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# The Book That Shook The World

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# **The Book That Shook The World!**

Can a book possess the power to completely shake the very world that people live in? Is it possible to even change a single person let alone the world by using a mere book? Has there been a book that can in reality have such an impact which is long lasting and continuous?

Well, the simple answer to these questions is a resounding; Yes! Yes there does exist such a miraculous book, revealed about 1500 years ago, known as the Quran. This book changed the face of the earth when it was first revealed and continues to inspire billions of human beings living on our planet, every day. So what exactly does this book contain that has the power to transform not only an individual but the entire societies, nations and indeed has the potential to transform the whole mankind? Let's try to look at some of these aspects in this booklet.

## **Audience Of Quran**

Throughout the Muslim world, in mosques, in homes and in the streets, one can hear magnificent voices reciting the divine words that form the Quran. This happens without any distinction between religious scholars and laymen. The Quran is read by everyone and anyone and it speaks to each in his language, accessibly, as if to match his intelligence, his heart, his questions, his joy as well as his pain. As people read or hear the Text, they find themselves striving to suffuse themselves with the spiritual dimension of its message: beyond time, beyond history and without any bias. The millions of beings who populate the earth, God is speaking to each of them, calling and reminding each of them, inviting, guiding, counselling

and commanding. God responds to the heart of each: with no intermediary, in the deepest intimacy.

We do not need to go through rigorous studies and diplomas nor do we need any masters and guides. Here, as we take our first steps, God beckons us with the simplicity of his closeness. This book cannot be bound by any form of bigotry to any nation, race or geographical location. The Quran belongs to everyone, free of distinction and of hierarchy. God responds to whoever comes to study His Word. It is not rare to observe women and men, poor and rich, educated and illiterate, Eastern and Western, falling silent, staring into the distance, lost in thought, stepping back, weeping. This is when the search for meaning has encountered the sacred, God is near; very near!

The Quran declares:

*“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammed], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided” (2:186)*

When a person makes a conscious decision to understanding the truth and reality and opens this miraculous book; a dialogue has begun. An intense, permanent, constantly renewed dialogue between a Book that speaks the infinite simplicity of the adoration of the One, and the heart that makes the intense effort necessary to liberate itself, to meet him.

Even though people can neither see God nor subject Him to any other form of sense perception this should not make them feel that God is remote from them. On the contrary, He is so close to each and every person that whenever any person so wishes he can

communicate with his Lord. So much so that God hears and responds even to the prayers which remain within the innermost recesses of the heart.

People exhaust themselves by approaching false and powerless beings whom they foolishly fancy to be their deities but who have neither the power to hear nor to grant their prayers. But God, the omnipotent Lord and the absolute Master of this vast universe, Who wields all power and authority, is so close to human beings that they can always approach Him without the intercession of any intermediaries, and can put to Him their prayers and requests.

## **What Quran Offers!**

At the heart of every fruitful effort, however, lies the sincere, objective and unbiased approach to understanding the Quran. This is the process of renewing our understanding of the facts and fiction with which we were all brought up. This is the time to challenge what is culture and what is taboo! As we keep reading the Quran and as this beautiful journey progresses we begin to realise and comprehend that the Quran holds out peace for us and initiates liberty of our hearts and minds from all forms of superstition, taboo, misunderstandings and illusions that are prevalent amongst our societies in the name of religion and spirituality.

It is this very aspect of studying this Book that shakes off all our misunderstandings and helps provide an amazing level of clarity of thought and action. Far from being a prison, or a constraint, revelation is an invitation to mankind to reconcile itself with its deepest essence, and to find there both the recognition of its limitations and the extraordinary potential of its intelligence and its imagination.

To submit ourselves to the creator of the unimaginably vast universe and to the laws that maintain a perfect harmony in this vast universe is to understand that we are free and fully authorized to reform the injustices that lie at the heart of the order or disorder of all that is temporally human.

Qur'an is the only book that has had and still carries an unparalleled effect on human thought, ethics, morality, civilization, and their lifestyle. It transformed its first audience and organised them into a group of people and they rose to such a level of development which was to impact the whole world for all times to come. It managed to do something which all ideologies and idealists have only dreamt of i.e. it brought people from all races and all nations uniquely together into one strong brotherhood called an Ummah- and set a golden era into motion in the history of humankind. No other book has rendered a comparable revolution. The Qur'an did not just advance a unique theory, but its every word was actually put into practice by revolutionising the very thought patterns of people that lead to creating a lasting world civilization.

Its revolutionary appeal initiated some 1,500 years ago has continued over centuries – starting from its appearance in the Arab world and continued to progress across the Muslim world. Then spilling over into Europe and Americas, and into the unforeseen futures to come; this certainly is a continuous miracle of this book that continues to change people's perceptions.

Qur'an's subject matter is basically the human being itself. As a consequence it is vast and comprehensive - encompassing the entirety of existence from initial stages into its future. It discusses the reality of the universe, its beginning and end, its make-up and its organization. It tells us who its Creator is and how it is organized. It

describes its Lord and what are His attributes. It details the basis on which He has organized the entire worldly system? It enunciates the position of man in this world, and delineates his rightful position in it - a position which is beyond human capacity to modify. It elucidates the correct human conduct to accord with his rightful position, and what would violate that position. It presents evidence in support - from all aspects of the universe, from human's own nature and from his history. Alongside this, it tells why and for what reasons people have stumbled into wrongful ways. And what sources they could use to correct themselves and live righteously.

