

An Introduction to the Glorious Quran

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A simple exposition of the way in which the Qur'an presents itself in its own terms and how this can be disclosed through a careful reading of the text. It answers several common questions about the Qur'an.

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Category:

Qur'anic Sciences [5]

Topic Tags:

Quran [6]

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Dedication

To

My beloved mother

Homa Samii

My life is barren without your love

Enlighten your homes by recitation of the Glorious Qur'an... Goodness prevails and blessing spreads in a

house where the Noble Qur'an is read very often. Such a house illuminates for the celestial inhabitants as the stars shine for the terrestrial beings. 1

A house in which the Glorious Qur'an is recited and the name of God the Exalted is frequently mentioned shall be a very blessed home. Angels will be present in it and satans shall be far from it. Such houses radiate for the divine residents as stars shine for the inhabitants of the earth. And the house in which the Noble Qur'an is not read and the name and remembrance of the Almighty God is not uttered, is desecrated. Angels keep away from and satans keep presence in these homes.2

1. A hadith from The Prophet Muhammad (SA), al-Usul of al-Kafi chapter "Homes in which the Glorious Qur'an is read".

2. A hadith from Hadrat 'Ali (PBUH), al-Usul of al-Kafi, chapter "Homes in which the Glorious Qur'an is read"

Abbreviations and Qur'anic Names Used in this Book

Abbreviation Table

A) From expressions in English

- * (PBUH) is an abbreviation for "peace be upon him or her"
- * (PBUT) is an abbreviation for "peace be upon them"
- * (A.H.) for After Hijrah (the Migration from Makkah to Madinah)
- * (B.H.) for Before Hijrah
- * (L.H.C.) for Lunar Hijri Calendar
- * (S.H.C.) for Solar Hijri Calendar

B) From expressions in Arabic

- * (SA) is an abbreviation of an Arabic expression, meaning: Allah's peace and blessing be upon him and his kinsfolk
- * (A.S.) means: peace (salam) be upon him or her
- * (R.A.) means may Allah be pleased with him
- * (A.ft) means may Allah accelerate his Noble Manifestation (Relief)

English Equivalent of Quranic Names

Hadrat Ibrahim, A.S. – Prophet Abraham, PBUH
Hadrat Idris, A.S. – Prophet Enoch, PBUH
Hadrat Ishaq, A.S. – Prophet Isaac, PBUH
Hadrat Isma'il, A.S. – Prophet Ishmael, PBUH
Hadrat 'Isa Masih, A.S. – Prophet Jesus Christ, PBUH
Hadrat Adam, A.S. – Prophet Adam, PBUH
Hadrat al-Yasa', A.S. – Prophet Elisha, PBUH
Hadrat Ayyub, A.S. – Prophet Job, PBUH
Hadrat Dawad, A.S. – Prophet David, PBUH
Hadrat Hud, A.S. – Prophet Had, PBUH
Hadrat Jibril, A.S. – Angel Gabriel, PBUH
Hadrat Musa, A.S. – Prophet Moses, PBUH
Hadrat Nuh, A.S. – Prophet Noah, PBUH
Hadrat Salih, A.S. – Prophet Salih, PBUH
Hadrat Shu'ayb, A.S. – Prophet Jethro, PBUH
Hadrat Sulayman, A.S. – Prophet Solomon, PBUH
Hadrat Ya'qub, A.S. – Prophet Jacob, PBUH
Hadrat Yahya, A.S. – Prophet John the Baptist, PBUH
Hadrat Yunus, A.S. – Prophet Jonah, PBUH
Hadrat Yusuf, A.S. – Prophet Joseph, PBUH

About the Author

Bahram Samii was born in the city of Shiraz, in 1939. Upon completion of his Petroleum Engineering degree from the University of Tehran, he left Iran to continue his education in the United States of America, in 1962. He started his career with Standard Oil Company of California (now Chevron) as soon as he received his Master's degree in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In 1969, he joined the Iranian oil industry, and served in various engineering departments until he joined the rapidly expanding operations of the North Sea oil industry in Aberdeen, Scotland. Incidentally, this move was made in mid-October, 1978, only about four months before the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. His employer, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, transferred Bahram from Scotland to California, in 1983, to join the corporation's headquarters of its worldwide engineering activities.

His job was the task of facilitating the Director of Europe and Middle East Petroleum Engineering with

economic studies for project ranking and strategic decision making. 1986 was a critical year for the oil industry in which many lost their jobs; Bahram was no exception. While many were sad, Bahram kept saying: "Thank God Who may have planned something better for me". This refers to the essence of a beautiful Iranian poem, which says: "If God closes a door out of His Wisdom, He opens another, out of His Grace."

A significant turning point was forming in Bahram's life. God's will was to subdue his earthly matters and to compensate for this by arousing his spiritual life. Initially, he himself, his colleagues, and his lovely wife tried hard to set up various oil (and non-oil) related businesses. But it was obvious to those around him that God had something else in store for him. A variety of irresistible forces induced him more and more toward the study of the Glorious Qur'an and the omnipotent Islamic belief. All glory and thanks belong to God.

The most effective one of these forces were the love of his family and the occurrence of certain grave events. This created the main driving force pulling him closer to the spiritual aspect of life, and a desire to learn about God and His recommended way of life. He found the Glorious Qur'an the best guide to inspire him. The second important feature was the charisma of a great man, Hadrat 'Imam Khomeini (R.A.).

Without having met him, and with miles of physical distance between them, the radiant character of this great leader had a striking impact on Bahram. Interestingly enough, misinformed Bahram was initially somewhat suspicious of Ayatullah Khomeini's mission! However, his words and deeds gradually convinced Bahram about the Great Ayatullah's spiritual character, strength and wisdom (R.A.).

This generated curiosity to read first, his biography, then, about the system that built his character (i.e. Islam) and finally the Glorious Qur'an as the basis and foundation of Islam. The third great force was the effect of certain spectacular dreams, dramatic visions, and prayer sessions at the beginning of this drive.

Bahram is devastated by the extent to which the enemies of Islam, from both within and without, have collectively managed to change the real picture of Islam, and that of Muslims into an ugly and unbecoming one. No matter how divided they may be in their own beliefs, they become united allies when they face Islam.

Bahram is deeply disturbed when he sees that they have managed to deceive a worldful of people by manipulating and falsifying the rule of God in order to justify their own illegitimate earthly desires or practices. He is greatly concerned about the innocent young people who could easily fall into their traps under various great-sounding but deluding and unpalatable banners.

With this brief background, the motivation for this work – and hopefully others in future – becomes overwhelming and overpowering. He himself was the victim of a lengthy period of unawareness, and he hopes to compensate for this setback by raising the sense of awareness of others of the *Reality*, and in particular, that of the innocent, lovely young people living under the subduing and often misleading

influence of Western culture.

Acknowledgements

Unending glory to God, The Exalted, Who granted me the primary inspiration and stamina all along to complete this humble work. This small contribution, if just and correct, is only a drop of appreciation for His ocean of munificence.

Every individual member of my family was a source of motivation and stimulation for the production of this modest contribution, possibly without being aware of this influence. This work would never have been initiated, pursued, or completed had it not been for their love, next to the reverence and the cause of Almighty God. I felt their inspiration behind every letter, word and keystroke, all along. May God bless them with Great reward for their mysterious hidden inducement. They have gracefully sacrificed the time, attention and other resources that would have been available to them had I not diverted my attention to this effort. May God always protect them from all devils and guide them in the right direction.

I am greatly indebted to Muhsin Jahangiri, professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences of the University of Tehran. He generously donated his time, in Oxford, to examine this very humble contribution in detail from an ideological viewpoint. I am very grateful for his valuable contribution and encouragement.

I am greatly indebted to the late Charles L. Janssens, retired professor of French, German and English at various institutions (including the University of Arizona, San Jose State University, California, and the University of Houston, Texas) and ex-Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature at Jundi Shapur University, Iran.

He has kindly and sincerely donated much of his valuable time to scrutinize this work from the English-language point of view. It is regrettable that Janssens passed away on 27th of November 1995, only a few months after his lasting contribution in this work. May God bless him for his sincere assistance.

Last, but definitely not least, I am also greatly indebted to 'Tahereh Saffarzadeh, popular and prominent poet, whose thought-provoking message has reached all corners of the world. This dynamic pious lady studied in Iran, England and America in contemporary literature with special focus on major poets, practical literary criticism and translation.

On returning home, she felt mostly concerned about the anti-traditional and "westernized intellectuals" who lose their identity and become disloyal and insincere toward their own countries, nations, and

genuine culture and heritage. Her sincerity toward the oppressed is obvious in her wide-ranging work. She has written eight volumes of poems in addition to other valuable publications. She adores the Glorious Qur'an incessantly and looks for her poetic expressions in this Noble Book and the rich Islamic traditions, in a world governed by laic and vulnerable minds.

Saffarzadeh, the most distinguished poet of Islamic thoughts, has also served as a university teacher, and in several reforming and constructive cultural and educational projects. Currently she is in charge of reviewing, composing and producing high standard university books in English, in addition to other activities, including translation of the Glorious Qur'an into English. She has helped me tremendously to finalize this book.

Preface

By John Cooper

The Holy Qur'an, the scripture of the Islamic religion, was first translated into English by Alexander Ross in 1649, after a French version by Andre du Ryer. After three and a half centuries, and many subsequent translations, however, it still remains a closed text to most English readers.

Many reasons can no doubt be found for the apparent difficulties encountered in efforts to engage with the Qur'an in English; some of these will be to do with problems of language, others with more complex matters of religious, social, and political history and their influence on a particular translator's motivation and the individual's response to the Book, as the Qur'an calls itself.

It is rarely a comfort for the reader to be told that there exists a vast learned literature, composed by Muslim scholars down through the centuries, devoted to the genre of *tafsir*, or commentary on the Qur'an; this can be rather more intimidating than comforting. Moreover, the twentieth century has witnessed a growing literature in English on the Qur'an, written both by Muslims and non-Muslims, but which is also more often than not directed at the scholarly reader, and can leave someone wishing a simple introduction in a state of frustration.

What is very often needed by a person coming to this scripture for the first time with a sincere desire to penetrate its meaning is some guide as to how it influences the ordinary believer, how it exerts its effect on his or her life, and how it penetrates the deepest layers of a Muslim's conscience. This work by Bahram Samii marks a significant effort to give just such an introduction.

The author has avoided an academic style, and has instead concentrated on a simple exposition of the way in which the Qur'an presents itself in its own terms and how this can be disclosed through a careful reading of the text. It cannot, of course, be done without some knowledge of the Arabic in which the

Qur'an was revealed to The Prophet Muhammad (SA) over fourteen centuries ago, and this terminology has been explained to a sufficient degree for the non-expert to understand the sometimes very different meanings which such a vocabulary has when compared to its contemporary English translations.

Naturally, the meaning of the Qur'anic text has been the subject of the profoundest meditations and discussions throughout the history of Islamic scholarship, and the author has incorporated some of this material, especially through the comments of contemporary Muslim translators and scholars; but this has been kept to a minimum so as to avoid overburdening the reader with unnecessary complexities.

Whoever is beginning to read the Qur'an in English will be able to use this work to understand how the book is not an impenetrable text but a living guide for the life of the ordinary, thinking Muslim, the key to the understanding of the Islamic view of the world and how the Muslim relates to other views of the world in our times.

The author has not, however, made any compromises in order to present his ideas, and what will strike the reader is the straightforward manner in which he has managed to communicate his own deeply committed reflections on the Qur'an, reflections with which the reader will easily be able to sympathize. This book will surely serve as an invaluable companion for those setting out on the stimulating journey to discover the message that the Qur'an extends to everyone who is prepared to listen to what it has to say.

John Cooper,
Cambridge 1997.

Foreword

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

The Great Qur'an is known to be the most authenticated Book in the world. It is also the most widely and most frequently read Book, and has maintained this worldwide recognition for centuries. As you read through the book in your hand, you shall discover why the Glorious Qur'an is so popular. The reading of the Holy Qur'an is considered a pious duty by Muslims.

They believe that blessings flow even from the sound of its recitation. There is historical evidence indicating that from the very beginning, it made a profound impression on those who came to believe in it by hearing it.

By now, people all over the world have enjoyed this pleasant internal sensation for centuries, and shall continue doing so for the reasons we shall read in this book. Many people, men and women, children or

adults, learn the entire Book by heart. Some people read the complete Qur'an several times during the blessed month of *Ramadan*. Many commit themselves to read it at least once in this month.

Not everybody, however, is familiar with this Holy Book. In fact, those who have not had the opportunity to become acquainted with the Noble Qur'an, may have a completely distorted impression about this unique Divine Scripture, as it has been subjected to ardent misrepresentation by powerful media for centuries.

The deeper one goes into the world of Qur'anic knowledge, the more enjoyable the recitation of this Holy Book becomes. After all it is a part of our instinctive nature; it is the purest Voice of our Loving Creator. Its adoration is beautifully inherent in the heart of humankind. *An Introduction To The Glorious Qur'an* is intended to give a portrait of the Holy Qur'an in a manner which is easy to follow for those who have not had the chance to become familiar with this Great Book.

The grandeur of this Miraculous Scripture has often put beginners off, but it has also caused scholars to find satisfaction in immersing themselves deeply in the ocean of the Precious Qur'an. Therefore, some of their writings can be found to be too deep and, perhaps, tiresome for the uninitiated.

This book is designed for easy and exciting reading by letting the Great Qur'an talk about Itself. This is why there is no "reference" section at the end of this book; it mainly consists of *ayat* 1 of the Glorious Qur'an, comments by my humble self, and a few authoritative scholars, as referenced in the text or endnotes.

This writing is meant to take you through a gradual and systematic understanding of the Miraculous Book. Even those who are familiar with the Glorious Qur'an may find this treatise stimulating when they obtain a global overview of this Holy Guidebook for mankind.

The meaning of the Arabic word, *Al-Qur'an*, is "The Reading, The Recitation (aloud) and The Collection". The Miraculous Qur'an has successfully created a new phase of human thought and has greatly affected the lives of millions of people the world over.

While the Great Qur'an strictly prohibits the roots of all evils such as interest (usury), oppression, corruption, adultery, intoxicants, gambling, etc., it constantly reminds us of Divine mercy and compassion. The Glorious Qur'an introduces the Hereafter as the ultimate residence of peace, serenity, security and permanence for those who follow the path of God, but of Hell-Fire for those who do not. It leaves us totally accountable for our deeds in this world: either we end up in the Garden or in Hell.

The most important feature of the Holy Qur'an is its purity; every word of it is the word of God the Exalted. It is not a book written by Muhammad (SA), but as we shall see, the Glorious Qur'an is a collection of revelations, exactly as revealed to Muhammad (SA). He was specially chosen to be the "means" through which the words were revealed and recited. His own words (collected by his disciples and known as *hadith(s)* or tradition(s)) are distinctly different from the revealed words of God, as will be

discussed later.

The Glorious Qur'an is a distinguished masterpiece of Arabic literature, unmatched throughout the life of humankind. The Great Book Itself challenges humankind to match it, and says "you cannot!" It is a great miracle that the Holy Qur'an has not been successfully challenged for over 1400 years. In fact God has taken it upon Himself to protect it, as it is mentioned in this Glorious Book Itself.

God gave miracles to all His prophets and apostles as proofs of their Divinity: Gone are the apostles, prophets and their miracles, except for the miracle of The Last Prophet, Muhammad (SA). God gave him a nonperishing miracle, one whose hidden wisdom has been gradually unravelled throughout the past fourteen centuries, and more is yet to be discovered as knowledge improves. These subjects will be briefly dealt with in this writing.

This Great Book repeatedly appeals to us to think, reason, and understand why we believe what we believe, and forbids us to believe blindly without pondering and reasoning. For those who wish to open their heart and intellect, there is plenty of evidence in the Holy Qur'an to consolidate their belief. Those who do not want to believe will refuse to believe no matter how sound the proof may be.

1. Please refer to the Glossary

Physical Aspects of the Noble Qur'an

The Precious Qur'an consists of 114 *surahs*¹ and 6256 *ayat*, some 77,436 words and about 320,211 letters.² These numbers may be reported differently from scholar to scholar depending on the method of counting the Arabic words and letters, and sometimes depending on the division or grouping of certain *ayat*. The entire Book was revealed in 23 years through 194 revelations with the last revelation in the 11th year after the *Hijrah* (the migration from Makkah to Madinah). On an average basis, one *ayah*, of about 12 words was revealed per day (but not, of course, every day in practice).

The longest *surah* in the Noble Qur'an is *surah al-Baqarah* with 286 *ayat* and in it occurs the longest *ayah* (2:282). The shortest *surah* is *surah al-Kawthar* (108) with only three short *ayat*. A total of 92 *surahs* were revealed in Makkah before Muhammad (SA), migrated to Madinah (beginning of the *Hijri* calendar), and the other 22 *surahs* were revealed in Madinah.

The first *surah* of the Glorious Qur'an is *al-Fatihah* (The Opening). Each *surah* is named after some striking incident or purpose, or after a key word in that *surah*. To emphasise the deserving importance of the entire being, and the environment in which the human being lives, Almighty God has granted many

environmental names to the *surahs* of the Holy Qur'an, such as The Night, The Day, The Spider, The Honeybee, The Dawn, The Time, The Sun, The Moon, etc.

All the *surahs* of the Holy Qur'an begin with *Bismillahi 'r-Rahmani 'r-Raham* (in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate) to keep reminding us of His endless Mercy and His all-encompassing Compassion, except for *surah at-Tawbah (9)*, meaning Repentance. This may indicate the degree of God's anger with those who insist on disobeying Him. In contrast, this key word for the Grace, Blessing and Mercy of God has been effectively used twice in the Opening *surah (al-Fatihah)*.

