

THE HOLY QURAN

AN INTRODUCTION

Edited By

KHURSHID AHMED

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I

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Islam is a revealed religion. It contains the code of life which Allah, the Creator and the Lord of the universe, has revealed for the guidance of mankind.

For a proper reconstruction of Life on this planet man needs two kinds of things, viz. (a) innumerable substances and resources to maintain life and fulfil the material needs of the individual and the society; and (2) knowledge of the principle of individual and social behaviour to maintain justice and tranquillity in society and culture. The Lord of the Universe has provided for both these needs in full measure. To cater to the material needs of man He has provided nature with all kinds of resources, which lie at the disposal of man, who can make use of them as he likes. To provide for his spiritual, social and cultural needs He raised His Prophets from among human-kind and revealed to them the code of life which can guide man's steps to the Right Path. The Quran is the final Book of Divine Guidance, revealed by Allah through His last Prophet, Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Each and every word of this Book is from Allah, the Creator of the Universe.

II

SOME BASIC FACTS

Quran literally means reading or recitation. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) did not receive the whole of the revelation at one stretch: revelations came to him in fragments, from time to time, covering a period of twenty-three years. As soon as he received a revelation the Prophet used to communicate it to his companions and asked them not only to learn that by heart—in order to recite the same during the prayers—but also to write that down.

Though the Holy Quran was revealed piecemeal, yet the entire revelation is one organic whole. It is the Word of God,

revealed to the last of the Prophets, Muhammad (Peace be upon him), through the angel Gabriel.

Whenever there was a revelation, the Prophet got it inserted at its proper place in the text revealed so far. There is indeed perfect evidence, internal as well as external, that every single word or verse or part of a verse, and every chapter that was revealed was put, where it belonged, by the Prophet himself under Divine guidance. The arrangement of the Quran was thus a part of the Divine scheme. Allah has declared in the Quran that: "Surely on Us devolves the collecting of it and the reciting of it" (75 : 17). The Holy Quran, thus, existed in a complete and ordered form in the memories of numerous companions in the life-time of the Holy Prophet and had also been reduced to writing on such materials as were available for writing purposes in those days.

The Holy Quran is divided into 114 chapters, each of which is called SURAH meaning literally "eminence" or "high degree". The chapters are of varying length, the longest comprising one-twelfth of the entire Book. All the chapters, with the exception of the last thirty-five, are divided into sections (*ruku*), each section dealing generally with one subject, and the different sections being inter-related to each other. Each section contains a number of verses. The total number of verses is 6,240.

Another important division of the Holy Quran relates to the Makki and Madani surahs. The Holy Prophet spent first thirteen years of his prophetic career at Makkah. Then he was forced to migrate to Madinah where he spent the ten years of his life. Those Surahs of the Holy Quran which were revealed before the Hijra are called Makki Surahs and they are ninety-two in number, whereas those revealed after the Hijra are called Madani Surahs and are twenty-two in number. Again there are certain Makki verses in Madani Surahs and vice versa.

III

MISSION AND MESSAGE

The Quran is addressed to the entire humanity, transcending all barriers and limitations of race, region or time. Further, it seeks to guide man in all walks of life, spiritual, temporal, individual and collective. It contains directions for

the conduct of the head of state as a simple soldier for the rich as well as the poor, for peace as well as for war, for spiritual well-being as for commercial and material prosperity.

The Quran seeks, primarily, to develop the personality of the individual and then organise the individuals into an ideal society, so as to usher in an era wherein goodness and virtue may flourish and evil and vice are eliminated. It declares that every human being will be personally responsible to his Creator. The method of the Quran is that it not only gives commands, but also tries to educate the people and convince them about the validity and usefulness of its injunctions. That is why the 'illah (underlying reason) of a command is most often given. It appeals to the reason of man and invites him to exercise his own intellect in order to understand himself, his station and purpose in life, his conduct with his fellow-beings and above all, his relationship with his Sustainer.

The Quran adopts various ways and methods for enabling man to understand the truth. It relates stories and parables and invokes the testimony of history to show what the right course is, and what spelled the doom of nations in the past. The Quran teaches man the Attributes of the Divine Being which are manifest from the Names of the Almighty, such as, the One, the Creator, the Nourisher, the Sustainer, the Powerful, the Just, the Merciful, etc. etc. The Quran also points out what the duties of man are with regard to God, to his fellow-beings and to his own self. It lays stress on the fact that man has been created to fulfil the wishes of his Creator and to lead his individual and collective life in accordance with the instructions contained in the Holy Book and as taught by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him).

The Quran is a comprehensive code of life covering each and every aspect and phase of human existence. This Book of God lays down the best of rules relating to social life, commerce and economics, marriage and inheritance, penal laws and international conduct.

The diction and style of the Quran are magnificent and overpowering. Its recitation stirs the spirit and moves the imagination of even those who are not so well-versed in the niceties of the Arabic Language. Above all, the Quran has by virtue of its claim of Divine origin, challenged man, even all

disbelievers unitedly, to produce just a few lines comparable to those of the Quran. The challenge has remained unanswered to this day. The words of the Quran are :

“And if Ye are in doubt concerning that which We have revealed unto Our slave (Muhammad), then produce a *surah* of the like thereof, and call your witnesses beside Allah if ye are truthful” (11:23). What a challenge the like of which man has never seen and shall never see. For all those who deny the Quran to be the Word of God, this challenge shall, till eternity, remain as a perpetual source of humiliation and proof of their ignorance, prejudice, incompetency and powerlessness.

The Holy Quran occupies a place of such eminence in Arabic literature as is not and cannot be enjoyed by any other piece of literature. The place so occupied by it has not been attained at any time by any other book anywhere. This Book has not only remained the standard of the language in which it is revealed, but has also generated an international movement of literary revival. The Holy Quran transformed a dialect spoken in a very limited area of a forgotten corner of the world into a world-wide language which became the mother-tongue of vast countries and mighty domains. It produced a literature which is the basis of the culture of powerful nations from one end of the world to the other. 1

1. This is certainly not an exaggerated claim. The culture producing ideas of the Quran have left such a profound influence on the thought-patterns, philosophies and conduct of human life that their effect can be seen by any unprejudiced person. If the Quran had not been revealed, humanity would have yet been groping in the never-ending Dark Ages. A detached view of history fully demonstrates that the intellectual “explosion” created by the Quran girdled the entire globe with its life-giving, dynamic, ever-fresh message, at a time when Englishmen knew not even how to clothe their bodies and make their abodes, and Europe knew not even rudiments of civilized behaviour such as washing and bathing; and the highest pinnacle of “wisdom” was considered to be physically strong in order to plunder, rob and kill their neighbours and the lust of their young men knew no bounds.

This was exactly the period when the bearers of the message of the Quran were establishing libraries (with millions and millions of books) and the universities, and such centres of learning in Spain and elsewhere as attracted men from Europe; and they, after first mastering Arabic, got introduced to Greek philosophers, whom Europe had nearly lost if the upholders of the Quranic wisdom had not taken upon themselves the onerous task of rendering Greek thought into Arabic. It is the Quranic spirit of enquiry, freedom and learning that inspired the thinkers who made the Renaissance possible.

Properly speaking, there was no literature in the Arabic language before the Holy Quran. The few pieces of poetry that did exist never soared beyond the praise of wine or woman, or horse and sword, and can hardly be called literature at all. It was with the Quran that Arabic literature originated, and through the Quran that Arabic became a powerful language spoken in many countries and casting its influence on the literary histories of many others. Without the Quran, the Arabic language would have been nowhere in the world.

There are other considerations too which entitle the Holy Quran to a place of eminence to which no other book can aspire. The book gives a masterly exposition of the fundamental truths of religion and a complete scheme of life, the existence and unity of God, the principles of reward and punishments, the inevitability of life after death, the existence of heaven and hell, the truth and necessity of revelation, etc. etc.

It offers healthy solutions to the most bewildering problems of human life and society such as the distribution of wealth, the relationship between individual and society, the question of man's true status and station in life, the balanced relationship between man and woman, whether his freedom is unbridled or he is accountable and answerable for his deeds. It answers all those questions on which depends in any degree the happiness and advancement of man, and about which human intellect can never present balanced and satisfactory solutions, and which have been a major source of all human misery and suffering throughout the long history of mankind.

More wonderful still is the effect which the Holy Quran has produced on human society and history. The transformation wrought by its influence is unparalleled in the history of mankind. The most revolutionary change was brought about in the lives of an entire people in an incredibly short span of time, that is, a period of not more than twenty-three years. The Quran found the Arabs as worshippers of idols, of trees and of heaps of sand, yet in less than a quarter of a century the worship of One God became the creed of the whole land, and polytheism in all its conceivable aspects had been wiped out from one end of the country to the other.

It swept away all superstitions, and in their place, gave the most rational code of life the world was thirsty for. The Arabs who had stooped to take pride in ignorance had, as if by a magician's wand, been transformed into the lovers of knowledge, drinking deep at every fountain of learning. And this was directly the effect of the teachings of the Quran which not only appealed to reason, but also declared man's thirst for knowledge to be insatiable.

The Holy Quran did not accomplish the transformation of the individual alone. Equally, it brought about a transformation of the family, of society, of the entire peoples. Out of the warring elements of the Arab race, the Holy Quran welded a nation, united and full of life and vigour, before whose onward march the greatest kingdoms of the world crumbled.

In fact the Holy Quran brought about a transformation of humanity itself, a transformation material as well as moral, intellectual as well as spiritual. There is no other book which has brought about a change so deep and everlasting in the lives of men. It has changed the very course of history and inaugurated a new era in the life of the human race. Such is the Quran, the fourteen hundredth anniversary of whose first revelation the entire world is celebrating this year (Ramadhan 1387 A.H.). On this august occasion we are presenting a compilation of articles on the Holy Book. The idea is to enable the ordinary reader to know more about this revolutionary Book and to develop better understanding of its mission and message.

I am indebted to Dr. Amir Hasan Siddiqi for initiating this work and my colleagues at the Islamic Research Academy, Karachi, for enabling me to prepare this brochure in a very short period of time.

Karachi

KHURSHID AHMAD

Ramadhan 8, 1387.

Anis Ahmad

Introducing the Quran

The Quran is the Last Book of Allah—the eternal source of guidance for the mankind. It would be in the fitness of things to know some of the basic facts about this book, and about the work that has been done over it. This is a very exhaustive field and even thousands of pages would not suffice to comprehend what Muslims have done during the last fourteen hundred years. Below we are giving some of the glimpses of this work—but only a few glimpses.¹

I

What al-Quran Means?

The name *al-Quran*, the proper name of the Book of Islam, occurs several times in the Book itself. The word Quran is an infinitive noun from the root *qara'a* meaning, primarily, 'be collected things together,' and also, 'be read or recited.'² The Quran is so called both because it is a collection of the best religious teachings and because it is a Book that is or should be read; as a matter of fact, it is the most widely read book in the whole world. It is plainly stated to be a revelation from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad through the Holy Spirit. The first revelation came to the Prophet in the month of Ramadan, on the

1. This article has been compiled from different sources, both English and Urdu. But as many changes have been made to suit the present occasion and to make things presentable in a shorter space, the responsibility rests with the compiler. But it is frankly acknowledged that it is not an original writing. The Compiler is particularly indebted to the following writers: Allama Abdulla Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Ali, Maulana Abul Ala Maududi, Dr. Hameedullah, Muhammad Asad, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi and Maulana Sadruddin Islahi.
2. Sadruddin Islahi, *Quran-e-Majeed ka Ta'aruf*, Delhi, 1963, pp. 124-126.

25th or 27th night, which is known as *Lailat al-Qadr*. The first revelation being as follows :

Read in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created—created man from a germ-cell !

Read ! And thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful. One who has taught (man) the use of pen—taught man what he knew not. (Surah 96 : 1-5).

The Quran was revealed piecemeal, spread over a period of twenty three years. The last verse was revealed shortly before his death, the verse being :

“And be conscious of the Day on which you shall return to God, whereupon every human being shall be repaid in full for what he has earned, and none shall be wronged.”

(Surah II : 281).

Quran is the proper name of the Book of God. But the Book uses for itself many other names, some of which are as follows :

al-Kitab : a writing which is complete in itself ; *al-Furqan* : that which distinguishes between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong ; *al-Dhikr* : the Reminder or a source of eminence and glory to mankind ; *al-Hikmat* : the Wisdom ; *al-Shifa* : that which heals ; *al-Huda* : that which guides or makes one attain the goal ; *al-Tanzil* : the Revelation ; *al-Khair* : the Goodness ; *al-Bayan* : that which explains all things ; *al-Ne'mat* : the Favour ; *al-Burhan* : the clear Argument ; *al-Qayyim* : the Maintainer ; *al-Mubaimin* : the Gardian (of previous revelation) ; *al-Nur* : the Light ; *al-Haqq* : the Truth ; *Habl-Allah* : the Covenant of Allah ; *al-Mubin* : the Glorious ; *al-Hakim* : full of Wisdom ; *Mubarak* : Blessed ; *Musaddiq* : confirming the truth of previous revelation, etc.

III

Divisions of the Qur-an.³

THE reading of the Quran is considered a pious duty by every Muslim and is actually performed in practice by every literate

3. Material in this section is mostly derived from Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali's "Introduction" to *The Holy Quran : Text, Translation and Commentary*, London, 1946, vol. I. Some additional information has, however, been incorporated by the compiler.

person, man, woman, and child. For the convenience of those who wish to complete the whole reading in a given time, the whole text is divided into thirty equal parts, or seven equal parts. The thirtieth part is called *juz* in Arabic, and *Sipara* or simply *Para* in Persian and Urdu. If you read a *Sipara* every day, you complete the whole reading in a month of thirty days. The seventh part is called a *Manzil*. If one is read every day, the whole is completed in a week. Usually the arithmetical quarters of a *Sipara* (one-fourth, one-half, three quarters) are also marked in the Arabic copies as *ar-Rab'*, *annisf* and *ath-thalatha*.

According to subject-matter, the division is different. The whole of the Quran is arranged in 114 Suras of very unequal size. The Suras are numbered and the consecutive number shown just after the title shows chronological order as usually accepted by Muslim writers. Each Sura consists of a number of *Ayats*. Sura I contains 6 Ayats and Sura II contains 286. The most convenient form of quotation is to name the Sura and the Ayat: thus ii : 120 means the 120th Ayat of the second Sura. A Sura is usually spoken of as Chapter in English, but that translation is hardly satisfactory. If you examine the order you will find that each Sura is a step in a gradation. I think the word should be left untranslated, as a technical term in our religious literature. The Ayat or verse division is usually determined by the rhythm and cadence in the Arabic Text. Sometimes an Ayat contains many sentences. Sometimes a sentence is divided by a break in an Ayat. The total number of verses (*Ayat*) in the Quran is 6247, and if we add to each *Surah* the common opening verse of *Bismillah* the number is 6360.

A division of the Sura into Sections is shown in all Arabic Texts. These are logical divisions according to meaning. The word translated "Section" is in Arabic *Ruku'*, a "bowing of the head." The end of a *Ruku'* is shown in Arabic by ع . Usually three figures are written with ع . The top figure shows the number of *Ruku's* completed in that Sura. The middle figure shows the number of *Ayats* in the *Ruku'* just completed. The bottom figure shows the number of *Ruku's* completed in that *Sipara*, irrespective of *Suras*.

The servants of the Book have gone to the extent of enumerating each and every word and alphabet of the Quran. According

to one source the Book contains 77, 934 words and 3,23,760 alphabets.⁴

IV

Makki and Madani Sdrabs.⁵

Another Division of the Holy Book concerns the Makkan and Madinan revelations. Of the 23 years over which the revelation of the entire Book is spread, 13 years were passed by the Holy Prophet at Makkah and 10 were passed at Madinah, the city where he established the Islamic state. Of the entire number of chapters, 93 were revealed at Makkah and 21 were revealed at Madinah, but the 110th chapter, though belonging to the Madinah period, was revealed at Makkah during the well-known farewell pilgrimage. The Madanian chapters, being generally longer, contain really about a third of the entire Quran. In arrangement, the Makki revelation is intermixed with the Madani revelation. Thus, the Holy Quran opens with a Makki revelation which is entitled *al-Fatiha* and is followed by four chapters revealed at Madinah, which take up over one fifth of the whole Book. Then follow alternately Makki and Madani revelations.

As regards the dates of the revelation of the various Makki chapters, it is difficult to assign a particular year to a particular chapter, except in rare cases, but broadly they may be divided into three groups: those revealed in the early Makki period, i.e., during the five years; those revealed in the middle Makki period, i.e., from the sixth to the tenth year; and those revealed during the late Makki period, i.e., from the 11th year to the *Hijrah* (Migration). The dates of the Madani chapters, on the other hand, are tolerably certain and definite, but in this case the difficulty is that the revelation of the longer chapters extended over lengthy periods, and a chapter which undoubtedly belongs to the earliest days at Madinah sometimes contains verses which were revealed in the closing days of the Prophet's life.

4. Vide, Jalaluddin Suyuti, *al-Itqan fi-al-Uloom-il-Quran*, vol. I, Chapter 19.

5. The material is derived from different sources. For a detailed study of this classification see *al-Itqan op. cit.*, chapters 4 and 2.

Subject to the remarks made above, the following dates may approximately be assigned to the different chapters or groups of chapters :—

Early Makki period	...	60 Chapters : 1, 17-21, 50-56, 67-109, 111-114.
Middle Makkan Period	...	17 Chapters : 29-32, 34-39, 40-46.
Late Makkan Period	...	15 Chapters : 6, 7, 10-16, 22, 23, 25-28.
A.H. 1-2	...	6 Chapters : 2, 8, 47, 61, 62, 64.
A.H. 3-4	...	3 Chapters : 3, 58, 59.
A.H. 5-8	...	9 Chapters : 4, 5, 24, 33, 48, 57, 60, 63, 65.
A.H. 9-10	...	4 Chapters : 9, 49, 66, 110.

So much about the revelation in relation to time and place. Now we come to the question of the preservation and the compilation of the Book.

V

Preservation and Compilation of the Quran⁶

Already at the epoch of the commencement of the great religions, man not only relied on his memory, but had also invented the art of writing for preserving his thoughts, writing being more lasting than the individual memories of human beings who after all have a limited span of life.

The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad of blessed memory, employed both the methods simultaneously, each one helping the other and strengthening the integrity of the text and diminishing to the minimum the possibilities of error. He himself dictated certain texts to his scribes, which we call the Quran. *Quran* literally means reading or recitation. While dictating to his disciples, the Prophet assured them that it was the Divine revelation

6. This is a selection from Dr. M. Hamidullah's *Introduction to Islam*, Paris, 1957, Chapter two.

that had come to him. He did not dictate all at the same time : the revelations came to him in fragments, from time to time. As soon as he received any, he used to communicate it to his disciples and ask them not only to learn it by heart—in order to recite it during the service of worship—but also to write it down and to multiply the copies. On each such occasion, he indicated in a precise manner the place to which the new revelation belonged in the whole text ; he did not compile them chronologically. One cannot admire too much this care for preservation, when one takes into consideration the standard of the then culture of the Arabs.

Some historical facts give us an idea of what happened. Umar is considered to be the fortieth person to embrace Islam. This refers to the year 5 of the Mission (8 before the Hijrah). Already at this early period, one possessed written copies of certain chapters of the Quran ; and it was due to the perusal of some such document that Umar embraced Islam as Ibn Hisham reports. We do not know precisely the time since when the practice of writing down the Quran began, yet there is no doubt that during the remaining eighteen years of the life of the Prophet, the number of the Muslims as also that of the copies of the sacred text could not but have increased daily. The Prophet received the revelations in fragments. It is but natural that the revealed text should have referred to the problems of the day. It may be that one of his companions dies ; the revelation must come to promulgate the law of inheritance ; it could not be that the penal law regarding theft, for instance, should have been revealed at that moment. The revelations continued during the whole missionary life of Muhammad, viz., thirteen years at Mecca and ten at Madinah. A revelation consisted sometimes of a whole chapter, short or long, and sometimes of only a certain number of verses.

The nature of the revelations required that the Prophet should repeat and revise continually the form which the collections of fragments had to take. The sources relate that the Prophet recited every year in the month of Ramadan, before the angel Gabriel, the portion of the Quran till then revealed, and that in the last year of his life, Gabriel asked him to recite it twice. The Prophet concluded-

thereby that he was going soon to die. In other words, the Prophet used to revise in the fasting month the sequence of verses and chapters, which was necessary, because of the continuity of new revelations. It is also known, that the Prophet had the habit of celebrating an additional service of worship during the fasting month, every night, sometimes even publicly in congregation, in which he recited the Quran from the beginning to the end, the task being completed during the month. This service of *Tarawih* is still observed with great devotion to our day.

When the Prophet breathed his last, a rebellion was afoot in certain parts of the country. In quelling it, several of those people fell who knew by heart the Quran. The caliph Abu-Bakr felt at once the urgency of codifying the Quran. The task was accomplished some months after the death of the Prophet, in the following manner.

During the last year of his life, the Prophet used to employ Zaid ibn Thabit as his chief amanuensis for taking dictation of the newly received revelations. Abu-Bakr charged this same gentleman with the task of preparing a fair copy of the entire text in the form of a book. There were then in Madinah several *hafizs* (those who learn the whole Quran by heart), and the scribe was himself one. The caliph directed him to obtain two written copies of each portion of the text before including in the corpus. At the demand of the caliph, the inhabitants of Madinah brought to him copies of the fragments of the Quran which they possessed. The rich had written them on parchments or pieces of leather, the poor on shoulder blades, bones, flat stones and even pieces of broken pottery.

The fair copy was called *Mus'haf* (bound leaves), and was kept by the caliph Abu Bakr, and after him by his successor Umar. In the meanwhile the study of the Quran was encouraged everywhere in the Muslim empire. Caliph Umar felt the need of sending copies of the authentic text to the provincial centres, in order to avoid all deviations; but it was left to his successor, Uthman, to bring to a head the task in the following wise: One of his lieutenants returned from far off Armenia, and reported that he had found

conflicting copies of the Quran, and that there were even quarrels among the different teachers. Uthman caused immediately the copy prepared for Abu Bakr to be entrusted to a commission, presided over by the above mentioned Zaid ibn Thabit, for preparing seven copies; he authorized them to revise the old spelling if necessary. When the task was completed the caliph caused a public reading of the new "edition" before the experts of the capital, from among the companions of the Prophet, and then sent these copies to the different centres of the vast Islamic world, ordering that thenceforward all copies should be based on that authentic edition. He then ordered the destruction of copies of the Quran which went against the text officially established.

