

2.0 THE GLORIOUS Qur'an

THE LAST AND FINAL DIVINE REVELATION----A LIVING MIRACLE

Most of the other Prophets were divinely gifted with miracles to convince their respective people of the Power, Authority, Unity and Supremacy of Allah and to invite them to the path of Righteousness and Piety. For instance, Prophet Abraham (PBUH) could emerge unscathed from the arena of flaming fire in which he was hurled by the order of king Nimrod of Babylonia; Moses (PBUH) could perform the Miracle of the Rod which would change into a large snake when thrown on the ground; and Jesus (PBUH) could revive a dead person to life by the command of Allah (SWT), could completely cure a leper and other sick persons. No such miracles were gifted to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). The major miracle associated with him was his miraculous night journey from Masjid Al-Haram in Makkah to Masjid Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem and thereafter his ascent to the seventh Heaven and return to Makkah the same night.

Besides his steely resolve, indomitable courage, flawless character and firm belief in the Existence, Unity and Supremacy of Allah as the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, which were divinely gifted to other Prophets as well, the success of his mission was mainly brought about by the Book Al-Qur'an which was revealed to him for the guidance of all mankind (Al-Qalam – 68:52), and was a constant source of inspiration. He was also divinely bestowed with a devout and totally dedicated band of loyal companions such as Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Zaid bin Thabit, Abdullah bin Masud, Bilal etc, who loved Islam and the Prophet (SAWS) more than their own lives.

Undoubtedly Al-Qur'an was the greatest miracle, which was gifted to Muhammad (SAWS) by Allah (SWT). He himself referred to it in one of his traditions: Narrated by Abu Hurairah the Prophet said "Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believed but what I have been given is divine inspiration which Allah (SWT) has revealed to me so I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of other Prophets on the Day of Resurrection" (Bukhari)

Among the divine books revealed to various Prophets preceding Muhammad (SAWS) the Qur'an has certain distinctive attributes which are not matched by others.

It is the only revealed book, which has retained its originality and pristine purity and contains the verbatim record of the words of Allah (SWT), as revealed to Muhammad (SAWS) by Arch-Angel Gabriel (Jibrael) over a period of 23 years. (For a fuller discussion see MEDNET Monograph No. 7: Compilation of Al-Qur'an: the Verbatim Record of the Words of Allah (swt).

There is only one text of the Qur'an, which is being read and recited by Muslims all over the world. This is the only Holy Book, which has been wholly memorized by hundreds of thousands of Huffaz (Those who commit the entire text of the Qur'an to memory) all over the world.

The Qur'an proclaimed that Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was the Seal of Prophets i.e. the chain of Divinely Commissioned Prophets terminated with the Prophetic Mission of Muhammad (saws).

The Qur'an also declared the Universality of his mission (Saba-34:28) and honoured him with the title of *"Mercy to all Mankind"* (Al-Anbiya-21:107).

The religions of the world have progressively evolved over a period of time. The chain of Divinely Revealed books for the guidance of mankind ended with the Revelation of the Glorious Qur'an, hence the teachings of the earlier Prophets were also consummated in the Qur'an revealed to Prophet Muhammad

- **Corruption of other Revealed Scriptures:**

The other extant divine scriptures are Torah (Taurat) revealed to Prophet Musa (Moses), Injil (Gospels) to Isa Ibn Maryam (Jesus Christ) and Zubur (Psalms) to Prophet Daud (David). Excepting Al-Qur'an the text of all the divinely revealed books have been corrupted considerably because of human intervention. Jewish

and Christian religious leaders frankly admit that the Torah and the Gospels are edited texts.

The Torah was revealed all at once as a Mushaf. Unlike the Torah the Qur'an was revealed in stages and communicated orally by Jibrael (Gabriel) to Muhammad (SAWS)

- **The First Stage:**

In the first stage, the Qur'an was brought down by the angels from the Seventh Heaven to the Lowest Heaven (Alam Burzakh). This text of the divine scripture could be handled only by the purified angels. Allah (swt) reveals thus "this is a Glorious Qur'an (inscribed) in a hidden book which none may touch except the purified, a revelation from the Lord of creatures (56: 77-80). This glorious Qur'an will remain well preserved till eternity in Loh Mahfooz "Guarded Tablet (85:21-22). It was in the month of Ramzan that the Qur'an was brought down to the Lowest Heaven. (Refer Tafsir Majid Daryabadi Vol.4 Chapter 56). Allah has assured that the originality of the Qur'anic text as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (saws) will be divinely protected and preserved (15:9) till eternity.

- **THE Second Stage:**

The Second Stage begins with the revelation of the Qur'anic Verses to Prophet Muhammad through angel Jibrael (Gabriel) which is indicated by the following verses in the Qur'an "Surely, this Qur'an is a revelation from the Lord (Rabb) of the Worlds. The trustworthy angel Jibrael (Gabriel) brought it down upon your heart and mind so that as Messenger of Allah you may admonish your people in plain Arabic language (which they understand). This fact was foretold in the earlier scriptures." (26:192-196) The Qur'an further asserts that it has originated directly from Allah the "The All aware" (11:1) and " All wise, most knowledgeable"(27:6). Hence it is the most powerful weapon in the hands of Muslims.