For the convenience of those who wish to read all the *surahs* of this great book over a fixed period, the Glorious Qur'an is divided into 30 equal parts, each called one *juz'* (*plural, ajza'* meaning parts), or into seven equal segments, each called a *manzil*. Each *juz'* is subdivided into two *hizbs* (sections) which are further divided in four *rubs* (quarters). Therefore, if one reads one *rub* every night, the entire Qur'an will be read in about eight months. Similarly, if one wishes to read the complete Qur'an in one week, one must read one *manzil* a day. Large *surahs* of the Glorious Qur'an are also divided into *rukuc* according to the meaning of the passage.

The Noble Qur'an has been well preserved in its original form throughout fourteen centuries in two ways: 1) in writing, and 2) by memorising and passing the words from the heart of one generation into that of another. Two copies of the original standard Qur'an still exist today, one in Istanbul³ (Turkey) and one in Tashkent⁴ (Uzbekistan).

The Glorious Qur'an is considered to be so Holy that Muslims treat it with enormous respect.

While It is being read:

- You must not speak
- You must not eat or drink
- You must concentrate quietly.

It is not to be touched unnecessarily. Before reading it or touching it:

- You must wash thoroughly
- You must be in the right frame of mind and have good intentions
- You must seek refuge in God from satan's wicked intentions
- Women should be clear from menstruation.

Upon completion of its recitation one should conclude the session with certain phrases, at least stating that the Exalted God speaks the Truth, His Blessings be upon Muhammad (SA) and his kinsfolk. But normally, a longer prayer is recited.

When not being recited, it should be:

- Placed high up, so that nothing is put on top of it
- Kept covered with a light cloth to shield it from dust.

I shall refrain from describing this unique Book of Divine Guidance in my own humble words and examine how the Great Qur'an Itself defines Its own aspects.

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1. Please refer to the Glossary.
 2. "The history of the collection of the Glorious Qur'an", Sayyid Muhammad Rida Jalali Na'ini (Farsi), 1365 (1986), p 148.
 3. Istanbul is a corrupted name for the city of Islambul. The old Constantinople (during the Byzantine Empire) was re-named Islambul by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II. Islambul is a Turkish expression meaning "where Muslims are plentiful". Istanbul has no relevant meaning. The closest expression is a Greek one, Eistanpolin, meaning "toward the city!"
 4. This is known as the Tashkent Qur'an. It is related to the time of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, and was kept in Khaji 'Ubeydullah Ahrar mosque in Samarqand. Later, It was moved to Petersburg museum during the Tzars' rule in Russia. Late in 1918 It was brought back to Samarqand ceremonially. This Valuable Qur'an was later moved to Tashkent museum (reference: Tarikh al-Mushaf al-'Uthmani by Shiykh 'Ismail Makhdam).

The Glorious Qur'an, Self-Illuminating: Important Questions Answered By the Munificent Qura'an

The object of this chapter is to discover how the Miraculous Qur'an itself answers some of the questions raised by those who are curious about this Magnificent Book. This exercise is obviously limited to an **introductory** level, as the title of this book suggests:

1. Who revealed the Book?

"And this is a Book which We have revealed as a blessing. So follow it and be righteous, that you may receive mercy." (6: 155)

Quite clearly the Holy Qur'an asserts to be the revelation from God. In another phrase:

"1 - The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the exalted in Power, full of Wisdom. 2 - Verily, it is We Who have revealed the Book to thee, in Truth. So serve Allah offering Him sincere devotion." (39: 1 & 2 and 46:2)

This is a very important matter. There are many so-called divine books among people who cannot

substantiate the divinity of their Scriptures. The majority of such people believe this only because they were told so. But God reminds us repeatedly in the Glorious Qur'an that these *ayat* are bestowed upon us only by Him. As we shall see later, this Divine assertion is earnestly backed up by many features of the Glorious Qur'an such as its consistency, perfection, style, the authoritative inclusion of the Absolute and Eternal Knowledge about everything, its unique language, etc.

The name *Allah* has been used by God's prophets since The Prophet Adam (PBUH). This name comes from the combination of two Arabic expressions, *Al* (The) and *Ilah* (God), meaning "The God". For example, the Hebrew word *Eloha* (meaning the Creator) is the same as Allah. However, the Jews use the plural form, *Elohim*, which denotes more than one God. The Aramaic word, *Alaha*, for God, used by The Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH), sounds even closer to Allah. Therefore, even though this name may sound strange to non-Muslims, it was a familiar name to the previous prophets of God and their followers. Let us now examine if there is any difference between the two words, Allah and God.

The Supreme Being, the Creator, is free from being associated with partners or gender. He is unique and pure. Unfortunately, the word "God" has lost its uniqueness and purity. Unless we say "the God" it does not denote a unique being any more. And so long as we use words such as gods and goddesses, and follow duality, trinity, and multi-god worship, we have lost the purity of His name by associating gender and partners with Him. The word Allah (*Al-Ilah*), The God, is devoid of any association while it denotes the needed uniqueness. Moreover, it honours the integrity of the Unity of the Almighty God's religion from the very beginning, as other messengers of Allah the Exalted used the same word throughout. Now that we can appreciate this great difference between these two words, I would feel obliged to use the name Allah, not out of prejudice, but in order to reflect appropriately what is meant to be expressed.

2. How does the Precious Qur'an describe God the Exalted?

"Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, declares the Praises and Glory of Allah; for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. It is He Who gives Life and Death; and He has Power over all things. He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent (Hidden). And He has the full knowledge of all things. He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days (stages, long periods, or ages), then He established Himself on the Throne. He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what ascends up to it. And He is with you wheresoever you may be. And Allah sees well all that you do. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And all affairs go back to Allah. He merges Night into Day and He merges Day into Night. And He has the full Knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts." (57:1-6)

Or:

"Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god; Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He,

the Gracious, the Merciful. Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god; the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace, (and Perfection) the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme. Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Bestower of forms and colours. To Him belong the Most Glorious Names. Whatever is in the heavens and on earth doth declare His Praises and Glory. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (59:22–24)

Or:

"Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving (and causing life), the Eternal Self–subsisting by Whom all subsist. No slumber can overtake him nor sleep. All things in the heavens and on earth belong to Him. Who is he who can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knoweth what is before them and what is behind them, nor shall they grasp any matter of His knowledge except for what He pleases. His Throne extends over the heavens and earth, and the preservation of them tires Him not. And He is the High, the Supreme." (2:255)

Or:

"Say: He Allah is One. Allah is the Absolute Self–Sufficient. He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is not a single one to equate with Him." (112)

There are many more *ayat* describing the attributes of Allah the Almighty but these few may be sufficient to ask ourselves how we can consider a God who falls short of the qualities extracted from these four *ayat*. This would mean one who:

- is not being praised and glorified by all beings in the heavens and on earth,
- has no control over the dominion of the heavens and earth (cannot induce rain, earthquake, movement of the celestial bodies, etc.),
- cannot give life and death,
- has no power over all things,
- did not exist from "the Beginning" nor shall last to "the End",
- is indistinct and affected,
- does not have full Knowledge of all things,
- cannot create the heavens and earth,
- does not know the inflow and outflow of the heavens and earth,

- cannot be with you wheresoever you may be,
- does not see what you do,
- cannot receive all affairs; or all affairs do not go back to him,
- has no power over the emergence of day and night,
- has no knowledge of the secrets of all hearts,
- is not the Absolute Sovereign,
- cannot create nor originate,
- is not everliving,
- is not the Self-subsuming, and the Absolute Needless,
- gets tired and drowsy, or slumbers,
- is not One (the Only),
- is not the Absolute Self-sufficient (on Whom all others depend),
- begets or is begotten,
- is like others (taking spouse, having companions and colleagues).

This list can grow rapidly if one uses more *ayat* which describe Allah's attributes. It is obvious that one who is affected by a tiny insect and escapes from it cannot be considered The Almighty, no matter what names misguided and misdirected people may assign to him to justify their own belief, and perhaps to deceive and mislead others.

3. To whom was the Noble Qur'an revealed?

"And (as for) those who believe and perform acts of righteousness, and believe in the (revelation) sent down to Muhammad, which it is the Truth from their Lord, He will remove from them their ills and improve their condition." (47:2)

4. Who is Muhammad (SA)?

"And certainly, thou hast an exalted character." (68:4)

"Verily We have sent thee, in truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner But of thee no question shall be asked of the companions of the Blazing Fire." (2: 119)

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the rasul¹ of Allah, and the seal of the nabiy² and Allah has the full Knowledge of all things." (33:40)

Therefore, the message is quite clear that Muhammad (SA), was the *rasul* and the *nabiy* of Almighty Allah and that he was the last *nabiy*. These two words have been much misused and misinterpreted by Muslims and nonMuslims alike. Therefore, it is important to define them for clarity:

Rasul:³ The Arabic root for this word is "R-S-L", which denotes ideas such as message, letter, mission, delivering, and many others. Various words have been derived from this root. Two of these words are important in the context of our work:

* *Risalah*, meaning Mission, Apostleship, Message, Letter, Epistle, and

* *Rasul*, meaning Envoy, Messenger, Apostle.

Nabiy:⁴ The Arabic root is "N-B-'A", which denotes the idea of information and news. There are many words derived from this root, and all of them have to do with news and information; a few examples are: to announce (news) to anyone, to inform one another of, to prophesy, to enquire, the giver of news or information etc. In particular, there are three words which are important in the context of this work:

* *nubuwwah*, meaning Prophecy,

* *nabiy* (plural: *anbiya'*), meaning Prophet,

* *nabawiyy*, meaning Prophetic.

Therefore, a *nabiy* is one with whom Allah, the Exalted, has established a divine link. Ordinary pious people can also be inspired by Almighty Allah, but a *nabiy*, at a much higher level, can bring back Divine information (news) on what people have questioned.

A *rasul*, on the other hand, is commissioned with a major task, and is the Almighty Allah's ambassador and envoy to establish the "principles" of the way of life (*dins*). Therefore, *nubuwwah* (the ability to communicate with Allah) is a prerequisite for *Risalah* (being commissioned, Apostleship), and any *rasul* is automatically a *nabiy* (Prophet) by definition. But not all *nabiys* are, necessarily, *rasuls*. It is maintained that there have been some 124,000 *nabiys* and about 313 *rasuls* of Allah.

The word "seal" in this *ayah* asserts the completion of The Divine Message. When a document is sealed it is complete; no further additions, deletions, substitutions, or modifications can be made. Allah's guidance is and will always be continuous but there is no need for further *nabiys* to do so. The Final Divine Message is complete, according to this *ayah*, and no additional Prophecies are to be expected. Until the manifestation of Imam Al-Mahdi (A.F.), people will need thinkers and religious leaders – but not a new *nabiy* – to explore the truth already revealed in the Glorious Qur'an and the *ahadith*. This is not an arbitrary matter. It is a decree full of Divine Knowledge and Wisdom, as the above *ayah* says "and Allah has the full Knowledge of all things" immediately after asserting the completion of The Divine Message.

In order to bypass the above *ayah* and gain legitimacy for post-Islamic religious groups, some people argue that, unlike Muhammad (SA), who was a *rasul* and a *nabiy*, their religious leader is at a higher level, and need not claim to be a *nabiy*. They say their *rasul* could communicate with Allah, the Exalted, at his position of *Risalah* without being a *nabiy*, thus the above *ayah* and the seal of *nubuwwah* do not apply to their leader. They forget the element of interdependency (one entity being the prerequisite to another). *Nubuwwah* (being a *nabiy*) is a prerequisite for *Risalah* (being a *rasul*).

To do away with the above reasoning, they use a different terminology, instead of *rasul*. They make use of expressions such as "the Manifestation of God" or "the Reformer", and so on. The fact remains that the Miraculous Qur'an cannot be tricked. How can the Reformer, the Manifestation, or the Messenger in any name or terminology, perform God's mission without being in communication with Him? This is the beauty of the powerful language of the Glorious Qur'an, full of absolute wisdom.

These examples are given to illustrate why the position of a *rasul* is much higher than that of a *nabiy*. Such a clear distinction does not exist in the English language and much confusion and misunderstanding are experienced when one talks about apostles, prophets, messengers, saints, disciples, and so forth. For example, in English, the word *apostle* is used even for saints, such as St Paul, St John, and other disciples.

This lack of clarity can also deceive people into the creed of a few post-Islamic "religious" groups which contradict the universal and eternal *ayat* of Allah the Exalted (as presented above).

5. Does the Rasul (apostle of God) have Divine authority?

"...Say: Divine Signs (ayat) are indeed with Allah. And most certainly, I am only a clear warner!" (29:50)

"Say: I have no power over any good or harm to myself except as Allah willeth. If I had knowledge of the unseen, I should have multiplied all good, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner and bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith." (7:188)

These *ayat* elucidate that in the *din* of Allah, only He, the Almighty has the Divine power and authority. In some religions, their leaders are thought to have this Divine authority to abrogate, select and change Allah's Message without His authorisation.

6. How was the Glorious Qur'an revealed?

"It is We Who have sent down the Qur'an to thee by stages." (76:23)

"(It is) a Qur'an which We have divided (into parts from time to time), in order that thou mightest recite it to men at intervals. We have revealed it by stages." (17:106)

Therefore, it is now clear that the Holy Qur'an was revealed stage by stage for the use of humankind. Why was it not all revealed at one time?

"32 – Those who reject Faith say: 'Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once?' Such (it is revealed) that We may strengthen thy heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to thee in slow and well arranged stages, gradually. 33 – And no question do they bring to thee but We reveal to thee the truth and the best explanation (thereof)." (25:32 & 33)

It should be borne in mind that this gradual revelation over some 23 years relates to the Divine revelation to humankind, through Gabriel (PBUH) and Muhammad (SA), which is thought to be the second stage of revelation. The first stage, in contrast, was all at once from the level of the "Mother Book", (Umm ul-Kitab), before Allah, to that of the "scribe angels" in the heavens of the world, in one night.⁵ Please consider the following *ayah* from the Glorious Qur'an:

"We have indeed revealed this (Message) in The Grand Night." (97:1)

There is more Divine significance about The Grand Night, not known to humankind as yet:

"And what will make you comprehend what The Grand Night is?" (97:2)

The date of this Excellent Night is also a mystery. Several nights in the blessed month of Ramadan have been suggested with the 27th being the most widely accepted date. All we know confidently is that the Grand Night is in this blessed month, according to the Glorious Qur'an:

"The month of Ramadan, in which was sent down the Qur'an, a guide for humankind, and Clear Signs of guidance and distinction (between virtue and vice)." (2:185)

7. What is the Mother of the Book (or the Mother Book)?

"3 – We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic, that you may be able to understand. 4 – And verily, it is in the Mother of the Book, in Our Presence, high (in dignity), full of wisdom." (43:3 & 4)

"Allah doth obliterate (blot out) or confirm what He pleaseth. With Him is the Mother of the Book." (13:39)

The term "Mother of the Book" (or the Mother Book) is believed to represent the Full Knowledge, the essence of all Divine revelations without regard to time and space, the codes known to Him but not understandable by us. It does not necessarily represent a physical book. The following *ayat* may explain better. It should be clear that this subject is a very large one on which volumes of deep discussions have been rendered, with various points of view. Therefore, no claim is made in this brief writing that this interpretation is the only one or the true one:

"Say to whoever is an enemy to Jibril: for certain he brings down the (revelation) to thy heart by

Allah's will, a confirmation of what went before, and a (book of) guidance and glad tidings for the believers." (2:97)

"It is not but wahy that is revealed." (53:4)

"Thus doth (Allah) send wahy to thee as (He did) to those before thee, Allah exalted in Power, full of Wisdom." (42:3)

"Say: I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the wahy has come to me, that your Allah is one Allah" (18:110)

"51 – It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by wahy, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a rasul to reveal, with Allah's permission, what Allah wills. For He is most High, Most Wise. 52 – And thus have We, by Our command, sent inspiration to thee. Thou knowest not what was Revelation, and what was Faith. But We have made (the Qur'an) a Light, wherewith We guide such of Our obedient as We will. And verily thou dost guide to the Straight Path." (42:51–52)

Almighty Allah tells us explicitly that there are three ways in which He bestows His revelation on mankind:

A. *Wahy*: Inspirations may occur in many forms, ranging from a simple and common dream and telepathy, to much more elevated forms of vision and the Divine revelation. In the English language, the word "revelation" is used for all who reveal, being the journalists, politicians, writers, or God! Therefore, the Arabic term *wahy* is used here for that which is uniquely a Divine revelation.

Another point to clarify is that the subjects of inspiration are human beings, in general, whereas the subjects of *wahy* are chosen Messengers of Allah, the Exalted. In lower forms of *wahy*, signals are stimulated by Allah the Exalted into the heart and mind of a Messenger who understands the substance of the Message, whether it is a command or prohibition, or an explanation of a great truth. It is quite logical that the more elevated a Messenger, the greater is the value of the message, the quality of its reception and the impact of such a message.

In its perfect form, verbal or literal *wahy* is transmitted in such a way that the actual words of Almighty Allah are conveyed in human language, uttered by the human tongue. This superior – recited – form of *wahy* is only granted to the greater Prophets, while lower forms may be bestowed upon other Prophets. It is important to realise that not all inspirations or revelations are heavenly. Satan, angels, and humankind may inspire people and reveal certain affairs. This is how many people are deceived by specific ominous visions and inspirations. The safest revelation is that in which Allah the Exalted sends an Angel to recite the *wahy* personally to His Chosen Messenger, as will be covered under C) below.