The copies of the Quran sent by Uthman to provincial centres have gradually disappeared, in the succeeding centuries; only one of them, which is actually in Tashkend, has come down to us. The Czarist government of Russia had published it with a facsimile reproduction; and we see that there is complete identity between this copy and the text otherwise in use. The same is true of the other extant MSS, of the Quran, complete or fragmentary, dating from the first century of the Hijrah.

The habit of learning by heart the text of the Quran dates from the very time of the Prophet. The caliphs and heads of Muslim States have always encouraged this habit. A happy coincidence has confirmed it. From the very beginning, Muslims have had the practice of reading a work in the presence of its author and obtaining his authorization after necessary corrections at the time of the collation. Those who recited the Quran by heart or by simply reading the written text, also did the same thing; and the habit has continued down to our own day, with this remarkable particularity that every master indicates precisely in the certificate given by him not only the fact that the reading of his pupil was correct, but also that it was in conformity with that which this master had learned from his own master, and that this last had affirmed that he in his turn had learnt it from his master, the chain mounting up to the Prophet. The writer of these lines studied the Quran at Madinah with Shaikh Hasan ash-Sha'ir, and the certificate he obtained notes, among other things, the chain of masters and masters of masters,

noting that in the final portion the master had studied simultaneously from Uthman, Ali, Ibn Mas'ud, Ubaiy ibn Ka'b, and Zaid ibn Thabit (all companions of the Prophet). The number of *hafizs* is now counted in the world by hundreds of thousands, and copies of the text are found in all parts of the globe; and it is touching to note that there is absolutely no difference between the text employed by one or the other.

The original of the Quran was in Arabic; and that same text is still in use. There are translations in all the important languages of the world, which are more or less serviceable for those who do not know Arabic. Yet it is to be remembered that it is in the original language that the text has come down to us, and there has been no need of retranslating into Arabic from a later translation.

A text in the original language, a codification under the auspices of the Prophet himself, a continued preservation by the simultaneous double control of memory and writing, and this by a large number of individuals in every generation, and the absence of any variants in the text—these are some of the remarkable features of the Quran, the holy book of the Muslims.

VI

Translations of the Quran.

ALMOST all languages spoken by Muslims have translations of the Quran in them. Usually the text is printed with the Translation. If the language is undeveloped, many of the Arabic words of the Quran are taken over bodily into it for want of corresponding words in the language. Even in cultivated languages like Persian or Turkish, the introduction of religious terms from Arabic gave a body of words which were common to the whole Islamic world, and thus cemented that unity of the Muslim Brotherhood which is typified by the Qibla. Where the notion itself is new to the speakers of polished languages, they are glad to borrow the Arabic word expressing

6. This section is derived from Allama Yusuf Ali's "Introduction" *opt. cit.*; some additions have, however, been made.

that notion and all the associations connected with it. Such a word is Qibla. Where the language is undeveloped, the translation is nothing more than a rough explanation of the Arabic Text. The translation has neither grammatical finish nor a form which can stand independently by itself. That is what happened with the earlier Urdu translations. They were really rough explanations. The ambition of every Muslim is to read the sounds of the Arabic Text. I wish that his or her ambition were also to understand the Quran, either in Arabic or in the mother tongue or some well-developed tongue which he or she understands. Hence the need for good and accurate translations.

The translation into non-European languages known to me are: Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Tamil (used by Mopals), Pashto (for Afghans), Bengali, Malay, some of the languages of the Eastern Archipelago, and some of the African languages. I believe there is also a Chinese (dialectal) translation.

The earliest Urdu translation was by Shah 'Abdul Qadir of Delhi (d. 1826). Since then numerous Urdu translations have followed, some of which have been left incomplete. Among the complete ones, much used at the present day, may be mentioned those of Shah Rafi-ud-din of Delhi, Shah Ashraf Ali Thanawi, and Maulvi Nazir Ahmad (d. 1912).

Before the development of the modern European vernaculars, the cultivated language of Europe was Latin. A Latin translation was made for the Monastery of Clugny about 1143 (in the sixth century of the Hijra) but not published till 1543. The place of publication was Basle and the publisher Bibliander. This was translated into Italian, German, and Dutch. Schweigger's German translation was published at Nurenburg (Bavaria) in 1616. A French translation by Du Ryer was published at Paris in 1647, and a Russian one at St. Petersburg in 1776. Savary's French translation appeared in 1783, and Kasimirski's French translation (which has passed through several editions) first appeared in 1840, the French interest in Islam having been stimulated by French conquests in Algeria and North Africa. The Germans have followed up Schweigger with Boysen's

translation in 1773; Wahl's in 1828, and Ullmann's (first edition in 1840).

Meanwhile Maracci had produced in 1689 a Latin version of the Quran with the Arabic Text and quotations from various Arabic Commentaries, carefully selected and garbled, so as to give the worst possible impression of Islam to Europe. Maracci was a learned man, and there is no pretence about the object he had in view, viz., to discredit Islam by an elaborate show of quotations from Muslim authorities themselves. Maracci was himself a Confessor to Pope Innocent XI; his work is dedicated to the holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, and he introduces it by an introductory volume containing what he calls a "Refutation of the Quran".

The first English translation by A. Ross was but a translation of the first French translation of Du Ryer of 1647, and was published a few years after Du Ryer's. George Sale's translation (1734) was based on Maracci's Latin version, and even his notes and his Preliminary Discourse are based mainly on Maracci. Considering that Maracci's object was to discredit Islam in the eyes of Europe, it is remarkable that Sale's translation should be looked upon as a standard translation in the English speaking world, and should pass through edition after edition, being even included in the series called the Chandos Classics and receiving the benediction of Sir E. Denison Ross. The Rev. J. M. Rodwell arranged the *Suras* in a rough chronological order. His translation was first published in 1861. Though he tries to render the idiom fairly, his notes show the mind of a Christian clergyman, who was more concerned to "show up" the Book than to appreciate or expound its beauties. Prof E. H. Palmer's translation (first published in 1876) suffers from the idea that the Quran ought to be translated into colloquial language. He failed to realise the beauty and grandeur of style in the original Arabic. To him that style was "rude and rugged"; we may more justifiably call his translation careless and slipshod.

The amount of mischief done by these versions of non-Muslim and anti-Muslim writers has led Muslim writers to venture into the field of English translation. The first Muslim to undertake an English translation was Dr. Muhammad 'Abdul Hakim Khan, of

Patiala, 1905. Mirza Hairat of Delhi also published a translation, (Delhi 1919). The Commentary which he intended to publish in a separate volume of Introduction was, as far as I know, never published. The late Nawwab 'Imud-ul-Mulk Saiyid Hassain Bilgrami of Hyderabad, Deccan, translated a portion, but he did not live to complete his works. The Ahmadiya have also been active in the field. Its Qadiyan Anjuman published a version of the first Sipara in 1915. Apparently no more was published. Its Lahore Anjuman has published Maulvi Muhammad Ali's translation (first edition in 1917), which has passed through more than one edition. The English of the Text is decidedly weak, and is not likely to appeal to those who know no Arabic. There are two other Muslim translations of great merit. But they have been published without the Arabic Text. Hafiz Gulam Sarwar's translation (published in 1930 or 1929) deserves to be better known than it is. He has provided fairly full summaries of the Suras, section by section, but he has practically no notes to his Text. I think such notes are necessary for a full understanding of the Text. In many cases the Arabic words and phrases are so pregnant of meaning that a Translator would be in despair unless he were allowed to explain all that he understands by them. Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall's translation was published in 1930. He is an English Muslim, a literary man of standing, and an Arabic scholar. But he has added very few notes to elucidate the Text. His rendering is "almost literal": it can hardly be expected that it can give an adequate idea of a Book which (in his own words) can be described as "that inimitable symphony the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy." Perhaps the attempt to catch something of that symphony in another language is impossible. Other important translations in English are from the pen of Allama Yusuf Ali and Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi. Muhammad Asad (Leopold weis) has also published one volume of *The Message of the Quran* which contains translation and commentary on the first nine sura'hs of the Quran.

Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi

An Introduction to the Study of the Quran

I have two objects in view in writing this introduction to the study of the Quran.

First, I want to acquaint the reader with those things which will help him to understand the meaning of the Quran. If he does not become conversant with them in the very beginning, they keep coming back into his mind over and over again, and often become a hindrance to his going deep into its meaning and spirit.

Secondly, I want to answer beforehand some of the questions which usually arise during the study of the Quran.

A Unique Book

Before one begins the study of the Quran, one must bear in mind the fact that it is a unique Book, quite different from the books one usually reads. Unlike conventional books, the Quran does not contain information, ideas and arguments about specific themes arranged in a literary and logical order. That is why a stranger to the Quran, on his first approach to it, is baffled when he does not find the enunciation of its theme or its division into chapters and sections or separate treatment of different topics and separate instructions for different aspects of life arranged in a serial order. On the contrary, there is something with which he has not been familiar before and which does not conform to his conception of a book. He finds that it deals with creeds, gives moral instructions, lays down laws, invites people to Islam, admonishes the disbelievers, draws lessons from historical events, administers warnings, gives good tidings, all blended together in a beautiful manner. The same subject is repeated in different ways and one topic follows the other without any

apparent connection. Sometimes a new topic crops up in the middle of another without any obvious reason. The speaker and the spoken to, and the direction of the address change without any notice. There is no sign of chapters and divisions anywhere. Historical events are presented but not as in history books. The problems of Philosophy and Metaphysics are treated in a manner different from that of the books on the subjects. Man and the Universe are mentioned in a language different from that of the natural sciences. Likewise it follows its own method of solving cultural, political, social and economic problems and deals with the principles and injunctions of law in a manner quite different from that of the sociologists, lawyers and jurists. Morality is taught in a way that has no parallel in the whole literature on the subject.

That is why the unwary reader gets baffled and puzzled when he finds all these things contrary to his preconceived conception of a book. He begins to feel that the Quran is a book without any order or inter-connection between the verses or continuity of subject, or that it deals with miscellaneous topics in an 'incoherent manner,' or that it had been given the form of a continuous book though it was not a book in the commonly accepted sense of the word. As a result of this, its opponents raise strange objections against the Quran, and its modern followers adopt strange devices to ward off doubts and objections. They either resort to escapism or put forward strange interpretations to ease the minds. Sometimes they try to create artificial connections between the verses to explain away the apparent incoherencies, and, as a last resort, they even accept the theory that the Quran deals with miscellaneous topics without any order or coherence. Consequently, verses are isolated from their context and confusion is produced in the meanings.

This happens when the reader does not take into consideration the fact that the Quran is a unique book. It does not, like other books, enunciate at the very beginning the subject it deals with and the object it intends to achieve. Its style and method of explaining things are also quite different from those of other books one commonly reads and it does not follow any bookish order. Above all, it is not a book on "religion" in the sense this word is generally understood. That is why when a reader approaches the Quran with the

common notions of a book, he is rather puzzled by its style and manner of presentation. He finds that at many places the background has not been mentioned and the circumstances under which a particular passage was revealed have not been stated. As a result of these, the ordinary reader is unable to benefit fully from the most precious treasures contained in the Quran, though occasionally he may succeed in discovering a few gems here and there. Only such people become victims of doubts as are not acquainted with these distinctive features of the Quran. They seem to find miscellaneous topics scattered over its pages and feel difficulties about its meanings. Nay, even those verses which are absolutely clear appear to them to be quite irrelevant in the contexts they occur.

The reader may be saved from these, if he is warned beforehand that the Book he is going to study is the only book of its kind in the whole world and that its literary style is quite different from that of all other books and that its theme is unique and that his preconceived notions of a book cannot help him understand the Quran. Nay, these may even become a hindrance. He should, therefore, first of all free his mind from his preconceived notions and get acquainted with the distinctive features of this Book. Then and then alone can he understand it.

In order to understand the Quran thoroughly, it is essential to know the nature of this Book, its central idea and its aim and object. The reader should also be well acquainted with its style, the terms it uses and the method it adopts to explain things. He should also keep in view the background and circumstances under which a certain passage was revealed.

Divine Guidance

First of all, the reader should understand the real nature of the Quran. Whether one believes it to be a revealed book or not, one will have to consider, as a starting point, the claim that is put forward by the Quran and by the man to whom it was revealed, Muhammad (God's peace be upon him), that *this is the Divine Guidance*.

The Lord of the Universe, its Creator, Master, and Sovereign created Man and bestowed upon him the faculties of learning,

speaking, understanding and discerning right from wrong and good from evil. He granted him freedom of choice, freedom of will, freedom of action and gave him authority to acquire and make use of the things around him. In short, He granted him a kind of autonomy and appointed him as His Vicegerent on the Earth and instructed him to live in accordance with His Guidance.

At the time, when the Lord of the Universe appointed Man as His vicegerant, He warned him very clearly and precisely, leaving no doubt in his mind as to the kind of relations he keep with Him, as if to say, "I am your Master and Sovereign and that of the whole universe; therefore you should worship Me and none else. You are neither independent in My Kingdom nor the subject of anyone else, to whom you might owe obedience or worship. You are being sent to the Earth with certain powers for a fixed term of your test. After that you will have to return to Me. Then I will judge the works you did in the world and decide whether you have come out successful or have failed in the test. Therefore the right course for you is to accept Me *voluntarily* as Sovereign and worship Me alone and act in the world according to the Guidance I shall send you, and live on the Earth with the conviction and understanding that it is merely the place of your trial. Your real object in your earthly life should be to come out successful in the final judgement. Therefore any other course different from and apposed to the Divine Guidance, will be wrong. If you adopt the first course, (and you have full liberty and freedom to adopt it) you will achieve peace and tranquillity in this world and win the home of eternal bliss and joy (Paradise) in the next world, where you shall have to return. And if you follow any other course (and you are quite free to do this, too, if you so choose), you shall incur My disfavour in this world and eternal sorrow and affliction in the Hereafter, where you shall be thrown into the abyss of Hell."

After such a warning, the Ruler of the Universe sent Adam and Eve (God's peace be upon them), the first human beings, to the Earth and gave them the guidance according to which they and their descendants were to live here in this world. Thus, the first two human beings were not created in ignorance and darkness but were given very clear and bright Light and the Law they were to follow. This

was Islam, submission to Allah. Before they left this world, they themselves practised and taught the same way to their children and children's children and exhorted them to live as Muslims (obedient servants to Allah). But in the succeeding centuries, by and by, people swerved from this straight path of life (Islam) and adopted different crooked ways. They not only lost the Guidance owing to their negligence but also tampered with it because of their wickedness. They attributed to others the qualities and powers of Allah and associated others to rank with Him as gods and ascribed to others rights and attributes that were exclusively His. They invented different kinds of religions (ways of life) by mixing together various kinds of superstitions, wrong concepts and false philosophies with Guidance that was given by Allah. They discarded the right, just and moral principles taught by Allah or corrupted them and made such laws of life as suited their prejudices and lusts, and filled this Earth of Allah with chaos and iniquity.

Though this was a sad state of affairs, God did not will *to force* these misguided people to follow the Right Way because this would have been against the limited freedom of action which had been granted to man by him; nor did he will to destroy them forthwith as soon as rebellion broke out against Him, because this would not have been in keeping with the scheme of life laid for trial in this world. Instead, God took upon Himself, from the very beginning of man's life on the Earth, to send His Guidance to him during his term of life, leaving him free to follow or not to follow it. Accordingly, He made arrangements for the Guidance of mankind and appointed His Messengers from among the people themselves and bestowed upon them the knowledge of the Truth and the Right Way of life. They were charged with the mission to invite people to the Right Path from which they had swerved. The Messengers themselves believed in Allah and acted in accordance with the Guidance they received from Him. They were raised from different nations in different countries and thousands of them were sent during thousands of years. They all had one and the same religion which was based on the Unity of God and man's accountability in the Hereafter. They all taught the same way of life that was taught to the first man at the very start of his life-career in this world. They

all followed the same Guidance, that is, those fundamental and eternal principles of morality and culture which were prescribed for the first Man from the very first day of his life. They all had one and the same mission, that is, to invite all human beings to the Right path, and to organise those who accept the Divine Guidance into one community. All those people who accepted their invitation became one community, a fraternity of faith, which was in duty bound to follow the Divine Guidance and to exert its best and utmost to establish it and to guard against any transgressions against it.

During their respective terms, these Messengers fulfilled their mission admirably well. But it is a pity that the majority of the people were not inclined to accept their invitation and even many of those who joined their community gradually became corrupt and were led astray. So much so that some of these communities totally lost that Guidance and others tampered with the Commandments of Allah and mixed them up with false things.

Then the Lord of the Universe sent Muhammad (God's peace be upon him) as His last Messenger to fulfil the same mission for which Messengers had been sent before him. He extended his invitation to all human beings, including the corrupt followers of the previous Messengers and asked them to follow the Right Way. He organised all those who accepted the Divine Guidance into one community, which in its turn, was required to establish its collective way of life on the Guidance and to exert its utmost to reform the world, which had gone astray. The Quran which was revealed to Muhammad (God's peace be upon him) is the Book which contains that Invitation and the Divine Guidance.

Central Theme

Now that we have come to know the nature of the Quran, it has become easier to determine the subject it deals with, its central theme and its aim and object.

The **SUBJECT** it deals with is **MAN**: it discusses those aspects of his life that lead either to his real success or failure.

The **CENTRAL THEME** that runs throughout the Quran is the exposition of the Reality and the invitation to the Right Path

based on it. It declares that Reality is the same that was revealed by Allah to Adam at the time of his appointment as vicegerant, and to all the Messengers after him, and the Right Why is the same that was taught by all the Messengers. It also points out that all theories contradictory to this Reality, forged by people about God, the universe, Man and his relations with God and the rest of His creation, are wrong and that all the ways of life based on them are erroneous and lead to ruinous consequences.

The AIM and OBJECT of the revelation is to invite Man to that Right Path and to present clearly the Guidance which he has lost because of his negligence or has perverted through his wickedness.

If the reader keeps these three basic things in mind, he will find that in this Book there is no incongruity in the style, no disregard to the continuity of the subject and no lack of interconnection between its various topics. As a matter of fact, this Book is not irrelevant anywhere with regard to its Subject, its Central Theme and its Aim. From the first verse to the last, the different topics it deals with are so intimately connected with its Central Theme that they may be likened to the beautiful gems of the same necklace, despite their different colours and sizes. The Quran keeps the same object before it, whether it is relating the story of the creation of the Earth or of the heavens or of Man or is pointing to the manifestations in the Universe or stating events from human history. As the aim of the Quran is to guide Man and not to teach Nature Study or History or Philosophy or any other science or art, it does not concern itself with these latter subjects. The only thing with which it is concerned is to expound the Reality, to remove misunderstandings, and misconceptions about it, to impress the Truth upon the minds, to warn them of the consequences of wrong attitudes and to invite humanity to the Right Way. The same is true of the criticism of the creeds, of the moral systems, of the deeds of men and communities and of its discussions of the problems of Metaphysics etc. That is why it states or discusses or cites a thing only to that extent which is relevant to its aims and objects and leaves out unnecessary and irrelevant details and turns over and over again

to its Central Theme and to its invitation round which every other topic revolves. When the Quran is studied in this light, no doubt is left that the whole of it is a closely reasoned argument and there is continuity of subjects throughout the Book.

Background

One cannot understand fully many of the topics discussed in the Quran unless one is acquainted with background of their revelation. One should know the social, historical and other antecedents or conditions which help explain any particular topic. For, the Quran was not revealed as a complete book at one and the same nor did Allah hand over a written copy of it to Muhammad (God's peace be upon him) at the very beginning of his mission and command him to publish it and invite people to adopt a particular way of life. Moreover, it is not conventional literary work of the common type that develops its central theme in a logical order; nor does it conform to the style of such a work. The Quran adopts its own style to suit the guidance of the Islamic Movement that was started by God's Messenger under His direct command. Accordingly, Allah revealed the Quran piecemeal to meet the requirements of the Movement at its different stages.

Makki Surahs

When the Holy Prophet was commanded to start his mission at Makkah, Allah sent down such instructions as the Messenger needed for his own training for the great work that was entrusted to him. The Quran also imparted the basic knowledge of the Reality and gave brief answers to the common misunderstandings that misled people to adopt wrong ways of life and invited them to accept the basic principles of morality and adopt the right attitude that alone leads to the success and welfare of humanity.

These early messages consisted of short concise sentences and were couched in a very fluent and effective language to suit the taste of the people to whom they were first addressed. Their excellent literary style was so appealing that it touched their very hearts. They were so charming that they attracted the attention of the listeners, whose hearts and tongues began to echo them because of

their beauty and elegance. Though universal truths were enunciated in these messages, they were given a local colour and were supported by arguments, examples and illustrations from the environment with which its first addressees were quite familiar. In order to impress the addressees effectively, these early addresses were confined to their own history, their traditions, their monuments, their beliefs, their morality and their evil ways.

This early stage of the Movement lasted for four years or so with the result that a few noble souls accepted its message and formed the nucleus of the future Muslim Community. But the large majority of the Quraish began to oppose it because, in their ignorance they thought that it hit hard at their interests and the old traditions of their fore-fathers. The message of the Quran, however, went on spreading beyond the boundaries of Makkah and reached other clans.

Then the Movement entered its second stage which continued for nine years or so and a fierce struggle began with the old order. Not only the Quraish but also the majority of its upholders also rose up to crush this Movement and employed all sorts of weapons to suppress it. They made false propaganda and accusations and raised frivolous objections against it. They spread suspicions and doubts in order to alienate the common people from it. They hindered strangers from listening to the Holy Prophet and inflicted all sorts of cruelties on those who accepted Islam. They boycotted the Muslims socially and economically in order to intimidate and coerce them. Their persecution became so unbearable that some of them had to leave their homes twice for Abyssinia, and at last all of them had to migrate to Al-Madinah. But in spite of persecution and hindrances, the Movement went on spreading. There was hardly a family or a household left in Makkah from which one person or the other had not accepted Islam. Naturally this produced bitterness in the hearts of the opponents of Islam. The persecution became more cruel when they saw that their own brothers, nephews, sons, daughters, sisters etc., had accepted Islam and become its faithful and strong supporters and were ready to defend it against them even with their lives.

The Movement also got impetus from the fact that it was drawing into its fold those from among their best people who had become the embodiments of virtue after accepting Islam. The world, therefore, could not help feeling the moral superiority of the Movement that was transforming the characters of its followers so thoroughly.