The first five verses were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (saws) in cave Hira also called Jabl-al-Noor (The Mountain of Light) on the 24th of the lunar month of Ramadhan. These verses are “Read in the name of your Lord (Rabb) who created man from a leechlike mass. Read! Your Rabb is the most gracious, who taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not.” (96:1-5).

(a) Ramadhan is the month in which the Qur’an was revealed, a book of guidance distinguishing right from wrong (2:185)

(b) We revealed it to warn mankind, on a night when every precept was made plain as a commandment from our self. (44:2)

(c) “We revealed the Qur’an on the Night of the Qadr, Would that you know what the Night of Qadr is like! Better is the Night of Qadr than a thousand months. On that night the angels including Jibrael come down by the leave of their Lord (Rabb) with all decrees, that night is the night of peace, till the break of dawn.”(97: 1-5)

The second stage lasted 23 years, 13 years in Makka and 10 years in Madinah, during which the entire text of the Qur’an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS).

How did the Qur’an retain its Pristine Purity or Originality?

- The entire text of the Qur’an as dictated and arranged by the Prophet (saws) was already scribed before his death on camel skin (Riqa), thin slabs of stone (Lekhaf) and planks of wood from the base of palm trees. (Aseed).
- These verses of the Qur’an written on different pieces were scribed in a Mushaf (book) on parchment sheets, during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (ra) within 18 months after Prophet’s death. The Qur’anic text thus

compiled was rigorously checked and cross checked to ensure its authenticity.

- Many companions of the Prophet had committed to memory the entire Qur'anic text during the life of the Prophet and were in a position to check, verify and confirm the authenticity of the compiled text. All the companions of the Prophet also vouchsafed for its authenticity. This Mushaf compiled during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (RA) was considered as the standard and accurate referral text of the Qur'an.
- During the caliphate of Othman (r.a) Seven copies of this authentic referral text of the Qur'an were made and a copy each was dispatched for use, reference and copying to the then major centres of Islamic realm namely Makkah, Bahrain, Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Yemen and Madinah. Caliph Othman kept one copy to himself, which was called Mushaf Imam.
- It is this text of the Qur'an circulated by Caliph Othman, with the addition of diacritical marks later, that is being read, recited and memorized by Muslims all across the world.
- Two copies of Suhuf Usmani i.e. the Qur'an scribed during the Khilafat (Caliphate) of Usman (ra) are still preserved, one in Topakapi Palace Museum in Istanbul, Turkey, and the other in a library in the Hast Imam area of old Tashkent in Uzbekistan

Why Was the Qur'an Revealed?

- Idol worship in Arabia, particularly in Makkah, was at its peak. Kabah, the first house of worship for Allah built by Abraham and his son Ismael was completely polluted loaded with nearly 360 idols. Kabah had to be rid of these idols. One of the crucially important missions of Muhammad (SAWS) was to restore the sanctity of Kabah as the house of worship of Allah, the one and only Allah.

- The preceding messages brought by other Prophets such as Ibrahim, Yunus (Jonah) Daud, Jesus, Musa, and many others were either extinct or were thoroughly corrupted and had lost their originality.
- The divine messages conveyed by other Prophets were revealed for a particular community. For instance, Prophets Moses and Jesus were commissioned to guide the people of Bani Israel. Moses said to Bani Israel “Why do you annoy me, my people, when you know that I am sent to you by Allah (61:5); similarly Jesus reminded Bani Israel “O children of Israel. I am sent forth to you by Allah to confirm the Torah already revealed and to give news of an apostle that will come after me whose name is Ahmad” (61:6). Prophet Yunus (Jonah) was commissioned to reform a community of over 100,000 people who lived somewhere in Mesopotamia.
- Because of the utter corruption of Torah and Gospels (Old and New Testaments) the advancing human civilization, with the rise of great empires such as Chinese, Persian and Roman and increasing trade and commerce, lacked proper divine guidance to guide people to the path of piety and righteousness in the conduct of human affairs. There was thus urgent need for a divine book of guidance for all mankind, which shall be universally relevant and will highlight the fundamental values of justice, human equality, honesty, truthfulness and integrity. It was to fill this need for a universal message of guidance that the Qur’an was revealed and Muhammad (SAWS) was chosen as the Messenger to convey this Message. The Qur’an calls this “message for the guidance and admonition for all mankind”, (68:52) and Prophet Muhammad was specially chosen to convey this message, has been designated as “Mercy to all mankind.” (21:07)

Al Qur’an is a unique book, a Living Miracle:

