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Do Animals Speak

by [jawaid ahmed](#) , Uk, Thursday, December 01, 2011, 10:12 (9 days ago)

Do animals speak?

3:7 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 God. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding.

27:18 Hatta itha ataw AAala wadi alnaml qalat namlatun ya ayyuha alnaml odkhuloo masakinakum la yahtimannakum sulaymanu wajunooduhu wahum la yashAAuroona
027.018

"Till, when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an ant exclaimed: O ants! Enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his armies crush you, unperceiving"

27:20 Watafaqqada alttayra faqala ma liya la ara alhudhuda am kana mina algha-ibeena
027.020-21

"And he inspected the birds then said: "Why is it I see not the hoopoe or is it that he is of the absent? I will certainly punish him with a severe penalty, or execute him, unless he bring me a clear reason (for absence).""

Moses Maimonides, while studying the Bible, realised that some verses cannot be taken literally and must be understood as metaphorical; there are meanings behind the words. This is also how we should treat some Quranic verses, and also look at other meanings of words when an apparent miraculous event is mentioned. The above verses are in this category.

Hud-hud in Arabic can be translated to good old Hoopoe, which is a bird, but history tells us it is also a tribe in the Yemen and a man can be named after the tribe he came from. If you understand this to be a person, one of Solomon's devout and loyal commanders then the whole situation is brought down to earth and not made into a fairy tale residing in cloud cuckoo land. Hoopoe was able to take messages between Sheba and Solomon because he was a man trusted by Solomon to do this; he was able to talk and be understood because he was a man, not a bird. He belonged to the ranks of the cavalry; tair in Arabic can mean bird but it is also means a horse. When Solomon looked amongst his "tair" he was searching for the riders who traversed the land on horseback; reconnoitring and bringing vital surveillance information. When the tair are designated amongst the Jinn we must understand Jinn meaning those tribes who were usually not seen by the town dwellers .They became subservient to the Messenger of Allah, Solomon, who was able to unite theses disparate tribes and "Jews" into a mighty nation. They were able to ride around the country at speeds and distances a man on foot could not do so, so they achieved results in 'no time at all'. No invisible boogies flying through time and space on magic carpets or living in old lamps, but men using the Allah given resources at their disposal.

The talking ants in the above verse can also be correctly understood now. The Arabic word naml means ants but it is also the name of a tribe with a Queen and has been identified as such by Ibn Kathir (why is it that when some past scholars teach sensible things they are ignored yet when they and others record

nonsense they are believed?) How can ants talk? Has Allah bestowed speech on any other creature other than man? (Parrots are only great mimickers and do not speak by themselves, in many ways similar to the speech of Allah's "peak of creation!). Solomon was about to advance through the valley of this tribe and the Queen realised they were no match for his army so offered no resistance. Solomon was a Messenger of Allah and followed the Divine Revelation given to him not to attack non-combatants so secured peace and security in this area before turning his attention to another "Queen" led country, Sheba (Saba).

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Do Animals Speak

by **Quasim Hamdani**, Chicago, Friday, December 02, 2011, 06:45 (8 days ago) @ jawaid ahmed

Animal species do have their languages. Communication is a big part of survival. Communications includes more than speech; expressions and body movements are also part of communications. Pets do communicate with their owners through sounds and other behaviors.

Animals do not talk 'human.'

[Post reply](#)

118 views

Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Friday, December 02, 2011, 09:29 (8 days ago) @ jawaid ahmed

Jawaid.

Peace.

It is well established within the ambit of science that animals have a communication system, sometimes advanced. This area is still being better understood.

I think what lies at the crux of the difficulty with what you posit is the inability to accept that Prophet Solomon could have understood the speech of creatures such as 'birds' despite the Quran clearly saying '**ullim'na mantiqa'tayri'** 27:16 (we have been taught the speech of the birds).

(Particular humans were granted the capacity to understand the speech of certain creatures and not that the animals spoke in a human language)

This difficulty on your part to accept what the Quran is clearly saying, I feel has demanded an elaborate explanation making use of Arabic words such as '**tayr'** to denote a horse!

To denote a 'tayr' as a horse as the most appropriate explanation of the term is quite simply completely unwarranted.

Furthermore, making use of **isolated historical sources** to justify Quranic interpretations is no different from the methodology used by the traditionists. This is unacceptable for those that profess to maintain an explanation of the Quran from the Quran.

You have asserted that:

"tair in Arabic can mean bird but it is also means a horse."

This gives the impression to a lay Arabic speaker or one not familiar with the language that 'Tair' actually means horse but 'can mean' bird as a secondary explanation or that they are both equally appropriate.

This is in my humble view, completely misleading.

'Tayr's (Tair) primary meaning is a creature that moves through the atmosphere by means of its wings in flight (or flew). Application to other beasts are only secondary meanings and certainly not common at all when 'Tayr' is used as a 'noun'.