All through this long and bitter struggle, Allah continued to reveal, according to the requirements of the occasion, inspiring addresses which deeply influenced the thoughts and conduct of the hearers. On the one hand, these addresses instructed the Muslims in their primary duties, infused into them the spirit of loyalty and devotion to bind them together as members of the Muslim Community and through the ways of piety, high morality and purity of character and trained them to be true missionaries of Islam. On the other hand, these messages comforted and encouraged the Muslims with promises of success in this world and of eternal bliss in the Hereafter. They urged them also to exert their utmost in the way of Allah with fortitude, endurance and courage. The Muslims were so imbued with the spirit of sacrifice for this noble cause that they were ready to bear every kind of affliction and fight against the bitterest opposition. At the same time, these addresses administered warnings to those people who were opposing the Movement and those who were indifferent to it. Examples were cited from the history of the neighbouring peoples as proofs thereof. Their attention was also drawn to the ruins of the habitations by which they used to pass on their journeys, which were held out as objects of warning. They were asked to observe the phenomena of Nature they saw day and night on the earth and in the heavens as a proof of the Unity of God and of the inevitable Hereafter.

The early addresses so vividly exposed the weaknesses of the belief of the idolaters and their association of partners with Allah and their blind worship of the traditions of the past as to convince all fair-minded persons of their being wrong. They refuted their misconception that they were independent of God and not accountable to Him in the Hereafter with such clear reasoning as to leave no doubt in their hearts and minds. Every doubt was dispelled and every objection answered and every doubt and confusion in which

they were entangled and in which they were involving others, was dispelled and removed. In short, these addresses proved clearly and conclusively that old ways were based on ignorance and were utterly devoid of sense. Side by side with this, the disbelievers were admonished for their immorality, their wrong ways of life and their customs of ignorance and their opposition to the Truth and their persecution of the Believers. These early addresses also put forward those basic principles of culture and morality which have always been universally accepted and which have always formed the basis of the enlightened Godly civilization.

Several changes took place during the Makki stage of the Movement. It spread wider and wider, day by day, and the opposition to it became stronger and stronger in the same proportion. By and by, it came into contact with the people of different creeds and different ways of life and this gave rise to new problems. The discourses, therefore, began to deal with various new topics as well. This explains the difference of their styles from those of the earlier ones.

This is the background of the surahs which were revealed during the thirteen years of Makki life.

Madani Surahs

After facing long opposition for thirteen years in Makkah, the Islamic Movement found a new centre in Al-Madinah and it became possible to collect all its followers from the various parts of Arabia and to unify and strengthen them. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet and the majority of the Muslims migrated to Al-Madinah.

Then the Movement entered upon its third stage under totally changed conditions. Now that the Muslim Community had succeeded in founding a regular state, armed encounters ensued with the exponents of the old order. Besides this, the Jews and the Christians came into conflict with it, even though they also professed to be the followers of Prophets. It had also to deal with different kinds of hypocrite 'Muslims' who had somehow or other entered its fold. But in spite of all these obstacles; the Movement succeeded in subduing the whole of Arabia after hard struggle of ten years and was in a

position to extend its universal message of reform to the world at large.

As, by and by, several changes took place in this phase also, and every changed condition had its own special problems, so Allah revealed to the Holy Prophet discourses required for any particular occasion. That is why some of these were couched in the fiery rhetoric of a warner and the others in the form of the royal edicts of the lawgiver. Some adopted the method of a teacher, trainer and reformer and taught the principles and of constructing a good civilisation for the conduct of different affairs of life. Others gave instructions for dealing with the hypocrites or the unbelievers, who had come under the protection of the Islamic state. Then in some of these discourses, the people of the Book and with the belligerent powers and with their own allies. In others they were taught, trained and organised to carry out their obligations as vicegerents of the Lord of the Universe. Some gave instructions for their guidance, and warned them of their weaknesses and exhorted them to sacrifice their lives and properties in the way of Allah. Others taught the moral lessons they needed in defeat and victory, adversity and prosperity, war and peace. In short, these trained them to carry on the missionary work for the propagation of Islam as the successors of the Holy Prophet. Then some discourses invited to Islam the people of the Book, the hypocrites, the unbelievers and the blasphemers, or rebuked them for their hard-heartedness or warned them of the doom in store for them or admonished them for neglecting lessons from the stories and events of the past, so as to leave no excuse for their sticking to the wrong ways of life.

This is the background of the surahs that were revealed during the ten years at Al-Madinah. It is obvious that their style had to be different from that of the Makki Surahs.

Style

It must have become clear from the above that the revelation of the Quran began simultaneously with the beginning of the Islamic Movement and continued for twenty three years. The different portions of the Quran were revealed according to the requirements of the different phases of the Movement. It is thus obvious that a

book like this cannot have the kind of uniformity of style which is followed in formal books on religion and the like. Then it should also be kept in mind that the various portions of the Quran, both long and short, were not meant to be published in the form of pamphlets at the time of their revelation but were to be delivered as addresses and promulgated as such. Hence they could not have the style of a written work. Moreover, these addresses were necessarily of a different nature from that of the lectures of a professor; therefore, their style would naturally be different from them also. The Holy Prophet was entrusted with a special mission and had to appeal both to the feelings and to the intellect; he had to deal with people of different mentalities and cope with different situations and various kinds of experiences during the course of his mission. Such a person has to do all that is required for extending a message and for leading a movement. He has to impress the different aspects of his message on people's minds in order to change the established world of ideas, and to appeal to the feelings and emotions in order to counteract the forces of his adversaries. He has also to train and reform his followers and to imbue them with spirit and courage, and to refute the arguments of opponents and to expose their moral weaknesses and so on. That is why the style of the discourses that Allah sent down to His Messenger had to be what suited the requirements of a Movement. It is, therefore, wrong to seek the style of a formal book or that of university lectures in the discourses of the Quran.

That also explains why the same things are repeated over and over again in the Quran. A mission and a movement naturally demand that only those things should be presented which are required at a particular stage and that nothing should be said about the requirements of the next stage. That is why the same things are repeated over and over again as long as the movement remains in the same stage, no matter whether it remains there for months or for years. Of course, these things have been differently worded and styled to avoid monotony, and couched in a beautiful and majestic language to make them effective and impressive. Moreover, it repeats at suitable places its basic creed and principles in order to keep the Movement strong at every stage. That is why those surahs which were revealed at a particular stage of the Movement generally

deal with the same topics, though, of course, in different words and in various forms. Moreover, all the surahs of the Quran contain references to the basic creed; *i.e.*, the Unity of Allah, His attributes, the Hereafter and the Principle of Accountability, Punishment and Reward, Prophethood, Belief in the Book etc. They all teach piety, fortitude, endurance, faith and trust in Allah and the like, just because these virtues could not be neglected at any stage of the Movement. If any of these foundations had been weakened at any stage even in the least, the Islamic Movement could not have made any progress in its true spirit.

The Sequence of the Surahs

A little thinking in the light of the difference between the Makki surahs and the Madani surahs will also answer the question why the surahs of the Quran were not arranged in the sequence in which they were revealed. This question is also important because it has been used by the enemies of Islam to create misunderstandings about the Quran and make ridiculous conjectures about the present arrangement of the surahs. They are of the opinion that "Muhammad's (God's peace be upon him) followers published it, without any discoverable order as to time or otherwise; merely, trying as would seem, to put the longest chapters first....."

Such conjectures as this are based on ignorance of the rationale of the order of the Quran. Though it was to be the Book for all times yet it had to be revealed piece-meal in twenty three years according to the needs and requirements of the different stages through which the Islamic Movement was passing. It is obvious that the sequence of the revelations that suited the gradual evolution of the Movement could not in any way be suitable after the completion of the Quran. Then another order, suited to the changed conditions, was needed. In the early stages of the Movement the Quran addressed those people who were totally ignorant of Islam and, therefore, naturally it had first of all to teach them the basic articles of Faith. But after its completion the Quran was primarily concerned with those who had accepted Islam and formed a community for carrying on the work entrusted to it by the Holy Prophet, and the entire human race. Obviously, the order of the

complete Book had to be different from its chronological order to suit the requirements of the humanity and of the Muslim Community for all times. Then the Quran had, first of all, to acquaint the Muslims thoroughly with their duties for the regulation of their lives. It had also to prepare them for carrying its message to the outer world which was ignorant of Islam. It had also to warn them of the mischiefs and evils that appeared among the followers of the former Prophets so that they should be on their guard against them. Hence *Al-Baqarah* and the like Madani surahs, and not *Al'Alaq* and the like Makki surahs, had to be placed in the beginning of the Quran.

In this connection, another thing also should be kept in view. It does not suit the purpose of the Quran that all the surahs dealing with similar topics should be grouped together. In order to avoid onesidedness at any stage of its study, it is essential that the Makki surahs should intervene between the Madani surahs and that the Madani surahs should follow the Makki surahs, and that the surahs revealed at the earliest stages of the Movement should come between those revealed in the later stages so that the entire picture of the complete Islam should always remain before the reader. That is the rationale of the present order.

It should also be noted that the surahs of the Quran were not arranged in the present order by his successors but by the Holy Prophet himself under the guidance of Allah. Whenever a surah was revealed, he would send for one of his amanuenses and dictate it word for word and direct him to place it after such and such and before such and such a surah. Like-wise in the case of a discourse or passage, or verse that was not meant to be an independent surah by itself, he would direct him to the exact place where it was to be put in the surah of which it was to form a part. Then he used to recite the Quran during the *Salat* and on other occasions in the same order and direct his Companions to remember and recite it in the same order. Thus it was an established fact that the surahs of the Quran were arranged in the present order on the same day that the Quran was completed by the one to whom it was revealed under the guidance of the One who revealed it.

Compilation

Allah Who revealed the Quran Himself made arrangements for its safety and security for ever.

No sooner was a passage of the Quran revealed than it was recorded on leaves of date-palm, barks of trees, bones etc., at the instance of the Holy Prophet and all these pieces were put in a bag. Besides this, some of his Companions also wrote these pieces for their own use. At the same time, the Muslims committed these passages to memory as they had to recite these during *salat* which was obligatory from the very beginning of Islam.

Though many Companions had committed the whole of the Quran to memory during the life-time of the Holy Prophet, it had not been compiled in book form. But immediately after his death, an event occurred that necessitated this work. A storm of apostasy broke out and many of the Companions, who went to war to suppress it, were killed. Among these martyrs were some of those who had committed the whole of the Quran to memory. Then it occurred to Hadrat 'Umar that necessary steps should be taken to preserve the Quran intact in its original form against any and every kind of danger and that it was not wise to depend exclusively upon those who had learnt it by heart. Therefore, he urged, it was essential to put the whole of it in black and white in the form of an authenticated book. He tried to impress the necessity of this step on Hadrat Abu Bakr, who at first showed hesitation to do that thing which the Holy Prophet had not done. But after some discussion, he agreed to it. Accordingly, he entrusted this work to Hadrat Zaid bin Thabit who also showed hesitation at first like that of Hadrat Abu Bakr and for the same reason, but at last he was convinced and he undertook this historic work.

And Zaid was best qualified for this work. He had frequently acted as an amanuensis to the Holy Prophet and was one of those Companions who had learnt the Quran directly from him. Moreover he also was present on that occasion when the Holy Prophet recited the whole of the completed Quran to angel Gabriel, Arrangements were, therefore, made to collect and gather all the written

pieces of the Quran left by the Holy Prophet, and those in the possession of his Companions. Then with the co-operation of those who had Committed the whole or any part of the Quran to memory word for word, all those written pieces were compared with each other for verification. Hadrat Zaid would not take down anything in his copy unless all the three sources tallied with one another. Thus was compiled one correct authenticated and complete copy. This authenticated copy of the whole Quran was kept in the house of Hadrat Hafsa (Hadrat 'Umar's daughter, and one of the wives of the Holy Prophet) and it was proclaimed that anyone, who desired, might make a copy of it or compare with it the copy one already possessed.

As regards the sequence of the surahs, Zaid followed the same order that was followed by the Holy Prophet himself because he could not and would not have followed any other. He was so particular about following the Holy Prophet in everything he did, that, at first, he hesitated to undertake the work of the compilation, just because this had not been done during the life-time of the Holy Prophet. It is, therefore, wrong to suppose that the surahs were arranged in the existing order after the death of the Holy Prophet. The very fact that the Holy Prophet recited the whole of the Quran twice before Gabriel during the last Ramadan of his life, is a clear proof of the fact that he must have followed some order. And we have already cited a Tradition to the effect that Hadrat Zaid attended the second of these two last recitals. Likewise those Companions, who had committed the whole of the Quran to memory must have done it in some order and that, too, could not have been any other but the one followed and taught by the Holy Prophet.

Imam Malik says, "The Quran was compiled in the way the Companions heard it from the Holy Prophet." Moreover, at several places, the Quran speaks of itself as a Book. For example, in Surah *Muzzammil*, an early Makki revelation, Allah says to the Holy Prophet, ".....recite the Quran in order....." LXIII: 4 This also shows that the Quran was meant to be a book from the beginning of the revelation and a book must follow some order.

Difference of Dialects

Though Arabic was the common language of the whole of Arabia, there existed some variations in the dialects of different parts and tribes.

For obvious reasons the Quran was revealed in the dialect of the Quraish of Makkah. However, the Arabs living in different parts of the country were, at first allowed for the sake of facility, to recite it according to the dialect of their own clan or district but this did not produce any difference in its meanings. But when Islam spread beyond the bounds of Arabia and the Arabs came into contact with the non-Arab Muslims, the Arabian language gradually began to be influenced by its new environment. Then it was feared that the different dialects of the Quran might give rise to various kinds of mischief and as a result of that people might even begin to accuse one another of tampering with the Quran. Moreover, there was the danger that the pure and beautiful Arabic of the Quran might be altered or changed by those Arabs who came in contact with non-Arabs. Therefore, Caliph 'Uthman, in consultation with other Companions of the Holy Prophet, decided that the authenticated copies of the Quran compiled by the order of Hadrat Abu Bakr, should alone be used in the whole of the Muslim world, and the use of all other copies according to any other dialect or idiom should be prohibited. As a precautionary measure, he had all the other existing copies burnt to ward off any possibility of future confusion and misunderstanding. For instance, some of the Companions had noted down explanatory words and comments on the margins of their copies and it was feared that these might get mixed up with the original text of the Quran. Though such a possibility did not exist at that time, it was most prudent foresight to make the Quran safe and secure against any possible future danger by burning all other copies.

The Quran, which is now in use all over the world, is the exact copy of the Quran which was compiled by the order of Hadrat Abu Bakr and copies of which were officially sent by Hadrat 'Uthman to different places. Even today many very old copies are found in big libraries in different parts of the world and if anyone has any doubt

as to whether the Quran has remained absolutely safe and secure against every kind of change and alteration, he can compare any copy of the Quran with any of these copies and reassure himself. Moreover, if one gets a copy of the Quran from a bookseller, say, of Algeria in Africa in the West and compares it with a copy obtained from a bookseller, say, of Java in the East, one will find both the copies to be identical with each other and also with the copies of the Quran made during the time of Hadrat 'Uthman. If even then anyone has any doubt left in his mind, he is advised to take any copy of the Quran from anywhere in the world and ask anyone, out of the hundreds of thousand who know the Quran by heart, to recite it word for word from the beginning to the end. He will find that the recitation conforms word for word to the written text. This is a clear and irrefutable proof of the fact that the Quran which is in use today is the same Quran which was presented to the world by Muhammad (God's peace be upon him). A sceptic might doubt its safety and immunity and purity from any and every kind of addition or excision or alteration, for there is nothing so authentic in the whole human history as this fact about the Quran that it is the same Quran that was presented by the Holy Prophet to the world.

Variant Readings

Now let us consider the case of the variant readings of the Quran for their existence has created the misunderstanding that it has not remained intact. The following facts will help us to understand their nature and extent :—

1. The Arabic script adopted by the amanuenses of the Holy Prophet during his life-time had neither dots nor vowel points. The same was the case with the copy of the Quran compiled by Hadrat Zaid during the time of Hadrat Abu Bakr and also with its copies circulated by Hadrat 'Uthman.

2. Though the Quran was made safe and secure in the written form, the work of its propagation was done orally because of general illiteracy and the scarcity of paper. Little difficulty was, however, felt by the literate Arabs in deciphering this script. There were thousands of such persons who had learnt the whole of the

Quran by heart from the Holy Prophet himself and his Companions. They followed and taught the same reading that they had learnt from the Holy Prophet and his Companions.

3. Hadrat 'Uthman not only sent an authenticated copy of the Quran to the different centers of Islam, but also sent a Qari along with it in order to preserve that correct reading which was taught by the Holy Prophet himself.

4. With the passage of time it was felt that there should be vowel points to preserve the correct reading of the Quran. Accordingly, at the instance of Zaid, the Governor of Basrah (45 to 53 A.H.), dots were assigned for vowel points. Then during the reign of Abdul Malik (65-86 A.H.), Hajjaj-bin-Yusuf appointed scholars to assign new symbols for vowel points and dots for the similar letters for distinction. The same practice continues to the present time.

From the above historical facts, it must have become clear that the reading of the Quran (with a few minor variations) is the same as practised and taught by the Holy Prophet. All the scholars and QURRA of the Quran have been unanimous in asserting that only that reading will be authentic which (a) conforms to the script of the copy circulated by Hadrat 'Uthman and (b) complies with the lexicon of Arabic, its usages, its idioms and grammar, and (c) above all, that reaches by genuine and continuous links to the Holy Prophet himself. That is why there are only a few variations in its reading and even these are not contradictory in their meanings but make them wider and more comprehensive. Thus there is absolutely no doubt that the Holy Prophet himself practised those various readings in the few cases which exist today, and that, they too, make the meanings more comprehensive.

As instances, let us take the two authentic readings of (a) verse 3 of *Al-Fatiha* and (b) verse of *Al-Ma'idah*. One reading of 1 : 3, that is, "مالك يوم الدين" will mean "the Master of the Day of Judgement," and the other reading "ملك يوم الدين" will mean, the Sovereign of the day of Judgement." It is obvious that these two readings make the meaning of the verse all the more clear. (c) One reading of V : 6, that is, "فاغسلوا وجوهكم... وارجلكم" means ".....wash your

faces.....and (wash) your feet” as is done at the time of performing ablutions with naked feet. The second reading, that is,..... “فاغسلوا وجوهكم.....واسوا برؤوسكم وارجلكم” will mean “wash your faces... and wipe your heads and (wipe) your feet” with wet hands. The second reading allows one to wipe one’s feet with wet hands, provided that one had washed one’s feet and put on thick socks after the performance of the previous ablution. This concession holds good for twenty-four hours at home and for 72 hours on a journey. It is obvious from the two instances that in the variant readings, there is absolutely no contradiction in essence. On the other hand, these make the meanings all the more comprehensive. And the same is true of all the other variant readings.

Universality.

Everyone knows that the Quran claims to provide guidance for the whole mankind, but when he reads it, he finds that its main address is directed to the Arabs, who lived at the time of its revelation. Though at times it also addresses people and mankind in general, yet it mainly discusses those things which appealed to the taste of the Arabs and were linked with their environment, history and customs. This naturally gives rise to the question : Why does the Quran contain so many local and national elements of the period in which it was revealed, although it was sent for the guidance of the whole mankind? Those people who do not understand the reason for this, begin to argue like this : ‘the Quran was really meant for the reform of the Arabs of that period but later on, somehow or other, the claim was made that it was a guidance for the whole mankind and for all ages.’

If one does not raise this objection merely for the sake of objection but really wants to understand the matter, I would advise him to read the Quran and mark down those parts which give rise to this doubt. He should then point out any tenet, idea or principle therein that might have been meant *particularly* for the Arabs of that *period only*. He should lay his finger on any moral principle, practical rule or regulation that could not be universal and must have been meant only for the Arabs of that period, time and place. The mere fact that the Quran refutes the blasphemous creeds and condemns the evil customs of a particular people, living at a particular time and

place and bases arguments for the Unity of God on the material gathered from their environment, is not a sufficient proof to establish the allegation that its invitation and appeal were local and temporary. We should examine the question closely and decide whether what it says regarding the misguided people of Arabia is or is not equally true of every period and every place, and whether we can or cannot apply the same arguments with equal force to refute the blasphemy of every time and every place, and whether we can or cannot use everywhere, with minor changes, the same arguments that the Quran puts forward for the Unity of God. If the answer to these questions is in affirmative, then there is no reason why such a universal revelation should be dubbed as local or temporary, simply because it was addressed to a particular community and during a particular period. There is no philosophy, no way of life and no religion in the world which expounds, from the beginning to the end, everything in the abstract without making any reference to particular cases or concrete examples, for it is simply impossible to build a pattern of life merely in the abstract. Even if we suppose, for the sake of argument, that it were possible to do so, most surely such a system will always remain merely a theory on paper and will never take a practical shape.

Moreover, it is neither necessary nor useful to start from the very outset on international lines any ideological movement that is meant to be ultimately international. The only right method of beginning this will be to start the movement in the country of its origin and present with full force its theories and fundamental principles which are to form the basis of the required system of life. Then its exponents should impress these things on the minds of their own people who have a common language, common habits and common customs. They should first of all put these principles into practice in their own country and prove their worth by evolving a happy and successful system of life. This thing will naturally attract other nations, and their intelligent people will themselves come forward to understand the movement and start it in their own country. Thus a certain ideological system does not become national simply because it was at first presented to a particular nation and its arguments were, in the first instance, addressed to a particular people. As a matter of fact, what distinguishes a national from an interna-

tional and a temporary from a permanent system is this : a national system aims either to establish its own superiority or its special claim over other nations or presents principles and theories which, by their very nature, cannot be applied to other nations. On the other hand, an international system grants equal status and equal rights to all human beings and puts forward principles of universal application. Moreover, the principles of a temporary or time-bound system become impracticable and obsolete with the passage of time while the principles of a permanent system are applicable to all times. If one studies the Quran in the light of the above, one will come to the conclusion that its teachings are of universal application.