- The Qur'an is a unique and incomparable book, which can never be imitated and shall never be corrupted. Its message is straightforward without any crookedness (18: 1-2). It is totally immune from falsehood which cannot even approach this truthful message from any direction (41: 42). The Qur'an reveals only the truth and nothing but the truth (17: 105)
- It was revealed about 1500 years ago but has stayed uncorrupted. Not a word has changed since its revelation to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). It is the only Book which contains the verbatim record of what was communicated to Prophet Muhammad by angel Jibrael.
- The revelations of the Qur'an were completed in 23 years. Despite this long period of revelation Al-Qur'an is remarkably free from all contradictions (4:82).
- The eloquence and the elegance of the Qur'an in Arabic has remained unexcelled till today. The Arabic language itself in which the Qur'an was revealed 1500 years ago has continued to remain a living and dynamic language even in modern times.
- The challenge of the Qur'an to human beings and to Jinns to make a combined effort to produce a book of this unique nature and immaculate quality has remained unanswered (Al-Isra-17: 88; Al-Qasas – 28:49). The Qur'an challenges the non-believers and even the people of the Book to produce even a single Surah of excellence in quality and subtlety of language and meaning and asserts that none can achieve it (Al-Baqarah – 2:23; Yunus – 10:38). This challenge posed by the Qur'an has not been met.

Accuracy of Predictions of Unforeseen Events in the Qur'an:

Khursu Parvez, the Persian Emperor, inflicted a humiliating defeat on the forces of

Byzantine Emperor Heracles in Syria in 615 A.D. After this defeat Allah (SWT) revealed in the Qur'an that shortly the Romans (Byzantines) will be victorious against the Persians (Ar-Rum-30: 2 to 4). The Romans in the Battle of Mosul routed the Persians in December 627 A.D.

Qur'an Though a Revealed Book is Thoroughly Rational As Well:

- Rationality in the following verses is evident and telling.
 - a) If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods beside, god, there would have been confusion in both (21:22) This was strongly corroborated by President Obama when he was President elect. He refused to attend a summit meeting convened by President Bush saying that “ there can be only one President at a time”.
 - b) King Nimrod of Babylonia argued with Ibrahim that like Allah, he had the power to kill persons or keep them alive. Ibrahim then sharply retorted, “Allah causes the sun to rise from the East, can you then cause it to rise from the West” (21:51-67). Nimrod was stunned to silence.
- Rationality in the Qur'an is again highlighted when Jews claimed Ibrahim (Abraham) was a Jew and Christians claimed that he was a Christian. The Qur'an rebuts their claim and points that Ibrahim lived long before the advent of either Judaism or Christianity, therefore he was neither a Jew nor a Christian but he was a dedicated believer who had surrendered himself to Allah (SWT).
(3:67)

Qur'an is a book of knowledge: (for details refer Monographs No: 18 to 22)

- a) Encourages research and acquisition of knowledge.
- b) Superiority of Adam over angels was established because of Adam's knowledge and intellectual capability.

- c) In the first five verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad, Allah (SWT) stressed the importance of knowledge “your Lord is the most bountiful One, who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know”. (96:4-5). Man should therefore, constantly pray to Allah to enhance his knowledge (20:144)
- d) Prophet Muhammad also stressed that, “it is obligatory for Muslim men and women to acquire knowledge” (Bukhari).
- e) Encouragement to scientific research is clearly evident from the following verse in the Qur’an: “it is Allah who has subdued to you the ocean so that ships may sail upon it at his command so that you may seek his bounty and express gratitude to Him. He has subjected to you whatever the heavens and the earth contain. Surely there are signs in this for those who ponder.” (45:12-13)
- f) The Qur’an revealed some startling scientific truths regarding creation of living beings, astronomy, human embryology, geomorphology, etc.

The Qur’an Outlines the Fundamental principles for the conduct of Human Affairs and Highlights the Five Pillars of Islam:

A . The Quranic revelations provide human beings with a concise and an uncorruptible divine document, in order to guide them to paths of piety and virtuous deeds till the Day of Judgment. It instills in the hearts and minds of human beings the fear of Allah and repeatedly warns them of their accountability to Him for their earthly deeds.

B. Allah (SWT) designates the Qur’an as glorious light, which clearly differentiates between good and evil (4:174, and 25:1). It has also been referred to as a book of “Hikmat or Wisdom” which clearly outlines the path human beings should follow to stay on the “Straight Path’ or “Sirat al- Mustaqeem”.

C. The moral norms and ethical codes prescribed in the Qur’an govern the conduct of Muslims, in fact all human beings, concerning all facets of life. They guide their conduct in war and peace, behaviour towards fellow human beings, relations with neighbours, close and

distant, behaviour and attitude towards family members, respect for parents, treatment of women, distribution of inheritance, adherence to principles of peace, justice, compassion, truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, integrity, and transparency.

D The Qur'anic revelations are forceful, logical, and rational. It encourages acquisition and advancement of knowledge through scientific research including objective observation of nature and creations of Allah (SWT) on land, in water and in air. It stresses on constant search for truth, which alone can ensure advancement of knowledge and can unravel the mysteries of the creations of God in the universe.

E. The Qur'anic revelations are multidimensional in character, which are hardly highlighted by Muslim scholars. They have focused their attention on Islamic jurisprudence and Jihad, which severely constricts the scope and character and presents a skewed view of this remarkable Book, a unique gift of Allah to mankind,

Before discussing the multidimensional character of Qur'anic revelations let us first look into the origin of Deen Islam.