The Qur'an charts out a comprehensive scheme of life that includes a belief system, ethics and morality, acts of worship, culture, civilization, economics, politics, law and all other areas of human activity – the beauty of this book is that they all fit together harmoniously constituting a balanced and proportioned just system of life for the betterment of mankind. This is why the Quran is seen as a guide towards a complete way of life and this is why it has modified and revolutionised everyone and every nation that has come into contact with its elegant and practical remedies for human development.

In addition, it discusses in detail the reasons and ways that can lead to the rise and fall of nations and the consequences that follow the right versus the wrong human conduct in the life of this world - and into another world after this life ends. The Qur'an describes accounts of the reality of the Hereafter and its various stages in detail, such that a complete picture emerges in how we will live through another life. It explains how an accountability of our actions here in this worldly life would be carried out there into the Hereafter. And the consequent effects in this world of our actions and the rewards and punishments in the next life.

## Scholars Witness

Let me Quote from Thomas Cleary, a linguist and preeminent translator of classic Eastern religious books from introduction to his book "The Essential Koran" as follows:

*"The Qur'an is undeniably a book of great importance even to the non-Muslim, perhaps more today than ever, if that is possible. One aspect of Islam unexpected and yet appealing to the post-Christian secular mind is the harmonious interplay of faith and reason. Islam does not demand unreasoned belief. Rather, it invites intelligent faith, growing from observation, reflection, and contemplation, beginning with nature and what is all around us. Accordingly, antagonism between religion and science such as that familiar to Westerners is foreign to Islam.*

*This connection between faith and reason enabled Islamic civilization to absorb and vivify useful knowledge, including that of ancient peoples, whereby it eventually nursed Europe out of Dark Ages, laying the foundation for the Renaissance. When Europe got on its cultural feet and expelled Islam, however, the European mind was rent by the inability of the Christian church to tolerate the indivisibility of the sacred of the sacred and secular that characterized Islam and had enabled Islamic civilization to develop natural science and abstract art as well as philosophy and social science. The result was a painful, ill-fated divorce between science and religion in Europe, one whose consequences have adversely affected the entire world.*

*"In the post-Christian West, where thinking people, including scientists themselves once more, are seeking solutions to the*

*difficulties created by the Christian divorce between religion and science, the Qur'an offers a way to explore an attitude that fully embraces the quest for knowledge and understanding that is essence of science, while at the same time, and indeed for the same reasons, fully embrace the awe, humility, reverence, and conscience without which "humankind does indeed go too far in considering itself to be self-sufficient" (Al Alaq 96: 6-7)." (Introduction The Essential Koran t Cleary)*

## **Quran Addresses As First Person**

Unlike other religious books, the speaker throughout Qur'an is in the first person, that is God addressing His creation. At times, depending on the situation, it uses the royal "We." It addresses its message variously according to whom it is addressed. Most chapters begin with a general statement addressed to all readers. The comments are either glorifying God or describe the validity of Qur'an, in noble words. When the address is for the entire humanity, it says "O Humankind"; the word of address in this case is An-Naas plural of Insan, which is a human. Other places it addresses "O Children of Adam", Adam being the first human as well as the first prophet of God.

It often addresses the believers "O You who believe" when it instructs the people who believe its message. Other places it responds to questions asked of the Prophet (PBUH) by saying "They ask you."

Jews and Christians are given the respectable and befitting title of "Ahlal kitab" "People of the Book" or "Family of the Book" and thus addressed together, since Muslims share a commonality with them. The Jews are often reminded of their history as "Bani Israel" "Children of Israel", Israel being another name for the Prophet Jacob.

Therefore, an outstanding beauty of Qur'an is that, although it was revealed through Prophet Muhammed (PBUH), it addresses him and every one of us. The Western scholars among them Huston Smith, a professor of religion at the University of California, Berkeley are much impressed by its address in the first person against third person used in other revealed scriptures.

*“A Muslim when reading understands that it is God that addresses him or her. Others, who read it with an open mind, have the same feeling. Admittedly thus it is the word of God, and in its address God is talking with each of us directly and addressing us each individually. He warns us if we do wrong, and gladdens us if we do right and tells us of the consequences of our actions as if we are actually witnessing them. All this is done with a certainty and assurance that could come only from God! Its message is very forceful, provided the reader gives any attention! It needs no proving that it is from God”*

## **Quran Relevant Always**

Some people falsely claim that because Muslims believe the Quran to be the word of God, interpretation and reform are impossible. This belief is then cited as the reason why a historical and critical approach cannot be applied to the revealed Text. The development of the sciences of the Quran — the methodological tools fashioned and wielded by the Scholars of Quran and the history of Quranic commentary — prove such a conclusion baseless. Since the beginning, human approach to interpreting and deriving injunctions from the Quran have led to a cautious approach to the texts, one that obligates whoever takes up the task to be in harmony with his era and to renew his comprehension. Dogmatic and often mummified, hidebound readings clearly reflect not upon the Author of the Text,

but upon the intelligence and psychology of the person reading it. Just as we can read the work of a human author, from Marx to Keynes, in closed-minded and rigid fashion, we can approach divine revelation in a similar manner. Instead, we should be at once critical, open-minded and incisive. The history of Islamic civilization offers us ample proof of this and the fact that the interpretation and exegesis of the Quran has never stopped from the time of its revelation is enough to negate such an aspersion.