Complete Code

Another thing that causes some mental worry to certain persons is the oft-repeated assertion that the Quran is a complete code of life. But when one reads the Book, one does not find detailed rules and regulations regarding social, cultural, political and economic problems etc...One is, therefore, baffled to see that it does not contain any detailed regulations even about Salat and Zakat which are such important obligatory duties that the Quran itself lays great emphasis on them over and over again. That is why the casual reader cannot understand how this Book can be called a complete code. This confusion is caused because those who object lose sight of the fact that God did not only send down the Book but also appointed His Messenger to demonstrate its teachings by putting them into actual practice. To illustrate this, we may take the case of the construction of a building. If only a plan of the proposed building is laid down and no architect is appointed to supervise and direct its construction, then every detail must be supplied. But if an architect is also appointed on the spot along with the plan to construct the building, obviously there is no need for a detailed plan. In that case only a sketch with its essential features will be quite enough. It would, therefore, be wrong to find fault with such a plan as being incomplete. As Allah sent His Messenger along with the Quran, general principles and absolutely essential instructions only were needed and not their details. Hence the main function of the Quran is to present clearly the intellectual and moral bases of the Islamic Way and strengthen them with

arguments and appeals to the heart. As far as the practical side of the building of the Islamic Way of life is concerned, it only defines the limits and bounds of every aspect of life without giving detailed regulations and laws. Moreover it fixes sign-posts for guidance at certain important places to show how those parts are to be constructed in accordance with Allah's will. The actual work of building the Islamic Way of life, in accordance with the instructions contained in the Book, was entrusted to the Holy Prophet, who was specially sent to set up the pattern of life for the individual, for the society and for the Islamic State to be constructed practically according to the principles of the Quran. Thus the Quran is a complete code in the sense that it is to be taken along with the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet.

Differences in interpretation

Another question which troubles the minds is that of difference in the interpretation of the Quran. People say, "On the one hand, the Quran condemns very severely those people who create differences in the Book of Allah and cause division in their religion; on the other hand, so many different interpretations of the injunctions of the Quran have been made that there is hardly to be found any Command which has an agreed interpretation. And it is not the people of the later periods alone who differ with one another but even the great scholars of the early period, including the Companions of the Holy Prophet and their followers, did not all agree in every detail in regard to Commands and Prohibitions. Do all these people then deserve the condemnation pronounced in the Quran for making different interpretations? If this is not so, then what kind of differences of opinion have been condemned in the Quran?"

The problem is very vast and extensive and this is not the place for its detailed discussion. Suffice it to say here that the Quran is not against healthy difference of opinion in the interpretation of its injunctions, provided that (a) there is agreement on the basic principles of Islam among those who differ and (b) they remain united within the fold of the Muslim Community. The Quran deprecates that kind of divergence which starts with self-worship and crookedness and leads to disputes and sectarianism. As the two kinds of differences are neither alike in their nature nor in their

results, they should not be placed in one and the same category. The first kind of difference are essential for progress and constitute the very soul of life. Every community of intelligent and thinking people must encourage such difference of opinion. Their existence is a sign of life and only that community can afford to repress them which desires to have only blockheads in it. The second kind of divergence, as everyone knows, disintegrates the community which nourishes it: therefore its appearance in a community is not a sign of health but a symptom of disease and it can never produce good results.

These two kinds of divergencies of opinion may further be illustrated by the following :

Supposing there are two scholars or two judges, who agree, on principle that Allah and His Messenger alone are entitled to obedience and that the Quran and the Sunnah are the sole source and the final authority to determine all laws and regulations. They may then differ in the details or in their decision on a particular case, provided that neither of them makes his opinion as the criterion of Islam or un-Islam nor declares the other to be outside its fold on account of that difference of opinion. They may put forward their own arguments in support of their opinions and leave the decision to the public opinion or to the highest court, if it is some judicial matter, or to counsels of the community, if it concerns whole of the community. Then either one of the two different opinions will prevail or both will be permitted to exist in their own spheres. But it should be noted particularly that no difference can be allowed in the basic principles of Islam nor in such things as lead to the formation of a new community. For instance, it would be wrong that a scholar or a jurist or a saint or a leader should form an opinion about some matter (which Allah and His Messenger do not consider to be basis) and declare it to be a basic principle of Islam and then denounce all those who differ from him to be outside its fold, and then on this bases, proceed to form a community of his own followers and say, "This is the real Muslim Community and all outside it are doomed to Hell. Therefore, if you are a Muslim, come and join it, otherwise you are not one". It is this kind of difference of opinion which the Quran condemns. As regards the first kind

of difference, several instances of it occurred during the time of the Holy Prophet himself. He not only permitted it but also spoke well of it, for it was a healthy sign, which showed that intelligent people of the Community were thinking and making research. This also showed that the intelligent people of the Community were taking interest in Islam and its teachings and were trying to find solutions for the problems of life within Islam and not outside it. It also provided a proof of the golden rule that while the Community should remain united on principles, it should, at the same time, grant freedom of research to its thinkers within appropriate limits so that the doors of progress might remain open.

Suggestions for Study

Finally, here are a few suggestions for the study of the Quran :

As different people turn to the Quran with different aims and objects, it is not possible to offer any general advice about the method of its study so as to fulfil the requirements of all. I, however, am interested only in those people who want to understand this Book and seek guidance from it for the solution of human problems. I will, therefore, offer some suggestions which may help satisfy their needs and remove their difficulties.

An essential prerequisite for understanding the Quran is to study it with a free and detached mind. Whether one believes it to be a revealed book or not, one should, as far as possible, free one's mind of bias in favour of or against it and get rid of all preconceived notions and then approach it with the sole desire of understanding it. Those people who study it with preconceived notions of their own, read only their own ideas between its lines and cannot, therefore, grasp what the Quran wants to convey. It is obvious that this method of study can never be fruitful even with other books but it is utterly fruitless when applied to the study of the Quran.

There is another thing which must be kept in view. If one wants to have merely a cursory acquaintance with the contents of the Quran, then perhaps it might suffice for him to read it once. However, if one wishes to have a deep knowledge of it, one will have to

go through it several times and each time from a different point of view. Those people, who desire to make a thorough study of the Quran, should read it at least twice with the sole purpose of understanding, as a whole, the system of life it presents. One should also try to find out its fundamentals and the way of life it aims to build on them. During this preliminary study, if some questions occur in his mind, the reader should note them down and patiently continue his study, for he is likely to find their answers somewhere in the Quran itself. If he finds answers to his questions, he should note them down along with the questions. But if he does not find an answer to any question in his first reading, he should patiently make the second reading, for he will surely get the answer. I can say it in the light of my own experience that in the second reading hardly any question remains unanswered.

After getting a general insight into the Quran in this way, one should begin its detailed study and take down notes of the different aspects of its teachings. For instance, one should note down what pattern of life it approves and what it disapproves. One should note down the qualities of a good man and those of a bad man, side by side, in order to bring simultaneously both the patterns clearly before his mind. Similarly, one should note down, side by side, those things which lead to the success and salvation of man and those which lead to his failure and ruin. In the same way, he should put down, under different headings, the teachings and instructions of the Quran about creed, morality, duties, obligations, civilization, culture, economics, politics, law, social system, peace, war and other human problems. These notes should be consolidated to form a complete sketch of each aspect of the teachings and then fitted together to form a complete system of life.

Then if one desires to know the Quranic solution of a certain human problem, he should first make a study of the relevant literature, both ancient and modern, and mark down the basic issues. He should also make use of the research so far made into the problem and note down the points at issue. Then he should study the Quran with a view to finding out the answers to those issues. I can say from my own personal experience that when one studies the Quran with a view to making research into any problem, one will find an

answer to it even in those verses which one had skipped over without ever imagining that it was there.

But in spite of all these devices, one cannot grasp the inspiring spirit of the Quran, unless one practically starts the work for the accomplishment of the mission for which it was revealed. For the Quran is neither a book of abstract ideas and theories which may be studied in an arm-chair nor is it a book of religious riddles which may be unravelled in monasteries and universities. But it is a Book that has been sent down to invite people to start a movement and to lead its followers and direct their activities towards the achievement of its mission. One has, therefore, to go to the battlefield of life to understand its real meaning. That was why a quiet and amiable person like Muhammad (God's peace be upon him) had to come out of his seclusion and start the Islamic Movement and fight with the rebellious world. It was the Quran that urged him to declare war against every kind of falsehood and engage in conflict with the leaders of the old order without any consideration of the consequences. Then it attracted good souls from every home and gathered them under the banner of its leader in order to fight against the upholders of the old order who organised themselves into a gang to oppose them. During this long and bitter struggle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, which continued for twenty-three years or so, the Quran went on guiding the Movement in every phase and at every stage, until it succeeded in establishing the Islamic Way of life in its perfection.

It is thus obvious that one cannot possibly grasp the truths contained in the Quran by the mere recitation of its words. For this purpose one must take active part in the conflict between belief and unbelief, Islam and un-Islam, Truth and falsehood. One can understand it only if one takes up its Message, invites the world to accept it and moves on and on in accordance with its Guidance. Then and then alone, one shall experience and understand all that which happened during the revelation of the Quran. One will meet with the same conditions that were experienced at Makkah, Ta'if and Habash and pass through the same kind of fire that had to be passed through at Badr, Uhad, Hunain, Tabuk etc. One will meet with Abu Jahls and Abu Lahabs and come across hypocrites, the

double-faced, the Jews, in short, every type of people mentioned in the Quran. Incidentally this is a wonderful experience of its own kind and worth the trial.

While passing through any one of these stages of this experience, one will find some verses and some surahs of the Quran, which will themselves tell that they were revealed at such and such a stage and brought such and such instructions for the guidance of the Movement. In this way the Quran will lay bare its spirit even though one might not be able to understand all the lexical meanings of its words and solve all the intricacies of grammar and rhetoric. The same formula applies to its Commandments, its moral teachings, its instructions about economics and culture and its laws regarding different aspects of human life. These things can never be understood unless they are put into practice. It is thus obvious that those individuals and communities who discard it from practical life, cannot understand its meaning and imbibe its spirit by mere lip-service to it. To understand it one has to live it—This is the golden rule.

Allama A. Yusuf Ali

Principles of Tafsir and Some Works on Tafsir

Quranic literature is so voluminous that no single man can compass a perusal of the whole. Besides the extant works there were innumerable works written for special groups of people or from special points of view or for special purposes, which have perished. And more works are being added every day. The activity in this line has never been greater than it is now.

There is no Book in the world in whose service so much talent, so much labour, so much time and money have been expended as has been the case with the Quran. A mere glance at Imam Suyuti's (d. 911 H.) *Itqan* or Haji Khalifa's (d. 1059 H.) *Kashf-uz-Zunun* will show the encyclopaedic volume of the Quranic sciences in their day.

Since then the volume has continued to go on increasing, although it must be admitted that the quality of the later literature on the subject leaves much to be desired. With the retrogression of the Islamic nations in original work in science, art, and philosophy, and the concomitant limitation in their outlook and experience in various phases of intellectual and spiritual life, has come a certain limitation in the free spirit of research and enquiry. The new Renaissance of Islam which is just beginning will, it is hoped, sweep away cobwebs and let in the full light of reason and understanding.

The Need for Tafsir

The need for an explanation of the verses of the Quran arose quite early. Even before the whole of the Quran was revealed, people used to ask the Apostle all sorts of questions as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or of their bearing on problems as they arose, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters

on which they sought more light. The Apostle's answers were carefully stored in the memory of the Companions (*Ashab ar-Rasool*) and were afterwards written down. In the next generation, the Tabi'in, were those who had not personally conversed with the Apostle, like Companions, but had conversed with the Companions and earned from them. Subsequent generations always went back to establish a chain of evidence through the Tabi'in and the Companions. Through them grew up the science of Hadith or Traditions. As this literature grew, it became necessary to establish strict rules by which the evidence could be examined and tested, so as to separate that which was considered to be established from that which was doubtful or weak, and that which was to be rejected as unproved. In the evolution of the science of Hadith, it became clear that even among the Companions certain persons had better memories than others, or better opportunities of becoming really acquainted with the Apostle's true meaning, or in other ways, a better title to be called true expositors, and the number of such persons came to be limited. Similarly the claims of the Tabi'in came to be examined and graded, and so on. Thus arose a new science, in which the names and positions of persons in Hadith literature were examined biographically and in other ways.

The Hadith literature dealt with all sorts of matters, including Theology, Ethics, and Exegesis (explanation of the Quran). Exegesis soon became an independent science by itself and was called *Tafsir*, and the sphere of *Tafsir* itself began to widen as the experience and knowledge of the Arabs and Arabic writers began to increase. Besides the examination of correct traditions from various kinds and grades of authorities, it began to examine the meaning of words philologically, collecting a vast amount of learning as to root meanings, the usage of the Quraish tribe of Arabs, to which the Apostle belonged, the usage and meaning of words in the purest original Arabic before it became mixed up with foreign idioms and usages by the use of the Arabic language by non-Arabs in Islam, and by the influence of the enormous geographical expansion of the Arab race in the first few centuries of Islam. The increasing knowledge of history and of Jewish and Christian legends enabled the Commentators to illustrate the Text of the Holy Book with reference to these. Sometimes the amount of Jewish stuff (some of it absurd), which

found its way into the Commentaries, was out of all proportion to its importance and relevance, and gave rise to the legend, which has been exploited by polemical Christian and Jewish writers, that Islam was built up on an imperfect knowledge of Christianity and Judaism or that it accepts as true the illustrative legends from the Talmud or the Midrash or various fantastic schools of Christianity. Then came philosophy and the mystic doctrine of the Sufi schools. The development of the science of *kalam* (built on formal logic), and its further offshoot, the '*Ilm-ul-'Aqid* (the philosophical exposition of the grounds of our belief) introduced further elements on the intellectual side, while *Taawil* (esoteric exposition of the hidden or inner meaning) introduced elements on the spiritual side, based on a sort of transcendental intuition of the expositor. The Sufi mystics at least adhered to the rules of their own Orders, which were very strict. But many of the non-Sufi writers on *Taawil* indulged in an amount of licence in interpretation which has rightly called forth a protest on the part of the more sober 'Ulama.

Guidelines for Tafsir

For my part I agree with this protest. While freely reserving the right of individual judgement on the part of every earnest writer, I think the art of interpretation must stick as closely as possible to the text which it seeks to interpret. Every serious writer and thinker has a right to use all the knowledge and experience he possesses in the service of the Quran. But he must not mix up his own theories and conclusions, however reasonable, with the interpretation of the Text itself, which is usually perfectly perspicuous, as it claims it to be. Our difficulties in interpretation often arise from various causes of which I will mention just a few :

(1) Arabic words in the Text have acquired other meanings than those which were understood by the Apostle and his Companions. All living languages undergo such transformations. The early Commentators and Philologists went into these matters with a very comprehensive grasp, and we must accept their conclusions. Where they are not unanimous, we must use our judgement and historic sense in adopting the interpretation of that authority, which appeals to us most. We must not devise new verbal meanings.

(2) Ever since the early Commentators wrote, the Arabic language has further developed, and later Commentators often abandon the interpretations of earlier Commentators without sufficient reason. In exercising our selective judgement in such cases it would be a good rule to prefer the earlier to the later interpretations though, where a later writer has reviewed the earlier interpretation, and given good reasons for his own view, he has an advantage which we must freely concede to him.

(3) Classical Arabic has a vocabulary in which the meaning of each root-word is so comprehensive that it is difficult to interpret it in a modern analytical language word for word, or by the use of the same word in all places where the original word occurs in the Text. A striking example is furnished by the word *Sabr*. Even though one particular shade of meaning may be predominant in any particular passage, the others are latent. So in a ray of light, when a prism analyses it, we may look at a portion of the field where a particular colour predominates, but other colours do not escape our glance. An Arabic word is often a full ray of light; when a translator looks at it through the prism of a modern analytical language, he misses a great deal of its meaning by confining his attention to one particular colour. European translators have often failed in this respect and sometimes have even been landed in absurdities because these delicate rich ones are not studied in their languages or literatures, and they do not look for them or appreciate them in the best examples of Oriental style. If they despise them or think them fantastic they had best leave the interpretation of Oriental literatures alone. This is all the more so in religious or spiritual literature. No human language can possibly be adequate for the expression of the highest spiritual thought. Such thought must be expressed symbolically in intense and comprehensive words, out of which people will perceive just as much light and colour as their spiritual eyes are capable of perceiving. It is possible that their prism will only show them a dark blue while a whole glorious symphony of colours is hidden from their eyes. And so it comes about that through the prism of a clever English translation, poor 'Umar (Omar) Khayyam emerges as a sensualist and cynic who sees no higher purpose in life than drinking wine, dallying with women, and holding up his hands

in despair at "this sorry scheme of things entire." And so the parables of stern morality in the Quran, its mystic earnestness, and its pictures of future beatitude are distorted into idle fables, incoherent effusions, and a sensual paradise.

(4) An opposite error sometimes arises because in certain matters the rich vocabulary of the Quran distinguishes between things and ideas of a certain kind by special words, for which there is only a general word in English. Instances are: Rahman and Rahim (Most Merciful); and the various words for Creation. The fact is that it gives us a very limited idea of God's Mercy, when we only use the English word "mercy"; the Quranic idea implies not only pity and forgiveness but the Grace which protects us and keeps us from sin, and indeed guides us to the light of His "Countenance." So the "forgiveness" of God is a thing totally different in quality from the forgiveness which a man can give to his brother man: the equation implied in "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us" is a misleading fallacy. So, again, "Creation" is not just a simple process done by God at some remote time and finished with: the Quranic idea implies various processes and the continuous presence and activity of God in His Creation.

(5) God's purpose is eternal, and His plan is perfect, but man's intelligence is limited at its very best. In the same individual it grows and declines according to the strength of his powers and the width of his experience. If we take mankind collectively the variations are even greater from age to age and from people to people. There is thus no finality in human interpretation. And in the thing interpreted—God's Creation—there is constant flux and change. So that the impact of the one on the other must yield diverse results. The view of Kunchinjunga must vary infinitely according to the position of the observer, even if Kunchinjunga remained the same. But if Kunchinjunga itself varies, there is a double cause of variation in the view. So I believe in progressive interpretation, in the need for understanding and explaining spiritual matters from different angles. The difficulties that confront me may not be the same as those that confront you. The problems which our age has to meet may not be the same as the problems which puzzled earnest minds

of the fourth or sixth or later centuries of the Hijra. Therefore it is no merit to hug the solutions offered in the fourth or sixth centuries when our souls cry out in hunger for solace in the fourteenth century of the Hijra.

The distinction drawn by Commentators between matters of report (*manqulat*) and matters of judgement (*ma'qulat*) is a sound one, and I heartily accept it. But I would extend the scope of the (*ma'qulat*) far beyond questions of idiom and meaning. In the former the issues are : what actually happened, or what was actually said, or how were certain things done ? Here the closer we go back to contemporary authority the better. In the latter, the issues are : what is the bearing of truth on our lies, or what illustration helps us best to grasp this, or what is the wisdom we can extract from this ? In such matters, the closer we come to our own circumstances and experiences, the better. It is not only our right but our duty to seek honestly our own solutions, and while we respect authority, we must not neglect or despise the gifts which God has accumulated for us through the ages.

A word about Important Tafsirs

Let me set out the names of the most important Tafsirs.

(1) The monumental work of Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarir Tabari, d. 310 H. A perfect mine of historical information as the author was both a historian and a Traditionist.

(2) The *Mufradat*, a dictionary of difficult words and phrases in the Quran, by Abul-Qasim Husain Ragib, of Ispahan, d. 503 H. Also explains allusions.

(3) The *Kashshaf*, by Abul-Qasim Mahmud Zamakhshari, of Khwarism, d. 538H. Very full in the explanation of words and idioms ; takes a decidedly rational and ethical view of doctrine. Numerous Commentaries have been written on this Commentary.

(4) *Tafsir Kabir*, by Fakhr-ud-din Muhammad Razi, d. 606 H. Very comprehensive. Strong in interpretations from a Sufi or spiritual point of view.

(5) *Anwar-ut-Tanzil* by Qadhi Nasir-ud-din Abu Sa'id Baidhawi d. 685 H. Has drawn largely from the *Mufradat*, the *Kashshaf*, and the *Tafsir Kabir*, but incorporates a good deal of original matter. A very popular Commentary, on which again numerous Commentaries have been written.

(6) The *Tafsir* of Abul-Fida Isma'il Ibn Kathir, d. 774 H. Voluminous, but has great authority among the 'Ulama.

(7) *Itqan fi'ulum-il-Qur-an*, by Jalal-ud-din Suyuti, d. 911 H. A comprehensive review of the sciences of the Quran, being an introduction to his *Majma-ul-Bahrain*.

(8) *Tafsir Jalalain*.—Written by the two Jalal-ud-dins, one of whom was the author of the *Itqan*, mentioned above, d. 911 H. A concise and meritorious Commentary on which again a number of Commentaries have been written.

(9) Our country has produced some notable scholars in the realm of Tafsir. They wrote in Arabic and Persian, and the latter ones have written in Urdu.

The earliest I can trace is Shaikh 'Ali Ibn Ahmad Mahaimi (of Mahim, near Bombay), d. 835H.=1432 A. D., author of the *Tafsir Rahmani*. Almost contemporary with him was 'Allama Shams-ud-din, of Daulatabad and Delhi, who lived during the brilliant reign of Ibrahim Sharqi of Jaunpur (1400-1440 A. D.). He wrote in Persian. During the nineteenth century, the famous Muhaddith of Delhi, Shah Waliullah, and his two sons Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz (d. 1824) and Shah Abdul Qadir (d. 1826) wrote both translations and Commentaries. Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz wrote in Persian and Shah 'Abdul Qadir in Urdu. The Urdu Commentary of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan of Aligarh (d. 1898) has not met the approval of the 'Ulama. On the other hand the more recent Urdu Commentary of Maulvi 'Abdul Haqq, the *Tafsir Haqqani*, has passed through several editions, is quite modern in tone and manageable in bulk, and is widely circulated in India.

The Commentary of Maulvi Abul Kalam Azad—the *Tarjumanul Quran*—has been planned on a spacious scale and has not yet

been finished.*

(10) The Modernist school in Egypt got a lead from the late Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1323 H. 1905 A. D.) whose unfinished Commentary is being completed by Muhammad Rashid Ridha, the talented editor of the *Manar* newspaper. The work of Shaikh Tantawi, Jauhari, a pupil of Abduh, finds the 'jewels' of the Quran and of the sciences mutually illuminative. 'Allama Farid Wajdi is also spoken of as a good modern Commentator.**

(11) It has been said that the Quran is its own best Commentary. As we proceed with the study of the Book, we find how true this is. A careful comparison and collation of passages from the Quran removes many difficulties. Use a good Concordance and you will find that one passage throws light on another.

