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ORIGIN OF LANGUAGES: A QURANIC INQUIRY

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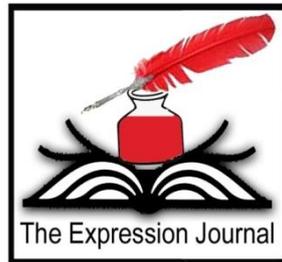
Abstract

The paper entitled “Origin of Languages: A Quranic Inquiry” is an attempt to explore what the *Quran* suggests through implications and clues about the origin of human languages. Given that there are over six thousand languages in the world today and that each is indebted to a number of them for several of its features such as grammar, vocabulary, script, phonological features, semantic features, morphological and etymological peculiarities, etc., the chances of all of them having a common ancestor from which each might have originated in various places, at various stages of history cannot be ruled out. Human exploration in the modern epistemological terms and methods has inevitable limitations in the pursuit to arrive at a conclusion as to the origin of human languages. The *Quran*, the final divine book in Arabic revealed to Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century AD which deals with a number of issues pertaining to the origin of the universe, creation of human beings, the pre-natal existence of man and the post-death predicament of man including trial, reward, punishment etc. in the hereafter, helps us make very enlightening inferences on the nature, origin, development and purpose of the divine gift of human language. A study carried out employing scientific methods and tools in the light of these inferences will surely yield great breakthrough in the field of enquiry.

Keywords

Origin, Language, Genesis, Quran, Monogenesis, Polygenesis, Diversity, Babel, Kaabah, Makkah, Mother of Cities, Mother of Languages.

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Linguistic Diversity in Humans

Although language is the principal means for human beings to communicate with one another, unlike the rest of the living species on the earth, humans all over the world do not always successfully communicate with one another by this means. The phenomenon of failure in communication among members of the same species is something unique about human race. No other creature on the earth, so far as we know, is destined to face such a challenge at any stage of its life.

The simple reason for this difficulty is that humans, as a race or species, do not speak the same language world over. There are, according to current estimates though not claimed to be scientific, about 6000 languages spoken by human beings across the globe today. This estimate excludes the mutually intelligible and at times unintelligible varieties or dialects of the same language. Besides, there are innumerable languages that became extinct at various stages of our history in various parts of the world.

The Changeable Nature of Language

No language enjoys a static or permanent shape throughout its history. All languages, as a rule, are involved in a continuous process of change. In fact, languages do change at every moment. Every user makes his own changes to his language every time he uses it meaningfully for his real life-requirements. It is not difficult to find that the very nature and spirit of language is its flexibility and openness to change or alterations to suit the requirements, the environments and the imagination of its users.

Going by this logic, one can easily draw the conclusion that the languages in use in the world today were not in their current shape in the past and that they have attained the present shape as a result of the process of infinite and multifaceted changes that has been at work from time immemorial. The changes that languages have been subject to have never been mono-dimensional. It has had as many dimensions as could be imagined depending on the richness and variety of the experience that the users of the language had in their life.

The Umbilical Cord

A simple conclusion that this line of thinking yields is that every language in use in the world today has had a parent or several parents to which one can trace its origin. Thus, one language tracing its origin to another or a few others, and they, in turn, to a few others before them, the indebtedness is a long chain reaching eventually to the language spoken by the original / first man in the beginning of history. That there is an umbilical cord kind of biological relationship between languages is quite certain and obvious. No language in the world can be found standing exclusively outside this chain of indebtedness. The history of any language is, no doubt, the history of the acknowledgement of indebtedness as well.

Language and Civilization

This shows that the history of the growth and development of a particular human language or languages cannot be analyzed except by tracing, and in line with, the history of the growth and development of human civilization or civilizations. The history of world civilizations tells us a good deal about the movements of human societies from place to place, from country to country and from continent to continent. It has a good deal to tell about the beginning of human habitation in the great centers of civilization.

Although history can't say anything conclusively about the earliest origin of human civilization on the earth, it conclusively points out that each civilization on any part of the earth has a parental source from which it derived. This much reliable information on the origin of civilizations that history yields is sufficient for a researcher to be convinced that one civilization known to us has come from one or a few others before it and so one language known to us has come from one or a few others before it. Thus, human civilizations and human languages could be concluded to have emerged and developed together simultaneously in parallel lines.