In this respect, again consider the following observation from Murad Hoffmann from his book on "Islam & Qur'an": *"Even prolonged cooperation between an expert team in the Arab language, theology, philosophy, history, anthropology, psychology, sociology, literature, physics, and biology would never arrive at final conclusions, because the Qur'an keeps offering new insights to every individual, every society, in each new era. In other words: Never ever is the Qur'an without relevance."*

It is this very comprehensive, easy to understand and yet unfathomable depth of its meaning which makes it reliable and flexible enough for adaptation and suitability in all societies- free from any bounds of time and era-that makes Quran the only book that shook the world the first time it was revealed and continues to shake anyone and everyone that lends himself or herself to its message and way of life.

This Book transformed the Bedouin camel tenders into leaders of the world; leading to the Golden era of Islamic civilization and then spilled over its fruits into the dark ages of Europe and not only made renaissance a possibility but changed the outlook towards science once and for all. This continues to inspire and benefit mankind as the binary system of mathematics, upon which all our computers and

smart devices are based, came from the scientific exposition of Islamic civilization-which was inspired by the Book That Shook the Arabs and woke them up from their deep slumber in the first place-The Glorious Quran!

It is this very book that remains a living miracle and you can get a copy in the language you understand so that you can observe for yourself how this book appeals to our very core and possesses the power to shake the edifice of all superstition and deviation in human life. It brings out the best in us and takes us closest to our true nature-the nature that is humane and unadulterated from its pure and pristine form. This is how this book shook the barren world of Arabs and transformed it into a fruitful land of culture and civilization for all mankind to benefit from!

## **The Style Of The Quran!**

The Quran is full of wisdom. It is full of the wonder and glory of God, and a testament to His mercy and justice. It is not a history book, a storybook, or a scientific textbook, and yet it contains all of those genres. The Quran is God's greatest gift to humanity – it is a book like no other. In the second verse of the second chapter of the Quran, God describes the Quran by calling it

*“A book whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are pious, righteous, and God-conscious. (2:2)*

The Quran was delivered to Prophet Muhammed pbuh by the Angel Gabriel and revealed in stages over a period of 23 years. Prophet Muhammed was commanded by God to convey the Quran to all of humankind and the responsibility weighed heavily upon him. Even in his farewell address he called on the people present to bear witness that he had delivered the message.

The Quran explains the concept of God, it explains in detail what is permissible and what is forbidden, it explains the basics of good manners and morals, and gives rulings about worship. It tells stories about the Prophets and previous nations and describes in detail the Paradise and the Hell. It is a complete code of conduct for each human being.

And yet if a person was to read the Quran for the first time perhaps one of the first impressions he may get is that the Book does not conform to traditional formats and styles. To a sceptic, the Book presents a number of confusing issues. In a paper entitled "Is the Quran the Word of God?" the sceptic Joseph Smith wrote:

*" ..... The Qur'an, on the other hand, reads more like a jumbled and confused collection of statements and ideas, many of which bear little relationship to preceding chapters and verses. Many scholars admit that the Quran is so haphazard in its make-up that it requires the utmost sense of duty for anyone to plough through it."*

Others have criticised the symmetry of the Quran. Normally, in any literary work, one would expect to find a number of chapters that are fairly comparable in length. In contrast, the Quran contains 114 chapters, called Suras, arranged in progressively diminishing lengths. With the exception of the opening Sura (The Key), the longest Suras are placed at the front of the Book with the shortest at the back. The variation in size is also quite conspicuous. The longest Sura, which is the second Sura, contains 286 verses while the shortest (Suras 103, 108 and 110) are made up of no more than 3 verses!

That is not all. In any man-written book we would normally expect to find every chapter dealing with one major theme. This is not always

the case in the Quran, for although many of the shorter Suras are confined to a single topic or incident, it is not uncommon to find other Suras which deal with most of the subjects of the Quran.

Moreover, we often find the topic categorically changed between one verse and its successor. This is another area of confusion to any sceptic. After all, and in any other book, any subject is introduced after sufficient preparation. The fact that in the Quran a major subject may suddenly, and without any preparation, be upon the reader prompts such remarks as "jumbled arrangement of statements" that we have read above.

But is the Quran truly a "jumbled arrangement of statements"?

Is the Quran in reality a book that lacks logic and coherence? The reply to this question is: It all depends on the criteria we employ.

If we assess the Quran as we would assess a novel by Dickens or a play by Shakespeare, and proceed to evaluate it solely on whether the Quran conforms to the recognised literary norms, then the Quran would appear to be very odd, and indeed, 'haphazard'. In any literary work we normally find a beginning, middle and an end; but with the Quran, this format is absent. In actual fact, unlike any other book, it is possible to start reading the Quran from any chapter and not feel at all out of sync.