* Abul Kalam could only write two volumes but the real Tafsir is of Surah Fateha only. Three other commentaries in Urdu deserve mention. *Byanul Quran* by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, *Tafseer-e-Majides* by Maulana Abdul Majed Dryabadi and *Tafheemul Quran* by Maulana Abul Ala Maududi. *Tafheemul Quran* is a monumental work and most enlightening for the modern educated people. Four volumes, covering tafsir upto the XXV II chapter (Para), have broken into print. Fifth volume is still being written. Editor.

** Most recent work in Arabic is from the pen of the great scholar and soldier of Islam Syed Qutb Shaheed entitled *Fi sikatil-Quran*, 8 volumes, published from Beirut. Ed.

Muhammad Asad

The Quran and the West*

Read in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created—created man from a germ-cell ! Read ! And thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One who has taught (man) the use of the pen—taught man what he knew not

With these opening verses of the ninety-sixth Surah—with an allusion to man's humble biological origin as well as to his consciousness and intellect—began, early in the seventh century of the Christian era, the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad, destined to continue during the twenty-three years of his ministry and to end, shortly before his death, with verse 281 of the second surah :

And be conscious of the Day on which you shall return to God, whereupon every human being shall be repaid in full for what he has earned, and none shall be wronged.

The Quran—its Impact on History

Between these first and last verses (the first and the last in the chronological order of their revelation) unfolds a book which, more than any other single phenomenon known to us, has fundamentally affected the religious, social and political history of the world. No other sacred scripture has ever had a similarly immediate impact upon the lives of the people who first heard its message and, through them and the generations that followed them, on the entire course of civilization. It shook Arabia, and made a nation out of

*This portion is taken from Muhammad Asad ; Introduction to *The Message of the Quran*, a new translation and commentary of the Quran by Asad.—Editor.

its perennially warring tribes; within a few decades, it spread its world-view far beyond the confines of Arabia and produced the first ideological society known to man; through its insistence on consciousness and knowledge, it engendered among its followers a spirit of intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry, ultimately resulting in that splendid era of learning and scientific research which distinguished the world of Islam at the height of its cultural vigour; and the culture thus fostered by the Quran penetrated in countless ways and by-ways into the mind of medieval Europe and gave rise to that revival of Western culture which we call the Renaissance, and thus became, in the course of time, largely responsible for the birth of what is described as the "age of science": the age in which we are now living.

All this was, in the final analysis, brought about by the message of the Quran: and it was brought about through the medium of the people whom it inspired and to whom it supplied a basis for all their ethical valuations and a direction for all their worldly endeavours: for, never has any book—not excluding the Bible—been read by so many with a comparable intensity and veneration; and never has any other book supplied to so many, and over so long a span of time, a similarly comprehensive answer to the question, "How shall I behave in order to achieve the good life in this world and happiness in the life to come?" However often individual Muslims may have misread this answer, and however far many of them may have departed from the spirit of its message, the fact remains that to all who believed and believe in it, the Quran represents the ultimate manifestation of God's grace to man, the ultimate wisdom and the ultimate beauty of expression: in short, the true Word of God.

Why the west Fails to understand the Quran ?

This attitude of the Muslims towards the Quran perplexes, as a rule, the Westerner who approaches it through one or another of the many existing translations. Where the believer, reading the Quran in Arabic, sees beauty, the non-Muslim reader often claims to discern "crudity"; the coherence of the Quranic world-view and its relevance the human condition escape him altogether and assume the guise of what, in Europe's and America's orientalist literature, is frequently described as "incoherent rambling"; and passages

which, to a Muslim, are expressive of sublime wisdom, often sound "flat" and "uninspiring" to the Western ear. And yet, not even the most unfriendly critics of the Quran have ever denied that it did, in fact, provide the supreme source of inspiration—in both the religious and cultural senses of this word—to innumerable millions of people who, in their aggregate, have made an outstanding contribution to man's knowledge, civilization and social achievement. How can this paradox be explained?

It cannot be explained by the too-facile argument, so readily accepted by many modern Muslims, that the Quran has been "deliberately misrepresented" by its Western translators. For, although it cannot be denied that among the existing translations in almost all of the major European languages there is many a one that has been inspired by malicious prejudice and—especially in earlier times—by misguided "missionary" zeal, there is hardly any doubt that some of the more recent translations are the work of earnest scholars who, without being actuated by any conscious bias, have honestly endeavoured to render the meaning of the Arabic original into this or that European language; and, in addition, there exist a number of modern translations by Muslims who, by virtue of their being Muslims, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be supposed to have "misrepresented" what to them, was a sacred revelation. Still, none of these translations—whether done by Muslims or by non-Muslims—has so far brought the Quran nearer to the hearts or minds of people raised in a different religious and psychological climate and revealed something, however little, of its real depth and wisdom. To some extent this may be due to the conscious and unconscious prejudice against Islam which has pervaded Western cultural notions ever since the time of the Crusades—an intangible heritage of thought and feeling which has left its mark on the attitude towards all things Islamic on the part not only of the Western "man in the street" but also in a more subtle manner, on the part of scholars—but this does not sufficiently explain the complete lack of appreciation of the Quran in the Western world, and this in spite of its undecaying and ever-increasing interest in all that concerns the world of Islam.

It is more than probable that one of the main reasons for this lack of appreciation is to be found in that aspect of the Quran which

differentiates it fundamentally from all other sacred scriptures: its stress on reason as a valid way to faith as well as its insistence on the inseparability of the spiritual and the physical (and, therefore, also social) spheres of human existence: the inseparability of man's daily actions and behaviour, however "mundane", from his spiritual life and destiny. This absence of any division of reality into "physical" and "spiritual" compartments makes it difficult for people brought up in the orbit of other religions, with their accent on the "supernatural" element allegedly inherent in every true religious experience, to appreciate the predominantly rational approach of the Quran to all religious questions. Consequently, its constant interweaving of spiritual teachings with practical legislation perplexes the Western reader, who has become accustomed to identifying "religious experience" with a thrill of numinous awe before things hidden and beyond all intellectual comprehension, and is suddenly confronted with the claim of the Quran to being a guidance not only towards the spiritual good of the hereafter but also towards the good life—spiritual, physical and social—attainable in this world. In short, the Westerner cannot readily accept the Quranic thesis that all life, being God-given, is a unity, and that problems of the flesh and of the mind, of sex and economics, of individual righteousness and social equity are intimately connected with the hopes which man may legitimately entertain with regard to his life after death. This, in my opinion, is one of the reasons for the negative, uncomprehending attitude of most Westerners towards the Quran and its teachings. But still another—and perhaps even more decisive—reason may be found in the fact that the Quran itself has never yet been presented in any European language in a manner which would make it truly comprehensible.

The Problem of Translating the Quran

When we look at the long list of translations—beginning with the Latin works of the high Middle Ages and continuing up to the present in almost every European tongue—we find one common denominator between their authors, whether Muslims or non-Muslims: all of them were—or are—people who acquired their knowledge of Arabic through academic study alone: that is, from books. None of them, however great his scholarship, has ever been familiar

with the Arabic language as a person is familiar with his own, having absorbed the nuances of its idiom and its phraseology with an active, associative response within himself, and hearing it with an ear spontaneously attuned to the intent underlying the acoustic symbolism of its words and sentences. For, the words and sentences of a language—any language—are but symbols for meanings conventionally, and subconsciously, agreed upon by those who express their perception of reality by means of this particular tongue. Unless the translator is able to reproduce within himself the conceptual symbolism of the language in question—that is, unless he hears it “sing” in his ear in all its naturalness and immediacy—his translation will convey no more than the outer shell of the literary matter to which his work is devoted, and will miss, to a higher or lesser degree, the inner meaning of the original and the greater the depth of the original, the further must such a translation deviate from the spirit of the former.

No doubt, some of the translators of the Quran whose work is accessible to the Western public can be described as outstanding scholars in the sense of having mastered the Arabic grammar and achieved a considerable knowledge of Arabic literature; but this mastery of grammar and this acquaintance with literature cannot by itself, in the case of a translation from Arabic (and especially the Arabic of the Quran), render the translator independent of that intangible communion with the spirit of the language which can be achieved only by living with and in it.

Arabic is a Semitic tongue: in fact, it is the only Semitic tongue which has remained uninterruptedly alive for thousands of years; and it is the only living language which has remained entirely unchanged for the last fourteen centuries. These two factors are extremely relevant to the problem which we are considering. Since every language is a framework of symbols expressing its people's particular sense of life-values and their particular way of conveying their perception of reality, it is obvious that the language of the Arabs—a Semitic language which has remained unchanged for so many centuries—must differ widely from anything to which the Western mind is accustomed. The difference of the Arabic idiom from any European idiom is not merely a matter of its syntactic cast

and the mode in which it conveys ideas ; nor is it exclusively due to the well-known, extreme flexibility of the Arabic grammar arising from its peculiar system of verbal "roots" and the numerous stem-forms which can be derived from these roots ; nor even to the extraordinary richness of the Arabic vocabulary : it is a difference of spirit and life-sense. And since the Arabic of the Quran is a language which attained to its full maturity in the Arabic of fourteen centuries ago, it follows that in order to grasp its spirit correctly, one must be able to feel and hear this language as the Arabs felt and heard it at the time when the Quran was being revealed, and to understand the meaning which they gave to the linguistic symbols in which it is expressed.

We Muslims believe that the Quran is the Word of God, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through the medium of a human language of the Arabian Peninsula : the language of a people endowed with that peculiar quick-wittedness which the desert and its feel of wide, timeless expanses bestows upon its children : the language of people whose mental images, flowing without effort from association to association, succeed one another in rapid progression and often vault elliptically over intermediate—as it were, "self-understood" sequences of thought towards the idea which they aim to conceive or express. This ellipticism (called *i'jaz* by the Arab philologists) is an integral characteristic of the Arabic idiom and, therefore, of the language of the Quran—so much so that it is impossible to understand its method and inner purport without being able to reproduce within oneself, instinctively, something of the same quality of elliptical, associative thought. Now this ability comes to the educated Arab almost automatically, by a process of mental osmosis, from his early childhood : for, when he learns to speak his tongue properly, he subconsciously acquires the mould of thought within which it has evolved and, thus, imperceptibly grows into the conceptual environment from which the Arabic language derives its peculiar form and mode of expression. Not so, however, the non-Arab who becomes acquainted with Arabic only at a mature age, in result of a conscious effort, that is, through study : for, what he acquires is but a ready-made, outward structure devoid of that intangible quality of ellipticism which gives to the Arabic idiom its inner life and reality.

This does not, however, mean that a non-Arab can never understand Arabic in its true spirit: it means no more and no less than that he cannot really master it through academic study alone, but needs, in addition to philological learning, an instinctive "feel" of the language. Now it so happens that such a "feel" cannot be achieved by merely living among the modern Arabs of the cities. Although many of them, especially the educated ones, may have subconsciously absorbed the spirit of their language, they can only rarely communicate it to an outsider—for the simple reason that, however high their linguistic education, their daily speech has become, in the course of centuries, largely corrupted and estranged from pristine Arabic. Thus, in order to obtain the requisite "feel" of the Arabic language, a non-Arab must have lived in long and intimate association with people whose daily speech mirrors the genuine spirit of their language, and whose mental processes are similar to those of the Arabs who lived at the time when the Arabic tongue received its final colouring and inner form. In our day, such people are only the bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula, and particularly those of Central and Eastern Arabia. For, notwithstanding the many dialectical peculiarities in which their speech may differ from the classical Arabic of the Quran, it has remained—so far—very close to the idiom of the Prophet's time and has preserved all its intrinsic characteristics. In other words, familiarity with the bedouin speech of Central and Eastern Arabia—in addition, of course, to academic knowledge of classical Arabic—is the only way for a non-Arab of our time to achieve an intimate understanding of the diction of the Quran. And because none of the scholars who have previously translated the Quran into European Languages has ever fulfilled this prerequisite, their translations have remained but distant, and faulty, echoes of its meaning and spirit.

Syed Habibul Huq Nadvi

The Quran and the Challenge of Modernism*

Since the dawn of Islam many new and exciting movements rose and fell. New sects and creeds, pregnant with intellectual vitality, emerged and decayed. Their luxuriation of thought, embroidered by myths, and their *psychotherapeutic technique*, and logical tries, clouded the horizon of faith and blurred the visions of the peoples. Ethical tones of the ages passed through innovations which left far-reaching consequences in the history of Islam. But in spite of all these hypnotic means, Islam flourished in more colourful dimensions and Islamic life and thought did not differ basically. The divine truth remained the same, unchanged and unaltered. The Quran and Hadith remained to enshrine a sense of personal and community conscience in the face of the cosmos. And the greater the intellectual progress of the ages, the more fully it was possible to employ them as the basis of Islamic law.

In the twentieth century the profusion of sects, with new ideas and ideals, is no wonder. Some of these sects aim at making the Quranic laws consistent to human behaviour and bringing it into conformity with innovatory creeds of modern times. Some others aim at breeding suspicion and doubt about the virtuosity and validity of Hadith, as a source of Islamic law. And thus they seek an excuse for the free interpretation of the Quran in order to twist it to the genius of modernism, which is always in a state of flux and is never standardized.

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The basic outlines of such movements, gaining strength in the twentieth century, could be summarized as below :

- (a) Law contained in the Quran has to be consistent with human behaviour, influenced by existing circumstances and determined by diverse factors.
- (b) Quran is an open book, clear in its terms and plain and easily understandable. It, therefore, needed no help or guidance of Hadith for its interpretations.
- (c) Energies should be devoted to develop the exegesis of the Quran without any reference to Hadith.
- (d) Hadith has a spurious character. The Quran alone should furnish the basis of Islamic legislations. Hadith can at best only be treated as precedent for the facts and contemporary circumstances and not to apply to quite different times and conditions, that is, the twentieth century, etc.

These dogmas obviously lead us to think that the holy Quran was unfit to suit the changing circumstances, and thus it needed new commentaries in order to fit into the contemporary society. Moreover, Hadith was out-dated and has lost its sanctity as a source of Islamic law. Before we censure the above-mentioned views, we should have a cursory glance over similar movements in the early Omayyad and the Abbasid periods.

Intellectual Agitations

The early Omayyad and the Abbasid periods were marked with great intellectual agitations. All sorts of philosophical, non-philosophical ideas were in the air. The rise of rationalism and free-thinking, the rise of scholastic theology and sufi mysticism brought new movements in Islam. During Omayyad period Basrah was the intellectual capital. Mutazilites rose under the influence of the Greek theologians especially John of Damascus and his pupil Theodore, the Bishop of Harvan. The Mutazilites asserted their intellectual freedom and believed in the Greek dogma of the supremacy of reason. They propagated their views under the patronage of the State and carried on their struggle against the orthodox group.

The whole controversy between the reason and revelation turned on a single question, i.e., "Is the Quran created or uncreated?" According to the orthodox, it was uncreated, existing with God from all eternity. The Mutazilites, on the contrary, asserted their intellectual freedom and believed that a better model than Quran could be produced, which they could never produce.

The Mutazilites thus cleared the way for other such movements like the 'Fraternity of *Ikhwanus Safa*' which endeavoured to harmonize authority with reason, and constructed a universal system of religious philosophy. They held that perfection could only be reached if Greek philosophy was combined with Arabian religion. Accordingly, they composed fifty tracts on every branch of philosophy and named them *Rasael-e-Ikhwanus Safa*.

The official religion of rationalism as the "State Religion" came to an end on the accession of Mutavakkil (234 A.H.). It was Ghazzali who stemmed the tide of rationalism or freethinking. He answered ably in his *Tahafatual Falasifah* (Incoherence of the Philosopher), the questions raised by the free-thinkers, lectured at Nizamia College at Baghdad, and led men back from scholastic labour on theological dogmas to living contact with the study of the Quran, exegesis and traditions. He re-introduced the elements of fear and intuition and brought philosophy and philosophical theology within the range of ordinary minds. In short, Ghazzali made his mark by leading Islam back to its fundamental and historical facts.

The contemporary movements of free commentaries of the Quran ignoring the light of Hadith are hazardous. Such movements are, in fact, designed to twist the Quran (in letters and spirit), in favour of the modern culture. The efforts to make the Quran consistent with human behaviour, influenced by existing circumstances, obviously implies that Quranic Laws were not in conformity with human nature, but they were supra-human or supernatural laws, to be reshaped in accordance with the principles of human behaviour. It further meant that the Quran was imperfect or unable to regulate the human conduct in changing circumstances.

Psychological Analysis of human Behaviour and Interests

Quranic Laws are based on certain positive and definite values which could not be sacrificed for the changing values and divers interests of mankind. If the values of a civilization or the interest of a nation were changed toward the worst, how the Quran could be conformed with such values or interests ?

Human behaviour is erroneous and fallible. It is so much instable and inconsistent in respect of sense of perception that the Divine, universal and consistent code could not be left to the mercies of such flexible sensuous apprehensions.

The exhibition of the passivity and subjectivity in the perceptual organization was not a hidden secret. According to the modern psychologists, eighty percent of human perceptions are influenced or governed by their personal interests, moods, needs and social and cultural backgrounds. The Quran has repeatedly demonstrated or illustrated the passivity of man's interests, whose entire conduct does change whenever evil touches him or good reaches him.

- (a) Truly man was created very impatient. Fretful when evil touches him, and niggardly when good reaches him. (70 : 19-21).
- (b) A slander, going about calumnies (habitually) hindering (all) goods, transgressing beyond bounds, deep in sin. Violent (and cruel) with all that baseborn. Because he possesses wealth and (numerous) sons. (68 : 11-14)

Such is the picture of human behaviour, to which modern psychologists also bear an eloquent testimony. Such behaviour could only be regulated by a divine law. The Quran imposes checks and balances on human behaviour, as it is devoted to the final salvation of mankind. It seeks man's material well-being as well as his spiritual welfare. God's purpose is eternal and His plan is perfect, but man's intelligence or his interest is selfish or limited at its very best. There is no finality in human interest. If the Quranic Laws were left to the mortals for modification it would loose all mark of divinity and would remain no more a divine law. It should better

be called human law or national law. Quranic laws can fail in no stage of evolution of human civilization from providing guidance to humanity, which it has provided during the course of the last fourteen hundred years. Had there been changes into the letters and spirits of the Quran, it would have already been reduced to apocryphal material and it would not have been preserved, as it is today. Even the commentaries or the exegesis of the Quran, written through the ages, do not differ radically in basic concepts of the Quranic laws. Minor differences in interpretations are quite human. This further certifies the fact that human behaviour might change from time to time, the concept and spirit of man-made laws might vary from ages to ages but the way of God would remain the same :

But no changes wilt thou find in God's way of dealing. No turning off wilt thou find in God's way of dealing. (35 : 43)

There can be no doubt that the Quran is an open book and easy to understand. But for whom is it so easy and clear ? Only for those who love and revere the book and earnestly strive to find in it, not a reflection of their own fancies, but clue to higher matters of spirit,

And we have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember. Then is there any that will receive admonition. (54 : 17)

But the Quran becomes, at the same time, ambiguous, causing spiritual harm to those who are unjust and untrue and who interpret it according to their selfish desire or endeavour to make it endorse any human behaviour right or wrong, instead of making human behaviour in confirmity with the eternal principles and absolute laws of the Quran, which were beyond any flux and change.

"We sent down (step by step) in the Quran, that which is healing and a mercy to those who believe. To the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss." (17 : 82)

"By it He causes many to stray and many He lands into right path, but He causes not to stray, except those who forsake (the Path)." (2 : 26)

Exegesis of the Quran

The devotion of all energies to the development of the exegesis of the Quran is, indeed, a very pious and noble duty. But exegesis can not be written for special groups of people, or from especial points of views, or for special purposes. The need for an explanation of the verses of the Quran was not a new demand. It arose quite early. People used to ask the Prophet all sorts of questions regarding the meaning of particular verses. The prophet's answers were earnestly stored in the memories of Companions (*ashab*) and were afterwards written down, which contain all sorts of matters. All such details have become a part of Ahadith. The help of Ahadith, therefore, was inevitable for the right interpretation of the letter of the Quranic laws. The closer we go back to the contemporary authority, the better.

If the Quran was left for open interpretation to every man, to who are untrained in Quranic studies, it would create chaos and anarchy. It is not possible to explain the Quran without a thorough knowledge of Arabic language, or without examining the meaning of the words philologically, or the usage of the Quraish tribe, to which the prophet belonged. The beauty and the grandeur of the style of the Quran requires a life-long interest in the Quran. In many cases, Arabic words, idioms and phrases in the text have acquired other meanings than those which were understood by the Prophet and his companions. We must not devise, therefore, new verbal meanings and must not mix up our own theories and ideas with the text itself.

Scholars of Islamic learning as well as the masters of modern research methodologies in the West, have ever protested against such licence of interpretations, sanctioned freely to untrained minds. Professor I.A. Richards, a great critic of English literature at Harvard (now retired), wrote a specific book entitled *Practical Criticism* on the art of interpretation. He ably explained ten difficulties befalling interpreters. In his opinion, lack of plain sense, sensuous apprehension, place of imagery, influence of innemonic irrelevances, stock response, sentimentality, inhibition, doctrinal adhesion, technical presupposition and finally the general critical preconceptions, cause a

constant clash between the reader and the author, leading to confusion and erratic judgments in criticism and interpretation of any work, poetry or prose, ethics or religion, etc. The above mentioned limitations intervene endlessly between the reader and the author unless primary sources or closer authorities were consulted in the matter.

Under such accepted canons and principles of criticism and interpretation, it would be betrayal of these principles, if everybody was allowed to interpret things which were either beyond the jurisdiction of his knowledge or the area of specialization and the field of his concentration.

Legal Status of the Prophet as Defined by the Quran

Prophet of Islam was commissioned for the interpretation of the Quran and for providing guidance to human beings :

And we have sent down unto thee the Message, that thus mayest explain clearly, to men, what is sent for them and that they may give thought. (14 : 44)

To accept the Prophet as law-giver is one of the conditions of faith.