B. *Behind a veil*: Not, of course, a material veil, or screen, but a mystic Veil of Light. There are

quotations from Muhammad (SA), saying: "Allah has some seventy thousand Veils of Light and Darkness. Were He to withdraw their curtain, then would splendours of His Aspect (or Countenance, or Face) surely consume everyone who apprehended Him with his sight: ' This is a very large subject which has been studied by numerous scholars. This subject will be only briefly introduced in this book (see the mystic elements of the Glorious Qur'an, page 38). For more information, one could start with Appendix VIII of the Glorious Qur'an translated into English by A. Yusuf 'Ali.

C. Rasul (apostle of Allah): The revelations are delivered to the Holy Messenger of Allah through the Angel Gabriel (PBUH), as mentioned earlier, in the purest and most confident form. These spiritual visions, conveying the message of Revelation, are the basis of the Noble Qur'an.

Another important point in the above *ayah* is: **"We have made (the Qur'an) a Light, wherewith We guide such of Our obedient as We will."** There is another *ayah* to complement the above:

"O mankind! Verily there had come to you a convincing proof from your Lord. For We have sent unto you a Light (that is) manifest (muban)." (4: 174)

The Light refers to the Glorious Qur'an and its manifestation is the character and personality of Muhammad (SA) himself. He is known to be the walking Qur'an. Extensive volumes of traditions (*ahadith*) fail to give evidence to one single incidence indicating that he (and his kinfolk) deviated from –the Qur'anic way. Therefore, his life should be taken as a perfect model to follow for those who wish to be guided according to the Holy Qur'an.

8–10 – The Qura'n's Structure, Interpretation and Selective belief?

8. What is the structure of the Great Qur'an? and

9. Are we allowed to interpret the allegorical parts of the Holy Qur'an? and

10. Can we believe in the Glorious Qur'an selectively?

"He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book. In it are ayat basic or fundamental (Muhkamat). They are the foundation of the Book. Others are homologous or allegorical (mutashabihat). But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord and disturbance (fitnah), and searching for ta'wil of its hidden meanings. But no one knows its ta'wil except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in the Book, the whole of it is from our Lord.' But only men of understanding really heed." (8:7)

This very important passage beautifully clarifies the structure and the concept of interpretation of the Great Qur'an. In this respect, the Munificent Qur'an consists of two portions:

- 1) the nucleus or foundation of the Book (*ayat muhkam*), and
- 2) the part which is allegorical, reflecting more than one aspect (*ayat mutashabih*).

Ayat muhkam are those *ayat* whose inner meaning is identical to their meaning in the sentence in which they appear. No other interpretation can be made; as an example: "Say: Allah is One". The majority of the Qur'anic *ayat* are of this type.

Ayat mutashabih, on the other hand, are those for which more than one interpretation is possible. It is fascinating to utilise the latter part to exercise our ingenuity for interpretation of the inner meaning of the Glorious Qur'an. But, as clearly stated in this verse, *ta'wal of the allegorical part is associated with perversity, discord and disturbance (fitnah)*,⁶ and Allah the Exalted has assured us that no one knows their correct interpretation except He. This is why Muslim interpreters, commentators and translators should not insist on the correctness of any particular interpretation of these *ayat*. They say only Allah the Exalted knows which one, if any, is correct. Many of these *ayat* automatically become clear by the time that scientific and other discoveries give evidence of their truth. This subject will be discussed later. Some non-Muslim intellectuals, however, press strongly with their interpretations of these *ayat*, as the above *ayah* associates this with *fitnah*.

Another important feature of this *ayah* is the holistic approach to the Noble Qur'an. *We should believe in the Book, in its entirety. We cannot believe some parts, and reject other parts.*

These two very important features should be considered particularly seriously by those who would exert efforts to interpret allegorical issues of the Precious Qur'an, and those who would selectively believe in this Book. We must try to understand it as best we can, but not deviate from the path of Almighty Allah and mislead people by insisting on certain interpretations of metaphorical *ayat*. Time will clarify them when necessary, as time has already clarified plenty of *ayat* misinterpreted or not understood at all for many years. This subject will be reviewed later.

11. Is the Miraculous Qur'an consistent?

"Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy" (4:82)

In the 23 years that Muhammad (SA), received the revelations, he passed through conflicting vicissitudes of life. Any person, during the long course of such a mission, would be forced by circumstances to make compromises, and could not help contradicting himself unless every word came from one unique source.

Furthermore, the Glorious Qur'an uncovers many matters relating to the nature of the universe, which were totally unknown to humankind over 14 centuries ago, particularly to the untutored Muhammad (SA). Considering all this, it is miraculous that the Great Qur'an is perfectly consistent throughout.

12. What is the purpose of the Noble Qur'an?

"Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, verily thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah. Such are the similitudes which We propound to men, that they may reflect." (59:21)

"O mankind! There hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a Healing for the (diseases) in your hearts. And a Guidance and Mercy for those who believe." (10:57)

"And We reveal from the Qur'an that which is a Healing and a Mercy to the believers. And It adds only to the perdition of the unjust." (17: 82)

"And We have not revealed to you the Book except that you may make clear to them, that about which they differ, and (A.S.) a Guidance and a Mercy for a people who believe." (16: 64)

"These are ayat of the Book that make (things) clear (mubin)." (26:2)7

These are only a few examples of how Allah the Exalted sees the benefits of this Munificent Book. Only from the observation of these four *ayat* can one realise that the Great Qur'an can subdue arrogance to humility, and can be a source of food for thought and reflection –this very important point has been repeated throughout the Glorious Qur'an– it is the fountain of Blessing, Mercy and Healing for the heart, it is a Book of Guidance for all peoples and for all times, and finally, the criterion that distinguishes right from wrong. Other similar *ayat* cast more light on the use of this Unique Book, but we should be content at this level. All these magnificent benefits are for those who wish to be guided. For those who insist on prejudice and arrogance regarding the *wahy* of Allah the Exalted, this Holy Book can cause nothing but perdition.

13. Then what does the Glorious Qur'an clarify?

The Noble Qur'an clarifies a great number of subjects. In fact, not all the Qur'anic revelations have been understood as yet. But as time goes by, theological, intellectual, scientific, and historical evidence contributes to a better understanding of these revelations by mankind. The following points are just a few examples:

13.1 The Oneness of God the Exalted and His Divine system (tawhid)

The following *ayat* of the Holy Qur'an are self-explanatory in defining the concept of *tawhid*.8

"Say: He Allah, is One. Allah is the Absolute Self-Sufficient. He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is not a single one to equate with Him." (112)

"O people of the book!" There hath come to you Our rasul, revealing to you much that you used

to hide in the Book, and passing over much (that is now unnecessary). There hath come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous (mubin) Book. Wherewith Allah guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and security, and leadeth them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light, guideth them to a Path that is Straight. In blasphemy indeed are those who say that Allah is Christ, the son of Mary..." (5: 15 – 19)

"Allah has said: `Take not (for worship) two gods, for He is only One Allah. Then fear Me and Me alone ...!'" (16:51)

13.2 The unity of all Divine religions; Islam as a concept

The concept of Islam – submission to the Will of Allah – is nothing new. It existed well before the development of Islam as a religion. The following *ayat* clarify that this concept was preached by all the major prophets of Allah. This is a proof of the Unity of all Divine religions, even though they are called differently by mankind.

"Behold! his (Ibrahim's) Lord said to him: `Be a Muslim (submit yourself to My will)'. He (Ibrahim) said: `I am a Muslim (submit myself) to the will of the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe'. And this was the legacy that IbrMam left to his sons, and so did Yacqub; `Oh my sons! Allah hath chosen the Faith for you, then die not except in the Faith of Islam (submission to the will of the Almighty Allah)!'." (2: 131 & 132)

"When 'Isa (Masih) found unbelief on their part he said: `Who will be my helpers to (the work of) Allah?' Said the disciples: `We are Allah's helpers, we should believe in Allah, and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims.'" (3:52)

"O ye who believe! Bow down, prostrate yourselves, and adore your Lord. And do good that ye may prosper. And strive in His cause as you ought to strive (with sincerity and under discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the cult of your father, Ibrahim. It is He (Allah the Exalted) Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (revelation); That the Apostle should be a witness for you and you be witness for mankind! So establish regular Prayer, give regular Charity, and hold fast to Allah! He is your Protector – the Best to protect and the Best to help!"(22: 77 & 78)

This *ayah* has many important points but the one we need to concentrate on is: *"It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (revelation)"*. This very clear and strong statement makes Islam distinctly different from all religions of the world in which people coin a name for their religion, normally after the person whom they follow. But when it comes to Islam, Allah the Exalted clearly says that He Himself selected this very profound name, for all His revelations, either before or during the time Muhammad (SA).

For the definition of the word *Islam* please refer to the Glossary.

"And remember Ibrahim and Isma'il raised the foundation of the House (with this prayer): `Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. For Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing'. Our Lord! make us Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will), and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Thy (Will); and show us our places for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in Mercy); for Thou art the Oft Returning, the Merciful." (2: 127 & 128)

"The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will): Nor did the `people of the book' dissent therefrom except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them..." (3: 19)

The above *ayat* clearly confirm that Islam as a concept existed from the early days of the *din* of Allah the Exalted, but it took centuries before this concept finally culminated as a religion by His Will through Muhammad (SA), and the most appropriate name, *Islam*, was explicitly selected by Almighty Allah for His *din*.

Clearly, the *din* before Exalted Allah is Islam (being in the state of submission to Allah the Exalted) and there is punishment, as shown later on, for those who have seen the Precious Qur'an and yet turn away from His *din*.

"Ibrahim was not a Jew nor a Christian; But he was true in Faith as a Muslim. And he joined not gods with Allah." (3:67)

"Say: We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, Yacqub, and the Tribes, and in that which was given to Musa and 'Isa (Masih) and the prophets, from their Lord. We make no distinction between one and another among them and we are Muslims to Him (to Him we submit). If anyone desires a Religion other than Islam (submission to the Almighty Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." (3:84 & 85)

These passages clearly indicate that Islam as a concept goes back to the early days,⁹ and that this concept of total submission to Allah the Omnipotent has also been preached by other prominent messengers of Allah the Exalted preceding the last prophet.

It is significant to realise that in the entire Qur'an the singular form "*din*" (Religion) appears about 70 times but the plural form, "*adyan*", not one single time. This clearly shows that there is only one *din* before Almighty Allah.

13.3 Islam as a religion

Now let us see how this concept of Islam (submission to the will of Allah) finally culminates in the form of a religion called Islam.

"...This day have those who reject Faith given up all hope of your religion. Yet fear them not but

fear Me. This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your Religion" (5:3)

It is quite remarkable that in this very last preceptive revelation to Muhammad (SA), Allah the Omnipotent declares, emphatically, that the religion founded from the early times and gradually augmented by various prophets is now perfect, is named Islam and is chosen for humankind by Almighty Allah Himself. With this important message for mankind, the preceptive *wahy* ends, only 81 days before the last prophet leaves this world (SA).

13.4 Islam as a single ummah

"And verily this ummah of yours is a single ummah and I am your Lord (and Cherisher). Therefore fear Me (and no other)." (23:52)

"Verily, this ummah of yours is a single ummah, and I am your Lord (and Cherisher). Therefore, serve Me (and no other). But (later generations) will cut off their affair (of unity), one from another. (Yet) they will all return to Us." (21:92 & 93)

In his well known English translation of the Qur'an, Yusuf 'Ali wrote:

"God's message was and ever is one; and his Messengers treated it as one. It is people of narrower views who come later and trade on the earlier names, that break up the Message and the Brotherhood [*ummah*] into jarring sects and tribes." p 843, n. 2750

The Islamic *ummah* is only one in Exalted Allah's view. All the boundaries and differentiations are our own makings. These *ayat* and the translator's footnote tell us about the unity of Almighty Allah's Word from the beginning to the end, the unity of His *din*, mankind, and the entire universe.

13.5 The universality of Islam

"We have not sent thee but as a Universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not." (34:28)

This is a very clear statement of the universality of Almighty Allah's Religion (the concept and religion of Islam). There are more to follow:

"Indeed We sent Nuh to his people, and he said: O my people! Worship Allah. Ye have no other god except Him. Verily! I fear for you the Punishment of a Dreadful Day" (7:59) "And unto (the tribe of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud. He said O my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god save Him. Will you not ward off (evil)?" (7:65) "And unto Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said O my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god but Him." (7:85) "And to (the tribe of) Thamud We sent their brother Salih. He said O my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god save Him." (7:73) "And verily We have sent among every nation an apostle

(proclaiming): Worship Allah and eschew evil." (16:36)

"And We sent Nuh to his people, so he remained among them a thousand years less fifty" (29: 14)

"And Ibrahim said to his people "Serve Allah and fear Him. That will be best for you, if ye understand!" (29: 16)

Every prophet was sent unto his own nation for their guidance, but the message of The Last Prophet Muhammad (SA) is general for all mankind:

"Say: O mankind! Verily! I am sent as the rasul to you all." (7: 158)

"Above all, it is a Message to all the worlds." (68:52)

Therefore, it is obvious that Almighty Allah's Religion had entered a universal level by the time Islam was introduced as a way of life (*din*) and that the Noble Qur'an is a Book of Guidance for all humankind, in all places and for all times.

13.6 Confirmation of previous revelations

"It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it. And He sent down the Tawrah (to Musa) and the Injal (to clsa Masah) before this as a guide to mankind. And He sent down al-Furqan, the Criterion (of judgment between right and wrong – meaning the Holy Qur an)." (3:3)

"Nothing is said to thee that was not said to the messengers before thee..." (41:43)

13.7 Correction of people's misunderstanding and misbelief

"They say: Allah hath begotten a son! Glory be to Him, Nay; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. All shall render worship to Him." (2: 116)

14. Does the Great Qur'an identify previous Divine Books and Prophets?

Some 124,000 *nabiys* (Prophets) and 313 *rasuls* have been chosen by Allah the Exalted to develop, fulfil, and finally perfect His *din*. Obviously, not all of them have been named in the Great Qur'an. But the following 25 names have been mentioned in this Holy Book; (PBUT all). These names are sorted according to the number of entries in the Glorious Qur'an:

Messengers	No. of entries	Remarks
Musa (Moses)	134	The Tawrah was revealed to him.
Ibrahim (Abraham)	69	Father of Islam. Rebuilt the Ka'bah. Lived 175 years.
Nuh (Noah)	43	Lived 950 years. A true Muslim.
'Isa Masih (Jesus)	33	Son of Maryam (Mary). The Injil was revealed to him.
Lut (Lot)	27	The Prophet Abraham's (PBUH) nephew.
Yusuf (Joseph)	27	Son of Ya'qub ibn Ishaq ibn Ibrahim.
Adam (Adam)	25	The first Messenger, may have lived 1,000–2,500 years.
Harun (Aaron)	20	Prophet of Allah and brother of The Prophet Moses (PBUH)
Sulayman (Solomon)	16	Son of David (PBUH). Author of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs
Ya'qub (Jacob)	16	Son of Isaac (PBUH). Lived 147 years.
Dawud (David)	15	King and prophet of justice. Author of The Psalms.
Isma'il (Ishmael)	12	1 st son of Abraham (PBUH). Helped his Father rebuild the Ka'bah.
Ishaq (Isaac)	10	2 nd son of Abraham (PBUH). Helped his Father rebuild the Ka'bah.
Shu'ayb (Jethro)	10	Father in-law of The Prophet Moses (PBUH)
Salih	7	Prophet for the people of Thamud.
Zakariyya (Zachariah)	7	A Jewish Prophet and priest. Father of John the Baptist (PBUH)
Hud	7	Prophet for the people of 'Ad.
Yahya (John)	5	John the Baptist (PBUH). Some 800 years before Jesus Christ (PBUH). A
Yunus (Jonah)	4	<i>rasul</i> <i>of Allah.</i>
Ayyub (Job)	4	Over 100 years before Abraham (PBUH). Author of The Book of Job in the Old Testament.
Muhammad (SA)	4	Introduced Islam as religion. The last Messenger of Allah.
Al-Yasa' (Elisha)	2	Mentioned in the Qur'an 6:86
Idris (Enoch)	2	A prophet before Noah (PBUH)

Dhu al-kifl (Dhalkifl) 2 Qur'an 21:85-86
Ilyas (Elias, Elijah) 2 Qur'an 37:123-132

And the names of Divine Scriptures in the Glorious Qur'an are:

The Injil meaning "The Tidings" in Greek, the New Testament, The Tawrah meaning "The Law or The Sacred" in Hebrew, the Old Testament, The *Zabur* (or *al-Mazamir*) meaning "The Writ" in Arabic, the Psalms of David, The *Suhuf* of Abraham, meaning "The Sheets" in Arabic. (PBUT all).

15. Does Almighty God's Final Message have a fixed duration?

"Nay, this is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved!" (85:21-22)

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly guard it." (15:9)

16. Does God the Exalted abrogate His Final Testament?

"None of Our revelations do We abrogate¹⁰ or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar. Knowest thou not that Allah hath power over all things?" (2:106)

"...But Allah abrogates¹¹ anything that satan throws in, and Allah confirms His Signs. For Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. That He may set whatever thrown in by satan as a tribulation for those in whose hearts are a disease and who are hardened of heart. Verily the wrong-doers are in a schism far (from the Truth)." (22:52-53)

These passages are of great consideration for the followers of those who have abrogated Almighty Allah's final revelation selectively and/or replaced them with their own inspirations in the name of Allah the Exalted. They quote the following *ayah* of the Noble Qur'an, using an incorrect translation for the key word:

"Allah doth obliterate or confirm what He decides. With Him is the Mother of the Book." (13:39)

Based on this *ayah* some people have allowed themselves to cut the Glorious Qur'an into pieces and under the banner of abrogation select what they like and disregard the rest. Let us look at the correct translation first:

"Allah doth obliterate¹² or confirm what He decides. With Him is the Mother of the Book." (13:39)

One should consider that obliteration (*mahw*) means blotting out, effacement, wiping away, forgetting, suppression, resolution, disappearing because of erasure, loss, absorption or solution. Whereas to abrogate (*naskh*) means to annul, to cancel, to invalidate and to void.