However, it is important to remember that if we place a book of logarithms next to a play by Shakespeare and assess it by the same literary expectations, we would also end up with the conclusion that the book of logarithms is no more than a jumbled and odd book, but is it really so? The answer is a clear no. A book of logarithms is a perfectly constructed book and is not odd in any way. The error in the assessment was due to the use of the wrong criteria.

Since the majority of the sceptic comments written about the Quranic style come from Biblical critics, it is understandable that they would have compared the style of the Quran with that of the Bible. In the Bible, stories have beginnings and endings within the same chapter. Subjects do not fluctuate between adjacent verses as they do in the Quran, and to a great extent, the Bible is more systematic in its style and narration.

## **Why Does Quran Have This Style?**

Although the Quran is not a scientific reference as such, the delivery of information throughout the Book is in the mould of scientific references. If we read a book of physics or chemistry, we note the lack of theme presentation. To present a scientific fact, whether it is the number of electrons in elements, or the resistance of semi-conductors, no literary preparation is necessary. The bare facts are simply stated and they stand on the merit of their scientific content and not on the language or style they are written in.

This is not the same in a work of literature, be it a novel, a play, etc. The author is first and foremost creating a work of art, so he may engage in lengthy preparations, elaborations, phrase ornamentations and witty development of the theme in order to produce a creditable literary work. This is not the style, nor the aim in the Quran.

With the exception of a few occasions where a complete story is told from beginning to end in one chapter, such as the story of Joseph in Sura 12, the Quran is not a collection of tales placed one next to the other. In addition, although the Quran contains many historical accounts of various people and times, yet it is not a historic reference as such. This explains why some narrations of past peoples and Prophets are given more detail in the Quran than others. The reason

being, that such narrations are not mentioned for their historic value, but for their relevance to the message of the Book.

Quranic verses present pieces of truths that do away with elaborate presentation and ornate diction. The Quran, being the word of God, is truth. God is not in need of elaboration or skilful justification to convince the reader. In that sense, it is possible to compare the presentation of information within the Quran with that of a scientific reference.

A Quranic verse can present the reader with a truth on its own, without the need for this truth to be developed in previous verses. Various adjacent verses may relate to the same truth, or may contain independent truths that are placed side by side. Having said that, it is still necessary, for any person; studying a specific subject in the Quran, to study all verses in the book that speak of a common theme. These are often found in a number of Suras and not one single Sura. Many readers have often arrived at false interpretations of Quranic verses simply because they studied one verse in isolation.

## **Quran Is Complete**

God told us that the Quran has all the details we need to live by it and that we can seek guidance through it for all times to come, following verses explain this fact:

*“This (Quran) is not fabricated, but an authentication of what is with you, a detailed account of all things and guidance and mercy for people who believe”. (12:111)*

*“We have brought the Book (Quran) down to you providing explanations for all things, plus guidance and mercy, and giving news to the Muslims”. (16:89)*

*“We did not leave anything out of the Book (Quran)”.* (6:38)

*“Shall I seek other than God as a law maker when He has brought down to you the Book (Quran) fully detailed?”* (6:114)

*“A Book whose verses are detailed; an Arabic Quran for people who know”.*( 41:3)

Because the Quran presents itself as the complete code of life to the rest of mankind it lends itself to the litmus test of it being divine in nature. Let us see what the challenge of Quran is.

## **Challenge Of The Quran**

*“Say: “If the mankind and the jinns were together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another”*[ 17:88]

*“And if you (humans) are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e. the Qur’an) to Our slave (Muhummed), then produce a surah (chapter) of the like thereof and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides God, if you are truthful. [2:23]*

*“(Lord of the heavens and the earth), but it is a confirmation of (the revelation) which was before it [i.e. the Torah and the Gospel etc.], and a full explanation of the Book (i.e. laws and orders, etc, decreed for mankind) – wherein there is no doubt (it is) from the the Lord of the Worlds.Or do they say: “He (Muhummed) has forged it?” Say: “Bring then a surah (chapter) like unto it, and call upon whomsoever you can, besides God, if you are truthful!” [10:37-38]*

*“Or they say, “He (Muhummed) forged it (the Qur’an).” Say: “Bring you then ten forged surah (chapters) like unto it, and call whomsoever you can, other than God (to your help), if you speak the truth!” [11:13]*

*“Or do they say: “He (Muhummed) has forged it (this Qur’an)?” Nay! They believe not! Let them then produce a recital like unto it (the Qur’an) if they are truthful” [52:33-34]*

When the revelations of the Qur’an began, Muhummed pbuh clearly proclaimed the Qur’an to be the word of God, and said it was impossible for any human being to duplicate it. If anyone disagreed, he ought to make an attempt to copy it, and should feel free to seek help from any source in doing so. None was able to take up this challenge and produce even a short surah similar to the Qur’an.

The Qur'an remains a book of inimitable quality, not only from a linguistic, but also from an intellectual point of view. When Muhummed pbuh was challenged by his fellow countrymen to present a miracle, in keeping with the tradition of other prophets, he presented the Qur'an to them. The inimitability of the Qur'an is repeatedly emphasized in the Quran itself.

The Qur’an issued a challenge not only to the contemporaries of the Prophet but also to men in all ages. In order to demonstrate the incapacity and impotence of people to imitate it, it issued the following universal proclamation:

*“Were all mankind to come together and wish to produce the like of the Qur’an, they would never succeed, however much they aided each other”(17:88)*

Let us try to understand how it is impossible for humans to produce a chapter like Quran.