"But no, by the Lord, they can have no real faith, until they make thee judge in all disputes between them." (4 : 65)

"He who obeys the Prophet obeys God." (4 : 80)

"O ye who believe obey God and obey the Prophet and make not vain your deeds." (47 : 33)

"If any one disobeys God and His Apostle, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path." (33 : 36)

The spirit of disregarding Ahadith or dismissing them as a fundamental source of Islamic law would obviously amount to the dismissal of the Prophet's status as law-giver and a conscious attempt to breed suspicion about the *sunnah* of the Prophet and thus remove the elements of devotion to and love with the Prophet of Islam, which according to the Quran was a sign of love with and devotion to God himself :

"Say, if ye Love God, follow me, God will love you and forgive your sins." (3 : 31)

“Ye have indeed in the Apostle a beautiful pattern of conduct.”
(33 : 21)

The Quranic verses illustrate clearly the status of the Prophet as a law-giver, legislator and a judge :

For the (Prophet) commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil. He allows them as lawful what is good (and pure), and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure).

Finally the Quran commands the believers to take and accept whatever the prophet assigns to them :

So take what the Apostle assigns to you, and deny yourselves which he with-holds from you. And fear God for God is strict in Punishment.

Hadith as a Source of Islamic Law.

It is facile to assume that Hadith had a spurious character and it was out-dated. Quran and Sunnah both are for all the times and climes and for all mankind, black, yellow or white, and their universal principles are applicable to all stages of human development from primitive to the most advanced stages of society. There is hardly any problem temporal or spiritual which can not be solved with the guidance of the Holy Book and the sunnah of the Prophet.

The Holy Prophet translated the letter and spirit of the Quran into practice by his deeds, sayings, actions and instructions, which now constitute the main body of Ahadith. The way in which Ahadith have been preserved is unique in the history of human civilization. The science of *asma-ur-Rejal* was the exclusive contribution of the traditionists who devised a scientific way to scrutinise the Ahadith, and distinguish the genuine from the non-genuine, pure from the impure and chaste from the unchaste.

There is no doubt that the political interests and selfish motives instigated the partisans of various political and religious groups to forge and fabricate Ahadith in order to support their causes. But all such clever forgeries have already been detected by this scientific technique that is *asma-ur-Rejal*, which put every *rawi* or the narrator to acid test and examined the whole chain of narrators. Being hard and strict in its examination, this scientific investigation dismissed

even such *rawis* from the whole cycle of narration who were ever found or seen eating or fighting on the streets even for once. After such strict examinations the entire body of Ahadith was purified. It would, therefore, be a sheer prejudice to dismiss Ahadith as a source of Islamic Law.

Even if the Ahadith were treated as precedents, as some of the critics of Ahadith do assert, they can not lose the force of law. The role of precedents, conventions and traditions in shaping and designing the structure and patterns of law is quite historical. Law springs up from the habits of the peoples and their sense of justice or from the ideologies of a particular community. It, therefore, bears relations to the social conventions, beliefs and faith of the people concerned. Islamic laws are consistent with the ideology of Islam, as explained in the Quran and Ahadith.

A student of law could only appreciate the role of precedents and traditions in the legal life of a community. Precedents, that is, previous cases taken as example for subsequent cases or as justification, have even served as rules or pattern of law among many nations of the world. The part that precedents and conventions have played in codifying Roman Law is not a secret. The English law has even been claimed to be unwritten law, that is, a perpetual transmission and acceptance of English precedents and conventions as valid laws. The International law itself, is a record of precedents and conventions. The treatise signed and ratified by the nations were destined to become the letters of the international law, enjoying legal validity, and being binding on the ratifying nations.

Such being the case, why should there be any hesitation in accepting Ahadith as a source of Islamic Law. The entire edifice of Islam were erected on the Quran and the Sunnah. To demolish either of the two would result in the collapse of the whole edifice. And a deliberate denial of genuine Ahadith would amount to the denial of the clear injunctions of the Quran which commanded believers to follow the Prophet, who himself categorically proclaimed as following :

I have left for you two things, and you would never be misled so long as you held up those two, the Book of God and Ahadith of his Prophet. (vide : *Muatta* of Imam Malik).

Caliphs of Islam obeyed the injunctions of the prophet faithfully. The second caliph 'Umar issued the following instructions to Abu-Musa-al-Ashari, when he was appointed as a judge in Basrah :

“In the administration of justice divine ordinance and the practice of the Holy Prophet ought to be followed.”

A similar instruction was issued by the same caliph to Qazi Shurayh, one of the most just and efficient judges of the time.

Conclusions

The Holy Quran has not been revealed to be twisted to the will of man, rather the will of man was to be subordinated to the will of God, the Creator of man and the knower of man's behaviour. It is extremely misleading to assume that the Quranic laws or Sunnah aim at arresting the growth of human progress or dynamism of culture, or taking human beings back to medieval ages. It is a gross misrepresentation of facts. The Quran and the Sunnah, on the contrary, aim at elevating man to the highest standard of civilization, which of course, is not based on feeding and watering carnal appetites, unlawful exploitation, tyranny and despotism, intemperance, enchainment of man in slavery, man's worship of man, and man's surveillance to man, etc. They condemn such practices, committed whether by the Muslims or the non-Muslims. Human civilization is still imperfect, because it could not achieve the perfection of the "Self" although it has achieved miraculous material well-being. Thus, the human civilization is still in the making. This spirit of making and process of dynamism needs channelization from better to the best.

The philosophy of the Divine Book and the Sunnah is to achieve that "Best." They are, therefore, *sine qua non* with the believers.

The answers of the Believers, when summoned to God and His Apostle, in order that He may judge between them, is no other than this, they say, "we hear and we obey." It is such as these that will attain felicity. (24 : 51)

Anwar Ahmad Qadri

Al-Fiqh-fi-Al-Quran

In the contemporary Orientalist literature on Islamic law and jurisprudence, there is a tendency to bring out some new horizoned research works in order to present something innovatory in the settled history of Islam. The origion of these neo-tendencies has a fascination and somewhat long history, which is rooted in the term orientalism so-called properly as 'Syncretism'. It means a fusion and blending of religious ideas and practices by means of which either one set adopts thoroughly the principles of another or both are amalgamated in a cosmopolitan shape. Its most frequent use under history has been to simplify and unify oriental religions.

Under the above objectives of the concept of 'Orientalism', the works of the researchers are pretty clear when one notes them deeply in the method of approach and presentation of the topics they cover in their studies. It has a wide area of operation and requires a voluminous writing, to uncover the whole situation. However, for our present purpose, I want to refer to some of their views which are interesting in Islamic legal research.

For the accomplishment of the situation under the title of our present subject, I plan at first to reproduce the orientalist views on the Quranic law, and shall also refer to their views on Sunna or traditions of the Prophet in the presentation of the aspects of Islamic Jurisprudence. In order to uncover the genuine spirit behind their researches, I will attempt to present the Muslim studies on the same aspects and thus explain the same subjects as they are considered by the Muslims and others in general, after the orientalist references. It is sincerely expected that all this leads

toward a greater understanding of the Islamic principles of the science of law, I feel highly privileged in presenting these humble views on the sacred topic of Islam. It becomes a pious duty to perform the same at a time when the world of Islam is celebrating the 1400th anniversary of the revelation of the Holy Quran and the connected periodicals on Islam are bringing out special numbers with great zeal and interest.

The Orientalistic Colourings referred

In the field of translation of the Quran, at first in importance, we find Meracci, a Confessor to Pope Innocent XI, introduced his work of translation of the Quran in 1689 through an introductory volume styled 'Refutation of the Quran' to present the worst possible picture to the world. George Sale's translation (1734) being based on Meracci, went through many editions and reprints and was included in the Chands Classics. He introduced most unjustified and false charges on the Prophet (Peace and Blessing of God be upon him) and also leveled invention of the Quran on him. E. H. Palmer in his translation wrongly remarking that, "...of his own stiff-necked generation a drama of which the real hero is always himself", thereby continued the vilification of Sale. Such mischievous attempts were made by Re. J. M. Rodwell and others and ultimately Prof. A. A. A. Fyze in 'Modern Approach to Islam' suggested a disturbed view that there should be a new edition of the Quran since Arabic as language has developed in modern time in addition to his new *Fgih* theory attempted in 'Muhammadan Law.'

From the above translation works and the connected comments, if we turn to the field of law and jurisprudence and the related areas, we find some interesting comments on these topics. Thus, it may be pointed out that Dr. Joseph Schacht in 'Law In The Middle East' at first says, "Islam in general and Islamic Law in particular, is a system of duties—a command which is typical of the ethical attitude of the Quran toward legal matters". His views become sharper when one reads 'Introduction to Islamic Law'. Dr. Fazlur Rahman in 'Islamic Methodology in History' goes further and says, "The evidence, in fact, strongly suggests that the Prophet

was primarily a moral reformer of mankind—In the Quran itself general legislation forms a very tiny part of the Islamic teaching. But even the legal or quasi-legal part of the Quran itself clearly displays a situational character. In 'Islam', he moreover remarks that, "Islamic law, in its first intention, is a system of 'oughts' and 'ought not' rather than a specific legal code." These views when compared with others stand interesting and intentional. Thus, for example, Dr. Gibb in 'Mohammedanism' continuing his thesis on Quran as manufactured says: "New prophetic narratives—the stories of Joseph and John the Baptist, the first draft of the story of Jesus, stories of David and Solomon, of the 'Two-horned', the Seven Sleepers, and other figures from apocryphal tradition and Alexander-legend-were added for homeletic purposes or to demonstrate the super-natural origin of his knowledge".

Turning our attention from the above to the Sunna or traditions of the Prophet, we find that under the lead provided by Ignaz Goldziher an unfair and exaggerated theory on the topic has been attempted to be established by the science of orientalism. Goldziher in 'Muhammedanische Studien' started to put up the show and said: "Judged by a scientific criterion, only a very small part, if any, of the contents of these canonical compilations can be confidently referred to the early period from which they profess to date". Margoliouth, Juynboll, Lammens, Hurgronje and others concurring with the views of Goldziher, put up, 'variety of views. Dr. Joseph Schacht wrote a comprehensive thesis styled as 'origins of Muhammedan Jurisprudence' in support of the theory of Goldziher. He purveyed his philosophy saying: "that great majority of traditions from the Prophet are documents not of the time to which they claim to belong, but of the successive stages of the development of the doctrines during the first centuries of Islam". He was followed in his crusade by Lecturer N. J. Coulson when in 'History of Islamic Law' he said, "We take the view that the thesis of Joseph Schacht is irrefutable".

Instead of sincere scholarship under the rules and principles of *Ilmul Hadith* which especially provides the words 'Daif', 'Azir', etc. for the weaker traditions, Dr. Fazlur Rahman accepting the orientalist views carried forward the alleged views. He in his 'Islamic

Methodology In History' said : "Hadith, in fact, is the sum total of aphorisms formulated and put out by Muslims themselves, ostensibly about the Prophet although not without an ultimate historical touch with the Prophet". He continuing his alleged views remarked : "Its very aphoristic character shows that it is not historical. It is rather a gigantic and monumental commentary on the Prophet by early companions." He wrongly concluded that "though based on the Prophet, it also constitutes an epitome of the wisdom of classical Muslims".

Different methods and ways were planned to confuse the Islamic science of law. In the garb of scholarship, the manufactured Christian theology which had re-edited the original Christian religion, was brought out as a solution to cure the self-created malady of orientalism. One wonders when one finds Barrister Kemal A. Faruki in 'Islamic Jurisprudence' saying : "It may well be found desirable and useful to examine later methods of ascertaining historical truth and apply such tests to hadith literature. As an example, of a possible line of approach, the higher criticism' used by a Western Christian historian (citing Toynbee) in endeavouring to separate the original Christian Gospel from subsequent accretions may prove useful example for Muslims in evaluating compilations with the aid of man's ever-developing knowledge". It is submitted that here is unfolded the attempted introduction of the ways and methods of Christian theology for the transformation of the Islamic sciences by the orientalist learning. The historical bases of Christianity which were tested under rigours, by placing the Bible and other institutions of the Church on trial through tearing away the original principles of that religion, were thought to be suggested cure for their Islam. All this clarifies and brings to reality the aim and purpose of the science of 'Syncretism' mentioned above.

The Islamic Reality

In the above pages we have a brief picture of the attempted colouring of orientalist scholarship on Islamic institutions. In order to cover up the main theme of our present topic, it is now essential to unfurl the Islamic reality on the subject as it is and universally followed by the faithful and the unprejudiced scholarship.

THE REVELATIONS: The Quran and Sunna : -The Quran and Sunna which since their manifestation are the primitive source of the orders of the Law, form two branches of study—*Ilmul-Tafsir* or the interpretation of the Quran and *Ilmul-Hadith* or the study of traditions. All the orders of the Law have regard either to the action (*Din*) or to the belief (*Iman*) of the Mukallifs (one who is subject to the Law).

Being the very words of God, the Quran is objective in nature, instead of being a subjective revelation. When one reads in the Quran, as for example '*Qul Huwa'llah Ahad*' ('Say': He, God is One') God Himself is the speaker, not the Prophet, and therefore the faithful in quoting His scriptures employs the formula, "He says exalted is He", while only in quoting the traditions of the Prophet does he say: "He says upon him be the Blessing of God and His Peace". In the traditions the inspiration is subjective and true inspiration. It places them second only to Quran, and makes them true supplement to that Book. Thus they not only throw light upon their meaning, but themselves form the basis on which the doctrines may be established. So important this branch of Muslim theology is that the study of traditions is included in the *Ilmul-Usul* or the science of exegesis. The Prophet declared that Islam must be written in hearts of men. Thus was there an unwillingness to commit them in writing. They were handed down by words of mouth. To prevent spurious tales, a number of strict rules were formed at the head of which stands the Prophet's saying itself a tradition:—"Convey to other persons none of my words except those which ye know of a surety. Verily, he who purposely represents my words wrongly will find a place for himself no where but in fire". God says to the Prophet: "To thee have we sent down this book of monitions, that thou mayest make clear to men what hath been sent down to them" (XVI. 46). In other words the Prophet unfolded the meaning distinguished between abrogating verses and committed this knowledge to his Companions. It was from his mouth that they knew the meaning of the verses and the circumstances which led to each distinct revelation being made.

The Companions thus instructed became perfectly familiar with the whole revelation. This knowledge they handed down by

word of mouth to their followers - the *Tabain*, who in their turn passed it on to their followers-the *Tabai-Tabain*. The art of writing became common and the business of the commentators henceforth was to collect together the sayings of the Companions thus handed down. Criticism of a passage of the Quran was not his duty, criticism of a comment made on it by a Companion was beyond his province, the first was too sacred to be touched, the second must be accepted, if only the chain of narrators of the statement was perfect. Thus early in Islamic history, were the principles of exegesis fixed and settled. Every word, every sentence, has now its place and class. The commentator has now only to reproduce what was written before, though he made in elucidation of the point, bring forth some tradition hitherto unnoticed which would, however be a difficult thing to do.

USUL-al-FIQH:—In its root, *Fiqh* signifies conception, comprehension. Thus Muhammad (Peace be upon him) prayed for Ibn Masud: “May God make him comprehend (*Faqqihahu*) and make him know the interpretation of the Quran.

Fiqh which is the Arabic equivalent for a science of law, is literally translated as the knowledge of what is for a man’s self and what is against a man’s self (in respect of his acts). Since the Quran and the Sunna are the principal sources from which the precepts of *Shari’a* have been drawn, so the rules recognized as the principal elements of actual jurisprudence are the subjects of *Ilmul-Fiqh*. God the only legislator, has shown the way of felicity to the people whom He has chosen, and in order to enable them to walk in that way He has shown to them the precepts which are found, partly in the eternal Quran, and partly in the sayings and doings of the Prophet transmitted to posterity by the Companions and preserved in the *Sunnat*—called *Shariat* and the rules thereof called *Ahkam*. The Quran says: “Verily, we have sent down the Reminder and verily, we will guard it” (XV. 9). The Holy Book declares further: “Whatever of good befalleth thee (O man) it is from Allah, and whatever of ill befalleth thee it is from thyself. We have sent thee (Muhammad) as a messenger unto mankind and Allah is sufficient as witness. Whoso obeyeth the messenger obeyeth Allah, and whoso turneth away: we have not sent thee as warder over them”

(IV, 79-80). God commands further and says: "And what the Apostle gives you, take and what he forbids you, desist from; and fear God, verily God is keen to punish" (LIX, 7).

Law or *Hukum* is that which is established by communication or *Khitab* from God with reference to men's act, expressive either of demand or indifference on His part or being mere declaratory. The function of law is to control the actions of men in their senses. Since every communication from God is law, unless God has restricted a particular action of man, the latter has option in doing or abstaining from doing an act. It is called an action of *Ibaha*t similar to the rule of law theory. If the law demands a man to do something which is of an absolute nature, such an act when demanded is *Fard* or an obligatory act such as fasting *Zakat*. If the demand is not of an absolute nature, such an act is called *Mandub* or commendable, such as to help the needy. If the law asks a man to refrain from doing a particular act, in an absolute form, it is called *Haram* or forbidden act, as the drinking of wine, but if the demand in such a case is not of an absolute nature, such an act is called *Makruh* or improper as the eating the flesh of a dead animal. The Islamic conception of law remains very wide, for it not only tells what is required under penalty, but also what is either recommended or disliked though without reward or penalty. However, in cases of justified excuses, the strict law or *Azimat* provides a concession by way of equity or *Rukhsat* as is the case of concession in fasting during sickness or journey on the basis of Quranic injunctions contained in ii : 185.

According to the principles of *al-Fiqh*, the Quran collectively contains three things :— (1) Those verses which relate to *Ilmul-Kalam*; (2) Those which relate to moral principles; and (3) Those verses which deal with the rules of conduct of human beings as *Awamir wa Nawahi* about human acts or actions (as said above). These last verses are directly connected with the *Usul al-Fiqh*. These kind of verses are largely available in the *Madani Ayaat* which come if counted to 6,211 in number.

If studied analytically, it is found that in the Quran the *Fiqhi Ayaat* were revealed firstly, in circumstances on cases of necessity of

time for reforming the Muslim society at its specific happenings. This point may be illustrated as follows :—

It is reported that the Prophet sent a Sahabi to Mecca to get back a weak Muslim party from there. When the Sahabi reached there, a rich and beautiful woman presented herself before him, but he by fear of God refused her. Then she proposed marriage with him which he accepted subject to the permission of the Prophet of God. Thus when he returned to Madina, he submitted his affair to the Prophet and requested for permission of nikah. Upon the same the following Ayat was revealed : “Wed not idolatresses till they believe ; for lo, a believing bond woman is better than an idolatress though she please you ; and give not your daughters in marriage to idolaters till they believe, for lo, a believing slave is better than an idolater though he please you...” (II : 221).

Secondly, the Quranic revelations came containing Fiqhi principles in the shape of answers to the questions put by Muslims and non-Muslims. On the basis of nature of religion, such cases were rare. The immediate illustration of this kind is furnished in the following gradual prohibition against wine drinking :—

1st stage when Quran (ii : 219) said : “They question thee about strong drink and games of chance ; Say : In both is great sin, and (some) utility for men ; but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness.”

2nd stage when the Quran (iv : 43) warns ; “O ye who believe ! Draw not near unto prayer when ye are drunken, till ye know that which ye utter...”

3rd stage when the Quran (v : 90) explicitly prohibits : “O ye who believe ! Strong drink and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan’s handiwork. Leave it aside in order that ye may succeed.”

The Quran fundamentally, on the principles of Fiqh rules, primarily concerns with the reforms of humanity, for human welfare, and their betterment in this life and the life to come. To accomp-

lish such an objective, it at first works for *Adam Harj* i.e., provides for the avoidance of difficulties or narrowness from humanity and their life. It clearly states the same for mankind when we find the following words : "Allah desires you ease and good and not hardship....." (ii : 185). He is *Rahman* or the Most Gracious and *Rahim* or the most Merciful (Quran i : 1, 3) and through the Quran has provided everything lawful and essential for a happy social life of the world by the following verse of the Holy Book : "We have turned about for men in this Quran every parable..." (xvii : 91). The Quran guides for the lessening of difficulties or *Qillat-ee Taklif* for mankind which it terms as 'One Nation'. Under a gradual process or by *Tadreej* a model stage for the accomplishment of the ideals of religion is provided by the Quran. God who is *Malikul-Mulk* and *Khairul-Hakemeen*—"has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth...(Quran xiv : 13) and created man as His vicegerent on earth (Quran ii : 30). He is termed *Adil* or the Just and He directs the faithful : "Set thy face steadfast toward the religion as an *Hanif*, according to the consideration whereon God has constituted men, there is no altering the creation of God, that is the standard religion, though most men do not know" (xxx : 30). He gave to mankind the religion of Islam which is based upon justice and righteousness', for the Quran plainly states that, "This day have I perfected for you religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as religion" (v : 3). The society conceived by the Quran is the best and is termed as *Ummat*. The Holy Book explains : "Thus have we made of you an *Ummat* justly balanced, that ye may be witnesses over the nations. And the Apostle a witness over yourselves..." (ii : 143). The Quran says that Prophet Muhammad (Be peace and blessings of God upon him) was sent as favour to Believers (iii : 164, iv : 170), a mercy to them (ix : 61) and is a mercy to all creatures (xxi : 107). The Prophet said : "I leave with you two guides, which if you follow faithful you will never go astray, the Quran and my practices (Sunna). All these facts are well explained by the rules and principles of *al-Fiqh* as founded in the Quran and Sunna.

The above discussion goes to show as a way of explanation the nature, constitution, definition, purpose and methods of the Quranic principles of the *Usul-al-Fiqh* in Islam. It is the soul's cognizance of

its rights and obligations and is also called as the knowledge of practical legal questions. Thus, in more simplified terminology, the science of law or the *Usul-al-Fiqh* is concerned with the Law-Giver or the Legislator-Allah, who is called *Hakim* i.e., the Supreme Sovereign of the universal system. Next, it deals with the objects of the Law called *Mahkum Behi* which are rights and acts and the subjects of the Law are called *Mahkum Alaihi* which denote to whom the Law is applicable and which are the general mankind.

The body of the science of jurisprudence in Islam which trenches the knowledge of the various branches of the law is called *Ilmul-Faru* in the shape of its detailed application in the aspects of public, private, territorial and individual and social areas of the rule of human conduct. The Quran directs and expressly states, "And this (He commands) : Judge thou between them by what God hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they beguile thee from any of that (teaching) which God hath sent down to thee..." (v : 52). Moreover, God warns in the matter of violation of His injunctions for He gives notice : "And whoso will not judge by what God hath sent down-such are the infidels" (v : 38). It explains the imperative nature of law contained in the Quran. It may be interpreted as positive law given by God for mankind laying down such are the infidels" (v : 48). It explains the imperative nature of law contained in the Quran. It may be interpreted as positive law given by God for mankind laying down a complete rule of conduct. It exposes the orientalist views that the Quran law is ethical only and not legal. The theory of law contained in the Quran and Sunna of the Prophet have been misunderstood and the critics perhaps conceal the open truth that the injunctions of the Shari'a uniquely and positively bind the Muslim's acts, his conscience and irrespective of wherever he may be, the law of the Quran is always with him. He is afraid of the displeasure of Allah and his conscience always blames him at his blameworthiness. In his individual, social, local, national and international areas of human operation, the faithful has the Islamic message with him and such is the widest operation of the religion. Timely considerations or self-indulgence may hamper the same but the control of religion in the mind is always there in a Muslim heart. For this reason, Islam

which regulates each and every area of human life called as a 'complete code of life.'

