكُمْ فِي جُذُوعِ النَّخْلِ</p>

16) Allah's instructions to Moses

<p>26:52 “<u>Then</u> depart with My slaves. Surely, you will be pursued.”</p>	<p>44:23 “<u>And</u> depart with My slaves <u>by night</u>. Surely, you will be pursued.”</p>
<p>أَنْ أَسْرِبَ بِعِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبِعُونَ</p>	<p>فَأَسْرِبَ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبِعُونَ</p>

17) Instructions to the people of Israel

<p>2:58 And remember We said: “<u>Enter</u> this town and eat therein as ye wish <u>plentifully</u> ; but <u>enter the gate prostrating and say “Forgive us”</u> and We shall forgive you your faults and increase (the portion of) those who do good.”</p>	<p>7:161 And remember it was said to them: “<u>Dwell</u> in this town and eat therein as ye wish but <u>say “Forgive us” and enter the gate prostrating;</u> We shall forgive you your faults; We shall increase (the portion of) those who do good.”</p>
<p>وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا حِطَّةً نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ</p>	<p>وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةً وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَاتِكُمْ سَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ</p>

18) Saleh warns the people of Thamud

<p>7:73 He said: “<u>O my people! Worship Allah; ye have no other god but Him. Now hath come unto you a clear (sign) from your Lord!</u> This shecamel of Allah is a sign unto you: so leave her to graze in Allah's earth and touch her not with harm lest a <u>grievous</u> punishment seize you.</p>	<p>11:64 “<u>And O my people!</u> This she-camel of Allah is a sign to you: leave her to graze on Allah's earth and touch her not with harm lest a <u>swift</u> Penalty seize you!</p>	<p>26:155, 156 He said: “This shecamel <u>has a right of watering and ye have a right of watering</u> on a day appointed. Touch her not with harm lest the Penalty <u>of a Great Day</u> seize you.”</p>
<p>قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ</p>	<p>وَيَا قَوْمِ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ</p>	<p>قَالَ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَهَا شِرْبٌ وَلَكُمْ شِرْبٌ يَوْمٍ مَعْلُومٍ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ</p>

19) Zakariya speaks to the angel

<p>3:40 He said: “O my lord! How shall I have a son, <u>seeing I am very old, and my wife is barren?</u>”</p>	<p>19:8 “He said: “O my lord! How shall I have a son <u>when my wife is barren</u> and <u>I have grown decrepit from old age?</u>”</p>
<p>قَالَ رَبِّ انِّي كُنْتُ لِي غُلَامًا وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِي الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ</p>	<p>قَالَ رَبِّ انِّي كُنْتُ لِي غُلَامًا وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا</p>

20) The angel speaks to Zakariya

<p>3:41 He said: “Your sign will be that thou will speak to no man for three <u>days, except with signals</u>.</p>	<p>19:10 He said: “Your sign will be that thou will speak to no man for three <u>nights although having no bodily defect</u>.”</p>
<p>قَالَ آيَتِكَ إِلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمَزًا</p>	<p>قَالَ آيَتِكَ إِلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا</p>

21) Mary's question at the annunciation of the birth of Jesus

<p>3:47 She said: “O my Lord! How shall I have a <u>son</u> (<i>walad</i>) when no man hath touched me?”</p>	<p>19:20 She said: “How shall I have a <u>son</u> (<i>ghulam</i>) when no man hath touched me?”</p>
<p>قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ</p>	<p>قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ</p>

22) Allah instructs Muhammad about what to say to the pagans in Mecca

<p>35:40 Say: “Have you seen <u>your partner-idols</u> that you invoke besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth. Or have they a share in the heavens? Or have We given them a Book, so that they act on clear proof from it? Nay, the wrongdoers promise each another only delusions.”</p>	<p>46:4 Say: “Have you seen <u>what</u> you invoke besides Allah? Show me what have they created of the earth. Or have they a share in the heavens? Bring me a Book from before this, or a trace of knowledge, if you are truthful!”</p>
<p>قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أُرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيْنَةٍ مِنْهُ بَلْ إِنَّهُمْ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا</p>	<p>قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أُرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ إِنِّي نُنزِّلُ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَارَةَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ</p>