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Editorial

This is both a special issue of the "Voice of Islam" and a compilation pertaining exclusively to the Holy Quran on the occasion of its fourteen hundredth anniversary. It is indeed a matter of rejoicing for us all that our scripture has passed through this long period of history untarnished.

In the case of a divine book like the Quran, the question of time is immaterial. A single year is as good as a millennium or more for an eternal thing is eternal in any case.

We, of the present age, are fortunate that the 1400th anniversary of our Holy Book has come at a time when it has emerged from the various influences which obscured its light, and we can see it for what it really is. We have discovered that the Quranic message is different from everything that went before; it makes significant departures from Judaism and Christianity. Its relation to Sufism and dogmatism, as also Hellenism in which it once got lost has been studied. The long course of thought, particularly that reflected in philosophy, has been assigned its due place in the Islamic system The circumstances which obscured the teachings and spirit of Islam in the West and distorted its role and that of its followers by gross misunderstanding and misrepresentation on the part of Wester nears, especially with regard to the influence produced by both on the West, giving rise to the Renaissance and Reformation, and followed by the Modern Age itself with its emphasis on science and modern knowledge, have been brought out by a number of scholars in both the hemispheres.

All this gives the Muslims the opportunity to present the real teaching of Islam again in a far better atmosphere. This the right time for them to make a new start, start, knowing well v the weak nesses of their opponents, Christianity, the Western civilization, and now Communism too.

The task is a stupendous one and it is well that Muslims all over the world have again taken up this task right earnestly on the 1400 the Anniversary of the Revelation of the Quran. The Jamiyat ul Falah took it up as a sacred duty which it shared with other organizations. Having regard to the vast experience of Mr. Khurshid Ahmad who has a glance at all the principal aspects of the matter and the avenues of information, both eastern and western, old and new, he was asked to prepare a suitable compilation which should serve as an independent publication as well as a special Quran Number of the "Voice of Islam". It is the fruits of his editorial effort that are being presented in this issue, which we hope, will, to a large extent, meet the needs arising on this auspicious occasion.

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 Gaveled 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 behavior to maintain justice and tranquility in society and culture. The Lord of the Universe has provided for both these needs in full measure, to cater to life material needs of man He has provided nature with all kinds resources, which lie at the disposal of man, who can make dose of them as he likes. To provide for his spiritual, social and Janitorial needs He raised His Prophets from among human-kind and revealed to them the code of life which can guide man's eps 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 Pear 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,

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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 from 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, transcend ding 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 Voice of Islam

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The conduct of the head of state as a simple sim 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 organize 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. 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, com. merce 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 224

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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" (II: 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 career 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 behavior 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 neighbors 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 centers of learning in Spain and else-whereas 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.

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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 astral. 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 a 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 worshippers of idols, of trees as 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.

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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 know- ledge, 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 vigor, before who’s on- ward 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

Ramadhan 8, 1387.

KHURSHID AHMAD