As the *ayah* clearly mentions, the Mother of the Book is with Almighty Allah. This is the Full Knowledge,

the essence of all revelations, independent of time and space. Why should Allah, the Knowing, reveal the Final Message and then abrogate it? And how? Muhammad (SA) is the Last *nabiy*, and we should remember from the earlier discussions that without being a *nabiy one* could not have full access to the Divine "knowledge" necessary for any Divine mission, including abrogation of Divine revelations.

One important consideration in this context is that religious tenets (*'aqidah*) are never abrogated. They have been fixed from the beginning and have been repeated by all prophets of Almighty Allah. A few examples of such creed and doctrines are oneness of Allah, concept of Islam, the idea of the return of all humankind back to Him for the Judgement, and so forth. Such religious tenets are independent of time and location. The religious laws (*shari'ah*), however, have been abrogated by Almighty Allah from nation to nation living at different times and in different geographical locations.

The second important consideration is that only Almighty Allah and the Divine prophets can abrogate certain rules of *shari'ah*, not anyone else. He possesses the Mother of the Book, the essence of all revelations.

The third important subject is the distinction between obliteration (*mahw*) and abrogation (*naskh*). Some local and timed rules and laws are subject to obliteration according to the Plan and Will of Almighty Allah, by not getting effectively recorded, being forgotten with time, or other causes and events. Where are the pure and original words of Allah, exactly as uttered by many of His *rasals* or *nabys*? What happened to the *Suhuf* (Scriptures) given to The Prophet Abraham (PBUH), the Psalms to The Prophet David (PBUH), The Tawrah to The Prophet Moses (PBUH), and the Injil to The Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH)?

Based on clear evidence all or parts of these words may have been lost, translated, forgotten, or obliterated (*mahw*) either due to satanic alterations or to innocent mistranslation (from the true words). And this is not by accident; it is the will of Allah the Exalted Who dictates that certain things be obliterated or be preserved. When it comes to the Holy Qur'an, however:

"... for it is indeed a Message of Remembrance. So, let whosoever will, keep it in Remembrance; in Books held in honour; exalted, pure and holy; (written) by hands of scribes, noble and righteous." (69: 11–16)

Islam did not come to abrogate the previous Divine Scriptures. On the contrary, it came to establish and strengthen the unity of all previous Divine religions and their respective messengers. The main question is whether all components of the previous Scriptures are indeed purely and truly the word of Allah, or some parts have been contaminated by the words of humankind.

There are, however, people who have read the Glorious Qur'an and yet claim prophethood. They usurp Divine authority, and abrogate the Noble Qur'an selectively in order to remove any sign that is incompatible with their own claim!

17. Is Islam (the din of God, the Exalted) difficult?

"...He has chosen you and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion (din). It is the cult of your father Ibrahim..." (22: 78)

"On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It (one's soul) gets every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it deserves..." (2:286)

Therefore, Allah's intention is not to impose difficulties on us through His *din*. His recommended way of life is as uncomplicated as it was represented centuries ago by Abraham (PBUH), as we read in the first *ayah*. But in the second *ayah* we read that it is only people who make life easy or unbearable. How is it possible for us to be on the right side? Through *du'a*'s and He shows us how. Please continue for further explanation; first let us find out.

18. What is the difference between the Great Qur'an and books of *dua*'?

In summary, *dua*' (supplication) is our appeal and petition to Allah the Exalted requesting whatever we wish Him to grant us. *Munajah* is whispering, like telling one's secrets to Allah the Exalted, or prattling. It may or may not include any petition and solicitation. There are numerous ravishing *du'a*'s and enchanting *munajahs* and beautiful *dhikrs*¹⁴ available in the Muslim world composed by the infallible *Imams* and prominent religious leaders. In size, they vary from a few lines all the way to a sizeable booklet which may take over an hour to recite. Each has a specific purpose with a certain recommended time of recitation. But the general and cardinal purpose is, of course, nearness to Allah the Exalted by repeated remembrance of His attributes and His glorification.

With this brief introduction, it is clear that the nature of the Glorious Qur'an is totally and completely different from that of books of *dua*', *munajah* and *dhikr*. The former comes from the heavens to earth whereas the latter set of three goes from earth to the heavens. The former is the heavenly and pure *wahy*, directing people with unlimited Authority, Wisdom and Mercy as to what is good for them and what is bad for them. The latter set, however, is an earthly plea and petition from us soliciting Allah the Exalted, weakly and yearningly.

In the absence of a Divine Scripture, this clear distinction does not exist in some religious cults. They mix an assortment of *du'a*'s and *munajahs* along with other writings of their leader and call the booklet a prayer book.

This entire section was included for the continuation of *ayah* 2:286 under the previous heading. In the Glorious Qur'an, Allah the Exalted teaches us the basic ingredients for our supplications. There are a number of such *ayat*, one being the latter part of the last *ayah* of *Surah al-Baqarah* (2). This is the

longest *surah* of the Glorious Qur'an full of serious matters of law. How appropriate to end this onerous *surah* with this beautiful *duca'* for the acquittal of our sins and mistakes:

... Our Lord! condemn us not if we forget or fall into error. Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which Thou didst lay on those before us. 15 Our Lord! Impose not on us that which we have not the strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us forgiveness and have mercy upon us. Thou art our Protector; award us with victory over the disbelieving folks." (2:286)

Allah the Exalted sows more seeds to show us the ingredients for supplications in a few other *ayat* such as:

2:201 & 250, 3:8, 16, 53, 147, 193 & 194, 7:23, 47, 126, 155 & 156, 14:40 & 41, 20:25–28, 23:97 & 98, 25:65 & 74, 27:19, XXVHI:17, 40:7, 59:10, 60:4, 71:28, etc.

They are captivating and penetrating when their deeper meanings are realised. Using these, and other ingredients, Islamic literature is full of rich, enchanting and powerful supplication books. Unfortunately they are not all available in English. The reader could contact the publisher of this book, The Muhammadi Trust, and enquire for "The Psalms of Islam" and other supplication books available in English.

19. What was the first revelation to Mubammad (SA)?

In the night of *Mab'ath*¹⁶ (Commissioning, Appointment, Assignment, Mission, Resurrection) when Muhammad (SA), had gone to pray alone in a cave on Mount Hira' (later called Mount Nur), Gabriel (PBUH), the same angel of Almighty Allah, who had appeared to The Prophet Abraham (PBUH), and to Mary, the honourable mother of The Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH), appeared to Muhammad (SA) who was then about forty years old. Angel Gabriel (PBUH) instructed him, in his mother tongue, with a mighty voice, surging like the waves of the ocean, "Recite aloud!" In fear and uneasiness, Muhammad (SA) cried out: "I am not learned!" The angel repeated the command, and elicited an identical response from Muhammad (SA). Angel Gabriel (PBUH) embraced him hard, and commanded him the third time:

"1 – Recite! in the name of thy Lord (and Cherisher), Who created. 2 – Created humankind, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. 3 – Proclaim! And thy Lord is the Bountiful, 4 – He Who taught (the use of) Pen, 5 – Taught man that which he knew not..." (96:1–5)

After this Divine revelation, a great trembling came upon Muhammad (SA). Shattered and feeling tired, he hastened home to his wife, Khadijah, hoping to recuperate from this great shock. She wrapped him in the thick cloak he used to use as a blanket, and helped him sleep.

These first five *ayat of surah 96, al-'Alaq*, (the very first *wahy* to Muhammad (SA) carry considerable significance which cannot be discussed in this introductory account. Volumes of commentaries have been written about this revelation, which cannot be covered in this book. However, the referral to the

Pen as a symbol *of* the eternal plan *of* Allah the Omnipotent should be mentioned briefly. Many Divine words through numerous messengers have been lost, forgotten or tampered with because they were not recorded early enough. Islam, as the Perfect and Final stage *of* Almighty Allah's *din*, had to be provided with a well-documented record so that the purity and the integrity *of* Exalted Allah's words should be safeguarded for ever as a Book *of* human guidance. This is why in the very first revelation the use *of* Pen is mentioned.

Only three years later, one complete *Surah*, called *al-Qalam* (meaning The Pen) was revealed to Muhammad (SA), to strengthen the symbol *of* permanence *of* His Final Testament (the Great Qur'an). This *Sarah* starts:

"Nun! By the Pen and by the (Record) which (humankind) writes." (68: 1)

Knowing Muhammad (SA), so well, and seeing the unequivocal transformation that had come over him, Khadijah became his first follower. The second follower was Ali, (A.S.), who was only ten years old, and the next was Zayd (a slave boy who was adopted by Muhammad (SA), after setting him free). Soon Muhammad's (SA) friend Abu Bakr was also convinced. At this stage, Muhammad (SA), had not talked about his experience openly.

Some months later, he had another heavenly experience. Suddenly he heard the voice again, and this time saw a huge pair *of* eyes staring at him, which became a gigantic figure whose wings (or feet) straddled the horizon. He shut his eyes and turned away, but no matter what he did he could still see the angel. There was no escape.

Once again he rushed home in shock. Khadijah noticed this time that when she wrapped him up, he began to breathe deeply, and sweated profusely. He was seeing the angel again, who said:

"O thou wrapped up (in thy cloak), arise and deliver thy warning! And thy Lord do thou magnify! And thy raiment keep free from stain! And all abomination (idolatry) shun! Nor expect any compensation (in return of what you give). But for thy Lord's (cause) be patient." (74: 1-7)

20. What were the last words revealed to Muhammad (SA)?

The fifth *surah* *of* the Precious Qur'an, *al-Ma'idah*, deals with the backsliding *of* the Jews and Christians from their pure religions. As a logical corollary to the deterioration *of* the earlier religions *of* Allah, the practical precepts *of* Islam about food, cleanliness, justice, and fidelity are recapitulated in this *surah*. The third *ayah* *of* this *surah* is an extremely interesting one and is known to be among the last few words from Almighty Allah. This *ayah* consists *of* three parts. Similar to a precious pearl which is hidden within a pair *of* shells to protect the valuable jewel, the cardinal issue in this *ayah* is enveloped in a pair *of* "shells" to ennoble the focal point in this *ayah*. The first part is:

"Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath

been invoked the name of other than Allah. That which hath been killed by strangling or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death. That which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal, unless you are able to slaughter it (in due form). That which is sacrificed on stone (altars). (Forbidden) is also the division (of meat) by raffling (gambling practised by pagans) with arrows. That is impiety..." (5:3)

The jewel of this *ayah* follows the important and memorable declaration which was announced during the farewell pilgrimage of Muhammad (SA), to Makkah in the tenth year of the Hijri calendar. Soon after the pilgrimage, he started for Madinah. On his way to Madinah, at Ghadir Khumm, three important events took place¹⁷ one of which is the very last revelation, as follows:

"...This day have those who reject Faith given up all hope of your religion. Yet fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion..." (5:3)

The holy prophet departed to the eternal world in less than 3 months after this revelation (on 28th Safar, 11 A.H.):¹⁸

The "shell" is then completed as follows:

"...But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-Forgiving, the Merciful." (5:3)

With this long *ayah*, Allah the Almighty perfects His religion (*din*) and calls it Islam.

21. Who decided to re-arrange the order of this Miraculous Book?

21.1 Why is the very first revelation in the 96th surah, and the last words in the 5th surah? Who decided to re-arrange the order of this Miraculous Book?

This is a long subject but I shall try to make it short. From time to time, Angel Gabriel (PBUH) visited Muhammad (SA), by Exalted Allah's leave, to reveal His words. Angel Gabriel (PBUH) would ask The Prophet (PBUT) to rehearse the Words carefully in the presence of his disciples. Each disciple was supposed to go over them at least one thousand times, and this went down to imams of mosques and others, each practising at least one thousand times. At the same time it was being recorded too. If there were any mistakes, misunderstandings or questions, they could go back in reverse order to check and correct. Once one group of revelations were well drilled throughout the community, or when there was a need for certain revelations, Angel Gabriel (PBUH) visited again, and the process was repeated.

Each year, Angel Gabriel (PBUH) reviewed all the revelations which had been revealed during the year

for accuracy and correctness. In the last year, Angel Gabriel (PBUH) visited twice,¹⁹ to make sure that everything was in perfect order. Incidentally, this gave Muhammad (SA), the clue that his life in this world was about to cease. But to answer the question, it was Allah the Exalted, Who, through Angel Gabriel (PBUH), placed the order of each single *ayah* to compile the Book. He clarified exactly where each *ayah* was supposed to be located in the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, not all ayat in a *surah* are in the sequence of revelation. Two sequential ayat might in the end be located in two separate *surahs* far from one another. This is the way Allah the Omnipotent wanted His Book to be, and this is the way It is. Recorded documents substantiate that the disciples of the *rasul* recorded everything according to the order given by the prophet without moving anything backward or forward.²⁰

22. More on the process of revelation to Muhammad (SA)

It should be clear that the Miraculous Qur'an is not the teachings of Muhammad (SA); rather, It is a collection of words of Allah the Exalted as they were revealed. The following are some important features about most revelations to Muhammad (SA):

- a. Muhammad (SA), always knew when revelations were about to come down, and normally he lay down covered in his cloak, if possible.
- b. The special revelations were always attended by extraordinary phenomena such as shaking or trances.
- c. Sometimes he seemed to lose consciousness.
- d. Sometimes he was found soaked in sweat, even in cold weather.
- e. Sometimes the message came instantaneously when he was being questioned by people, confronted with a major problem (or decision), or when a message, deemed necessary by Almighty Allah, was to be delivered in a specific location, at a specific moment, for a specific group of persons (or even an individual).
- f. Sometimes the voice did not come through clearly. But most often the revelation was quite clear, and he heard the words explicitly. It has been reported that people could hear some vibrating sound similar to the sound of honeybees when revelations were being transmitted.
- g. On some occasions Allah the Exalted spoke to him through Angel Gabriel (PBUH) who stayed with the prophet and absorbed much of the shock. But on other occasions, Allah the Omnipotent revealed to Muhammad (SA), directly. The latter form reflected a heavier impact on The Prophet, and resulted in extraordinary phenomena, as mentioned above.

23. What is the most emphasised subject in the Glorious Qur'an?

23. What is the most emphasised subject in the Glorious Qur'an?²¹

If the most emphasised subject is to be taken as the subject most often referred to, then the following are the six subjects most emphasised by Allah the Exalted for the guidance of His people, in the order of His emphasis:

1. Disbelievers (*kafirin*, *kafirun*, and *kuffar*) and disbelief (*kufr*). Literally, *kufr* means "to cover". In general, this subject has to do with covering up the ayat of Allah the Exalted, i.e. His *wahy*, His words, His Books, His Messengers and their message, partly or entirely, openly or silently. It means disobeying His Guidance, and disbelieving His Message. It means following our own beliefs and the belief of other mortal human beings, who are, themselves, created by Allah the Exalted. It means confining various matters to only what we can envisage in our limited mind, and denying or disbelieving the Divine Order.

2. People of Hell (*ashab un-nar*). This subject is self-explanatory but it is important to realise that these two most-emphasised matters constitute the most important message Allah the Exalted wishes to implant into the minds and the hearts of His men and women. I beseech readers, respectfully and humbly, to pay particular attention to the emphasis Allah the Exalted has placed on these important issues, and not to pass them by indifferently. Would you please consider taking a few minutes to think of why Almighty Allah emphasises these matters so much, giving historical examples, naming the persons and communities who disbelieved, repeatedly warning the readers of the Glorious Qur'an about satan and his influences on the hearts, minds and actions of humankind. This is because He loves us, and He warns us about the heavy impact and the doomed ending of *kufr*. These matters are more emphasised than the glad tidings for the men and women who believe and their blissful fate. This emphasis is for our guidance by the Great and Only Creator Who knows best what is good for us, and what is to our detriment.

3. The Truth of the Glorious Qur'an, and its recognition of the previous Books. This emphasis, once more, proves the deserving attention that Allah the Exalted gives to the Legitimacy and the Truth of a Divine Book. Again, this should be of interest to followers of certain religious cults, who lack a Divine Book or mistake a human's writing for Divine.

4. Promises and agreements that Allah the Exalted has granted to the men and women who believe. Once Allah the High has emphatically warned people against *kufr*, and about the miserable outcome of such disbelieving ideologies and actions, and after He emphatically asserts the Divine position of the Glorious Qur'an, He stresses the promises He is willing to grant, and agreements He is willing to make with His believing people of the right deeds so that they will be successful in this world and the next. These agreements constitute the duties of the men and women believers towards the Compassionate, the Merciful and the Knowing Creator. One cannot neglect these duties and still expect ultimate prosperity in both worlds.

5. Piety, Virtue and Righteousness (*taqwa*) is His next matter of emphasis. *Taqwa* can be construed as the essence of Islamic practice, as *tawhid* might be considered as the paramount hinge of Islamic belief. It certainly deserves the emphasis of the Glorious Qur'an, after the above-mentioned important matters have been repeatedly stressed and clarified in the minds of its readers.

Taqwa is difficult to define. It is easier to grasp its meaning by knowing that it is the opposite of being the slave of one's selfish desires. *Taqwa* is the most difficult aim in one's earthly life because satan is constantly sowing flamboyant ideas in our hearts and is continually tempting us with exciting actions which have no purpose except satisfaction of the self. It takes great willpower to let the intellect be in control, not the heart, and to distinguish vice from virtue. As one acquires more strength in this area, and gradually discovers that one's decisions and actions can be governed by certain Divine principles instead of being guided purely by self-satisfaction, then satan will shy away and will gradually have less and less influence on him/her.