Those that profess a '**Quranic interpretation**' such as the Quran explains itself should remain committed first to see how the Quran makes use of these terms in the Quran.

The word in 27:20 'Tayr(a)' is a masculine noun. Not a verb like 'ittayyara' or 'istatara', it has been firmly been used in 27:20 as a 'noun'.

Let us allow the Quran to define how the noun 'Tayr' is used as opposed to secondary sources.

002:260 God said, "Take four **birds**, draw them to you

003:049 in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a **bird**,

003:049 and it becomes a **bird** by God's leave:

005:110 you make out of clay, as it were, the figure of a **bird**, by My leave,

005:110 and it becometh a **bird** by My leave,

012:036 I see myself (in a dream) carrying bread on my head, and **birds** are eating from it

012:041 he will be crucified so that the **birds** will eat from his head.

016:079 Have they not seen the **birds** obedient in mid-air?

021:079 Our power that made the hills and the **birds** celebrate Our praises

022:031 it is as if he had fallen from the sky and the **birds** had snatched him or the wind had blown him to a far-off place.

024:041 and the (very) **birds** with expanded wings

034:010 O ye hills and **birds**, echo his psalms of praise!

056:021 And flesh of **fowls** (domesticated bird: Hen, Turkey, Duck, Guinea fowl etc) that they desire.

067:019 Have they not seen the **birds** above them spreading out their wings and closing them?

105:003 And He sent against them flights of **birds**,

The above examples are cited to show how the Quran makes use of the noun 'Tayr'. Please substitute 'horse' in any of the above references and see what happens.

For me, who endeavours ardently (God willing) to submit to the Quran as the word of God, this is **convincing evidence** of what 'Tayr' means.

General Arabic parlance has generally retained this Quranic interpretation of the term.

Regards,
Joseph.

--

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George Orwell

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Do Animals Speak

by **jawaid ahmed** ✉, Uk, Monday, December 05, 2011, 07:36 (5 days ago) @ Joseph Islam

Brother Islam,

A nice reply to my post; one which requires a logical riposte.

27:16. And Solomon was David's heir. He said: "O ye people! We have been taught the speech of birds, and on us has been bestowed (a little) of all things: this is indeed Grace manifest (from Allah.)"

27:17. And before Solomon were marshalled his hosts,- of Jinns and men and birds, and they were all kept in order and ranks.

Here we have the Quran apparently telling us that Solomon had the ability to understand the speech of birds. You have stated that throughout the Quran 'tayr' is only used for birds so I am holding you to this understanding.

27:18. At length, when they came to a (lowly) valley of ants, one of the ants said: "O ye ants, get into your habitations, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you (under foot) without knowing it."

27:19. So he smiled, amused at her speech; and he said: "O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for Thy favours, which thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please Thee: And admit me, by Thy Grace, to the ranks of Thy righteous Servants."



Now we have an 'ant' speaking [it uses words in human speech form and knows Solomon's name] and being understood by Solomon; this, if my A-level biology was correct, is not a bird, but an insect! We must now believe that Solomon could talk to insects as well, even though the Quran explicitly states, in your understanding, that he was given the power of bird speak only. If he had been able to communicate with all animals, then why does the Quran limit it to birds?

We cannot say that "and on us has been bestowed (a little) of all things" from 27:16 to mean that he was given a little knowledge of all animal speech because this means that blessings/ bounties were given to Solomon, and does not refer to his Dr Doolittle abilities.

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Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Monday, December 05, 2011, 12:08 (5 days ago) @ jawaid ahmed

Brother Jawaid,

Salamun Alaikum.

There are two points to take note:

Firstly, there is nothing in the Quran to suggest that verse 27:16 comprised a comprehensive answer or a list of all the mercies they were granted.

If I say that God has granted me the speech of the Chinese, this does not mean that I do not understand the language of the Norwegians.

Therefore the premise of your assertion: "that he was given the power of bird speak only" is left wanting.

Secondly, at no place does the Quran say that the ant could communicate with Prophet Solomon. It only informs us that Prophet Solomon could understand her speech. Arguably the 'bird' is the only such creature (da'aba but not human) that we know of from the Quran where a **two way** conversation has been captured (Surah 27 - Naml).

I understand this as an **advanced form** of the type of communication that usually exists between experienced dog owners and handlers who can understand what their dog's intend to communicate and the dog's themselves that react to complex commands. If the Greek village of

Antia could whistle their whole speech, I can well appreciate how a human could have acquired the expertise to whistle to birds or understand their tweets.

Now with regards 'Solomon'.