Monogenesis and Polygenesis

Although history or scientific study of human activities on the earth from the beginning points to Lower Mesopotamia in Iraq (3000 BCE), the valley of Nile River in Egypt (3000 BCE), the Indus River Valley in present-day India and Pakistan (2500 BCE), and the banks of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers (2200 BCE) as centres of the earliest civilizations, it doesn't tell anything conclusively about the place and time of the very first human civilization on the earth nor does it tell anything about the very first language that humans on the earth spoke. However, history yields information and makes observations which help us make certain assumptions. The current tools of historical research, presumably, are quite insufficient to bring to light any conclusive information on this score. Besides, the issues in question had taken place well before history itself took birth as a discipline. And since the give and take between civilizations has always been multidimensional, the course, the movement and the direction it has taken cannot be easily traced out in an infallibly authentic way.

The scholarly or academic notions in vogue about the origin of human civilization and, in turn, human language, are quite various and mutually exclusive. Each of the two prominent premises, monogenesis and polygenesis, has powerful advocates and champions on its side.

The Biblical Story of the Tower of Babel

The Biblical story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11: 5-8) built in the plain of Shinar is interesting in this context as it is one of the classical explanations to the question of linguistic diversity. According to this much discussed story in the Bible, a tower that people started to

build too tall, caused god to show his anger by making them speak different languages, which led to the collapse of the project and ultimately to the scattering of people across the world.

Though it caters to our sense of curiosity or fictional imagination, the story does not help us much to understand the nature either of god or of language. According to this story, linguistic diversity in the human species all over the world was the result of divine curse or punishment for the vaulting ambition of human beings. It also suggests that god, in anger, deliberately caused the progeny of Adam to be scattered all over the globe. This view, however, doesn't match with the historical facts known to us nor does it agree with the perspective of the *Quran* on the matter.

The Quranic View

Generally speaking, the *Quran* treats language as a great divine gift or blessing to human species. The extracts quoted below will make this quite clear:

And he taught Adam all the names (the skill of classifying and naming things) ... (*The Quran* 2: 31)

He (Allah) who taught the use of the pen (the skill of writing). (*The Quran* 96: 4)

(Allah is) Most Gracious! It is he who has taught the *Quran*. He has created man. He has taught him (the skill of) speech. (*The Quran* 55: 1- 4)

Efforts to put together the implications in the Quranic text on the question of language with the purpose of developing the outlook of the *Quran* on the question of the origin and evolution of human languages will be quite rewarding. However, this can be done only by inferring on this particular issue from the general view of the *Quran* on human beings, their origin, development, predicament, purpose of life, mission, responsibilities, relationship with the creator, etc.

The Origin and Spread of Mankind

Allah has made quite unequivocally clear in the *Quran* that he created all people from the same person, that his spouse was created from him and that he caused the spreading of a lot of men and women from them:

O mankind! Reverence your guardian-lord, who created you from a single person, created from him his mate and from them two scattered countless men and women... (*The Quran* 4:1)

O mankind! We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted. (*The Quran*: 49:13)

The divine wisdom in turning humanity into nations and tribes here can be found analogous to the logic we often apply in classifying and labeling the living species and the nonliving things in nature for the convenience of easy identification.

However, there might have been a reason for the dispersal from the side of human beings also. Allah further clarifies that human beings were initially one community and that he sent his messengers and divine scriptures to them for their guidance. Yet they split up into several peoples and races in the course of time on account of the hatred among themselves and their negligence of Allah's instructions. The dispute and hatred among them arose only after they were given divine guidance. Yet the righteous were given further guidance to the truth:

Mankind was one single nation. Then Allah sent the messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them he sent the book in truth to judge between people in matters

wherein they differed. Those who were given the book did not differ among themselves after the clear signs had come to them except through selfish contumacy. Allah, however, guided the believers to the truth by his grace in the matter that they differed. Allah guides whom he wills to a path that is straight. (*The Quran* 2:213)

It is quite clear from this that the scattering of human beings all over the planet was initiated by the differences, disputes and hatred among them that arose even after divine messengers and divine books were sent to them. This predicament was obviously part of Allah's designs or intentions. He has made it clear that he could have kept humanity together as a single community had he intended so. But he didn't do so as he wanted to show his mercy to whom he intends and leave the wrong doers to their choice.