One feels at peace only when his heart and mind act hand in hand. Before that, the heart longs for a satanic feature and the intellect tries to defy it; the person feels insecure and unsure as he has to sort things out between his conflicting heart and mind. Once he practises *taqwa*, ultimately the heart and mind shall come together, and there will be no internal conflict to upset the person, and he will be in peace and harmony with everything around him. But how does one get there?

Like everything else, to achieve a certain goal, one needs certain tools and training. The more we discharge our duties toward Allah the Exalted, the more we shall acquire His Mercy, Light, Guidance and Blessing:

"... Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the one among you who oractises taqwa the most..." (49: 13)

We need the tools that train us to be willing to let go of things that we relish, such as certain foods, excessive sleep, illicit sex, immoderate money and luxury. A hungry person who has all sorts of food around him, but resists eating them because of fasting, can be better prepared to fight against his selfish desires than one who does not have this training. A person who rises for the regular prayers, five times a day, must sacrifice many hours of sleep, including getting up at the crack of dawn. He is well equipped with willpower to combat his selfish desires, let alone the fact that he will be closer to Allah's Blessing because of the obedience and discharge of his duties toward Allah the Exalted.

Therefore, it appears that the necessary primary training for the realisation of *taqwa* begins with the *salat* (regular prayers), the *sawm* (fasting), payment of the *khums*, the *zakah* and charities, and the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an, not only for guidance toward *taqwa*, but also for the blessing that Its recitation brings about. This is only the beginning. For further refinement, one should understand and practise the Islamic Principles (religious tenets) and the Pillars of Islam (the necessary duties to be discharged by a Muslim).

6. Matters relating to the legitimacy of Muhammad's (SA) message and the *wahy* from Allah the Exalted. This is complementary to item 3 above. These two items together consolidate the validity, legitimacy and Divinity of the Message and of the Messenger of Islam with great emphasis. Once more, this is another flag to alert people who follow certain religious groups or certain individuals depending on a slim evidence of legitimacy or a complete lack of it. Beware of the first two items of Allah's emphasis for your own sake.

24. Is the Glorious Qur'an a book of science, law, history, or art?

The Noble Qur'an is basically a book of human guidance. Allah the Omnipotent shows us in this practical book how He wants us to live. After all, He, as the Creator of the entire universe including mankind, knows best what is ultimately good, and what is ultimately bad for us.

Today's plight of mankind is the very heart of this issue. For a few centuries, mankind had been deceived into believing that it knew better what was good and what was bad for it, and it lived a life of its own with very little regard for the wishes of Allah the Exalted. Then it found out all sorts of miseries such as AIDS, drugs, high rates of crime, divorce, and violence, in a world where economic, racial, and political slavery prevail. An important part of the Great Qur'an forms a comprehensive foundation on which sound systems of social justice, politics, economics, legislation, jurisprudence, world order, global responsibilities towards Nature, and so forth, can be constructed.

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1. Will be defined shortly.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Refer to the Glossary for detailed definition.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Please refer to the following references: 1) *Al-Burhan fi `Ulum ul-Qur'an*, by 'Imam Badr ud-Din Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah Zarkish. Vol 1, p 228, Beirut, 1391 L.H.C. (1972), in Arabic. 2) "*Al-Mizan, Exegesis of the Qur'an*", by al-Allamah as-Sayyid M.H. Tabataba'i. Vol 3, pp 15-22, Translated into English by World Organisation for Islamic Studies (WOFIS), P.O. Box 11365-1545, Tehran, Iran, 1402 L.H.C. (1982).
 6. Refer to the Glossary.
 7. Refer to the Glossary.
 8. See the Glossary.
 9. Some people believe that this concept of Islam existed from the beginning of creation.
 10. The root of the original Arabic word used in the Glorious Qur'an is N-S-KH (naskh).
 11. Ibid.
 12. The root of the original Arabic word used in the Glorious Qur'an is M-H-W (mahw)
 13. Please refer to the Glossary.
 14. In general, it means remembrance of Allah the Exalted and mentioning of His name and attributes, in any possible form, either silently or audibly. Specifically, among the Sufi brothers and sisters, it is a pleasant religious gathering in which certain du'a's and munajahs are chanted in a spiritually uplifting atmosphere.
 15. The Glorious Qur'an is full of educational stories about the punishments that arrogant people and societies received, as well as the blessing and peace that were bestowed upon humble believers who do good.
 16. Several dates are suggested by various historians and scholars for this historic Divine Assignment. The most factual

one seems to be the 27th of the blessed month of Rajab, in the L.H.C., a well-celebrated holy day called the Mab'ath or the Mi'raj un-nabiy.

17. First event: The Voice from Heaven cried:

"O Rasul of Allah! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord. And if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people." (5:67)

The prophet stopped at once and ordered all the people to come around. After making all possible preparations, he delivered a long sermon under Divine Command (known as the declaration of Ghadir Khumm or Hadith thaqalayn) in which the second important issue was raised:

Second event: Hadrat 'Ali (A.S.) was selected as the leader or Imam of the Muslim community (ummah). This event and hadith is well recorded within both Shi'iy and Sunni hadith writers and commentators. For more information please refer to Imamate, the Vicegerency of the Prophet, by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, pp 62-84, 4th edition, 1985 (1405 L.H.C.).

Publisher: World Organisation for Islamic Services (WOFIS), P.O. Box 11365-1545, Tehran, Iran.

Third event: Once again the Voice from Heaven proclaimed:

"This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (5:3)

This event, being toward the end of the Prophet's life, has especial significance. Even though there are records indicating the possibility of further revelations after this event (possibly ayat 4:176, 2:278-79, 2:281-82, 9:127, etc.), they are non-preceptive revelations and are not related to the definition of rules and the perfection of Allah's din. It might also be that Almighty Allah calls His din perfect once Hadrat 'Ali (A.S.) is selected to commence Imamah. For more information please refer to The history of the Precious Qur'an by Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Hujjati, 5th edition, 1368 S.H.C. (1989), pp 55-62 (in Farsi). Publisher: Daftar-e Nashr-e Farhangui-ye Islami, Ferdowsi Avenue, Tehran, Iran.

18. For more information please refer to A brief history of the fourteen infallibles, second edition, pp 20-23, 1992 (1413 L.H.C.), World Organisation for Islamic Services (WOFIS), P.O. Box 11365-1545, Tehran, Iran.

19. The history of the collection of the Glorious Qur'an, Sayyid Muhammad Rida Jalali Na'ini (Farsi), 1365 S.H.C. (1986), p 156.

20. Sharh us-Sunnah by Husayn ibn Masu'd (entitled Muhiyy as-Sunnah), 436-510 L.H.C. (in Arabic). Also available in the reference cited in the above note.

21. The emphasis is based on detailed appendices in these two references:

1) an appendix to al-Qur'an ul-Karim, donated by the Union of the European Students Islamic Societies and the Student Islamic Societies of Canada and America, with compliments from Kayhan Inc., P.O. Box 638, Oakland Gardens, NY 11364, U.S.A. Translated by Muhammad Kazim Mu'izzi (into Farsi), including various appendices produced by Mahmud Ramyar, and distributed by Book Distribution Center, P.O. Box 22933, Houston, TX 77027, U.S.A.

2) Tafsil-i ayat il-Qur'an ul-Hakim by Jules La Beume, including al-mustadrak, by Edouard Montet, translated into Farsi by Haj Sheykh Mahdi Ilahi Qumshih, of the University of Tehran, published by Islamiyah Booksellers, Tehran, 1345 S.H.C. (1966).

What are the Signs of a Pure Divine Scripture?

Certain individuals have claimed utterance of "divine guidance" throughout the history of humankind without being chosen by Allah the Exalted for this purpose. These people have been either mad or deluded by evil influences, and this came to pass even among well-versed prominent religious leaders. The best thing is to examine their words in their exact original form and language (not a translation of, or excerpts from, or sporadic comments) with an open mind and heart, without any prejudice. It will immediately become obvious whether or not their writings are truly *walzy* from Allah the Exalted or are satanic inspirations. This is why Allah the Exalted says:

"There is no compulsion in religion, the Right way is just made clear from the wrong..." (2:256)

The following are a few characteristics of the way Almighty Allah speaks. This set of examples may be a rudimentary way to gauge such claims, but examples can be extended to any degree, all the way to the entire text of the Glorious Qur'an:

A. The Commanding And Authoritative Language

The commanding and authoritative language used by Allah the Exalted is quite obvious in many of the *ayat* reviewed so far and will be clearer in the *ayat* yet to come. But the following may be used as another set of examples:

"71 – Not one of you but will pass over it (the Fire). This is with thy Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished. 72 – But We shall save those who guarded against evil, and We shall leave the wrong-doers therein, to their knees." (19: 71-72)

"They ask thee concerning (the nature of) the spirit. Say: The spirit is by command of my Lord. And of the knowledge of it very little is communicated to you." (17:85)

"16 – Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur'an) to make haste therewith. 17 – It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it. 18 – But when We have promulgated it, follow thou its recital. 19 – Nay more, it is for Us to explain it." (75: 16- 19)

I chose these examples, in particular, as they are partly addressed to His highly positioned *rasul* rather than to ordinary people. While they reflect the highly authoritative position of Allah the Exalted, they have the significance of clarifying His total control over what is transmitted to His messenger as *wahy* (Divine revelation).

Not a single one of us could escape from the Fire if it were not for His Mercy and Compassion. They illustrate that the spirit is under the command of the holy prophet's Lord, and that about the knowledge of

spirit very little is communicated to him. They show that The Holy Prophet (SA) was commanded to allow the revelation to sink into his heart and mind rather than be impatient about it. It adds that Almighty Allah would certainly complete the revelation to its perfection according to His Own Plan. It assures us that all revelations would be collected and preserved for mankind and would not be forgotten or lost.

These few examples are sufficient to give the reader a feeling of authority, of being in charge and control, of commanding, and of assurance.

B. The interrogative supremacy

There are numerous direct questions asked in the Great Qur'an which are full of wisdom. These are but a few examples:

"Thinketh he (mankind) that none hath power over him?" (90:5)

"Thinketh he that none beholdeth him? Have we not made for him a pair of eyes? And a tongue and a pair of lips? And shown him the two highways? But he had made no haste on the path that is steep. And what will explain to thee the path that is steep?" (90:7-12)

"Is not Allah the wisest of Judges?" (95:8)

"Knoweth he not that Allah doth see?" (96:14)

This is another evidence of the commanding language of this Miraculous Divine Book. It provides comfort, assurance and confidence to the reader of the Glorious Qur'an that these words are expressed from an Allauthoritative and All-superior Source, Who is in absolute control, and that things are in complete check at all times and all places throughout the universe. And it renders the reader a sense of security should he/she totally depend on Him, His mercy, His judgement, His sustenance, His ability and might, His justice, His protection, and effectively submit him/herself to His Will (the true meaning of Islam).

A few more examples are:

"Is it you that cause it to grow, or are We the causers of growth?" (56: 64)

"Who is then more unjust than one who forges a lie against Allah or rejects His communications?..." (7:37)

"Do they who work evil think that they will escape Us?..." (29:4)

"...Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other?..." (2:85)

"What! Did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to

Us?" (23:115)

In addition to these types of questions, there are as many as 976 interrogative statements, for example with what?, for what?, in what?, from what?, from whom?, for whom?, on whom?, and others such as then what?, then who?, like what?, and like who? etc. in the Noble Qur'an.

C. The language of peace, serenity and security

Having seen the stern interrogative language of the Glorious Qur'an, let us now examine its soft language of security, peace and tranquillity:

"But whoever believes, and works righteousness, he shall have a goodly reward, and easy will be his task as We order it by Our command." (18:88)

"60 – ...those who repent and believe, and work righteousness will enter the Garden and will not be wronged in the least. 61 – Gardens of Eternity, those which (Allah) the Gracious, has promised to His obedient in the Unseen. His promise will certainly come to pass. 62 – They will not there hear any vain discourse, but only salutations of peace (salam) and they will have therein their sustenance, morning and evening. 63 – Such is the Garden which We give as an inheritance – to those of Our obedient who guard against evil." (19:60–63)

According to Yusuf cAli, the distinguished translator of the Precious Qur'an, the Arabic word *salam*, translated as "Peace", has a much wider meaning. This word is derived from the Arabic root "S-L-M", and has various significant meanings such as:

- * A sense of security and permanence, which is unknown in this life, as in *salam*.
- * Soundness; freedom from defects; perfection, as in the word *salam*.
- * Preservation, salvation, deliverance, as in the word *sallama*.
- * Salutation, accord and harmony with those around us.
- * Resignation in the sense that we are satisfied (and not discontented).
- * The ordinary meaning of peace for *salam*, i.e., freedom from any jarring element.
- * Total submission (to the will of Allah the Exalted), as in *taslim*.

All these shades of meaning are implied in the word *Islam*. If all the above can characterise the Heavens, then the ultimate destiny of Islam is the Heavens.

D. The mystic elements

The strength of the mystical contents of the Holy Qur'an, nourishing the inner aspects of our being, has been the aspiration for the ripening of sufism and mysticism over the centuries. This part of the Glorious Qur'an is responsible for the illumination of many great men and women, who have achieved unimaginable levels of insight and knowledge. One of the examples of such a reflection is the following *ayah*:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp, which is enclosed in Glass. The Glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east, nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire hardly touched it. Light on Light! Allah guides to His Light whoever He will. Allah sets forth Parables for Men, and Allah Knoweth all things." (24:35)

Volumes and volumes have been written to explore the sublime meaning of this magnificent *ayah*. Yusuf 'Ali, the distinguished translator of the Noble Qur'an, says no notes (comments) can do adequate justice to the full meaning of this *ayah*, but here follows his attempt:

"Physical light is but a reflection of the true Light in the world of Reality, and that true Light is Allah. We can only think of Allah in terms of our phenomenal experience, and in the phenomenal world, light is the purest thing we know, but physical light has drawbacks incidental to its physical nature: e.g. (1) it is dependent upon some source external to itself; (2) it is a passing phenomenon; if we take it to be a form of motion or energy it is unstable, like all physical phenomena; (3) it is dependent on space and time: its speed is 186,000 miles per second, and there are stars whose light takes thousands of years before it reaches the earth. The perfect Light of Allah is free from any such defects. The first three points in the parable centre around the symbols of the Niche, the Lamp, and the Glass, as follows:

"1. The niche (*mishkah*) is the little shallow recess in the wall of an Eastern house, fairly high from the ground, in which a light used to be placed, before the era of electricity. Its height enabled it to diffuse the light in the room and minimised the shadows. The background of the wall and the sides of the niche helped to throw the light well into the room, and if the wall was white-washed, it also acted as a reflector. The opening in front made the way for the light. So with the spiritual Light, it is placed high, above worldly things; it has a niche or habitation of its own, in Revelation and other Signs (*ayat*) of Allah; its access to men is by a special Way, open to all, yet closed to those who refuse its rays.

"2. The Lamp is the core of the spiritual Truth, which is the real illumination; the niche is nothing without it. The niche is actually made for it.

"3. The Glass is the transparent medium through which the Light passes. On the one hand, it protects the light from moths and other forms of low life (lower motives in man) and from gusts of wind (passions), and on the other, it transmits the light through a medium which is made up of and akin to the

grosser substances of the earth (such as sand, soda, potash, etc.), so arranged as to admit the subtle to the gross by its transparency. So the spiritual Truth has to be filtered through human language or human intelligence to make it intelligible to mankind."

In the same way that this Glass needs constant cleaning in order for the light to pass through, mankind should also maintain such transmissibility by regular prayer (*salat*), the *zakdh*, and other purification means. *Salat* purifies the soul in the same way that bathing cleanses the body.

"The glass by itself does not shine. But when the light comes into it, it shines like a brilliant star. So men of Allah who preach Allah's Truth, are themselves illuminated by Allah's Light and become the illuminating media through which that Light spreads and permeates human life."

This is a good example of how a low-level matter, such as glass, takes on a higher level quality, illumination, when it is in proximity with the main source (of Light). Another example is a piece of black, solid carbon which takes on the glowing, warm and radiant qualities of fire, if placed next to a raging fire. This demonstrates how blissful we shall feel if we constantly choose to associate ourselves with the radiant and blessed people, and to follow their path.

"The Olive tree is not a very impressive tree in its outward appearance. Its leaves have a dull greenish-brown colour, and in size it is inconspicuous. But its oil is used in sacred ceremonies and forms a wholesome ingredient of food. The fruit has a specially fine flavour. This Olive is not localised. It is neither of the East nor of the West. It is universal, for such is Allah's Light. It shines in all directions beyond time and space limitations."

... whose Oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire hardly touched it ...

"Pure olive oil is beautiful in colour, consistency, and illuminating power. The world has tried all kinds of illuminants, and for economic reasons or convenience, one replaces another. But for coolness, comfort to the eyes, and steadiness, vegetable oils are superior to electricity, mineral oils, and animal oils. And among vegetable oils, olive oil takes a high place and deserves its sacred associations. Its purity is almost like light itself; you may suppose it to be almost light before it is lit."

This is why the expression "light on light" is used in this *ayah*.

"So with spiritual Truth: it illuminates the mind and understanding imperceptibly, almost before the human mind and heart have been consciously touched by it."

... Light on light! Allah does guide, whom He will, to His Light ...

"Glorious, illimitable Light, which cannot be described or measured. And there are grades and grades of it, passing transcendently into regions of spiritual height, which man's imagination can scarcely conceive of. The topmost pinnacle is the true prototypal Light, the real Light, of which all others were reflections, the Light of Allah."

This beautiful *ayah* is one of the examples for the mystic elements of the Glorious Qur'an.