The Quran simply translates different languages and communications into Arabic so the primary Arab audience could understand. Prophet Moses's speech, Prophet Jesus's speech, the speech of angels etc, never occurred in Arabic. The Quran merely captures those dialogues and translates them into Arabic. Mary probably never knew her son as the Arabic 'Isa', but rather as the Hebrew 'Yeshua' or the Aramaic 'Jeshua'.

The mother of Prophet Moses would most likely not have known her son as the Arabic 'Musa' but rather the Hebrew 'Moshe'. [1]

The Quran merely translated the names of these personalities into a rendering that the Arabic audience could understand with names that they were familiar with. Even the name 'Allah' is an Arabic name for God. [2]

In the same way, the communication of the ant has been best captured into Arabic. It is for the reader to know who the ant was talking about. She may well have addressed 'Solomon' in her own communication method which Solomon simply understood.

Dr. Dolittle abilities? Please brother, let us not digress with such speech for if any of us are wrong, we will be held accountable. This is just brotherly advice.

Your brother,
Joseph.

[1] WHAT IS A MUSLIM NAME? - A MISNOMER

<http://quransmessage.com/articles/muslim%20name%20FM3.htm>

[2] 'ALLAH' IS NOT AN EXCLUSIVE NAME FOR GOD

<http://quransmessage.com/articles/allah%20is%20not%20an%20exclusive%20name%20for%20god%...>

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Do Animals Speak

by **jawaid ahmed**  Uk, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 09:07 (4 days ago) @ Joseph Islam

A few more of my thoughts on this topic.

Qaf-Waw-Lam = to say/speak, to call, to be named, word/speech, utterance, a thing said, greeting, discourse, one who says/speaks. To inspire/transmit/relate/answer/think/profess, emit an opinion on, indicate a state or condition or circumstance. qa'ilun - speaker, indicator.

The "ant" spoke/said [qalat] using human language so cannot be an ant. The female that spoke had authority, hence a leader, similar to the Queen of Saba [Sheba]. They lived in a valley called the valley of Al-Naml, "valley of ants" which is referenced in ancient sources north of the state of Saba. I also found these references, the second mentions in paragraph 7, bottom of page 1, valley Al-naml

<http://archive.arabnews.com/?page=1§ion=0&article=98732&d=20&m=7&am...>

<http://www.grandstrategy.com/2007/12/sword-of-allah-chapter-9-seige-of-taif.html>

Solomon smiled because he was a Messenger of Allah and would not have attacked anyone unless in self defence, so the Queen's remark about staying in their homes is meant to convey a non aggressive stance. Also, Queen 'ants' do not come out of their homes, the workers do, so she could not have seen Solomon.

Ants do not live in homes; masākinakum "your dwellings", is plural, not a single colony.

The following is taken from the Dictionary of the Quran by G.A Parwez.

Heh, daal, daal

Al-hudd: to drop something very hard with a sound: to demolish: al-haad means the sound of the sea which to those at the coast sounds like a boom: and sometimes this sound is the precursor of an earthquake: al-haad-dah: boom (of the clouds): * * al-huddah: the sound of something falling: had-dat tul Baqarah: I threw the cow on the ground to slaughter it: al-hidd: that which has fallen:*** hadadahu tahdeedah: he threatened him and made him frightful: ** Surah Maryam says: wa takh -khirul jibaalu huda: 19:90 the mountains will fall loudly and be torn to pieces:

Al-hudhud: the piegion who makes a lot of noise: any bird which speaks too much: it also means a particular bird: * but the hudhud mentioned in the tale of Hazrat Suleman was an officer of his army: 27:20 in those days men and even tribes were named after birds: this continues till today among the Christians: the names Fox and Lamb can still be found in abundance: even among the Hindus names like Tota Ram (Parrot Ram) and Chuhamal (Rat Mal) are still found: the Lissanul Arb says that jadahid was the name of a Yemeni tribe: and the Tajul Uroos says that hadad was the name of a king of Hameer who was a contemporary of Hazrat Suleman: al-hud hud in the Qur'an has appeared along with alif, and laam: this leads one to think that this was not the name of a man but he was so called in respect of his tribe.

*Taj, Muheet, Raghīb *Taj and Muheet ***Raghīb.
page 1756.

Also:-

27:20 Watafaqqada al-tayra faqala ma liya la ara al-hudhuda am kana mina algha-ibeena

Normally translated as:-

27:20 And he took a muster of the Birds; and he said: "Why is it I see not the Hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees?"

The reasoning then goes if Hudhud is a man, then tayr cannot be birds. It is common knowledge that people are/were called after their place of birth, tribe, occupation etc. Carpenter was an occupation, turned into a name. Jamie Fox, the actor; Mr Khattak, a friend of mine from the NWFP of Pakistan, denotes his tribal ancestry. Similarly, when the Quran says the word tayr, then this was a person from a tribe called tayr, who were horse riders:-

38:30. To David We gave Solomon (for a son),- How excellent in Our service! Ever did he turn (to Us)!