If Allah had willed, he could have made them a single people. But he admits whom he wills to his mercy. And the wrong-doers will have neither protector nor helper. (*The Quran* 42:8)

If your lord had so willed, he could have made mankind one people. But they will not cease to dispute, except those on whom your lord has bestowed his mercy. And it was for this that he created them. And the word of your lord shall be fulfilled: "I will fill hell with jinns and men all together. (*The Quran* 11: 118-9)

The Great Deluge

The scattering of human race, as could be understood from the *Quran*, had not taken place until the great deluge during the time of prophet Nuh(Noah). A vessel for sailing across sea was made for the first time in history by the prophet Nuh, and that too under the special guidance and supervision of Allah, for the rescue of the righteous from the flood that was to come as a divine punishment for those in disbelief and defiance. The sole survivors of the deluge on the planet were Nuh and his followers. Everyone else was drowned and fully wiped out from the surface of the earth.

Nuh called out to us crying. And we are the best to hear prayer. And we delivered him and his people from the great calamity and made his progeny to endure. And we left (this blessing) for him among generations to come in later times: "peace and salutation to Nuh among the nations." Thus indeed we do reward those who do right, for he was one of our believing servants. Then the rest we overwhelmed in the flood. (*The Quran* 37: 75-82)

The survivors of the flood, in the course of time, scattered all over the world with the help of the new invention i.e. the vessel for sea voyages. This was part of Allah's definite plan and executed for the reasons mentioned above. Nuh naturally was a revered patriarch common to all races and communities on all parts of the planet. A vague memory of a great deluge also can be traced out in the lore of all cultures.

Ibraheem, the Great Post-Deluge Patriarch of Humanity

The greatest leader of the human society in the post deluge era was Ibraheem (Abraham).

Verily among those who followed his (Nuh) way was Ibraheem. (*The Quran* 37: 83)

He was the third key figure in the human race, after Adam and Nuh. The *Quran* describes him as a "whole nation" (*The Quran* 16: 120). He represents a crucial stage in the history of the human race. The followers of the three great Semitic religions look upon him with great reverence as their great leader and guide. He was entrusted with the great divine

mission of paving the way for unifying the human race scattered all over the earth on the basis of allegiance to Allah, the creator.

And remember that Ibraheem was tried by his lord with certain commands which he fulfilled. He said: "I will make you an Imam / leader to the mankind." He pleaded: "And also from among my offspring!" He answered: 'But my promise is not within the reach of evil-doers.'" (*The Quran* 2: 124)

The Kaaba

Contrary to the implications of the biblical story of the Tower of Babel, the benevolent and merciful god directed Ibraheem and his son Ismail / Ishmael to rebuild the structure of the Kaaba at Makkah (Mecca), the most ancient house on the planet built for the worship of Allah, and call upon all the mankind scattered all over the world to return to the worship and allegiance of Allah and accept the Kaaba as their qibla (direction in prayer) and make pilgrimage to it. Ibraheem's call was, in fact, a great call of the patriarch of the human race to get united in the name of allegiance to their true lord and creator and not to continue to remain divided and scattered. The words of the *Quran* recounting these incidents are quite enlightening:

Remember, we made the house (Kaaba) a place of assembly for men and a place of safety. And you take the station of Ibraheem as a place of prayer. And we covenanted with Ibraheem and Ismail that they should sanctify my house for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow or prostrate themselves (in prayer).

And remember, Ibraheem said: My lord, make this a city of peace and feed with fruits its people such of them as believe in Allah and the last day. He said: Yea, and for such as reject faith, I will grant pleasure for a while and then drive them to the torment of fire, an evil destination (indeed)!

And remember, Ibraheem and Ismail raised the foundations of the house (Kaaba) with this prayer: "Our lord! Accept (this service) from us: for you are the all-hearing, the all-knowing."

Our lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to thy will, and make of our progeny a people who are Muslims, bowing to thy will; and show us our places for the celebration of due rites; and turn unto us in mercy; for you are the oft-returning, most merciful. (*The Quran* 2: 125-8)

The Kaaba was, according to the *Quran*, the first house (temple) built for the worship of Allah.