E. Perfect two-way communication and reflection

This subject has been discussed in more detail when we looked into the definition of *nabiy* (Prophet of Almighty Allah) and *rasul* (Apostle of Exalted Allah), page 8. Please consider the following *ayah*, in which you will find the reflection of a perfect, two-way communication:

"They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: In them is great sin, and some profit for mankind, but the sin is greater than the profit. And they ask thee how much they are to spend (in charity). Say: What is beyond your needs. Thus doth Allah make clear to you His Signs (Words) in order that ye may reflect." (2:219)

There are fifteen *ayat* which begin with the expression "They ask thee". There are more *ayat* which do not explicitly start with this expression; however, it is obvious that they are reflections upon certain earthly matters or questions in the everyday life of people. These *ayat* make the reading of the Glorious Qur'an most interesting.

It is always intriguing to listen to a dialogue, particularly when led by the Almighty, the Wise, the Knowing, and the Merciful One. Another interesting element of this feature is the very effective reflection of down-to-earth matters about which common and uncommon people wonder, think, or ask questions for their day-to-day life. This is why the Glorious Qur'an is The Book of Guidance for Allah's *dan* (His recommended way of life).

By now, we have reviewed sufficiently to enable us to distinguish the difference between the style of writing in the Holy Qur'an and the way human beings write. If this distinction is not yet apparent, there is still a considerable opportunity to grasp this point as one reads through, and finally, when one reads the Glorious Qur'an Itself.

It is remarkable that experts have clearly shown that there is a distinct difference between the style, grammar and vocabulary of the Prophet's own words (called *hadith*, plural *ahadith*) and those of the Miraculous Qur'an. This is another proof of the Glorious Qur'an being purely words of Allah the Exalted transmitted to Muhammad (SA), either directly, or through the Angel Gabriel (PBUH). No other religious book offers this feature of Absolute Purity. This is the very feature which makes the Precious Qur'an uniquely Divine.

F. The telegraphic style of Almighty Allah's sentences

In the Great Qur'an, Allah the Exalted speaks in a telegraphic style without losing the meaning of His message. This is Divine perfection expressing all matters using the most effective expressions, the most efficient language, and the most precise vocabulary within a unique structure, full of valuable parables.

To those who have been deceived to accept words of a human being as words of Allah (no matter how beautiful they may be), I would sincerely recommend to reading at least ten pages of the Noble Qur'an just to see for themselves how Allah the Exalted speaks. For the beginners it might be a good idea to start with small *Surahs* toward the end of the Glorious Qur'an. They are short, rhythmic and poetic, and are easy to begin with and enjoy.

It is amazing that Muhammad's (SA) own word, *hadith*, is distinctly different from the *wahy* of Allah the Exalted in many aspects, even though they both come out of the same mouth, by the same tongue of the same person. Let us review some examples. In the Great Qur'an we read this telegraphic statement:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the rasul of Allah, and the seal of the nabiys..." (33:40)

Compare this with a *hadith* from the Messenger of Allah the Omnipotent for style, vocabulary, and expression:

"The parable of myself and the parable of the Prophets is as the parable of a place of which the construction has been made good but wherein the place of a brick has been left out. The on-lookers went round it wondering at its good construction except for the place of the brick. It is I who closed up the place of the brick (according to Allah's command). The construction has therefore been sealed by me, and the Messengers have come to an end with me. I am the brick and the seal of the prophets."2

One of the best examples for the telegraphic style of the Qur'anic *ayat* is the famous *surah*, *al-Ikhlās*. (The Absolute Purity). The entire *surah*, with tremendous significance and impact, is as follows:

"Say: He Allah, is One. Allah is the Absolute Self-Sufficient. He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is not a single one to equate with Him." (112)

In the Arabic language, it takes even less wording to express this profound, purposeful and significant message, which is the cardinal aspect of the turning point from a multi-god worship to the great concept of *tawhad* (please refer to the Glossary).

G. Delightfully easy and uncomplicated vocabulary

It might be a good idea to see what the Glorious Qur'an Itself says:

"Verily, We have made this (Qur'an) easy, in thy tongue, in order that they (people) may give heed." (44:58)

Not only is the Noble Qur'an pleasantly uncomplicated, It is also charming and mellifluous; Its rhythm elevates the spirit of mankind to high levels. Even the allegorical part, which may not always be fully comprehensible, is delightfully stimulating. One important evidence for the miraculous nature of the

Glorious Qur'an is the very fact that many wise promises and warnings, glad tidings and admonitions, educational examples and historical events, and highly scientific facts are eloquently explained within simple vocabulary!

H. The repetitive style

The Precious Qur'an is a Book of Guidance. It has two fundamental objectives. Its first function is to provide knowledge, for educational purposes, about subjects that we did not know, and which we can now understand by reading The Book. The second function of the Final Testament, however, goes beyond educational aspects, and has to do with the training of individuals and societies to build up certain personal, social, cultural, communal and correctional characteristics.

For educational purposes, where a person reads certain material to understand its meaning, repetition is unnecessary if the matter is clearly stated. But for a build-up of personalities and societies, the reading material should go beyond the scope of plain understanding; it must become a native part of the reader for day-to-day practice. Not only does this type of reading material need continuous repetition, but it should also be attractive enough to generate the desire for repeated readings. This is the very feature Allah the Exalted placed in the Glorious Qur'an and this is why the Great Book is uniquely Divine.

I. Long-term readership, preservation and maintenance

This unique feature belongs only to the Glorious Qur'an. No other Scripture in the world has ever been in this position. Normally, the larger the readers' circle, the more opportunities arise for changes, additions, improvements, amendments and corrections. **But the Glorious Qur'an is uniquely different!** It has remained unchanged! Since it did not undergo any updating, and remained as It was fourteen centuries ago, we should expect It to have become outmoded or obsolete, and therefore ineffective. **But the Glorious Qur'an is uniquely different!** It shines more and more as It ages!

J. The amalgamative style

Many beginners are bothered by this style, and ask why the Glorious Qur'an is written in a disarranged and mixed-up style. They wonder why all matters relating to a certain subject could not be pulled together in one chapter, as in the majority of books we read today. This matter is very intriguing, and I shall try to review it with a few examples:

The most beautiful formal garden, full of fragrant flowers and blossoms, with complete separation of various sections, can soon become dull and boring if visited frequently. But a beautiful site, in a **natural** form, full of wild flowers of all colours and fragrances, mixed and mingled naturally with other shrubs and trees, is always pleasing and refreshing even if visited frequently.

It is an intrinsic trait of humankind to enjoy natural mixing and commingling. One of the beautiful aspects

of the mosques in cosmopolitan communities is the very mixing of people coming from various parts of the world, with different complexions, colours, languages, nationalities, costumes, but united through Allah the Exalted as one body. Can you imagine how uninteresting it would be if we were to segregate these people in separate sections of a mosque? This also applies to the Glorious Qur'an. This Great Book could not have maintained its standing record of the most frequently-read book of the world for over fourteen centuries if it were written in the boring form of a manual.

It should also be borne in mind that the Glorious Qur'an is a Book of Guidance for all people and for all times. Fourteen centuries ago, people were not used to classification, indexing, bibliography, heading, subheading, references, and computerised shortcuts. But today, all these facilities are available and are being used while the original format of the Precious Qur'an remains unchanged. The Glorious Qur'an has been entered into computers by many institutions all over the world, and has been analysed in many ways with amazing results and findings. Therefore, one should not consider the original format as a limitation. As we have seen before, placement of ayat and Surahs is exactly the way Allah the Exalted commanded it and this is the way It remained throughout.

Modern psychology recommends that we should not concentrate on one subject for too long, and should bring in a change to refresh the work and increase performance or comprehension. This is a built-in feature of the Glorious Qur'an, which gives the history of ancient civilisations, moves on to certain social rules about, say, weddings, eating or worship, then on to ethical lessons and morality, and on to the description of this world, and its purpose, while moving to what action or word Allah the Exalted inspired in the heart or mind of a prophet, and finally the reaction of the community of believers. This amalgamative style is the paramount cause of the joy felt in the recitation of this Munificent Book.

Modern businessmen keep changing the order of things in a department store. Giant stores keep moving various departments around. They know the merits of customer curiosity. It makes people wander around to find what they came to buy, and in this pleasant stroll, pick up a lot of things that they had no intention of buying when they came in. The very same wisdom in the Glorious Qur'an is teaching millions of earnest seekers things that they were not initially looking for. How could these modern techniques be known over fourteen centuries ago by any human being of that time?

K. The historical events

There are many historical events mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an, which were totally unknown to humankind at that time. There are two important reasons for this feature:

First, it proves its miraculous nature by giving the detailed account of circumstances that Muhammad (SA) could not possibly have known about in any imaginable way. Second, it is a very intricate educational technique. People take offence when they are directly told of their misconduct, and the results of their actions. Most often, they may not believe that the expected tribulation will afflict them. But being given examples of earlier civilisations as a proof of what happened to them, they do not react obsti-

nately as the sharp edge of condemnation is not aimed at them. They are much more willing to accept the point if someone else is being blamed and criticised.

Moreover, they are obliged to believe the consequences as they are already a matter of history. Given historical examples, it does not take much imagination to prove the end result of an evil act. This is why the Glorious Qur'an is full of interesting educational, historical stories and parables. Book printing and reading is much more common now than it used to be centuries ago. In order to promote the idea of learning through historical events, not only does the Glorious Qur'an give numerous historical examples about the doers of good and of evil, it also encourages us to go around and discover for ourselves signs of disastrous floods, earthquakes, etc. that afflicted some disbelieving ancestors. These historical examples are too many to include in this introductory review, but for the recommended "exploratory expedition" these ayat can be referred to: 3:137, 6:11, 16:36, 27:69, 29:20, 30:42.

I. The language of Absolute Knowledge about everything

The Great Qur'an is full of knowledge on a wide range of matters, definitely unknown to human beings at the time of Muhammad (SA). As science gradually gropes forward, humankind becomes more and more amazed at the absolute truth of the Qur'anic knowledge revealed over fourteen centuries ago, when human beings had no idea about these matters. This subject is a vast one, and is certainly beyond the scope of this brief monograph.

The Glorious Qur'an gives evidence of the truth on various aspects of life, the earth, its shape, its rotation, the mountains, their continuous movement and their importance in the stability of the earth, the water source and its storage, information about the skies, the sun and the moon and other planets, the plants, the animals, the insects, and the amazing and disciplined world order, the sophisticated abilities and performances in the entire universe as a whole, the spirit, the composition of human and mammal milk, what mankind is made of, human embryology and the beginning of life, man's destiny, Almighty Allah's attributes, the history of various civilisations, the history of previous Divine prophets and messengers, the names of previous Divine books, and so on.

Therefore, unlike the Holy Bible, the Miraculous Qur'an is not primarily a book of religious history and events. It contains practically all aspects of *din* (the way of life prescribed by Allah the Exalted), matters such as sociology, geology, medicine, astronomy, theology, history, biology, anthropology, Divine world order, eternal peace and so forth. But it should be borne in mind that the Noble Qur'an does not claim to be a Book of law or science or of any of the above disciplines. It is a Book of Guidance for mankind.

Throughout history, many devout religious figures full of inspiration have produced uplifting writings full of beauty and grace. Many of them have been favoured with a considerable body of supporters and followers. For those who have not studied the Great Qur'an, it is very easy to accept such writings as divine scriptures, and mistake the writer for a prophet of Allah the Exalted, as these glamorous writings can entice the heart and the spirit very effectively. But those who are well-versed in the Holy Qur'an,

and have understood its uniquely exalted position, can immediately tell the difference between this Divine Book and the product of a created mortal. This is a very important issue, particularly in today's life when the shallow and cosmetic image is well advertised and well accepted at the expense of valuable genuineness, nobility, logic and Truth.

Only a few examples of the scientific wisdom of the Glorious Qur'an are covered below but the full coverage can easily be the subject of a very large book:

About the earth

"Seest thou not that Allah merges Night into Day and He merges Day into Night... " (31:29)

Merging is a gradual process and could not be caused if the earth were flat. Science was finally bound to discover the very reality that the earth was a spherical body, and not a flat surface! But if every word of Allah the Exalted could have been understood at the time of revelation, mankind would have known this fact over fourteen centuries ago. In *ayah* 39:5, we also see *"...He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night..."*, also confirming the fact that the earth is not a flat surface.

Is the earth truly a sphere?

In fact it is not! In 79:30, Allah the Exalted explains how He extended the earth like an egg! Experts in Arabic literature agree that one of the old meanings of the word *daha* was "egg". This egg-shaped form of the earth was, of course, discovered many centuries after the Miraculous Qur'an had already spread that information. *Allah-u Akbar!* (this is an expression of magnification, literally meaning Allah is Greatest):

"And the earth, He extended it (as an egg) after that." (79:30)

In the field of oceanography, we find:

"Or, (the status of unbelievers) is like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed with layer topped by layer of waves, topped with (dark) clouds. Depths of darkness, one above another..." (24:40)

Only recently did science discover that:

A. Water manoeuvres in various layers in the ocean. These layers may have different characteristics, such as salinity, density, temperature, marine biology, and so on; and they may move relative to one another.

B. Each layer acts as a filter causing the gradual disappearance of a certain light spectrum. For example, red light is excluded at about 30 metres, green at approximately 100 metres and blue at about 200 metres of depth. This continues to ultimate darkness at deeper sections of the ocean where fish

could not see anything if there were no source of light within their own bodies. In the above *ayah*, waves and clouds are also mentioned to emphasise the degree of darkness associated with the status of unbelievers, as clouds cause absorption, and waves cause reflection of light before it can reach the surface of an ocean.

How could Muhammad (SA), who had never seen an ocean, possibly know these twentieth-century scientific discoveries over fourteen hundred years ago? This, and many similar *ayat*, are signs of Divine *wahy* revealed throughout the Glorious Qur'an.

In the field of geology:

"Have we not spread out the earth, and the mountains as pegs?" (78:6-7)

Again, this is a relatively new discovery that mountains (like teeth) are deeply rooted into the earth (mantle), as anchors to help stabilise the full system of earth, including the mountains themselves. They keep the earth in balance during the rotation, they prevent slippage of layers of earth during the rotation, and similarly to tree roots they keep mountains firmly in place.

In the field of astronomy:

The words "sun" and "moon" have been mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an many times. Without exception, the sun is always associated with light as a source (*siraj*, *wahhaj*, *diya'*, etc.), whereas the moon is always referred to as a body that reflects the light (*nur*). This is, of course, general knowledge today, but over fourteen centuries ago, how did any one know, least of all The Prophet Muhammad (SA), (who had no earthly teacher) that the sun was a source of light, and the moon was its reflector? Please refer to the words *nur*, *siraj* and *wahhaj* in the Glossary. These short *ayat* are but two examples of such wisdom and knowledge:

"See you not how Allah has created the seven skies (heavens) one above another, and made the moon a light (nur) in their midst, and made the sun a (Glorious) Lamp (siraj)?" (71: 15 & 16)

"It is He Who made the sun to be a shining glory [diya^h], and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for her; that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time)..." (10:5)

In medical science:

A very extensive research on human embryology has recently found astonishing conclusions which had already been revealed over fourteen centuries ago. Keith L. Moore, Professor of Anatomy and Chairman of the Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine of the University of Toronto, has written a voluminous book on this subject, detailing the close match between the *ayat* of the Holy Qur'an and the findings of his team. The findings of this work are in perfect harmony with many *ayat* of the Miraculous

Qur'an as well as with several *hadith* quotations.

This book is now available in English, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Italian and Portuguese.

It is difficult to reduce a 500–page book with descriptive colour pictures into a few simple paragraphs. Basically, through the revelations from the Glorious Qur'an and *ahadith*, one finds the most comprehensive and accurate terminology to refer to various stages of embryology, the rules of heredity, and chromosomal makeup of a new being, and many other specific pieces of information which have been either unknown or misunderstood by medical science for many centuries. Embryologists are amazed to learn that accurate periods of time associated with specific embryonic developments have been mentioned in the *ahadith*, such as:

"In every one of you all components of your creation are gathered together by 40 days..." 3

or:

"When 42 nights have passed over the drops (fertilisation), Allah sends an angel to it, who shapes it and makes its ears, eyes, skin, flesh and bones. Then he asks: Oh Lord! is it male or female? and your Lord decides and the angel records it."4

The use of modern technology and magnified pictures of the embryo taken at different intervals clearly shows the development of the body as given above. The Glorious Qur'an reveals three veils of darkness that surround the embryo:

"...He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, stage by stage, one after another, in three veils of darkness..." (39:6)

Today, they are known to be: the anterior abdominal wall, the uterine wall, and the amniochorionic membrane.

As I write these words, I cannot help treasuring and adoring the quality and importance of the Wisdom and Knowledge given to us by Allah the Exalted in the Glorious Qur'an. People should be very careful when they pass judgements about many so–called "Divine" books. The Noble Qur'an is the best–known yardstick with which these claims can be examined.

Any further details on the scientific research on human embryology is beyond the scope of this book. I would like to refer the reader to the source book for this amazing information:

The Developing Human – Clinically Oriented Embryology

3rd edition (with Islamic additions), ISBN 0–7216–6472–5, 1983

Dar al–Qiblah for Islamic Literature

P .O. Box 10932, Jeddah 21443, S. Arabia.

Although there is a great deal to write about the findings of various subjects that have already been

revealed in the Precious Qur'an centuries ago, I should stop at this point. These few pages are only meant to be a humble illustration of the absolute knowledge reflected by the Miraculous Qur'an. For further information one could refer to:

The Bible, the Qur'an and Science by Maurice Bucaille (French Academy of Medicine) Published by American Trust Publications, 1979 7216 S. Madison Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46227, USA.

The Qur'an and Modern Science

The Islamic Academy of Science

20B Jalan Daud, Kg Bahm, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

M. The eloquent voice of the Noble Qur'an

This is a subject that has been attested to by well-versed experts in the Arabic language. Muslim and non-Muslim scholars in this area agree that the vocabulary, style, eloquence, effectiveness, and the rich poetic rhythm of this Masterpiece is indeed miraculous (as it should be). The significance of this section of our discussion cannot be expressed any further in English.