38:31. Behold, there were brought before him, at eventide coursers of the highest breeding, and swift of foot;



Why mention these horses if this has no relevance to his people/army?

This adds to my understanding that Solomon had control over a large horse riding tribe. Did not the Hoopee fleet about swiftly?

Post reply

67 views

Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 15:08 (4 days ago) @ jawaid ahmed

Dear brother Jawaid,

Salamun Alaikum

Please find below my views on the thoughts you have kindly shared.

The use of 'qalat' does not **restrict** the speaker to the human language. Qalat simply means 'she said', or similarly 'qala' which means 'he said' or 'qalu' (they said / say). This does not mean that these communications are in the human language.

This is no different from when the speech of the angels is captured in 34:41 as 'qalu' (they will say). Surely this does not suggest that the angels will speak to God in human speech.

You also say:

"Also, Queen 'ants' do not come out of their homes, the workers do, so she could not have seen Solomon"

With respect, I find no support for this brother Jawaid. Queen ants do leave the colony for many reasons for example, to start new colonies, for mating etc. How can one confirm that the ant was not in the process of starting a new colony whilst the incident took place or was not outside the colony for whatever reason? More importantly, how do we know she was even an ant of authority / queen ant? **This is an 'assumption'**. All the Quran informs us is that one of the ants warned others of impending danger. That is it. For even a worker ant can warn others as a human worker can warn others of impending danger even to their master.

You say:

"Ants do not live in homes; masākinakum "your dwellings", is plural, not a single colony"

This is no different from telling 20 people to go back into their homes. Each one still has their own home / living space but the address is plural. Also to assert dwellings cannot refer to habitats within a certain colony is untenable in my humble opinion.

You say from your deductions that 'tayr' cannot mean birds based on the assumption that Hudhuda is a man. **But please can you provide me one instance in the Quran of the noun 'Tayr' which there are many, where the collective noun 'tayr' is not used for a bird?**

If the Quran wanted to say 'horse', it would have said horse. The word 'khayl' (feminine noun) is known to the Quran as horses (3:14, 8:60, 16:8, 17:64, 59:6) **as is horsemen / cavalry (17:64).**

As I am sure you will appreciate, we cannot change scripture. It is like saying the Quran says cat but it means a dog. To any Arabic speaking person, this is an extremely untenable interpolation and such a suggestion would only be open to ridicule. The collective noun 'Tayr' in the Quran is a bird and it remains a bird, it doesn't mean anything else. Unless we want to rewrite the scripture and I am sure no one on this forum intends to suggest that.

You say: "The reasoning then goes if Hudhud is a man, then tayr cannot be birds."

With respect, the 'Hudhuda' being a man is quite a fantastic interpretation in my humble opinion. I know of not one classical Arabic grammarian authority or any support in the Quran that 'Hudhuda' was a particular man. However, it is well known in Arabic (even today) that

'Hudhuda' is a type of bird and the collective noun 'i ayr' is a bird. It was within these birds that the 'Hoopoe's' absence was questioned.

In fact, well attested classical lexicons such as the the Misbah of El-Feiyumi, the Sihah, the Lisan al-Arab and the Khamus as well as others all agree that 'Hudhuda' is a certain well known bird and it is exactly how it is known today.

With your interpretation, I find that you are suggesting God is using well established words in the Quran but means something else. Surely we don't want to repeat the mistakes of those who displaced words or changed words out of their proper context (4:46; 5:41).

Thank you for sharing your thoughts.

Joseph.

--

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Do Animals Speak

by **Fadil** , Yaounde (Cameroon), Monday, December 05, 2011, 08:53 (5 days ago) @ Joseph Islam

Very clear from within the Quran that Tayr has various meaning depending on the context. Translating the Quran word to word makes it very difficult to understand.

It will be great to have more examples where birds and ants have spoken to people. It is at the same time very hard for me to accept that an ant knew Solomon by name (27:18) and spoke eloquently.

QXP makes more sense to me. It is free from nonsense tradition

27:17 Solomon's army included warrior tribes of the woods and the mountains, dwellers of townships, and great riders of the tribe of Taer. They were well disciplined, and dedicated to any appointed mission.

27:18 Once (when Solomon was on an expedition), they came upon the valley ruled of An-Naml. The Queen, (realizing the power of Solomon), ordered her armies, "Go back in your barracks, lest Solomon and his armies crush you without knowing that we are a peaceful tribe."

Taair = Omen = Destiny = Registration of Deeds = Fleet-footed horse = Cavalry = Bird . 5:110, 7:131, 27:47, 27:47, 17:13, 27:16, 2:260, 6:38, 24:4. At-Taairaan = Those marching to war

7:131. But when good (times) came, they said, "This is due to us;" When gripped by calamity, they ascribed it to evil **omens** connected with Moses and those with him! Behold! in truth the omens of evil are theirs in Allah's sight, but most of them do not understand!