## **Arabic Prose And Poetry**

### **And The Inimitable Quran:**

### **POETRY**

Arabic Poetry is a form of metrical speech with a rhyme. The rhyme in Arabic poetry is achieved by every line of the poem ending upon a specific letter. The metrical aspect of Arabic poetry is due to its rhythmical divisions, these divisions are called ‘al-Bihar’, literally meaning ‘The Seas’ in Arabic. This term has been used to describe the rhythmical divisions as a result of the way the poem moves according to its rhythm. In Arabic poetry there are sixteen rhythmical patterns, which all of Arabic poetry adheres to or is loosely based upon;

1. at-Tawîl
2. al-Bassit
3. al-Wafir
4. al-Kamil
5. ar-Rajs
6. al-Khafif
7. al-Hazaj
8. al-Muttakarib

9. al-Munsarih
10. al-Muktatab
11. al-Muktadarak
12. al-Madid
13. al-Mujtath
14. al-Ramel
15. al-Khabab
16. as-Saria'

## **Arabic Prose**

Arabic Prose can be called non-metrical speech, meaning it does not have a rhythmical pattern like poetry mentioned above. Arabic prose can be further divided into two categories; Saj' which is rhymed prose and Mursal which is straight prose or what some may call 'normal speech'.

An apt description of Saj' is, in the words of Von Deffer:

*“A literary form with some emphasis on rhythm and rhyme, but distinct from poetry. Saj' is not really as sophisticated as poetry, but has been employed by Arab poets, and is the best known of the pre-Islamic Arab prosodies. It is distinct from poetry in its lack of metre, i.e. it has not consistent rhythmical pattern, and it shares with poetry the element of rhyme, though in many cases somewhat irregularly employed.”*

Mursal can be defined as a literary form that goes on and is not divided, but is continued straight throughout without any divisions, either of rhyme or of anything else.

## **The Quran's Literary Form**

The Quranic discourse cannot be described as any of the known literary forms and herein lies its miracle!

*The most predominant feature of Quranic style is that it doesn't adhere to any of the rules known to poetry and prose. Another opinion is that the Qur'an combines metrical and non-metrical composition to create its own literary form.*

### NON-COMPLIANCE TO THE RULES OF PROSE OR POETRY:

The Quranic literary form differs as it does not fit in to any of the literary categories explained above, it is not like the prose of Saj' or Mursal and it doesn't fit into any of the 16 types of al-Bihar. This can be seen by the following example:

*“Wad Duha wal laili idha saja Ma waddaka Rabbuka wa maa qala  
Wa lal akhiraatu khairul laka minal oola Wa la sawfa ya teeka  
Rabbuka fa tarda”...*

*“By the morning hours and by the night most still, Your Lord has  
neither forsaken you nor hates you And indeed the hereafter is better  
for you than the present And verily your Lord will give you so that  
you shall be well pleased”*

The examination of the whole chapter with reference to the above literary forms indicates that it is not Saj' or Mursal as this verse has

an internal rhythm, whereas Saj' does not have a consistent rhythm and Mursal has no rhythm or rhyme. Also it cannot be described as poetry; the totality of this chapter, or any other chapter for that matter, does not adhere to any of the al-Bihar.

### UNIQUE FUSION OF METRICAL AND NON-METRICAL SPEECH:

Some parts of the Quran follow the rules of poetry, that is, some verses can be described as one of the al-Bihar, however, when the totality of a Quranic Chapter, that contains some of these verses is analyzed, it is not possible to distinguish its literary form at all.

“The Qur'an is not verse, but it is rhythmic. The rhythm of some verses resembles the regularity of saj' ...But it was recognized by Quraish (Arab tribe of Muhammed pbuh) critics to belong to neither one nor the other category.”

The Quran achieves this unique literary form by intermingling metrical and non-Metrical speech in such a way that the difference cannot be perceived. This intermingling of metrical and non-metrical composition is present throughout the whole of the Quran.

It is almost impossible for the listener to detect the shift from one form to the other, nor does this exquisite mingling impinge on the fluidity of expression or impair its meaning.

The Quran is truly unique in composition. It is neither prose nor poetry. This inimitable style is achieved by intermingling metrical and non-metrical composition and by not adhering to the rules of Arabic poetry or prose. In addition to this, the Quran uses expressions that are eloquent, full of sublime rhetoric and adheres to the grammatical rules of Classical Arabic.

This is what makes the challenge so difficult for any human i.e. the Quran neither follows the rules of 16 types of Arabic Poetry nor the two types of prose and yet adheres to the grammatical rules of Classic Arabic!

The most predominant opinion on the inimitability of the Quran is that it exhibits a unique literary form. Some of the western scholars who have acknowledged this fact include Robinson, Gibb, Arberry, Zammit, Lawrence, Johns, Casanova, Nicholson, Kasis and many others. As an example let us see what Arberry states.