In this aspect of the Quranic legal philosophy, all commands including all rules laid down for human actions being divine in origin have the objects of less worldly prosperity and more for future reward. These features are based upon certain axiomatic, acute, and intricate rules of logic, metaphysics and divinity which are peculiar to the Shari'a legal system. The Muslim theory on the same basis classifies 'law' with reference to its sources into revealed laws and those propounded from the revealed laws. Under this method, the law is differently classified which relate to *Muamalat* or dealings, *Mumtlukat* or state or land, *Munkuhat* or matrimonial, *Uqubat* or penal, *Al-Siyar* or international, *Adaab-al-Qadi* or judicial process, *Shahadat* or evidence, etc. The basis and the roots of all these branches of the law are always there in the Quran and Sunna. It may be submitted that the orientalist researches do not judge or try to study the law of Islam and its bases from the point of view of a *Faqih* or jurist. It is the main reason of the misunderstanding of the Quranic law to pass undue remarks. It is suggested that a lawyer's approach be adopted and then what is the law of the Quran will easily be understood. Mere cultural, social, political or ethical and sociological approach is inefficient to enter into Islamic legal studies. Further, the judicial institutions of the religion should also be studied under the above guide-points and then only an understanding of the genius of Islamic law will be developed.

The law of the Quran in Islam once guided the western world and the legal systems of contemporary Europe and Americas were developed from borrowings from the Islamic principles. The insight of a jurist unfolds the debt of Western law to Islamic law. However, it should be also emphasized herewith that there is fundamental difference of a genuine scholarship and a prejudiced scholarship. Under this base lies the reason of the present misunderstanding about the true conceptions of the law.

It may be remarked that the Islamic or the Quranic law being divine in origin is given by God who is Just and who establishes

justice and righteousness. The law being so natured, differs from the law manufactured by men because they say 'this is better than that' and because they agree to place their wills at the service of the chosen end. The Western or Western oriented laws of the Analytical, Philosophical, Historical, Functional, Sociological, Teleological or Realist schools of modern jurisprudence are all based upon the will of men—the mainspring for the life of the modern society. There are among themselves great controversies in the boundaries of their jurisprudential theories. Such a thing is totally absent in the Quranic law which is based upon justice and righteousness, and here lies the superiority of the Islamic law from all other laws.

According to the *Ilmul-Tafsir*, the Quran is divided into four classes of words it contains. They are *Khass*, *Amm*, *Mushtarik* and *Muawwal*. The *Khass* words relate to genus, species, special individual and the sciences of the Quran are either obvious or hidden. The obvious sentences are *Zahir*, *Nass*, *Mufasir*, *Makham* and the science of deducing arguments from the Quran is called *Istidlal*. Under the same, there are plain sentences or *Ibarat*, *Isharat*, *Dalalat* and *Iqtiza* for purposes of *Istidlal*. The Quran contains *Harf* or letter-338, 606 in number, *Kalima*-79,087 or 77,934 in number and there are *Ayaat* or short sentences. The variations in the verses are based upon the Kufa verses, Basra verses, Shami verses, Macca verses, and Madina verses in revelation. The rules of *Naskih* and *Mansukh* regulate the methods of Quranic interpretation. A chapter is called *Sura* and the 30th portion is called *Siparah* and there are *Rukuus* or prostration made by the worshipper while performing prayers. Similar is the method of classification of the science of traditions or *Ilmul-Hadith*. All the orders of the law as such in Islam have regard either to the action or *Din* and the belief or *Iman* of the one who is subject to the law, i.e. *Mukallif*.

Under the above brief outline of the Tafsir features of the Quran, it is plain to evaluate the genius of the Book. Being a complete code of life for humanity, it contains many principles still uncovered by man in the different sciences, of humanity. The natural science, the medical science, the biological science aside from the aspects of social science, the physical science or any other science have been one way or by other, referred by the Quran. The

prophecies of the Book have been fulfilled and it requires human labour and intelligence to uncover the hidden treasures contained in the Quran. However, for our present purpose, it is submitted that if a concerted and consolidated research effort is undertaken upon the Quran and its maxims, principles, indications, rules and methods of approach are collected in the fields relating to legal, constitutional and political water-marks, a most comprehensive, complete, concise and lucid law code can be framed out for use of mankind in their legal and constitutional administration. All this requires a faith and sincerity of purpose to achieve something accomplishing for man's use. It is prayed that the faithful and the sincere will think over this matter and take initiative to guide the ideologically torn up world. Let the Quran guide the people who should realize the words of God when He states: "Truth has (now) arrived, and falsehood perished; for falsehood is bound to perish"- (al-Quran XVII. 81).- We hope for the best.

Dr. Basharat Ali

The Quranic Contribution to Sociology

The Jews, the Christians and prior to them most other nations were given books, but none preserved nor used them as a residual force to derive systems and sub-systems of knowledge and culture. The Muslims were the exclusive nation, throughout the entire human history, who utilized their sacred Book for the formulation, discovery, and systematization of known and unknown systems of knowledge and culture. It is a unique feature of the History of Muslim Culture that through their extensive and intensive study of Al-Quran, the Muslim academicians and scholars discovered and identified new systems and sub-systems of knowledge exclusively from the Quran. The Book was studied in form, content and meaning on the one hand, and it was scrutinized in its depth and level so as to yield a new system of knowledge in terms of micro-, macro-, and meta-levels. Attempts are being made today for the systematization of sociology in terms of micro-, macro-, and meta-levels, which was developed by the Quran centuries ago. Not only most of the systems of knowledge, but exclusively sociology was identified and formulated along the lines of approaches referred to above.

Danial Heineberg, the well-known German Islamiologist in his equally renowned book: *The History of Islamic Culture*, points out that the Muslims derived 150 types and sub-types of knowledge from the exclusive base of the Quran. This is a misleading statement made by him simply to misguide the Muslims about the contributions of their forefathers. In the beginning of the third century A.H., enormous literature was produced by the Muslim scholars of the various Quranic systems of knowledge.

Allama Abu Ishaq Ibrahim bin Musa al-Shatibi (علامه ابو اسحاق ابراهيم بن موسى الشاطبي) points out that the entire Quran is based on Laws

and Principles which may be used for the ever-new systematization of knowledge from time to time throughout future. The first commentary or *Tafseer* was produced by Hazrat Abi bin Ka'b (حضرت ابی بن کعب). This gave a momentum to the production of literature on various subjects of the Quran throughout the Muslim world. Nothing to say of the content even in form the Muslims produced literature of great significance. For instance, the dots and various symbols, words, letters and punctuations, etc., are systems of knowledge. On their exclusive fields there are innumerable books written by renowned Muslim scholars.

There is enormous literature on the systems and sub-systems of knowledge derived from the Quran. The first book on this subject appeared in the third century A.H., and subsequently continued upto the tenth century A.H. The most authentic document of this particular subject is the classical work by Allama Badr-ud-Din Zarkashi-*Al-Burhan*. This is the basic material of *Al-Itiqan* by Allama Jalal-ud Din Seuti. In the light of the references above we are in a position to repudiate the wrong enumeration of the Quranic systems of knowledge which have been referred to by Professor Heineberg, as many as 150. Allama Seuti points out that more than 3,000 systems of knowledge were derived and systematized by the Muslims.

In this long array of systems and sub-systems of knowledge derived from the exclusive existential base of the Quran there is no name as the Sociology of the Quran and its more than 500 disciplines and specialities. This does not mean that the Muslims were strangers to the science of society. Inspired by the Quranic teaching on the basis of laws and principles laid down by the Quran, undoubtedly the Muslims discovered and systematized the science of society. Ibn Abi Rabi and Kindi are the first sociologists and Ibn Khaldun, the father of modern analytical sociology, who discovered more than three hundred sociological disciplines and specialities out of the modern enumeration of 500.

According to the Quranic verdict given exposition in the Sura al-Baraat, verse 33, Islamic culture cannot perish. It will have to overcome all the parallel ideational and sensate cultures. According to 32 : 5, the evolution, expansion and development of Islamic

culture will not be linear but non-linear with usual fluctuations, spirals, oscillations, rhythms and pauses. The Islamic culture, according to the Quran, in its forward march, will be replaced by a new generation each time.

The de-energized and impotent generation will have to be eliminated, and its place to be taken by an energetic and potentially strong generation (II. Sections 35 and 76). This new generation will, according to Sura Ya Sin, Section 2, confirm the Truth. Under these circumstances, we are persuaded to believe that in the process of evolution, the new generation of Muslims will discover and evolve more and more systems of knowledge from Al-Quran. Allama Raghīb says that the Quran is not a bulky book, yet it is colossal and all-dimensional in its meaning. The human reason is incapable of grasping these multi-dimensional meanings. According to the Quranic enunciation, says he, it is beyond the purview of human reasoning to grasp and enumerate them all. Neither human intellect nor any mechanical device can encompass and compute them all :

“Say! If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be exhausted, before the words of my Lord were exhausted, though We brought the like of it to add therein. (18 : 109, cf: 31 : 27)

Allama Jalal-ud-Din, to my mind, has overlooked the predictive nature of the statement made in the *Qann-ut-Taveel* by Qazi Abu Bekr bin al-‘Arabi, that the Quranic systems of knowledge are 50,400,7,000, and 70,000. This means by the token of the advancement of Islamic culture, the new generations, in accordance with the rate of intellectual advancement and in accordance with the unfolding of the Quranic culture, will have to discover, identify, systematize and synthesize ever-new Quranic systems of knowledge. The process of evolution, according to Suras Ya Sin and Ar-Rahman, involves emergence from pre-existing situation. Social evolution, according to the Suras Fatir, and Insan, does not proceed by saltations, and new forms have always their precursors. This means the continuity of culture. Fundamentally, continuity is the principle of cultural conservation. When circumstances require new institutional, cultural

and knowledge forms in an Islamic society, these forms will be shaped by pre-existing situations. Whatever the nature of Islamic society, the social imperatives of Islam, according to verse 9:33, continue. But the pattern in which they operate will vary, and this variation is dependent in a large measure on the character of the ideal.

The expansion of Islamic systems of culture and other systems of knowledge will have to fulfil the requirements of space-time dimensions and mould the ever new spirit of the age at the turn of each century. The Quran in its Sura al-'Asr, for the first time, has invited attention to these facts realistically, otherwise the progress will be thwarted. In view of the Quranic axiomatic theory propounded under the Sura al-'Asr, it is inevitable that we should concentrate on the Quranic sociology and culturology, because in the present age these two sciences are inevitable for the unfolding of the Islamic culture and the reconstruction of man and society today.

Intelligent and meaningful participation in Islamic society demands of the individual basic understanding of the meaning of sociology and axiological science. It is today the meanings and values have been recognized as the existential bases of society, personality and culture, but the Quran more than 1400 years ago reiteratedly invited the attention of man to discover and identify the values and meanings involved categorically in every object of the phenomenal world of nature, society and culture. Modern science has yet to discover and recognize the depth and level meanings involved in every atom of the physical universe.

"And whoever is in the heavens and the earth makes obeisance to Allah only willingly or unwillingly, and their shades too, at morn and eve." (13:15)

The reiterated emphasis on meanings and values is the important part of the Quranic sociology of knowledge, Quranic sociology of axiology, the Quranic micro-macro-and-meta-sociologies. The depth and level meanings involved categorically in everything are the subject matter of the Quran repeated again and again all through its pages.

"In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are surely signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heaven and the earth (and say): Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee! Save us from the chastisement of the Fire." (3:189-190)

Such an understanding implies a generalized rather than a specialized knowledge and should lead to comprehension of what the scientífico-axiological mode of thought signifies and what it can and cannot be expected to do for us.

"Do they not reflect on the Quran or are there locks on the hearts?" (4:82, of. 47:24)

The various sciences and systems of knowledge have their specialized techniques and perspectives, but they share in common the basic principles of axiology and scientific method (op. cit. 13:15).

Scientific method with its three basic components of *Sama'*, *Basr* and *Fuad*, is in essence a way of thinking, and as such imposes certain restraints upon those who would use it; likewise, its use liberates many ordinary thought processes from the fetters of ignorance and error:

".....Our Lord punish us not if we forget or make a mistake." (2:286) To appreciate what scientific sociology of the Quran basically signifies, the Muslims must understand the importance of laws, principles, concepts, objective inquiry and rational experiment.

"Then turn thy eye again and again—thy look will return to thee confused while it is fatigued." (67:4 of. 3 also).

Certainly no other thought mode has meant as much to the rise of Islamic civilization in providing a means by which one could put the logical screws upon somebody so that he could not come out without admitting that this and nothing else was truth. The scientific method is the procedure used in seeking knowledge and truth on the basis of the three assumptious of *Sama'*, *Basr* and *Fuad*.

It is not possible to say that the data gathered outside this framework cannot be true, but one does claim that the only knowledge gained in this manner is scientific and meaningful. The most reliable method of gaining knowledge according to the suras Al-Baqarah and Al Mulk is through the human senses : Sama', Basr, i. e., sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. It is the eye, *basr*, and ear, *sama'*, of the person using them that makes of their sensitive indications a scientific observation. It is undoubtedly the miraculous nature of the Quran that among the various causes of the decline of society and culture, those which are potentially strong are transgression or value deviancy (17 : 16) and lack of sight and hearing:

“And follow not that of which thou hast no knowledge. Surely the hearing and the sight and the heart of all of these will be questioned.” (17 : 36)

The most valid method of organizing knowledge in their depth and levels or micro-,macro- and meta-levels is through the use of logic. Facts never speak for themselves, if by this it is meant that a given datum has meaning without interpretation. Facts have no meaning unless they are presented in statements of relationship to other facts. Thus, the verse 3:6 stresses that the *mutshabihat* (allegories) are equally facts, and need to be interpreted in strict conformity with the form, content and meanings of the *muhkamat* (Verities to become logico-meaning-fully and causally related with the socio-cultural and psycho-spiritual determinants.

“He it is Who has revealed the Book to thee (Muhammad), the Scripture wherein are clear revelations—they are substance of the Book—and others (which are) allegorical. But those whose hearts doubt pursue, forsooth, that which is allegorical seeking (to cause) dissension by seeking to explain it. None knoweth its explanation save Allah. And those who are of sound instruction say : We believe therein ; the whole is from our Lord : but only men of understanding really heed.” (3:7)

During our life we all acquire a considerable store of information, which we may bring to bear upon each new fact we learn. It

is easy to be unaware that our brain is cataloguing the newly presented information by reference to other knowledge and logico-meaningful Truth which we already possess.

The simple illustrations provided by the Quran in its parables, similitudes, oaths and *qasas* (stories, narratives) point to what the Quran means when it refers to the science of society as a body of knowledge, because it consists of facts which have been organized with relation to one another. The human reason according to the sura Al-Mulk, should grasp them.

The verses that refer to individual responsibility like 17: 15 and 53: 38, point that the valid method of checking knowledge is through the independent conclusions of a number of competent observers, styled by the Quran as *ar-rusikhon-a-fil-Ilm* (firmly rooted in knowledge). Scientific knowledge as one of the Quranic sociological disciplines is meant to teach that man should be objective. Without any personal bias the Quran wishes that man should see the truth with his own personal experience as it is. Man should separate his own wishes from the process of observation. Scientific method which is advocated by the Quran through its suras Nahl, Bani Israel, Ya Sin, Rahman and Al-Mulk, etc., is a discipline because it teaches man to get outside himself and his milieu in order to see his physical and social and cultural environment by himself. The stereotype of the absent-minded bigots who worship the false traditions of their forefathers is not at all derogatory. It is the portrait of a man consciously removed from the ordinary human world of prejudice and emotion, who strives to be an objective, unbiased rational being. (2: 170, 7: 38 and 10: 78, etc.)

The Quranic verse given below is just to give momentum and urge to human beings to pursue knowledge for the discovery of man, culture, society and God, because as a Muslim he attaches positive value to the idea of giving mankind more knowledge than it previously possessed.

“And We make the night and the day two portents. Then We make dark the portent of the night, and We make the portent of the day sight-giving, that ye may seek bounty from your Lord, and that ye may know the computation of the

years and the reckoning ; and everything We have expounded with a clear expounding." (17 : 12)

According to the Sura Al-Baqarah, Al-Insan, and An-Nisa, all human beings are social. Men have to interact with others in order to survive. Since all human beings live in a society, it is reasonable and meaningful to speak of social environment, a concomitant part of the physical environment. The Muslims, according to the verses which persuade man to study nature (16 : 10-16), the condition of different countries (29 : 20), and the histories of different nations (30 : 9), also stress that they should study the social environment in which they themselves live, with a view to understand human society, the universality and variability of human culture and to predict how people will interact in a given set of circumstances. The suras Anbiya, Qasas and Shu'ara, explain the personality (cf. Al-Insan). The primary concern of the prophets, according to Shah Waliullah, is to reform the world in keeping with their own values or to speculate and to show definitely the course which society is taking, and who have no intention of risking their own pet notions by subjecting them to empirical tests and canons of revealed truths:

"So be not thou in doubt as to that which these worship. They worship only as their fathers worshipped before. Surely We shall pay them in full their due undiminished." (11 : 109)

The sociology of the Quran is not concerned with the unique in the human events, but with the structure and patterns of social interactions. The difference between the generalizing focus of the Sociology of the Quran and the more specialized focus in fields of economics, education, politics, religion can be well stated when all the representing different phenomena of life attain the status of sociological specialities and disciplines. They all absorb into one totality, *i.e.*, culture, and represent the one meaning system, *i.e.*, *Tauheed*. Thus the Quranic sociology in this totality or oneness, explains the likeness among human groups, whether these groups are political, religious, professional, and familial, communal or educational in orientation. Sociology and culturology (the science of culture) of the Quran, in short, is the body of knowledge or *hikmat* about the similarities to be found among various human

groups and the patterns of interaction common to different human endeavours. When these endeavours become logically meaningful, causally related into one integrated ideal whole, they become a way of life. The way of life is culture, called by the Quran as *Deen-ul-qayyam* (دين القيم), commonly known as Islam.

“So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright—the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah’s creation. That is the right religion, but most men know not.”
(30 : 300)

SPECIALITIES AND DISCIPLINES WITHIN THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE QURAN

The general sociology of the Quran gives understanding to the universal, social and cultural structures, such as groups, communities (*ummah*), institutions like family, state, religion and economic system, etc., and universal, social and cultural processes such as co-operation (6 : 73), uprightness and equitability (5 : 8), justice in social relations, more particularly with relatives (4 : 133), truthfulness (7 : 153), mutual respect (49 : 11), solidarity, unity and harmony (3 : 102), and striving for the cause of truth (9 : 88), etc. Much of what is synthesized into general sociological laws and principles “(See *Laws and Principles of the Sociology of the Quran*” by Basharat Ali), however, is learned from critical study and research carried out in the specialized sociologies of the Quran, such as the sociology of knowledge (2 : 30-89), sociology of science (ar-Ra’d, an-Nahl, Ya Sin, ar-Rahman, etc.), sociology of family (an-Nisa), sociology of manners and etiquettes (al-Maidah), sociology of war (al-Anfal, Kahf), the sociology of education (Yusuf and Kahf), and the sociology of anti-social behaviour, value-deviancy and crime (suras 4 : 29 6:152, 1733, 81:8, etc). The social world in well-being goes in togetherness with the social world in trouble, and hence the Quran discusses the problems of social pathologies and their solutions in togetherness with the problems of general sociology. The social problems thus are synthesized into general sociological laws and principles (al-Baqarah, sections 2 to 13). The synthesis is closed with therapeutic suggestions in the following Section (2, 14). The

scholars have to work in these more restricted areas in order to narrow their field of observation. They have to attempt to gain new insights by exploring one area of interaction intensively instead of making a broad survey of all human groups. This will give them an opportunity to make three kinds of contributions to general sociology of the Quran. In this way the future researches in the sociology of the Quran

1. May uncover unnoted social phenomena of the type represented by politics, religion, family and economics, etc.
2. The family may add to the body of knowledge about such interactions.

The delimitation of the field of observation through specialization can prove a fruitful course in the development of many specialties and principles. Thus, the present writer, is confident that a number of the best established principles may be derived from research.

“Will they not then meditate on the Quran? If it had been from other than Allah they would have found therein much incongruity.” (4 : 82)

By Quranic sociology we mean the knowledge arranged systematically, scientifically and meaningfully about human interaction. According to suras Imran, Abzab and Hujrat, interaction is a process of social life. It means reciprocal contact between two or more persons—interstimulation and response. Every human being is not only born into a group and spends his life-time in value orientation, patterned socio-cultural and spiritual relations but he is born, according to the Quran and *Hadith*, as Muslim. Everything he does is closely bound up with what others do to and for him and what others expect of him. These facts indicate that group-life is both meaningful and patterned. Thus, by the sociology of Al-Quran, we mean the structure of social life—the way in which groups or *ummah* are put together. In view of the Quran, it is such a community of ideals that can provide a justifiable basis for society and culture :

“Ye are the best community that has been sent forth to mankind (in that) ye enjoin right and forbid wrong and have faith in God.” (3 : 110)

This is the ideal of Islam and on this basis Islamic society and culture is to be called idealistically integrated society and culture.

Sciences man's most fruitful way of observing, classifying and interpreting the world and himself, his physical and socio-cultural environments. In examining the social life we shall build our analysis around four concepts as reiteratedly emphasised by the Quran—structure, function, pattern and process (Imran, Hujrat, and Ahzab, etc.) : “The hand of God is upon the al-Jama'ah, and who is apart from it will be apart in Hell fire. He who departs from the community by even a hand span ceases to be a Muslim” : *Hadith*.

By structure the Quran means the way in which the things are analyzed. They are put together in terms of relationship of its parts. The function is the consequence of a structure. If we change the way in which a thing is put together, we get different functions. And hence once the members of society accept Islam, they are to keep themselves firmly attached to it.