27:47. They said: "Ill **omen** do we augur from thee and those that are with thee". He said: "Your ill omen is with Allah. yea, ye are a people under trial."



17:13. Every man's **fate** We have fastened on his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open.

Salam

[Post reply](#)

94 views

Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Monday, December 05, 2011, 11:07 (5 days ago) @ Fadil

Salamun Alaikum brother Fadil,

With all due respect and as I am sure you will appreciate, it is not for me to make an opinion on what makes sense to you. I am personally more interested in what the text of the Arabic Quran says.

As you are making the following assertion derived from the Quran, with respect, the burden of proof is with you to defend your position.

You assert:

"Very clear from within the Quran that Tayr has various meaning depending on the context. Translating the Quran word to word makes it very difficult to understand."

Therefore, can you please provide me clear evidences from the Quran where the [CONTEXT] collective masculine noun 'Tayr' means something other than a bird, in particular a 'horse'.

You have cited as elaborated examples, verses 7:131, 17:13 and 27:47

All three have been derived from the **verb 'Tara'** and describe the doer of the action (**active participle**). This would be no different from 6:38 where the intention is to capture a bird in motion. The 'fate' you refer to in 17:13 is best literally appreciated as a 'bird of omen' (in Arabic) but best interpreted as the person's 'augury' (active participle).

None of these usages refer to a horse or have been used as **collective masculine nouns**.

PS: With regards, 24:4 I'm totally confused why you have cited this verse or its relevance. Please can you elaborate.

Regards,

Joseph.

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Do Animals Speak

by **Fadil** , Yaounde (Cameroon), Monday, December 05, 2011, 13:09 (5 days ago) @ Joseph Islam

Dear Brother Joseph,

Salamun alaykum

Thank you very much for your kind and elaborated reply.

Sorry for the quote 24:4; it is out of context.

you said

The 'fate' you refer to in 17:13 is best literally appreciated as a 'bird of omen' (in Arabic) but best interpreted as the person's 'augury' (active participle).

For easy understanding of 17:13 please, how would you translate it? what is bird of omen?

For easy understanding of 17:13, please, how would you translate it? What is bird of omen?

Please, how would you also translate 27:18?



This is just to have an idea on different interpretation...

Salam

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Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Monday, December 05, 2011, 15:45 (5 days ago) @ Fadil

Dear brother Fadil

Salamun Alaikum

With regards 24:4, no problem. I merely had it down as a 'typo'. I've had my fair share of those and I'm sure a fair share yet is still to come! (God knows best).

But I appreciate your clarification 😊

You ask a very good question with regards 17:13 and have provided a befitting opportunity to elaborate and advance the thread.

An omen as you know is a sign or event which can be regarded as good or bad. Similarly, the classical grammarian authorities seem to note that the Arabs used to pass places where birds flocked on the ground. They used to rouse them to see (depending on their response) and determine a particular outcome from it. In some cases there was an 'evil' omen attached to the croaking of a crow or from the movement of the birds in a particular direction etc. But not all omens were bad.

This is well attested in the discussions captured by classical grammarian authorities, so most can access this information from any good classical grammarian's work.

Even today (not restricted to Arabs), the croaking of a crow can be seen as an omen.

So the 'tayraHU' in 17:13 is referring to a generic person's 'tayra' and would imply their bird of omen (good or bad). This is best understood (from a classical Arabic perspective) into English as their augury, action, fate or a person's deeds etc. (Active participle).

The Quran simply spoke in the language, phrases and idioms with which the Arabs were familiar with. Classical grammarian authorities attempt to capture these.

Even today the word 'tayr' is used to capture 'flying' or to do with flying such as tayra (plane), mataar (Airport), wazir atayran (minister of aviation) etc.

However, the collective noun 'Tayr' is not used to denote a horse in the Quran.

I hope that helps, God willing, even if its only use is to provide another perspective as you respectfully imply 😊

Your brother in faith,
Joseph.

--

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George Orwell


George Orwell

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Do Animals Speak

by **Fadi** , Yaounde (Cameroon), Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 13:01 (4 days ago) @

Joseph Islam



Dear Brother Joseph,
Many thanks for the explanation

Million thanks for the "quransmessage webpage" also. May Allah bless you
With lot of respects
salam

Post reply

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Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 15:12 (4 days ago) @ Fadi

Dear brother Fadil,

Salamun Alaikum.

Thank you for your kind words.

May God bless you also and all those that sincerely seek His way. It is only God that can guide any of us.


With regards the website, I'd like to share a humble sentiment which I have shared on my site.