*“For the Koran is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both”*

R. A. Nicholson in his book ‘Literary History of the Arabs’ states,

*“Thus, as regards its external features, the style of the Koran is modelled upon saj’, or rhymed prose, of the pagan soothsayers, but with such freedom that it may fairly be described as original.”*

This analysis has been summarised by Ibn Khaldun in his classical work ‘The Muqadimah’:

*“It should be known that the Arabic language and Arab speech are divided into two branches. One of them is rhymed poetry...The other is prose, that is, non-metrical speech...The Quran is in prose. However, it does not belong in either of the two categories. It can neither be called straight prose nor rhymed prose. It is divided into verses. One reaches breaks where taste tells one that speech stops. It is then reused and ‘repeated in the next verse. (Rhyme) letters, which would make that (type of speech) rhymed prose are not obligatory, nor do rhymes (as used in poetry) occur.”*

Hamilton Gibb’s states,

*“...the Meccans still demanded of him a miracle, and with remarkable boldness and self confidence Muhammad appealed as a supreme confirmation of his mission to the Koran itself. Like all Arabs they were connoisseurs of language and rhetoric. 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 evidential miracle”*

## **CONCLUSION**

The Quran is a unique form of Arabic speech. The form of its language cannot be described as Prose or poetry.. It achieves this unique literary form by intermingling metrical and non-metrical speech in such a way that its style is not affected and its meaning not distorted. Furthermore, the Quran does not adhere to the rules of Prose or Poetry but yet its expression is grammatically sound. This can be seen by analysing every Quranic chapter. The totality of every chapter has a special character, with its own unique form, and its unique use of literary devices. This book cannot be a handiwork of human endeavour as it is divine to its core and inimitable by its very form!

### **The Never Fading Beauty**

While reading the Quran, one is always struck by its profound preciseness. Any truth presented in the book is expressed in a direct and straight to the point manner. There is never a case of 'beating about the bush', nor do we find any words placed coincidentally or without carrying a considered significance within the message of the verse.

Another attribute of the Book is that it always offers the reader new knowledge no matter how many times he/she has already read the Book in the past. In contrast, when we read any man written book, we find that after reading it once or twice, no new information can still be discovered.

Here are some examples of this ever amazing beauty of Quranic verses:

## **The Position Of Stars**

*“I swear by the positions of the stars. This is an awesome oath, if you only knew”. (56:75-76)*

The number of stars in our Milky Way galaxy is thought to be around 200 billion stars. Our galaxy is about average in size with regards to number of stars.

An average galaxy contains between  $10^{11}$  and  $10^{12}$  stars. In other words, galaxies on average have between 100 billion and 1 trillion numbers of stars.

100,000,000,000 to 1,000,000,000,000

Astronomers estimate that there are approximately 100 billion to 1 trillion galaxies in the Universe. If we multiply the estimated number of galaxies by the average number of stars in each we get between  $10^{22}$  and  $10^{24}$  stars in the Universe. That is an astronomical number that is beyond our comprehension. It is so large that it is estimated to be greater than the number of sand grains on earth!

From planet earth, we can only see a small number of the stars in our Milky Way galaxy, the ones which are in that part of the galaxy that is nearest us. Most of the galaxy is hidden behind vast clouds of dust

and gases. Also other galaxies are too far away for most small telescopes to pick out individual stars.

When we consider the positions of stars, the first observation is that all heavenly bodies, stars, planets, moons, etc, are constantly moving at very high speeds. Our own Sun for example, is moving through space at about 30 kilometres per second in the direction of the star Vega. Other stars are moving along with their galaxies at astronomical speeds. The speed of far away galaxies can be derived from their red shift. It was found that the most distant galaxies are travelling at speeds approaching 80% of the speed of light. This amounts to about 240,000 kilometres per second. If we chart the position of every star inside such far away galaxies, at every kilometre, we would have 240,000 positions inside every one second!

How many positions would we obtain by charting the kilometre positions of every star, inside every galaxy, for the last 13.7 billion years, which is the estimated age of the universe?

We note that the word used in 56:75 is "positions" (plural) which speaks of the continuously changing positions of all the stars in the universe.

The awesome piece of knowledge we gain from this glorious Quranic verse is that God Almighty knows the exact position of every star at every moment in time. **Can we now comprehend why this oath is indeed an awesome one?**

## **Cooling Off Period Before Divorce**

*“Those who wish to separate from their women shall wait four months; if they change their minds, then God is Forgiver, Merciful. And if they decide to go through with the divorce, then God is Hearer, Knowledgeable. (2:226-227)*

God's way is always the best way. The Quran offers many solutions for some of today's most complex problems. Divorce rates are on the increase worldwide, and the worst rate of divorce is found in the USA. 50% of all marriages in the United States will end in divorce. 41% - 50% of all first marriages end in divorce, 60% - 67% for second marriages, and 73% - 74% of all third marriages.

Divorce rates are increasing at an alarming rate with the main reason being infidelity. Divorce can also be a result of other social and financial reasons. In many cases, the decision to go through with divorce can be impulsive and hasty.

The Quran regards marriage as a permanent bond between man and woman. Divorce, even though not prohibited, is discouraged. For that, the Quran imposes a number of conditions, mainly on the man, that must be fulfilled before divorce can be executed.

One of the conditions placed is the cooling off period. By virtue of 2:226-227, if a couple intend to go through with divorce they must wait a period of four months first. If after this period they still wish to go ahead with the divorce they may do so, but in many cases, this period of time leads to reconciliation.