The first house (of worship) stationed for men was at Bakkah (Makkah), full of blessing and of guidance for all people in the world. (*The Quran* 3: 96)

It is held to have been built in its rudimentary form during the time of the prophet Adam, the first man on the earth and *the hajar al-aswad*, the black stone on it brought from the heaven, functions as a land mark for mankind that reminds them of their past, their origin, their ancestry and their covenant with Allah. It is, further, a road-sign for them not to lose their direction in the course of time.

Ibraheem's Call

Ibraheem's role is poignant as the one who undertook the great singular effort to unite the humanity, lying scattered all over the globe following the deluge, on the ideological ground of allegiance to Allah, the creator. Ibraheem and Ismail together not only raised the structure of the Kaaba once again and kept it sanctified but also, following Allah's instruction, called upon

humanity to make pilgrimage to this ancient house of worship in response to Allah's call. The response to Ibraheem's call was quite tremendous as the *Quran* has made clear.

(And we told him): "Proclaim the pilgrimage among the mankind. They will come to you on foot and on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways." (*The Quran* 22: 27)

Ibraheem's Prayer

Thus Ibraheem was a great patriarch who successfully united the children of Adam in a superb way after the deluge and the scattering. He not only gathered humanity together once again but also showed them the path to be followed so that they will not fall out of the favor of Allah afterwards. He was quite concerned about the possibility of their losing sight of direction after him that he makes a very touching prayer to Allah asking him to send to them a messenger to teach them the divine wisdom:

Our Lord, send amongst them an apostle of their own who shall rehearse your signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom and sanctify them, for you are the exalted in might, the wise. (*The Quran* 2: 129)

One cannot overlook the fact that the *Quran* treats this prayer of Ibraheem with great importance and that the Kaaba as well as its location is of great significance in the general treatment of the *Quran*.

Ibraheem's effort was not a simple attempt to unite humanity but to bring back home the lost found children of Adam to Makkah, the very cradle of human civilization, and to the divine light that they had lost sight of over the centuries and for several of their reasons.

Muhammad, the Final Messenger

That Muhammad, the final messenger and seal of the long line of divine prophets to humanity, was sent to Makkah as requested by Ibraheem adds to the significance of this place. Muhammad, in the words of the *Quran*, was not a messenger to a section of the human society like many of the messengers before him:

We have not sent you but (as a universal messenger) to mankind as a whole, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin); but most men do not understand. (*The Quran* 34: 28)

The rationale of the final messenger to the human race being sent to Makkah is quite clear. The mission was being completed where it had begun long ago at the beginning of human presence on the earth. The circle was complete. The light of divine message and guidance was completed and consummated where it had been kindled long ago. Now the human race had just to follow it and be led to their final destination.

Ummul Qura (the Mother of Cities)

The *Quran* describes Makkah or Bakkah as *umm ul-qura* which means 'mother of cities' or 'the source or centre of cities'.

Thus have we sent by inspiration to you an Arabic Quran that you may warn the mother of cities and all around her, and warn them of the day of assembly of which there is no doubt when some will be in the garden and some in the blazing fire. (*The Quran* 42:7)

According to this Quranic extract, the divine revelation of the *Quran* sent to Muhammad was meant for warning the people of Makkah, the mother of cities, and all around it. It has already been shown above based on the Quranic quote that Muhammad's mission was meant for the humanity as a whole. To put it in other words, the world of human habitation, as the *Quran* visualizes it, is like Makkah, the mother of cities, the origin and source, in the centre and

all other cities, that human beings later on scattered to, around it. It is sufficiently clear from the implications of the Quranic extract that Makkah was the very source and origin of human civilization and that it was the place where Adam, his wife Hawwa (Eve) and their children settled down for the first time and began the worship of Allah at the ancient house before they or their children moved away to other parts. Moving away from the place might have been quite inevitable for survival as Makkah was well-known throughout history for being a rocky, barren, infertile, territory unsuitable for cultivation or habitation as is clear from the prayer of Ibraheem for his family that he left alone there:

Our lord, I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation by your sacred house, in order, our lord, that they may establish regular prayer. So make the hearts of some among men lean towards them (with sympathy and affection), and feed them with fruits so that they may be grateful (to you). (*The Quran* 14: 37)

Initially, and for a fairly long period, people might have strayed only for their basic requirements like food, water, etc. and could have come back easily to the centre where they had the landmark of the black stone. They didn't lose direction or get lost. But as the human community grew in size and their requirements in life forced them to move quite far, they might have got out of touch with the center, lost their way and did not come back at all. Even the sacred house for Allah's worship there and the land mark of the black stone might have been forgotten in the course of time.