"It is a complex web of acquiring information and I believe that God takes us past what I call are 'watering places' if He intends to guide and 'water' those that truly seek His way. It is often a case of traversing these stepping stones with an open mind / heart and indeed moving on when the time is right.

My work (my humble effort) is merely a small piece in this immense web. Please take anything from it that is good and move on from anything that you do not find convincing.

Let us race (fa-is'tabiqu) with one another in good works (2:148)"

I ardently pray that my Lord guides me and forgives my fallible soul on the Day that I am raised.

Your brother in faith,
Joseph 

--



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Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Monday, December 05, 2011, 17:18 (5 days ago) @ Fadil

Dear brother Fadil,

My apologies, I forgot to answer your last question with regards 27:18. I don't think I would disagree with much of the translations out there on this verse. The Arabic says what it says. However, I'll give you my humble interpretation of the Arabic as closely to the text as I possibly can into English.

"Until when they came to (the) valley (of) the ants, an ant (female singular) said, "O ants!, enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his armies / forces crush you while they do not perceive (yash'urun)"

If you note 27:19, Prophet Solomon's prayer of thankfulness seems to be linked to the speech of the female naml. It would be difficult to accept that this statement was simply captured because Prophet Solomon was amused by way of smiling (fatabassama) and laughing (dahika) at a statement made as captured in 27:18 by a person. The significance of the verse is not what was said but by who it was said by.

The 'dahika' also has the inherent meaning of wonder as well.

Regards,

Your brother in faith,
Joseph.

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Do Animals Speak

by **amirabbas**, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 03:28 (4 days ago) @ Joseph Islam

Salam,

if we accept that Prophets were normal human beings dwelling among their people eating, sleeping and having wives and children and that their only difference to be the duty of reforming the society and transmitting the Messages of Allah, then, whatever else they were able to do could be achieved by other human beings.

How could a Prophet claim to be only a normal human being similar to his own people while his people could realize that their messenger claiming to be a normal man, could speak to birds and ants?

We suppose that Prophet Solomon could understand the speech of animals and could talk to

them then his people too must have been able to do so in order for the actions of their

them, they, his people too must have been able to do so in order for the actions of their messenger seem rational to them.

If we take the literal meanings we will encounter rational conflicts: when it is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an that everyone bows willingly and/or unwillingly to Allah's command and laws and birds and other creatures know their duties and functions, then, why would ants be afraid of the messenger of Allah? Weren't they already submitted to Allah and consequently submitted to his messengers?

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Do Animals Speak

by **Quasim Hamdani**, Chicago, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 06:42 (4 days ago) @ amirabbas



You pose an excellent question.

There is a great deal of intellectual effort required to explain the Quran. What the Quran says and what it means to the humanity that speaks multiple languages is a non-trivial task.

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Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 07:44 (4 days ago) @ amirabbas

Salamun Alaikum brother Amir Abbas,

Thank you for your question

With respect, there are a lot of assumptions in your argument which are worth noting and from my perspective at least, unravelling.

You say Prophets were normal human beings. This begs the question, what is a normal human being?

Yes they were 'bashar' like other human beings which refers to the more physical, physiological attributes of a human being. So they ate, married and procreated. I do not know of any reference in the Quran where it is asserted they were 'insaan' (human beings) like other 'insaan'.

No two 'insaan' (human beings) on the planet are the same.

There is a difference between the two terms 'bashar' and 'insaan' in the Quran which is often missed in translations. A **human being** is not simply a 'bashar' but is a product of many other faculties which make him into an 'insaan'. The word 'insaan' is formed from the word 'Ins' and points to such attributes as faculties, perception and **knowledge**.

Human beings have been granted different capabilities and knowledge. This does not stop them being a 'bashar'. We need to realise the difference when studying the Quran from its source text. This was no different for the Prophets who had been given different capabilities (2:253). There are many human beings today that can do fantastic things that not all other human's can do.

You say: "could speak to birds and ants".

Please can you provide your evidence where the Quran says Prophet Solomon could speak with ants.

If Prophet Solomon could speak to ants, then the ants would have been able to understand Prophet Solomon's speech. The Quran only implies that Prophet Solomon was able to understand a female ant's speech or her communication method.

You say: "...Prophet Solomon could understand the speech of animals..."

Please can you provide me clear evidence from the Quran where the reader is informed that Prophet Solomon could understand the 'speech of animals'.

I accept that 27:16 does not provide a comprehensive list of what Prophet Solomon could or could not do. Therefore, this verse is inconclusive. To be able to 'talk with', there is an implication of a 'two way conversation'. From the animal kingdom, birds are the only animals where a two way conversation is implied.

Please see my response to brother Jawaid.