Suffice to say that man-made songs and melodies come into fashion in a given community, and disappear after a certain period of time. But the chanting of, and listening to, the beautiful *ayat* of Allah the Exalted have remained delightful and enjoyable for over fourteen centuries, stimulating the soul and the heart of people of different languages, cultures and backgrounds. This uplift and enchantment is not limited to the Arab nations or those who speak Arabic. It penetrates beyond geographical boundaries, race, nationality and culture, and is independent of time.

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1. Sustenance in the highest metaphorical sense, all the means of perfect satisfaction of the soul and its complete self-expression in an environment which we can only imagine vaguely in our material life. Morning and evening implies early and late, i.e., all the time.
 2. "Muslim" and "Bukhari" books of ahadith.
 3. Hadith from Bukhari and Muslim: Al-Qadar.
 4. Muslim: Al-Qadar.

The Glorious Qur'an as a Miracle

Muhammad (SA), faced many people in his lifetime who did not believe in him. They challenged him to produce a miracle to match those produced by other prophets in the past. He retorted that it was quite unnecessary, as the Noble Qur'an itself was the supreme miracle for all times and all places.

Many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have proved, in various ways, that the Holy Qur'an is a miracle. This conviction is reflected in many books and articles throughout the history of Islam. They render a variety of sound and just reasons to substantiate this fact. As I have chosen to let the Glorious Qur'an answer most of the questions, I think it would be appropriate to continue the same technique, and see how the Munificent Qur'an Itself proves Its own miraculous nature.

Let us first define "miracle". The Arabic equivalent of miracle is *mujizah*, which is a derivative of the root "A-J-Z". This root reflects the idea of being unable to, inability, impossibility. *Mu'jizah* (or miracle) means something that no one can do except Allah the Exalted (or His Messengers, with His Leave). What is the difference between magic and miracle? The difference is that the former can be done by a talented human being either out of his own creativity or by learning from others. The latter, however, cannot be done by mankind. Humankind is unable ('ajiz) to do it on its own initiative, without the Will of Allah the Exalted. In order to perform a miracle, one must be empowered by Allah the Omnipotent exclusively. With this in mind, let us now see how the Precious Qur'an Itself proves that It is a miracle:

82nd and 83rd revelations, 33 9 years B.H.

Allah the Exalted challenges the enemies of Muhammad (SA), to produce a book like the Great Qur'an.

"33 – Or do they say "He fabricated the (message)"? Nay They have no faith! 34 – Let them then produce a recital like unto it, if they speak the Truth!" (52:33 & 34)

118th revelation, 4 years B.H.

Five years later, the challenge is reduced to only ten *Surahs*, instead of a similar book.

"Or they may say `He forged it' say: `Bring you then ten Surahs forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than Allah! If you speak the truth!" (11: 13)

121st revelation in the same year

He confirms that the entire human race and the jinnis cannot produce a similar book.

"Say: `If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.'" (18: 88)

131st revelation, 2 years B.H.

The challenge continues:

"Say: `Then bring you a book from Allah, which is a better Guide than either of them (the Tawrah

and the Qur'an) that 1 may follow it! (Do), if you are truthful!" (28:49)

160th and 161st revelations, in the 4th year A.H.

Now, after 13 years of frequent challenge, Allah the Omnipotent confirms again that people are unable to produce a Book like the Holy Qur'an. He now further reduces the challenge from ten to only one *Surah*:

"37 – This Qur'an is not such as can be produced by other than Allah; On the contrary it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book –wherein there is no doubt– from the Lord of the worlds. 38 – Or do they say, 'He forged it'? Say: 'Bring them a Surah like unto it, and call (to your aid) any–one you can, besides Allah, if you speak the truth.'" (10:37 & 38)

164th and 165th revelations, in the 5th year A.H.

Again, He confirms the invitation to produce even one *surah* similar to the Qur'anic *surahs*. For those who claim they can produce a similar book but in reality have not been able to do so, He clearly reminds them of the excruciating consequences:

"23 – And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to our obedient, then produce a Surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers besides Allah if your (doubts) are true. 24 – But if you cannot –and certainly you cannot– then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones –which is prepared for those who reject Faith." (2:23 & 24)

Therefore, the contestation continued for fourteen years during the lifetime of Muhammad (SA), with frequent reminders. Today, after over fourteen centuries, no one has matched even the smallest *surah* of this Book. I hope that the above passage illustrates how the Noble Qur'an Itself proves its miraculous nature (i.e. the inability of humankind to produce a similar Writing).

Some people have claimed that their writings are Divine or their books are comparable or even superior to the Glorious Qur'an. There are also people who believe in these claims without either having assessed these writings in the original text (excerpts, translations, interpretations and commentaries are unacceptable for this assessment), or having realised the perfection and glory of the true *wahy* from the Miraculous Qur'an. I hope this and the next sections of this book can provide a basis for the examination of such claims.

Is there any Parallel to The Miraculous Qur'an?

As The Holy Bible is the closest Scripture that people commonly compare with the Noble Qur'an, and because these two Books are considered as being of the same importance by some people, it might be appropriate briefly to compare the two Books to get an idea about their fundamental differences. This comparison is only superficial. It does not include any quotations from either one of these Books. It is meant to be a purely academic exercise, without the slightest prejudice.

First of all, any "book" must have a title, and it shall identify its author(s) so that people can gain confidence about what they expect to read, and whose voice the "book" represents. If someone is writing a book about, say, computers, the word "computer" must appear in that book at least once! Otherwise, it would be an irrelevant title, and could confuse people. In the case of the Holy Bible, for example, not only does the author remain unidentified, but also the title of the book, Bible, is not even mentioned one single time. To begin with, this lack of assurance compels the reader to **assume** that this is the word of Allah the Exalted, or of The Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH), or of others.

Unlike the Holy Bible, the Glorious Qur'an addresses its title subject within the Book frequently. In fact, the word "Qur'an" appears 58 times in the Holy Qur'an. The count should increase when words other than "Qur'an" such as "The Book" or "al-Furqan" (the Criterion –to distinguish between good and bad), *dhikr* (remembrance), *Tanzil* (gradual descending of *wahy* to humankind), etc., were added. This indicates how meaningful the title name "Qur'an" is, and how well it blends with the material explained in it.

Table 11 is a brief comparison of the Holy Bible and the Miraculous Qur'an. One can easily see that the Holy Bible is composed of 66 books and missionary letters, "according to" various Prophets, Disciples, Saints, historians or other religious dignitaries, from memory. None of them are "according to" the *rasuls* of Almighty Allah, The Prophet Moses (PBUH) himself, or The Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH) himself.

The Glorious Qur'an is only one Book, in it, every word of Allah the Exalted is "according to" the *rasul* of Allah the Exalted, Muhammad (SA) himself. In the Islamic world, the Scripture that contains the sayings and traditions of Muhammad (SA), "according to" the Disciples and religious historians, is called a book of *hadith* (plural, *ahadith*), not the Qur'an itself. Most *ahadith* were collected and published in the 4th Islamic century. Each *hadith* must clearly identify every individual who related a quotation, as well as the one who received it. This linkage of information transmittal by prominent figures must go all the way back to The Prophet (SA) himself. One of the most important criteria by which a wrong *With* can be distinguished is the very quality of linkage. A *hadith* is unacceptable even if only one of the links of the chain is unrenowned. Therefore, to be perfectly correct, the Holy Bible should, at best, be compared with the books of *ahadith*, not with the Great Qur'an.

The New Testament in English is a translation of another translation of yet another translation. Even the best translator in the world has "limitations", as a human being, when it comes to interpreting a Divine Book, which originates from a source of "absolute" Knowledge. In the case of the Noble Qur'an, science, research, time, history, nature and analytical learning have proved, again and again, that some of the multifarious words were indeed wrongly translated in the past. Even simultaneous translations differ from one person to another, sometimes significantly.

One can envisage how much misrepresentation would have been entered into the Glorious Qur'an if the original Scripture in the original Arabic language had been unavailable for reference. The problem is that the Holy Bible is not available in the original words for reference (an Old Testament in Hebrew and a New Testament in Aramaic). Consequently, there is an inherent superimposed misrepresentation in this Book causing errors and contradictions. Some 50,000 errors and contradictions in the Holy Bible have been recorded by the Christians themselves, back in 1957.²

Books of the Old Testament were written years and centuries after the death of our great prophet Moses (PBUH); similarly, Books of the New Testament were written many years after the departure of our cherished prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH). Unlike these two Testaments, the single Book of the Final Testament (The Glorious Qur'an) was revealed, recited, fully memorised, written and distributed within the lifetime of The Prophet Muhammad (SA). This unique feature guarantees the authenticity and accuracy of this Book. Universally accepted "original" volumes of the Qur'an exist for reference in the exact original language. Therefore, this collection of Divine Revelations is well preserved in its original exactness and purity.

All of these features generate faith and interest in reading the Noble Qur'an without a shadow of a doubt about its authenticity and legitimacy. Almighty Allah says that The Qur'an will be saved until the end.

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly guard it (against corruption)." (15:9)

Almighty Allah's pure *wahy* and holy Truth will never be eclipsed even though the enemies of Islam constantly mock it, and are determined to abate, disparage, and invalidate It; as they have attempted to do for over fourteen centuries.

1. Table 1: Comparison of the Holy Bible and the Glorious Qur'an

THE HOLY BIBLE

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The 5 books of the Torah. The original Hebrew version is unavailable. It is based on memories and traditions. The first writings started in the 10th Century B.C. (mostly written in the 7-8th Century B.C.) the last book was written as late as 516 B.C. Later it was translated from Hebrew to Greek. This was the basis for translations into other languages.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

These 4 Gospels of Injil were selected from among over 100 books of Injil in the 4th century. No original version is available for reference, the last book (St. John's) was written in the year A.D. 94. None was written during the lifetime of Jesus Christ (PBUH). Translated from Aramaic to Greek to Latin, then to English. The first complete English Bible was compiled in the fourteenth century (by hand).

THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

Only one book, all of it revealed by Allah the Exalted to Muhammad (SA), over 23 years in 194 revelations. The entire book was completed during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. The original Arabic version is available for reference.

Based on material from:

A) Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc. (1974) William Benton, publisher Helen Hemingway Benton, publisher ISBN 0-85229-290-02, and

B) The Holy Bible, New International Version International Bible Society P.O. Box 62970, Colorado Springs, CO 80962-2970, U.S.A., and C) Qisas-i Qur'an (stories of the Qur'an) – in Arabic and Farsi Ninth edition, 1354 S.H.C. (1975) by Sadr ud-Din Balaghi Amir Kabir publisher, Tehran, Iran pages 316-319 and 346-347

2. Awake! volume XXXVIII, number 17, September 8, 1957, p 25. Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

A Few Words about Islam

This is intended to be a very short resume of Islam, based only on a few *ayat* of the Glorious Qur'an. To begin with let us consider this *ayah*:

"So set thy face (purpose, heart) steadily and truly to the din. Instincts Allah has bestowed upon mankind are in harmony with the nature He has created it. There is no altering of Allah's creation. By Allah, that is the right religion (din), but most people know not." (30: 30-31)

Dan is an instinctive part of humankind. We are all born with it. If a person does not feel this instinct, it is because of the influence of the family and/or society that either has disassociated him (or her) from it or has diverted him (or her) from the inborn natural Divine religion, *din*, to some kind of man-made, temporal sect. Without *din*, a person wanders around aimlessly and spoils his life in darkness, though he may be an "intellectual" in the eyes of some people.

The entire creation follows certain rules, conforms with certain conditions and has a certain goal, all set by Allah the Exalted. Humankind is no exception. Therefore the question remains: what is the *dan* (a way of life) that would conform with the rules and conditions and aims for our lives as set forth by our creator? Humankind had no choice in its own creation, and is only a "created" being. Therefore, it cannot depend on itself to search for the right way of life (*din*), as it does not know all about the entire creation, and all the rules and laws of the universe. Consequently, its own created creed is compelled to be

inadequate for the guidance of all people at all times.

Allah the Exalted has chosen Islam as the right way of life for all people and all times (also refer to *ayah* 5:3, on page 29) Islam is in accord with the creation of mankind, and its instinct and intuition. It is harmonious with the universal mandate of creation, which is total submission to the Will of Allah the Exalted.

Consider how the entire creation submits to the rules and conditions set forth by Him; the entire galaxy, the moon, the earth, the earthquake, the wind and the hurricane, the rain and the snow, the bees and the birds, the trees, the vegetables and the flowers, and an endless list of other beings. They all submit entirely to the set formula which has proved to be the best for them for millennia. And this is the true meaning of Islam. We should all learn Islam from Nature. Only the human beings keep challenging Allah the Exalted, His messengers and His Message, making life difficult for themselves.

"Do they seek for other than the din of Allah while all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, submitted to His Will (embraced Islam)? And to Him shall they all be brought back." (3:83)

"Verily the din (religion) before Allah is Islam (Submission to His Will). And `people of the book' did not dissent there from except through envy of each other after knowledge had come to them. But if they deny the Signs (ayat) of Allah, Allah is certainly swift in reckoning." (3:19)

According to Islamic belief, this world is only a farmland. We harvest what we sow in it. Prosperity and success in the mind of a Muslim are not conceived as worldly affluence and a rich life only. It is to fulfil the worldly obligations in the way Allah the Exalted has prescribed to earn His satisfaction for ultimate peace and security of the soul in the next world. This life is short, the next is forever. Which one is worth satisfying? This might be significant to observe that both "this world" and "the next" are mentioned equally, 115 times each, in the Noble Qur'an.

We said that the entire universe, including humankind, has a purpose. Let us now see what the Glorious Qur'an says in this connection:

"And I have not created the jinn and the human except that they should worship (obey) Me." (51:56)

Jinnkind and humankind are both free to choose, and it is up to them to follow the instructions of Allah the Exalted or not. The Munificent Qur'an teaches us that total submission to the Will of Allah the Exalted will make our spirit, intellect, and talents flourish towards perfection of our insight and toward the transformation of our "potential" abilities into "real" abilities.

This causes great pleasure, and constitutes a "real" success, which is but the reflection of our serving Allah the Exalted, and obeying Him like a slave.

If we are not obedient to Allah the Exalted, then we are a slave of our own wishes, and of satanic agents. The Glorious Qur'an is quite clear on the fate of such people. Let us examine the following two *ayat*:

"Have you then not seen him who takes his low (vain) desire for his god. And Allah has made him go astray having knowledge, and has sealed his hearing and his heart (understanding), and put a cover on his sight. Who can then guide him after Allah (has withdrawn guidance)? Will you not then be heedful?" (45:23)

It seems clear that selfish desires can seal Allah's guidance resulting in ignorance and going astray, no matter how intelligent and successful one may appear to be. And:

"Verily, Allah admits those who believe and do righteous deeds to Gardens beneath which rivers flow. While those who reject Allah (cover His words and disobey him) enjoy (this world) and eat as cattle eat. And the Fire is their abode." (47:12)

Therefore, it appears that the enjoyments of humankind, the most honourable part of creation, can become as low as those of animals when they choose to disobey Allah the Exalted. Choosing, by free will, not to reject, disobey and challenge Allah the Exalted seems to be the dividing line between mankind and animals. This total submission to the Will of Allah is the true meaning of Islam. Humankind adheres to it by free will while the rest of beings do it automatically.

Having come to this point, we now ask what is the secret formula and the procedure to achieve this position. The Glorious Qur'an has the answer:

"... And We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy and Glad Tidings to those who submit to the Will of Allah (Muslims)." (16:89)

This means that the Munificent Qur'an includes and explains everything humankind needs to know. Or:

"Nothing have We neglected in the Book " (6:38)

And:

"There is no compulsion in religion, the Right way is just made clear from the wrong (by the Glorious Furqan)..." (2:256)

Therefore according to the Glorious Qur'an Itself the secret formula to ultimate bliss can be found in this Book. Everything that humankind needs to know is in It and nothing is neglected in this Book of Guidance. Allah the Exalted leaves people free to choose after the Final Testament, al-Furqan (the distinguisher between right and wrong), has been sent down to humankind.

The Glorious Qur'an is the "written" form, and the Life of Muhammad (SA) and the infallible *Imams*

(PBUT all), is the "practical" form of guidance to the Straight Path for the ultimate and true pleasure, prosperity, peace and tranquillity (*salam*).

Conclusions

In my humble opinion, the most important issue in any religion is the question of Divine Scripture. This is the focal point of all ideas, concepts, rules and laws, social orders, important events and figures in that religion. This is why in the Holy Qur'an Allah the Exalted frequently talks about "people of the book".

Due to the paramount importance of the Scripture, the enemies of Islam have done their best to discount the value of the Glorious Qur'an. Maurice Bucaille in his book, *The Origin of Man*, says:

"As most people in the West have been brought up on misconceptions concerning Islam and the Qur'an; for a large part of my life, I myself was one such person As I grew up, I always thought that 'Mahomet' was the author of the Qur'an; I remember seeing French translations bearing this information. I was invariably told that the 'author of the Qur'an' simply compiled, in a slightly different form, stories of sacred history taken from the Bible; the 'author' was said to have added or removed certain passages, while setting forth the principles and rules of the religion he himself had founded This description of the origins of the Qur'anic text, which is so out of touch with reality, might lead one immediately to assume that if there are scientific errors in the Bible, there must also be errors of this kind in the Qur'an! This is the natural conclusion to be drawn in such circumstances, it is based on misconception"

I hope that with this introductory book I have been able to draw a more representative picture of the Glorious Qur'an. It may be a drop in the ocean to remove the satanic misconceptions brought about by those who felt the Glorious Qur'an conflicted with their interests.