The *Quran*, the Final Testament to Humanity in Arabic

Now comes the question of Muhammad, the final messenger, being given the divine book in Arabic. In several contexts, including the one quoted above, the *Quran* emphasizes that this final testament, meant for the humanity as a whole, has been sent in Arabic language. What is the justification for the choice of Arabic for this purpose?

The Quran doesn't give undue importance or superiority to any of the languages. On the other hand, it looks upon the question of linguistic diversity as a matter of divine intention and among his great signs. Neither did Muhammad, the final messenger of Allah to mankind, treat any particular language as superior. Nor did he view even the speakers of Arabic, the language of the *Quran*, as superior to the rest. The criterion for superiority according to his teachings was not language, race or any such but piety or heedfulness and fear of Allah evinced in one's life.

Diversification of Tongues

However, the words of the *Quran* concerning the question of linguistic diversity give very helpful clues and suggestive implications:

And among his signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variations in your languages and your colors; verily in that are signs for those who know. (*The Quran* 30: 22)

The diversification of human tongues, thus, according to the *Quran*, was among the great signs of Allah and not a result of a divine curse as the biblical story the Tower of Babel suggests. However, the Arabic word "ikhtilaf" which has been translated as "variations" here is to be particularly analyzed. The Arabic root of this word "ikhtalafa" suggests "to have difference of opinion" or "to disagree" rather than "diversity" or "variation."

Ummul Alsina, the Mother of Tongues

Considering the word "ikhtalafa" in the socio-cultural situation, one will easily find that the word is used intentionally and it implies the process of variations in language. Human

society had just one language in the beginning. All languages in use in human society today have derived from the same original tongue as a result of differences of opinion that led families to move from the centre to the various parts of the globe. Thus, the scattering of humans all over the world straying far from the “ummulqura” (the mother of cities) and the establishment of various cities all around occurred synchronized with the deviation from the “ummulsina (the mother of the tongues) and the emergence of the rest of the languages or the various mother tongues of the diverse nations and societies.

Though a slow and gradual process, over a long period, the little changes that occurred every moment grew into such a worth-reckoning phenomenon that each such noteworthy movement led to the emergence of a new tongue. This phenomenon is still at work and can be proved quite easily if one makes a retrospection into the diversification of English, the most modern of the world languages, into several varieties, British, American, Australian, etc. In the modern times, in the presence of modern technology and communication facilities, the straying will not cause languages to be fully out of touch with each other and to lose the thread of the roots.

Thus that all the languages in the world today had their origin from the one and the same source language at various stages in history is not difficult to visualise. The process of transition or metamorphosis also is not difficult to comprehend. The major difficulty is in identifying the mother of tongues, the original language that was the source of all other languages. An amount of ratiocination in the light of the implications of some of the Quranic remarks will help us derive helpful light and guidance in this connection.

Why in Arabic?

The Quran makes it unequivocally clear that Muhammad is the final messenger of Allah to the mankind as a whole and that the *Quran*, the final testament to the humanity as a whole, was judiciously sent in Arabic language.

Ha-Mim. By the book that makes things clear, we have made it a *Quran* in Arabic that you may be able to understand (and learn wisdom). And verily, it is in the mother of the book in our presence, high (in dignity), full of wisdom. (*The Quran* 43:1- 4)

Thus have we sent by inspiration to you an Arabic Quran that you may warn the mother of cities and all around her, and warn them of the day of assembly of which there is no doubt when some will be in the garden and some in the blazing fire. (*The Quran* 42:7)

Had we sent this as a Quran (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said: “Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (a book) not in Arabic and (a messenger) an Arab?” Say: “It is a guide and a healing to those who believe; and for those who believe not, there is a sort of deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their (eyes). They are (as it were) being called from a place far distant!” (*The Quran* 41: 44)

Ha - Mim. A revelation from (Allah) most gracious, most merciful. A book, whereof the verses are explained in detail; a Quran in Arabic, for people who understand. (*The Quran* 41: 1-3)