<http://www.salaatforum.com/index.php?id=358>

With regards rationality, you are basing your rationale on what is 'rational' in your perspective today. There could have been many arts or vestiges of knowledge that once existed that are either lost today, are remote, or cannot be replicated. This does not mean they are irrational or that they simply did not exist. Some may argue that the notion of a man who could have a whole book or a revelation inspired in him from a supernatural God is beyond rationale. But this does not mean it did not happen. But this is the argument that the Prophet's contemporaries made. Again, the question is about a subjective definition of 'rationale'.

Similarly, with regards speaking to birds, this is an area that is being better understood by science. However, here is an excerpt which may be of some interest.

"...Efforts now are being made to reconstruct the so-called 'secret language' of the Siberian Turkic shamans, and also that used in other areas of Siberia. Vestiges of the language remain incomprehensible refrains repeated in some shamanic performances; but a specific secret language has been verified among the Lapps, Inuits, Ostyaks, Chukchis, Yakuts and Tungus. The complete reconstruction has proved impossible as much shamanic lore has been lost ..."

"...The shamans secret language is an imitation of animal cries, or the sounds of birds. To know bird language enables one to understand all Nature's secrets..." [1]

You ask the question: "then, why would ants be afraid of the messenger of Allah?"

Please can you elaborate for me how you have come to the conclusion that the ants were afraid of a messenger of Allah?

If you are ploughing through a pack of dogs in a vehicle, the pack leader may disperse his pack members so that they don't get crushed. Are the dogs afraid of you or afraid of being crushed?

With the Quranic text and what the verses may imply literally, either we accept them or reject them. We all have a choice to accept the Quran as a word of God or to reject it. The Quran does not force anyone to believe in what it says. It simply posits clear arguments in clear Arabic text. Also, the Quran's intention is not to confuse its readers or to only be understood by those that who have advanced intellectual faculties. It is a communication to mankind with simple arguments which should remain comprehensible to the masses.

We should also not incline to change the text or interpolate meanings if it does not fit our world view or rationale. Good 'mufassirs' (Quranic exegetics) should try to stay as close to the classical text as possible **and try to understand its multifaceted wisdom and not confine the interpretation in accordance to their world view.** This applies as much to any classical mufassir as it does to one today. This is a generic statement and not directed at any personality, past or present.

Thank you for your question which I really feel does add value to this thread.

Your brother in faith
Joseph.

REFERENCES

[1] STUTLEY. M, Shamanism - A Concise Introduction, First published 2003 by Routledge, Male and Female Shamans, pages 16-17.

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George Orwell

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Do Animals Speak

by **Quasim Hamdani**, Chicago, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 08:20 (4 days ago) @ Joseph Islam

Explanation of 27:16 - 27:19 from QXP.

[27:16] Solomon was David's heir (as the Prophet and king) He said, "O People! We have been given a great cavalry of ready horses with best knowledge of training them, and we have been given every blessing. This is a manifest bounty." [21:79, 34:10. Solomon ruled as King from 965 to 926 BC. The common misconception that Solomon could speak to birds is denied here, as he clearly says that all his people understood Taair. Mantiq = Knowledge = Logic = Speech and concept. Taair = Omen = Destiny = Registration of Deeds = Fleet-footed horse = Cavalry = Bird. 5:110, 7:131, 27:47, 27:47, 17:13, 27:16, 2:260, 6:38, 24:4. At-Taairaan = Those marching to war]

[27:17] Solomon's army included warrior tribes of the woods and the mountains, dwellers of townships, and great riders of the tribe of Taer. They were well disciplined, and dedicated to any appointed mission.



[27:18] Once (when Solomon was on an expedition), they came upon the valley ruled by An-Naml. The Queen, (realizing the power of Solomon), ordered her armies, "Go back in your barracks, lest Solomon and his armies crush you without knowing that we are a peaceful tribe."

[27:19] Solomon smiled joyously at her words and said, "My Lord! Enable me to be grateful for Your blessings upon me and my parents. And enable me to work for the betterment of humanity and thus achieve Your approval. Include me, by Your grace, among Your righteous servants."

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Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 08:54 (4 days ago) @ Quasim Hamdani

Salamun Alaikum brother Quasim.

Thank you for citing the QXP explanation.

God willing, this should at least assist the readers to better understand the comprehensive contentions that have been raised with this interpretation within this thread and with a view to advance the debate 😊

Your brother in faith,
Joseph.

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George Orwell

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Do Animals Speak

by **Razi**, Saturday, December 10, 2011, 02:49 (9 hours, 23 minutes ago) @ Joseph Islam

Dear Joseph Sir,

In all of the quotes you quoted, where the context is same or similar? Where a General is addressing his army?

In 27:16 Prophet Solomon was addressing his army as Commander in Chief, and commanders do address their men by the name of their unit i.e. brigade, regiment, company etc.

My childhood was spent in army campus; the name of unit stationed there was "Garuda" (a mythological bird) and we children by looking at the insignia on uniform used to recognize the unit of the person and whenever any of us says "He is a Garuda" none of us look at sky.