“Whosoever surrendereth his purpose to Allah while doing good, he verily hath grasped the firm hand-hold. Unto Allah belongeth the sequel of all things.” (31 : 22)

It would not be possible to generalize, if the structure and functions being studied were not shared and repeated over and over again in orderly manner. This repetitiveness which allows us to make predictions we call patterns (33 : 25). In the sociology of the Quran patterns of behaviour are those characteristics of life in a society which regularly recur and which, according to the Sura Al-Ahzab, are shared by all the members, without exception and without violation. Process is the concept that permits a dynamic look at our material. Actually, we are aware that the phenomena included in these concepts are in a constant state of flux. Social life is constantly undergoing modification and hence, according to sura al-'Asr, we have to keep on adjusting. Here is the logic of the emphasis of the verse : “And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah and do not separate.” (3 : 101)

Dr. Amir Hasan Siddiqi

Contribution of the Quran to Modern Civilization

If we compare today the Islamic world with Christendom, the former presents a dark and depressing picture of a society deeply sunk in inertia and backwardness, and afflicted with intellectual and material bankruptcy. So dark and so disappointing is the general picture of the contemporary Muslim world that it is extremely difficult for the average westerner to believe that not many centuries ago this very world was the centre of culture and enlightenment, and that in those days it was Europe which was the underdeveloped and benighted area of the world. Much more difficult it is for the average westerner to believe that it were none else but the Muslims who pulled Europe out of the darkness of its medieval barbarism, released those powerful forces—material as well as ideational—which led to the re-birth of Europe and played a prominent role in the birth of the modern civilization. The difference that prevailed between the two worlds can be traced to one book and one man—the Quran and Muhammad (peace be upon him), the prophet of Islam. The Islamic era was inaugurated under the impact of the Quran and the Prophet, and the civilization which radiated light to all the four corners of the world owed itself to them.

Even the commonest student of world history knows that the Middle Ages (which are not inaptly designated as Dark Ages in the context of European history), were the ages of Islamic splendour and glory. In those days Muslims were far ahead of Christians in every walk of life, and every aspect of their brilliant civilization presented a sharp contrast to the revolting state of affairs in Europe.

This contrast can be best gauged from the remarks made by Draper in his excellent work entitled *The Intellectual Development of Europe*. Turning his narrative to Muslim Spain he writes :

“From the barbarism of the people of Europe, who could scarcely be said to have emerged from the savage state, unclean in person, benighted in mind, inhabiting huts in which it was a mark of wealth if there were bulrushes on the floor and straw mats against the wall; miserably fed on beans, vetches, roots, even the bark of trees; clad in garments of untanned skin, or at the best of leather of perennial durability, but not conducive to purity - a state in which the pomp of royalty was sufficiently and satisfactorily manifested in the equipage of the sovereign, an ox-cart, drawn by not less than two yoke of cattle, quickened in their movements by the goods of pedestrian serfs, whose legs were wrapped in wisps of straws; from a people, devout believers in all the wild fictions of shrine-miracle and preposterous relics; from the degradation of a base theology, and from the disputes of ambitious ecclesiasts for power, it is pleasant to turn to the south west corner of the continent, where under the auspices of a very different kind, the irradiations of light were to break forth”.

This being the contrast between medieval Islam and Christianity, would it not be proper to infer that it is the westward travel of civilization which forced Europe to liberate itself from the medieval moulds of its life and led to the birth of modern civilization? As against such a view, one may put forth the view that the Renaissance of Europe, which was the precursor of modernity, was mainly the outcome of the revival of classical Greek learning and the role of Muslims was of little importance because of continued hostility between the Cross and the Crescent which precluded the possibility of Europe's learning much from the Muslims. In other words, Europe drew from its own and not from Islamic resources in building up the impressive civilization, which is the pride and boast of the modern man. A more charitable view perhaps, could be to credit Muslims with some share in the Renaissance for the reason that they preserved the classical learning

and made it available to Europe when it was ripe for benefiting from it.

A dispassionate study of history would, however, show that Muslims played a much more important role in building up modern civilization than is generally recognized. The origins of some of the basic features of modern civilization, its scientific advancement, its freedom from the bondage of ecclesiastical authority, its socio-political values like liberty, equality and fraternity, are all traceable to Islamic sources—to the Quran and the practices of the Muslim society. Since science occupies a place of primary and supreme importance in modern life, we shall mainly examine in the following pages the role of Islam in the promotion of the cause of science, which in our view is the greatest contribution of Muslims to the development of modern civilization.

The misunderstanding that generally hinders the recognition of truth in the minds of many people is that they consider the revival of Greek classics as the basic factor of the Renaissance and regard modern science as the child of Greek science. This, however, is a highly exaggerated and false notion. It is based on a totally inadequate knowledge of historical development as well as on an erroneous appreciation of the nature of modern science. For science, which has been defined as "the ordered knowledge of natural phenomena and the relations between them" is based on observation and experiment. The hypotheses of science are formed on the basis of the observed facts, which when confirmed by criticism and experiment, are turned into Law of nature.

The first step towards scientific achievement, as we have seen, was the introduction of observation and experiment. It is this particular aspect which is markedly missing in what is inaply termed as Greek 'science'. In fact the Greeks were over-theoretical, and over-abstract. They were primarily asking philosophical questions. Their minds were obsessed with abstraction and quick generalisation. Their contribution lies in presenting clear, bold ideas, and strict logical reasoning. All that was excellent; it was genius; it was ideal preparatory work. But it was not science as we understand it.

The case of Aristotle who is regarded as the greatest Greek scientist offers a valuable illustration. His merit as a scientist consists merely in the collection and classification of facts in which he is unrivalled. His 'science' was, however, not based on observation and experiment. He never resorted to experiment which alone could justify the conclusions that he arrived at. Aristotle believed, for instance, that men had more teeth than women; that bodies fall to the ground at rates proportional to their weight, etc. But it never occurred to him that the teeth in the mouth of a woman could be counted and that the balls of different metals and weight could be thrown from a height to see whether they fell below at the same time or one after the other. This resulted from the Greek's over-occupation with abstract as against the concrete.

The Spirit of the Quran

The role of Islam in human history is of revolutionary importance in so far as it led to revolt against Greek traditions, particularly against the over-speculative and over-abstract nature of Greek thought. The spirit of the Quran was, as Iqbal has observed, anti-classical. It emphasized Nature and History as two important sources of knowledge. It saw the signs of ultimate reality in the sun, the moon, the lengthening out of the shadows, the alternation of day and night, variety of human colour and tongues, etc. In short, for purposes of knowledge Islam turned the gaze of Muslims on the concrete, the finite. For, in the words of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, "it is the intellectual capture of power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect to pass beyond the concrete." The Book of Islam produced a concrete spirit in the mind of Muslims as against the speculative spirit of ancient Greeks, and the spirit created a revolt in the Muslim mind against the speculative thought which ignored all observation and experiment.

We may borrow from Iqbal in order to appreciate the basic change in outlook brought by the Quran which led to the development of modern science and scientific spirit :

"This appeal to the concrete combined with the slow realization that, according to the teachings of the Quran, the Universe is dynamic in its origin, finite and capable of increase, eventually

brought Muslim thinkers into conflict with Greek thought, which, in the beginning of their intellectual career, they had studied with so much enthusiasm. Not realizing that the spirit of the Quran was essentially anti-classical, and putting full confidence in Greek thinkers, their first impulse was to understand the Quran in the light of Greek philosophy. In view of the concrete spirit of the Quran, and the speculative nature of Greek philosophy which enjoined theory and was neglectful of fact, this attempt was fore-doomed to failure. And it is what follows this failure that brings out the real spirit of the culture of Islam and lays the foundation of modern culture in some of its most important aspects."

It is this Islamic revolt against Greek thought which gave birth to induction and thus arose the methods of observation and experiment—the basis of modern science. It is a colossal mistake to suppose that the experimental method is a European discovery. Though Europe has been rather slow to recognize the Islamic origin of her scientific method, recent European researches show a grasp of this essential point. Robert Briffault, for instance, in his *The Making of Humanity* stresses the point repeatedly :

"Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world; but its fruit were slow in ripening. Not until long after Moorish culture had sunk back into darkness did the gaunt to which it had given birth rise in his might. It was not science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to European life." (p. 202).

"Although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic Culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the paramount distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of its victory—natural science and the scientific spirit."

He further stresses the point in these forceful terms ;

"The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries of revolutionary theories ; science owes

a great deal more to Arab culture ; it owes its existence. The ancient world was pre-scientific. The Astronomy and Mathematics of the Greek were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek Culture. The Greeks systematized, generalized, and theorized but the patient ways to investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament. Only in Hellenistic Alexandria was any approach to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of the spirit of enquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the development of Mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. The spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs."

The overwhelming evidence of history is that the Renaissance of Europe had direct Islamic origin and inspiration. Consequently we find that the first manifestation of European awakening was a large-scale translation of Muslim books into various European languages. By this process Europe recovered in Arabic the classical works of the Greeks and the Romans, which the Muslims had preserved at a time when Europe destroyed them, and also the valuable contributions made by Muslims to the treasure of human knowledge. It may be pointed out that during the course of translation some works were intentionally or unintentionally ascribed to the translators themselves.

It is in view of these facts that modern western scholarship is increasingly coming to realize that the modern civilization, particularly modern science which is its main source of strength, has a direct Islamic origination. Citations from the writings of a few out a numerous noted European scholars would make this point clear. According to Robert Briffault :

"It was under the influence of Arabian and Moorish revival of culture, and not in the fifteenth or sixteenth century that the Renaissance took place. Spain not Italy, was the cradle of the re-birth of Europe. After steadily sinking lower

lower into barbarism, it had reached the darkest depths of ignorance and degradation when the cities of Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova, Toledo, were growing centres of civilization and intellectual activity. It was there that new life arose which was to grow into a new phase of human evolution. From the time when the influence of their culture made itself felt, began the stirring of a new life. The fact has been set forth again and again. But it has been nevertheless stubbornly ignored and persistently minimised."

According to Sarton, whose work on the history of science is regarded as the most brilliant one :

"When the West was sufficiently mature to feel the need of deeper knowledge, when it finally wanted to renew its contacts with ancient thought, it turned its attention first of all not to the Greek sources, but to the Arabic ones."

The other main factor, besides the introduction of the Muslim sciences and the contact with Muslim civilization which had a stimulating effect on man's march towards progress and which brought about the Renaissance in Europe, was the relaxation of the iron grip of the Church and the emancipation of the individual in Europe. The old order which existed there before Europe came into contact with the world of Islam (which had no priestcraft and which refused to recognize the difference between lay and clerical, between spiritual and mundane as it was understood in Europe), had been the empire of the Church, the commune, the guild, the scholastic system : the individual was always part of some group, and had no existence apart from it. The new order brought about after the Reformation was the State, the National Church, the merchant, the individual. The fundamentals of the old order were authority and asceticism ; of the new, reason and joy in the whole of life. For about a thousand years there had been as much authority in the social life of Europe as there was in her intellectual life. Man used to be bound to a bishop, a lord, a municipality, a school. Now he proudly stepped on the stage himself, eager to develop his capacities for his own benefit, with boundless confidence in his will, his superiority and his infinite variety.

All this inevitably leads one to the conclusion that the bases of modern civilization were laid by Muslims and they played a basic and vital role in bringing this civilization into existence. At this point one feels constrained to express full agreement with the following words of Drapper :

"I have to deplore the systematic manner in which the literature of Europe has contrived to put out of sight our scientific obligations to the Mohammedans. Surely they cannot be much longer hidden. Injustice founded on religious rancour and national conceit cannot be perpetuated for ever."

The Quran—What Others say about the Book

It might be of some interest to our readers to know what some of the leading orientalists have said about the Quran. We do not need their testimony to *believe* in the authenticity of the Quran but the evidence of those who do not subscribe to our religion, including some of its bitter adversaries, will be of some interest to many. Hence, the following quotations—editor.

QURAN—THE DIVINE BOOK

“On the whole we find in it a collection of wisdom which can be adopted by the most intelligent of men, the greatest of philosophers and the most skilful of politicians...But there is another proof of the Divinity of the Quran; it is the fact that it has been preserved intact through the ages since the time of its Revelation till the present day...Read and reread by the Muslim world, this book does not rouse in the faithful any weariness; it rather, through repetition, is more loved every day. It gives rise to a profound feeling of awe and respect in the one who reads it or listens to it.....It was, therefore, neither by means of violence of arms, nor through the pressure of obtrusive missionaries, that caused the great and rapid diffusion of Islam, but, above all, through the fact that this Book, presented by the Muslims to the vanquished with the liberty to accept it or reject it, was the Book of God.”

(Laura Veccia Vaglieri, *Apologie de l'Islamisme* p. p. 57-59)

ORIGINAL TEXT PRESERVED

“It will thus be seen, from the above, that a final and complete text of the Kor'an was prepared within twenty years after the

death (A. D. 632) of Muhammad, and that this has remained the same, without any change, or alteration by enthusiasts, translators, or interpolators, up to the present time. It is to be regretted that the same cannot be said of all the books of the Old and New Testaments."

(F. E. Arbuthnot, *The Construction of the Bible and the Koran*, London 1885, p. 5)

"So there had been no opportunity for any forgery or pious fraud in the Coran, which distinguishes it from almost all other important religious works of ancient times...It is exceedingly strange that this illiterate person should have composed the best book in the language."

(Basanta Coomar Bose, *Mohammadanism*, Calcutta 1931. p. 4)

QURAN - AN INCOMPARABLE, MIRACULOUS PIECE OF LITERARY WORK

"From the literary point of view, the Koran is regarded as a specimen of the purest Arabic, written in half poetry and half prose. It has been said that in some cases grammarians have adopted their rules to agree with certain phrases and expressions used in it, and that though several attempts have been made to produce a work equal to it as far as elegant writing is concerned, none has as yet succeeded."

(F. F. Arbuthnot, *The construction of the Bible and the Koran*, London 1885 p. 5)

"Whenever Muhammad was asked a miracle, as a proof of the authenticity of his mission, he quoted the composition of the Qur'an and its incomparable excellence as proof of its divine origin. And in fact, even for those who are non-Muslims nothing is more marvellous than its language which with such apprehensible plenitude and a grasping sonority with its simple audition ravished with admiration those primitive peoples so fond of eloquence. The ampleness of its syllables with a grandiose cadence and with a remarkable rhythm have been of much moment in the conversion of the most hostile and the most sceptic."

(Paul Casanove, "*L'Enseignement de l'Arabe au College de France*, in *Lecon d'ouverture* for 26th April, 1009).

"It (Quran) is a literal revelation of God, dictated to Muhammad by Gabriel, perfect in every letter. It is an ever-present miracle witnessing to itself and to Muhammad, the Prophet of God. Its miraculous quality resides partly in its style, so perfect and lofty that neither men nor Jinn could produce a single chapter to compare with its briefest chapter, and partly in its content of teachings, prophecies about the future, and amazingly accurate information such as the illiterate Muhammad could never have gathered of his own accord."

(Harry Gaylord Dorman, *Towards Understanding Islam* New York 1948, p. 3)

"Well, then if the Koran were his own composition other men could rival it. Let them produce ten verses like it. If they could not (and it is obvious that they could not), then let them accept the Koran as an outstanding existential miracle."

(H. A. R. Gibb, *Muhammadianism*, London 1953, p. 33)

"All those who are acquainted with the Qur'an in Arabic agree in praising the beauty of this religious book; its grandeur of form is so sublime that no translation into any European language can allow us to appreciate it."

(Edward Montet, *Troduction Francaise du Coran*, Paris 1929, Introduction p. 53)

"The Qur'an in its original Arabic dress has a seductive beauty and charm of its own. Couched in concise and exalted style, its brief pregnant sentences, often rhymed, possess an expressive force and explosive energy which it is extremely difficult to convey by literal word for word translation."

(John Naish, . A. (Oxon), D. D., *The Wisdom of the Qur'an*, Oxford 1937, preface p. viii).

"THE KORAN is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of language, in the dialect of koreish, the most noble and polite of all Arabians, but with some mixture,

though very rarely of other dialects. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue.....“The style of the Quran is generally beautiful and fluent,.....and in many places, especially where the majesty and attributes of God are described, sublime and magnificent. He succeeded so well, and so strangely captivated the minds of his audience, that several of his opponents, thought it the effect of witchcraft and enchantment.”

(George Sale, *The Koran: The Preliminary Discourse*, London & New York, 1891, pp. 47-48).

THE KORAN - AN EXCELLENT MORAL CODE

“The Koran abounds in excellent moral suggestions and precepts; its composition is so fragmentary that we cannot turn to a single page without finding maxims of which all men must approve. This fragmentary construction yields texts, and mottoes, and rules, complete in themselves, suitable for common men in any of the incidents of life.”

(John William Draper, *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. I, London 1875, p. p. 343-344).

QUR'AN - THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND THE MOST OFTEN READ BOOK

“It (Qur'an) is more read than any other book in the world. The Christian Bible may be a world best-seller, but nearly 250 million followers of the Prophet Muhammad read or recite long sections of Al-Qur'an five times a day, every day of their lives, from the time they can talk.”

(Charles Francis Potter, *The Faiths Men Live By*, Kingswood, Surrey, 1955, p. 81).

“The Koran is probably the most often read book in the World, surely the most often memorised, and possibly the most influential in the daily life of the people who believe in it. Not quite so long as the New Testament, written in an exalted style, it is neither poetry nor ordinary prose, yet it possesses the ability to arouse its hearers to ecstasies of faith.”

"The Koran was revealed to Muhammad between the years 610 and 632 in the cities of Mecca and Medina. Devoted scribes wrote it down on 'scraps of paper, bark and the white shoulder blades of animals.' The early revelations were dazzling assurances that there was only one God, Merciful and Compassionate: "He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner, Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

"It was this message that swept away idols, and inspired men to revolutionise their lives and their nations. In later years, when Islam began to penetrate large areas of Arabia and had acquired much power, the revelation dealt with the organization of society, its laws, procedures and problems."

"Many revered names from Christianity and Judaism appear in the Koran. For example, five important chapters are titled Noah, Jonah, Joseph, Abraham and Mary. Lacking specific chapters of their own, but playing quite important roles, are Jesus, Adam, David Coliath, Job, Moses, Lot and Solomon."

"The Koran is remarkably down-to-earth in its discussion of the good life. In one memorable passage it directs: 'When ye deal with each other in transactions involving future obligations, reduce them to writing.....and get two witnesses This is Juster in the sight of God, more suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves!'"

"It is this combination of dedication to one God plus practical instruction, that makes the Koran unique. Each Islamic nation containing many citizens who are convinced that their land will be governed well only if its laws conform to the Koran."

(James A. Michener, "Islam-the Misunderstood Religion". In *The Reader's Digest* (American edition) for May, 1955).

"It must, however, be borne in mind that the Quran plays a far greater role among the Muhammadans than does the Bible in Christianity in that it provides ont only the canon of their faith, but also the text-book of their ritual and the principles of their Civil Law.

"It must not, however, be forgotten that the central doctrine preached by Muhammad. . . . was the unity of God, and that the simplicity of his creed was probably a more potent factor in the spread of Islam than the sword of the Ghazis.

"Islam, although seriously affecting the Christian world, brought a spiritual religion to one half of Asia, and it is an amazing circumstance that the Turks, who on several occasions let loose their Central Asian hordes over India and the Middle East, though irresistible in the onslaught of their arms, were all conquered in their turn by the faith of Islam, and founded Muhammadan dynasties,

"Thus through all the vicissitudes of thirteen hundred years the Koran has remained the sacred book of all the Turks and Persians and nearly a quarter of the population of India. Surely such a book as this deserves to be widely read in the West, more especially in these days when space and time have been almost annihilated by modern inventions and when public interest embraces the whole world."

(E. Denison Ross, *Introduction to the Koran*, By George Sale, London, pp. v-viii).

QUR'AN—THE FOUNTAIN—HEAD OF KNOWLEDGE

"We must not be surprised to find the Qur'an the fountain-head of the sciences. Every subject connected with heaven or earth, human life, commerce and various trades are occasionally touched upon, and this gave rise to the production of numerous monograph forming commentaries on parts of the holy book. In this way the Qur'an was responsible for great discussions, and to it was indirectly due the marvellous development of all branches of science in the Muslim world. . . . This again not only affected the Arabs but also induced Jewish philosophers to treat metaphysical and religious questions after Arab methods. Finally, the way in which Christian scholarsticism was fertilized by Arabian theosophy need not be further discussed.

"Spiritual activity once aroused within Islamic bounds was not confined to theological speculations alone. Acquaintance

with the philosophical, mathematical, astronomical and medical writings of the Greeks led to the pursuance of these studies. In the descriptive revelations Muhammad repeatedly calls attention to the movement of the heavenly bodies, as parts of the miracles of Allah forced into the service of man and therefore not to be worshipped. How successfully Moslem people of all races pursued the study of astronomy is shown by the fact that for centuries they were its principal supporters. Even now many Arabic names of stars and technical terms are in use. Medieval astronomers in Europe were pupils of the Arabs.

“In the same manner the Qur’an gave an impetus to medical studies and recommended the contemplation and study of Nature in general.”

(Hartwig Hirschfield, Ph. D., M.R.A.S., *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Quran*, London 1902, p. 9).

The Koran admittedly occupies an important position among the great religious books of the world. Though the youngest of the epoch making works belonging to this class of literature, it yields to hardly any in the wonderful effect which it has produced on large masses of men. It has created an all but new phase of human thought and a fresh type of character.”

(Rev. G. Margaliouth, in *Introduction to the Qur’an* by Rev. J.M. Rodwell, London 1918).

“It must be acknowledged, too, that the Koran deserves the highest praise for its conceptions of the Divine nature in reference to the attributes of Power, Knowledge and Universal Providence and Unity—that its belief and trust in the one God of Heaven and Earth is deep and fervent—and that. . . . It embodies much of a noble and deep moral earnestness, and sententious oracular wisdom, and has proved that there are elements in it on which mighty nations and conquering . . . empires can be built up.”

(Rev. J.M. Rodwell, M.A., *The Quran*, London, 1918, p. 15).

“The truth is, I do not find any understanding author who controverts the elegancy of the Al-Qur’an, it being generally esteemed as the standard of the Arabic language and eloquence.”

(Dr. Henry Stubbe, M.A., *Rise and progress of Mohammadanism*, London 1911, p. 158).