I hope I have been humbly able to explain the yardstick with which a Divine Scripture may be gauged. I sincerely feel sad, particularly for the young people seeking a way, to see that they become victims of Western propaganda against Islam and the Glorious Qur'an, and to see that they are deceived by some so-called religions which have no Divine legitimacy. May Allah the Exalted be with them, protect them and guide them to the Straight Path. I hope this small contribution will be found helpful in this respect.

I have seen, and heard of, people who cannot bear the initial impact of the Glorious Qur'an when they open this Great Book for the first time. This fright often causes them to close the Book, and thus close to themselves that ocean of wisdom and blessings. I hope this book has served the purpose of providing a comprehensive image of the Glorious Qur'an, the perfected and the unique Divine Book, so that the reader may have some idea about what he or she should expect from this Noble Scripture. No doubt there are shortcomings in this treatise, as we, the created, are limited in our abilities.

This ends all that was intended to be included in this work, though there is no end when it comes to writing about the Noble Qur'an. May Allah bless this service, and all the good intentions that have been my motivations for it. Without His consent and will, nothing could have been accomplished. So, thanks to Almighty Allah for His graceful inspiration and strength with which we have been able to produce this work. He is Sufficient and the best Guide.

May the peace and blessings of Allah the High, be on all *nabiys* of Allah, on the seal of the prophets and his kinsfolk, and upon those who transcend in following His Path.

15 Sha'ban 1416, L.H.C.

17 Day 1374, S.H.C

7 January 1996, A.D.

Praise and thanks are for Allah,
The Lord of the **Worlds**

1. This book was almost completed some six months ago, needing only a final review. For reasons unknown to me then, a host of pressing matters prevented me from accomplishing this small task. Irritated (naively), I set the target of 27th of Rajab for completion, a noble Holy Day, commemorating the Mab'ath of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the receipt of the first wahy, see A) 19 on page 27. But serious unexpected matters still prevented me from finalising the work even by this date.

Today, I was pleasantly astonished when I put 15th of Sha'ban down as completion date! This is not a coincidence. I believe Allah the Exalted intended this sacred and blissful completion date for this work, and I did not know it. I cannot thank Him enough for granting me such a great blessing. The 27th of Rajab and the 15th of Sha'ban are both very honourable and important sacred dates. They both are as vital as ever today. The latter is a noble Holy Date, much-celebrated as the birthday of Al-Mahdi al-Qa'im, the 12th infallible imam (A.F.), the Divine Saviour whose Noble manifestation shall guide the misguided to the Straight Path, dissolve all religious differences, and establish Almighty Allah's Universal code of justice and His world government on earth, in a true sense of Tawhid: One Allah, One din, One planet, One humankind, and One standard of Justice, i.e., One order of government for all. The gravity of today's laic world "order" and its associated oppression and double standard calls urgently for the much-needed Noble manifestation of our Saviour. May Allah the Exalted grant me the potential and the honour to compile a presentation of this Munificent infallible holy personality, in English. Insha Allah!

Selected Phrases about the Qur'an in the

Glorious Qur'an

73:1-6: *O thou folded in garments (refers to the holy Prophet). Stand (to prayer) by night, but not all night. Half of it, or a little less. Or a little more, and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones. Soon shall We send down to thee a weighty Message. ¹ Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing (the soul), and most suitable for (framing) the word (of prayer and praise).*

27:6: *And most certainly you are made to receive the Qur'an from the presence of One Who is the Wise and the Knowing.*

10:15: *But when Our Clear Signs are communicated unto them, those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, say: "Bring us a Qur'an other than this, or change it." Say: "It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it. I follow naught but what is revealed unto me. If I were to disobey my Lord, I should myself fear the Penalty of a Mighty Day."*

28:85: *Verily, He Who ordained the Qur'an for thee, will bring thee back to the Place of Return. Say: "My Lord Knows best who it is that brings true guidance and who is in manifest error."*

17:45-46: *When thou dost recite the Qur'an We place between thee and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, a hidden barrier. And We put coverings on their hearts (and minds) and a heaviness in their ears lest they understand it. And when thou commemorate thy Lord - Him alone - in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in aversion.*

41:26: *And those who disbelieve say: "Do not listen to this Qur'an and make noise therein, that you may gain the upper hand."*

12:3: *We narrate unto thee the most beautiful of stories by Our revealing to thee this Qur'an. Before this, thou too were certainly among those who did not know.*

18:54: *We have explained in detail in this Qur'an, for the benefit of humankind, every kind of similitude. But humankind is, in most things, contentious.*

27:76: *Certainly, this Qur'an doth explain to the children of Israel most of what they differ in.*

34:31-33: *The disbelievers say: "By no means will we believe in this Qur'an, nor in (any) that (came) before it." Couldst thou but see when the unjust (disbelievers) will be made to stand before their Lord, bandying words one with another. Those who were reckoned weak shall say to the arrogant ones (those who were proud of themselves and acted as a chiefs, superpowers, masters, and claimed false sacredness): "Had it not been for you, we would certainly have been believers."*

Those who were proud (masters) shall say to those who were deemed weak: "Did we turn you away from Guidance after it reached you? Nay! You (yourselves) were guilty."

Those reckoned weak shall say to the aggressors (masters): "Nay! It was a plot by night and by day when you told us to disbelieve in Allah and to set up equals to Him." They will declare repentance when they see the punishment. We shall put yokes on the necks of the disbelievers. It would only be a requital for their (ill) deeds.

47:24: Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an? Or are there locks on their hearts (and minds)?

17:9: Verily, this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most upright (or stable), and gives glad tidings to the Believers who perform deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward.

7:204: And when the Qur'an is recited, then listen to it and remain silent, that you may receive Mercy.

56:77-80: That this is indeed a Qur'an, most honourable, in a Book wellguarded, which none shall touch but those who are clean. A revelation from the Lord of the Worlds.

I would feel unaccomplished if I did not add a few words about this passage. It describes the Glorious Qur'an with four characteristics: 1) It is most honourable, which implies, besides the fact that It is worthy of receiving honour, that It bestows great favours upon those who receive It. 2) It is well-guarded; precious in Itself, and well preserved in Its purity. 3) None but the clean shall touch It. Clean in body, clean in mind, clean in thought, clean in intention, and clean in spirit. 4) It is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds, and is therefore universal for all.

There is more food for thought. Just open the Book and discover. Reflection upon Divine Clear Signs (*ayat*) is considered an act of worship.

1. In my humble judgement, these five ayat are the 38th through 43rd ayat out of the total 6,256 revealed to The Holy Prophet (only the first five ayat of surah 96 and a total of 32 ayat in surah 68 were revealed before). Therefore these ayat relate to the very early stage of wahy and in my estimate this is probably the first time the word Qur'an is revealed.

Surahs of the Glorious Qur'an

A complete table of the surahs of the Glorious Quran is presented here for reference. It may be found useful, not only for the meaning of all surahs in English, but also for the accurate pronunciation through transliteration characters:

Surah Name	Definition	Number
Al-Fatihah	The opening surah	1
Al-Baqarah	The cow	2
Ali-'Imran	The 'Imran people	3
An-Nisa'	The Women	4
Al-Ma'idah	The Divine food	5
Al-An'am	The cattle	6
Al-Anfal	The booty of war	8
At-Tawbah (Bara'ah)	The repentance (immunity)	9
Yunus	The Prophet Jonah (pbuh)	10
Hud	The Prophet Hud (pbuh)	11
Yusuf	The Prophet Joseph (pbuh)	12
Ar-Ra'ad	The thunder	13
Ibrahim	The Prophet Abraham (pbuh)	14
Al-Hijr	The rocky cave	15
An-Nahl	The honeybee	16
Al-Isra'	The Divine night journey	17
Al-Kahf	The cave	18
Maryam	Holy Mary (pbuh)	19
Ta-Ha	Ta-Ha Divine code	20
Al-Anbiya'	The prophets	21
Al-Hajj	The Makkah pilgrimage	22
Al-Mu'minun	The believers	23
An-Nur	The Light	24
Al-Furqan	The Criterion for Distinction	25
Ash-Shu'ara'	The poets	26
An-Naml	The ant	27
Al-Qasas	The narratives	28
Al-Ankabut	The spider	29
Ar-Rum	The Romans	30
Luqman	Luqman, the wise man	31
As-Sajdah	The prostration	32
Al-Ahzab	The Confederates (The Parties)	33
Saba	The city of Saba	34
Fatir	Originator of creation	35
Ya-Sin	Ya-Sin Divine code	36
As-Saffat	The rangers	37
Sad	Sad Divine code	38
Az-Zumar	The companions	39

Ghafir (Mu'min)	The Forgiver (The Believer)	40
Fussilat (Ha-mim)	Expounded (Hamim Divine code)	41
Ash-Shura	The Council	42
As-Zukhruf	Gold adornments	43
Ad-Dukhan	The smoke	44
Al-Jathiyah	The hobbling	45
Al-Ahqaf	The sand-dunes	46
Muhammad	The Prophet Muhammad (SA)	47
Al-Fath	The victory	48
Al-Hujurat	The chambers	49
Qaf	Qaf Divine code	50
Adh-Dhariyat	The scatterers	51
At-Tur	The name of a mountain	52
An-Najm	The star	53
Al-Qamar	The moon	54
Ar-Rahman	The Beneficent	55
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Al-Qiyamah	The resurrection	75
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An-Naba'	The tiding	78
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'Abasa	He frowned	80
At-Takwir	The eclipse of the sun	81
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Al-Fajr	The daybreak	89
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Al-Layl	The night	92
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Inshirah (ash-Sharh)	Expansion (of inner light)	94
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Al-Kawthar	The Abundance (Heavenly Fountain)	108
Al-Kafirun	The Unbelievers	109
An-Nasr	The Support (of Allah)	110
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Al-Ikhlās (Tawhid)	The Absolute purity (The Divine Unity)	112
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An-Nas	The people	114

Glossary

'Ad: 'Ad The community to which The Prophet Hud (PBUH) was sent.

Ahadiith: See *Hadith*.

Allah: Literally Al-Ilah meaning "The God", the One and Only, the Compassionate, the Merciful, in His Pure, Unique, Eternal and Absolute sense, on Whom all depend and to Whom no gods or goddesses are associated. **"He begets not, nor is He begotten, And there is not a single one to equate with Him."** (112)

Apostle: See *rasul*.

ayah: Clear Sign from Allah, miracle. Shortest unit of the Qur'anic text.

ayat: Plural of *ayah*.

Diya': Light, brilliancy.

Din: The way of life as prescribed by Allah. Religion is the closest word in English, but is not a precise representation. There are many religions, whereas there is only one *din*, which started from the time of The Prophet Adam (PBUH), was gradually completed by many prophets such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ (PBUT all), and Muhammad (SA), and was finally perfected by Allah, the exalted in the form of Islam. The word *din* has been mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an about 70 times, but there is no mention of its plural form, *'adyan*.

Du'a': Supplication.

Fitnah: Allurement, seduction, discord, riot, disturbance, civil war, impiety, unbelief, sin, chastisement, madness.

al-Furqan: The Criterion to distinguish between good and evil (one of the names of the Glorious Qur'an).

Furqan: See *al-Furqan*.

Hadith: A collection of words of Muhammad (SA) as quoted by reliable sources who reported directly from him, and identification of a series of reputable dignitaries who heard the quotations from one another before it was finally documented. A complete reputable linkage is necessary for an authentic *Hadith*. The plural is *ahadith*.

Hadrat: Excellency, Highness, a title used before the name of Messengers, angels, imams, religious leaders, and pious personalities.

Hijrah: The victorious migration of Muhammad (SA) from Makkah to Madinah, in A.D. 621, which initiates the Islamic calendar.

Imamah: Imamate, one of the five Shi'iy principles, the belief in 12 infallible imams, as leaders of Islamic community.

Injil, the: The Book of Divine Revelation to The Prophet Jesus Christ (PBUH) (the source from which the New Testament is produced).

Islam: As a concept, in the form of a verbal noun, means "the state of being submitted (to the will of Allah, the Exalted) at all times". As a religion, in the form of a proper noun, it is the perfection of *din* (please see *din*) before Allah. As a word, it has a variety of meanings, most suitable for the final stage of Allah's *din*. Various derivatives of its root denote perfection, safety, security and protection, health and freedom from defect, salvation and preservation, peace and tranquillity, salutation and greetings,

reconciliation, and most importantly, submission to the will of Allah, and obedience.

Jinn: Jinns are made of smokeless fire, men made of clay, and Angels made of light. As in the case of mankind, there are both believers and unbelievers, among jinnkind. Their bodies are more subtle than those of humans, and cannot be normally seen by mankind. But they are known to have affected the lives of men in various ways.

Ka'bah, the: The Holy focal point representing the Oneness of Allah and his Islam. There are indications that it was first built by The Prophet Adam (PBUH). But it is certain that its construction goes back at least to the time of The Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael (PBUT). After the establishment of truth of the Unity of Allah by The Prophet Abraham (PBUH), people gradually fell into idol worship again for many generations until the time of Muhammad (SA), when the Ka'bah was cleared of idols, and the worship of One True Allah was re-established. Muslims, worldwide, turn to the Ka'bah when praying, as a convergence to the Oneness of Allah and the Unity of His *din*. The Ka'bah is also a focal point for the unity of Muslims when they gather together during the pilgrimage. The rite of circumambulation around the Ka'bah emulates the circumambulation of angels around the Throne of Allah in the Heavens.

Khums: a tax on surplus wealth.

Madyan: Midianites. The Prophet Jethro (PBUH) was missioned by Allah for guidance of this community.

Messenger: See *nabiy* (Divine Prophet) and *rasul* (Divine Apostle). Messenger is taken to mean either *nabiy* or *rasul*.

Mishkah: Niche.

Mubin: According to A. Yusuf cAli, the renowned translator of the Glorious Qur'an, *mubin* means beautifully plain, clear, unambiguous, self-evident, not involved in mysteries of origin, history, or meaning, one which everyone can understand as to the essentials necessary for him (or her). *Mubin* has all these meanings, but it suggests, besides, some quality of a shining light, by which we are able to *make* things clear, to distinguish the true from the false. With this in mind, *perspicuous, illuminating or enlightening* might be a good representation of *mubin*.

Nabiy: A messenger, selected by Allah, who is in communication with Him and can bring back Divine news and information. He is not necessarily charged with the mission of *risdlah*. Out of some 124,000 *nabiys* who have helped mankind since its creation, only 313 were commissioned as *rasuls*.

Nur: Visible radiation, capable of causing a visual sensation, light, lighted (lit), luminous body, reflection or manifestation of the source (and The Truth).

Peace: A by-product of justice. Peace can only be achieved when justice prevails using one universal code of justice according to Almighty Allah, and not various standards according to heads of states.

Prophet: See *nabiy*.

Rasul: A messenger, selected by Allah, who is charged with certain Divine mission. He must also be a *nabiy* in order to be able to communicate with Allah and accomplish his mission.

Risalah: The Divine mission for a *rasul*, planned by Allah the Exalted.

Shi'iy: Shiite.

Siraj: Lamp, wick, a glowing subject (e.g. glow-worm), sun. See also *wahhdj* under which an *ayah* from the Glorious Qur'an includes both words.

Surah: Each of the 114 chapters of the Glorious Qur'an is called one *surah*.

Tafsir: Exegesis, commentary, explanation, interpretation. Please see Note below. 1

Tawrah, the: The Book of Divine Revelation to The Prophet Moses (PBUH) (the source from which the Old Testament is produced).

Taqwa: Piety, virtue, the opposite of being the slave of one's selfish desires.

Tawhid: The paramount principle of Islamic unity. It starts with the Unity or Uniqueness of Allah, the Exalted, [There is no gods or goddesses) except Allah], and penetrates globally through every aspect of life and death, such as the Unity of the universe, religion (*din*), mankind, race, Divine Plan, and so forth.

Ta'wil: Paraphrasing, commenting and expounding by going back to the root and origin of the subject, interpretation. Please see Note below. 38

Tafsir: Exegesis, commentary, explanation, interpretation. Please see the following note. 38

Thamud: Thamud community to which The Prophet Saiih (PBUH) was sent by Allah for guidance.

Wahhaj: Stems from a root that denotes: to blaze fiercely, to kindle (the fire), to be vehemently hot, to shine, intense heat or glow (of the sun or fire). **"And (have We not) built over you the seven firmaments, and placed (therein) a lamp (the sun) [siraj] that glows intensely (wahhaj)?" (78: 12-13)**

Wahy: The process of Divine revelation to messengers of Allah. For more information please refer to Chapter II, section A), item 7, "What is the Mother of the Book" on page 11, and also item 19, "What was the first revelation..." on page 27.

Ummah: The Muslim community, brotherhood.

Zakariyya: Father of Yahya, John the Baptist (PBUH).

Zakat: a tax on certain produce of the land, mines, etc.

1. There is not a sharp dividing line between ta'wil and tafsir. The former is prohibited while the latter is encouraged (with certain rules). The difference between the two is defined differently by different scholars in the past. The essence of what has been recorded by various scholars is given as follows,

Ta'wil is an intellectual process while tafsir is a verbal (literal) comment. Ta'wil has to do with the meanings and tafsir has to do with words.

Ta'wil is the discovery of the core (interior) while tafsir is the findings from the outward appearance (exterior).

Ta'wil belongs to the allegorical ayat (mutashabihat) whereas tafsir is for the fundamental ayat (muhkamat). Please refer to ayah III:7 on page 14.

An interpretation causing differences is called ta'wil, otherwise it is called tafsir.

Ta'wil has to do with intellectual penetration whereas tafsir clarifies matter by telling stories and giving comments.

The history of the collection of the Glorious Qur'an, Sayyid Muhammad Rida Jalali Na'ini (Farsi), 1365 S.H.C. (1986), p 313

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