One problem in your approach is "linear thinking" which is evident from your translation of 'ullim'na mantiqa'tayri' as "we have been taught the speech of the birds". When Quran is combination of highest form of prose, poetry and drama or none of these in Arabic, then how you can apply rule of translations of prose to poetry or drama or vice versa?

Isn't this approach of your turns Quran into mythology? If you are ready accept the literal meaning then I think you should not have objection of accepting the story of "Ramayana" as it is, in which lord Ram with the help of his army of primarily monkeys and other helpers like bears, garuds,

squirrels, snakes etc, defeated the 10-headed King Ravan and his army of daityas (devil / demon).

My knowledge in literature is shallow, but one simple fact I know conveying a story through prose differs from conveying it through drama.



QXP conveys the coherent meaning of Quran without sacrificing the rationality and reasonableness of Allah's message and in this process if it compromises with the literal meaning of the Ayah's that is O.k. with me, but not the vice-versa because from last one thousand year I was believing in "Birds", "Ants", "Ababeel", "Jin" and what not and where I reached anybody can see..... and I don't want to continue on same path. For me rationality of the message is far above the syntax and semantics of language.

Razi

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Do Animals Speak

by **Joseph Islam**  , On God's Earth, Saturday, December 10, 2011, 09:58 (2 hours, 14 minutes ago) @ Razi

Salamun Alaikum Razi,

Thank you for you comments.

If you feel that the Quran is making use of **well established, clear, plain words and phrases** in the Arabic language as known to Arabs throughout the history of the language, **but means something else**, then you are of course free to believe whatever you wish. That is of course your prerogative.

Even drama has a language, a context and needs to be understood in the time it was presented with the vernacular intended. No classical Arab has ever understood the Quran the way you profess to understand it.

If you want to apply a 20th century understanding of 'Garuda' in a particular language from an army context to a classical text revealed to a Prophet of God over 1400 years ago, then this is once again, your prerogative. This is an unacceptable line of thinking and has its source in an **etymological fallacy**.

Furthermore, I have concluded out of complete volition that the Quran is the **inerrant word of God**. I cannot say the same for the Ramayana; hence your analogy from my perspective is non-sequitur.

The Quran says it is **clear Arabic speech** (16:103, 26:195) and **easy to understand** (54:17,22,32,40). This is Arabic speech, tongue, language, vernacular that the Arabs clearly understood with all the idioms, phrases etc known to them. **No one** ever understood the **collective noun 'Tayr' (bird)** as a horse.

Furthermore, there are clear verses in the Quran which teach us to demand proof for our theological positions and beliefs. That is what the Quran teaches believers. I have adopted this approach throughout my threads. Unless of course, you think that these verses are also a product of 'linear thinking' and should be ignored and understood metaphorically. Please see my article below.

My humble view on all God's scriptures is quite simple. If anyone has difficulty with accepting well established meanings of a word or phrase in any scripture, then it is far better to reject it than to pretend to believe in it **only after the words are altered or interpolated in accordance to their theological view**.

In the end, God knows what lies deep in the hearts of His servants. We can fool those around us, even ourselves. But no one can fool God.

The last statement is not directed at you, so don't take it personally. It is a general sentiment that transcends adherents of all scriptures.

Finally, **please provide clear evidence against the contentions I have raised in the threads.** I will be most eager to see your responses.

Regards,
Joseph.

BURDEN OF PROOF - PROPHET ABRAHAM'S (pbuh) ARGUMENT

<http://quransmessage.com/articles/burdenofproof%20FM3.htm>

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Do Animals Speak - Acoustic Communication by Ants

by **Joseph Islam**  , *On God's Earth*, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 19:16 (4 days ago) @ *jawaid ahmed*
edited by *Joseph Islam*, Tuesday, December 06, 2011, 20:13

Dear All,

Salamun Alaikum.

Somewhat related to our thread discussions, I found this an interesting study, so I thought I'd share it for the benefit of other readers too who may not have come across it.

A scholarly paper is presented by both Robert Hickling and Richard L. Brown which proves the audible acoustic communication by ants and discusses it in some detail.

Audible files are also available. Here is a distress signal emitted by a 'single' major worker with a caught antenna. [1]

<http://home.olemiss.edu/~hickling/distress.mp3>

Original site for stridulation sounds: [2]

The complete paper can be read here:

http://murphylibrary.uwlax.edu/digital/journals/JASA/JASA2000/pdfs/vol_108/iss_4/1920_1...

REFERENCES

[1] HICKLING. R, and BROWN. R.L, Analysis of acoustic communication by ants" Journ. Acoust. Soc. Am, 108 (4)October 2000, pages 1920-1929

[2] <http://home.olemiss.edu/~hickling/>

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