We have put forth for men, in this Quran, every kind of parable, in order that they may receive admonition. (It is) a Quran in Arabic, without any crookedness (therein); in order that they may guard against evil. (*The Quran* 39: 27-8)

The simple logic of the *Quran* being in Arabic, as pointed out above, is that it was revealed to a messenger who was from among the Arabs and the immediate society that it addressed was the Arabs. Another reason which has often been pointed out in justification of

the choice of Arabic for the revelation of the final message to humanity is that Arabic is capable of hidden suggestiveness or allusiveness and multiple layers of implied meanings much more than any other language in the world today. Any linguist with an amount of scholarship in Arabic language and capable of the textual analysis of the *Quran* will admit this fact.

But what one finds a little bit difficult to understand initially is the issue concerning Allah's remark quoted above: "Had we sent this as a *Quran* (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said: "Why are not its verses explained in detail?" The delicacy involved here is that the *Quran* is the final message to the humanity as a whole and the objections that the Arabs would have raised may be raised by the non-Arabs now as *the Quran* was revealed in Arabic and not in their respective tongues. However, this issue wouldn't have come up seriously if Arabic had been the mother of tongues just as Makkah was the mother of cities. It is quite logical, just and reasonable that the *Quran*, the final testament, was revealed in the language that was the source of all other languages and from which all other languages have taken their origin.

It is to be further understood that all the known divine scriptures before *the Quran* were revealed in languages other than Arabic and all the known divine messengers after the time of Nuh till the time of Muhammad had come to non-Arab communities. *The Quran* is the only divine book known to have been revealed in Arabic. As for the earliest human society on the earth, no divine scripture is known to have been revealed for their guidance. It had, probably, not been necessary to send a scripture in Arabic as people then, presumably, had not been literate enough to follow textual messages or the society then had not been large enough to make a textual document necessary. It was a small society consisting of just a couple and their progeny. By the time the messengers with divine scriptures came in the subsequent ages, the human society had already been split up and had started speaking various tongues and Arabic was not the tongue common for humanity as a whole any longer.

It is true that Arabic language, like all other languages in the world, has undergone changes over the years, even since the time of the revelation of the *Quran*. However, its basic frame or structure has evidently succeeded in resisting the possible shape-altering changes over the last fifteen hundred years. It is quite reasonable to suppose that the basic features of this language might have been the same from time immemorial and that every major change that occurred had led to the birth of a new language which was not Arabic but a deviation from it.

Scientific Supports and Etymological Evidence

This conclusion derived from inferences based on the *Quran*, however, lacks authority in the epistemological terms of our day until it is established with scientific evidence. However, going by the fact that all existing human speech is one in the essential characteristics and that all diverse realizations of that human speech have a big chance to have originated from the same source, a study in this direction is worth undertaking. A collective effort on the part of philologists, etymologists, historians of language and culture and other experts is required for establishing this point.

At the present stage, one can only say that there are a number of factors that encourage one to go ahead with the effort of looking for scientific evidence to establish this conclusion. That Arabic is one of the oldest languages known to us is one of these factors. It was the language of the dwellers of the Arabian deserts long before the *Quran* was revealed. These people were nomads and not settled down in any particular place for a fairly long period in

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history. Therefore, they had no established culture or literature that could be easily traced and used for philological study helpful in this connection except for a few centuries before the revelation of the *Quran* which happened in the 7th century A. D. However, the petroglyphs in the Arabian peninsula, the inscriptions on the walls of the sandstone cliff houses in Madain Salih / Al-Hijr in Al-Ula, in K.S.A. that show a good deal of resemblance with the Arabic script, the noticeable resemblance the Semitic languages like Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Nabataean, etc. have with Arabic, in vocabulary, script, etc. suggest that modern Arabic language derived from an ancestral language common for all these and many others or all these languages have derived from *Proto-Arabic*, the language believed to have existed before all these. Many hundreds of words in many of the languages in the world have been convincingly traced to have their etymological roots in Arabic. Serious and careful etymological studies will further yield a good deal of very enlightening information on the mutual indebtedness of languages and bring to light the routes and movements which will further help our investigation in this direction. Since such an investigation is not within the scope and purview of this treatise, that phase of the study is summarily kept aside for an exclusive undertaking.

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