It is interesting to note that this Quranic solution, which is almost 15 centuries old (Quran revealed in the 7th century), is now being implemented by some countries in their attempts to lower the divorce

rate. The following piece of news was from a non Muslim country, which saw wisdom in recommending this procedure:

*"A cooling-off program piloted by the Seoul Family Court since March played a part in lowering the divorce rate in Seoul. Lee Myeong-sook, a lawyer, said that the program, which requires couples who file for divorce to take time to reconsider, may have helped reduce divorce cases where couples wanted to split in a fit of anger."*

## **Iron Sent Down To Earth**

*"Indeed We have sent Our messengers with the clear proofs, and We brought down with them the Scripture and the balance so that the people may uphold justice, and We brought down the iron, wherein there is great strength and benefits for the people. (57:25)"*

An interesting matter here is related to the formation of iron. It was found that the amount of energy required to form iron is greater than all the energy that was available in all the solar system when it was formed.

To be precise, it was found that the energy required to form iron was about four times as much as the energy of the entire solar system. For that reason, it is believed that iron was not formed in the solar system but was introduced as an extraterrestrial element. This information is in harmony with the Quranic words in 57:25

We note the use of the words "brought down" which are very accurately in line with scientific knowledge.

Further points of interest:

1- The majority of the iron on earth lies in the centre of the earth (core). Iron is also the main element of the core of the earth. It is interesting to find that the Sura called Iron lies exactly in the centre of the Quran. The Quran contains 114 sura's and the Sura named Iron is number 57.

2- The Gematrical Value of the chapter's title (The Iron) "Al-Hadeed" is 57, which matches the chapter number (57).

3- The Gematrical Value of the word Iron "Hadeed" is 26, which is Iron's Atomic Number (26). The atomic number of an element is the number of protons inside its nucleus.

## **Which Comes First, Night or Day?**

Many have debated the question of whether day or night come, first in the Quran. The majority of people regard the day to be the beginning of our 24 cycle. They support their view with the fact that the human being starts his/her day upon waking up in the morning, and thus day comes before night. Others claim that our 24 hour cycle starts at sunset. They support their view with the fact that the sighting of the crescent, which is at, or shortly after sunset, is described in the Quran as a timer which marks the beginning of the month and thus the beginning of the day.

When we study various Quranic verses, this issue can be resolved as follows:

1- In a universal sense, and when God speaks specifically about creation, we find that 'night' is always mentioned before 'day':

Among His proofs are the night and the day, as well as the sun and the moon. 41:37 (also see 16:12, 21:33 and others).

The reason for this deliberate sequence of placing the night before the day is due to the fact that before any light was created (which comes from stars) there was total darkness. So concerning the creation of the universe, there was darkness before any light existed. It is for the same reason that God mentions darkness before light in the verses which speak of the creation of the universe:

*“Praise be to God, who created the heavens and the earth, and ordained the darkness and the light”. 6:1*

How can anyone in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century have known such a fact? This is what qualifies the Quran as uniquely inimitable and divinely sent down for mankind!

## **Do we Live 'on the earth' or 'in the earth'?**

A conspicuous phrase often repeated in the Quran, which speaks about living creatures, is that they live **"in the earth"** and not the customary 'on the earth'.

Before looking at some of these verses, it must be mentioned that most translators translated the Arabic words into 'on earth' rather than 'in the earth' as they were oblivious of the fact that "in the earth" is a deliberate choice of words by God, and that the phrase "in the earth" is the scientifically accurate phrase of the two. The following are some verses which use this phrase:

*“There is no creature in the earth, nor a bird that flies with its wings, that are other than communities like you”.( 6:38)*

*“Had your Lord willed, all the people in the earth, in their entirety, would have believed”. (10:99)*

Normally, we think of all creatures as living 'on earth', however this is not accurate from a scientific point of view.

The earth's atmosphere is in reality a part of the earth. The fact that it is a gas layer does not mean it is not a part of the earth. All living creatures live in the lowest layer of the atmosphere and not on top of the atmosphere. Hence all living creatures live inside the earth rather than on the earth!

The atmosphere is divided into five layers. It is thickest near the surface which thins out with height until it eventually merges with outer space.

1- The troposphere: is the first layer above the surface and extends about 10 kilometres above the earth's surface. This layer contains around 80% of the Earth's atmosphere (in mass). Weather occurs in this layer, and all living creatures live inside the troposphere.

2- The stratosphere: is the second layer extending 50K above the surface; it is where jet planes fly and also where the ozone layer is found.

3- The mesosphere: is the third layer extending 85K above the surface and it is where meteors and rock fragments burn up

4- The thermosphere: is the fourth layer and it extends up to 800K and is the layer where we see the auroras. It is also where the space shuttle orbits.

5- The exosphere: is the fifth layer, it is above 1000k and is where the atmosphere merges into space and is extremely thin. This is the upper limit of our atmosphere.

These are statements of God Almighty describing how He created things on earth and in the Universe. What's most amazing is that all of these scientific statements and notions have proven to be in perfect agreement with science and our modern-day scientific discoveries. God Almighty made the Noble Quran be Prophet Muhammed's (peace be upon him) Everlasting Divine Miracle and proof for Prophethood. This Book certainly stood the test of time over 1,500 years with Its Claims, Prophecies and Miraculous eloquence, and it continues to do so again and again in our era, and for all times to come.

God Almighty Said:

*"We will show them Our signs in the Universe and inside their selves, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that He is a witness over all things? (41:53)"*

## **Creation And Guidance From God**

The Quran tells us that the One who created all things is also the One who has provided the ways and means for their sustenance. Creation and guidance are both from God.

*"Our Sustainer is He who gives everything [that exists] its true nature and form and thereupon guides it [towards its fulfilment]. (20:50)*

At another place the Quran also states:

*“[He is the One] Who creates [everything], and thereupon forms it in accordance with what it is meant to be / And who determines the nature [of all that exists], and thereupon guides it [towards its fulfilment] (87:2-3)*

Professor C. Lloyd Morgan, known for his theory of Emergent Evolution, writes (on the self or consciousness):

*...” it is my belief that this evolutionary ascent of mind in living creatures is due to the Creative and Directive Power of God” (The Ascent of Mind)*

The Divine ‘guidance’ that operates throughout the universe is termed Wahi in the Qur’an. The Arabic word wahi means

*‘subtle yet fast signal’.*

According to the Qur’an, God’s guidance (Wahi) pervades throughout the universe.

*[And God] imparted unto each heaven its function*

*(Wahi) (41:12)*

Regarding the earth, it states:

*“As your Sustainer (Rabb) will have inspired (Wahi)*

*her to do!( 99:5)*

And regarding the honeybee it states:

*“And [consider how] your Sustainer has inspired the bee: Make your dwellings in mountains and in the trees, and in what [humans] may build [for you, i.e. bee hives]” (16:68)*

*“And then eat of various fruit and flowers, and follow assiduously the paths ordained for you by your Sustainer.” There issues from within these [bees] a fluid of diverse hues, which has health-giving properties for humans. In this [behaviour of the bee], behold, there is a message indeed for people who think. (16:69)*

Aside from Wahi (God’s attribute of Divine ‘guidance’, or directive force), another important fact is highlighted in the above verses. Everything in the natural universe follows the law assigned to it unflinchingly and without question: Everything from the celestial bodies of the heavens, the moon, the sun, the stars; the earth with its highest mountains, the seas and tides, and its rivers; even down to the micro organisms spread throughout the atmosphere.

In short, everything is busy following the law of sustenance that is assigned to it. Nothing has the power to defy this ‘natural law’. If the sun moved even a tiny fraction slower or faster on its axis; if the earth likewise was to alter a fraction from its axis; if water changed its nature even momentarily; or if the wind changed direction of its own accord – then a chain reaction would occur, and the unity of the universe would collapse. The unity will remain firm as long as everything in the universe (without exception) obeys His law.

This ‘submission’ of the universe to God’s law is termed Islam. In the words of the Qur’an:

*“Whatever is in the heavens and on earth submits to God’s Laws [Islam] by choice or by constraint and follows the way which leads to the goal set for them by God”. (3:82)*

The meaning of ‘Islam’ in this context becomes clear. Islam is the ‘natural law’ at work throughout the universe that unlocks the latent potential of each and every thing and takes it to its final destination.

The meaning of salaam (from which ‘Islam’ is derived) is ‘free of faults or imperfections’. Mussalam likewise means ‘perfect’ and ‘complete’, without defects.

## **Rise & Fall of Nations In Quran**

Quran is the book of criteria that determines the rise and fall of nations. It describes the root causes and the reasons for failure as well as the success of nations:

*“Verily, we have sent down for you revelations that make plain, and the example of those who passed away before you. An admonition unto those who wish to be secured from the pitfalls in the way of life” (24:34).*

The method of the Qur'an is, first to state the laws that govern the fate of nations, and then to cite instances from history to illustrate the working of those laws. The purpose of the Qur'an is not to record past events in all their details but to give sufficient reference to make its own point and leave out the rest. Thus the Qur'an imparts such a deep insight into the nature of the life process that it inspires unquestioning faith in its pronouncement when it says:

*“Have they not travelled in the land to see the nature of the consequence for those before them? They were more numerous than these and mightier in power and in the traces (which they have left behind them) in the earth. But all that they used to earn availed them not. And when their messengers brought them clear proofs (of the consequences of their doings), they exulted in the knowledge they*

*themselves possessed. And that which they were wont to mock, befell them” (40:82-83)*

Quran teaches us and the history bears testimony to the fact that the conduct of nations, as that of individuals, is governed by the Law of Requital. A nation which lives and acts in accordance with the moral order and furthers the development of man, prospers and grows strong. An unjust and reactionary nation, on the other hand, heads for ruin. Each succeeds or fails as a consequence of its own acts. The events of history are not unrelated and arbitrary but are truly determined by an unalterable standard.

*"He who has to perish," says the Qur'an, "perishes by a clear proof, and he who has to survive, survives by a clear proof" (8:42).*

Success or failure are the eventual consequences of our good or bad conduct. The Qur'an makes this clear:

*“God does not do injustice to anyone. It is the people who do injustice to themselves” (11:101).*

It is man who often acts against his best interests:

*“Why should God punish you if you are grateful?” (4:147)*

The Qur'an says that a nation begins to decline when it pursues wealth and takes to hoard money. It should have spent the money for the general good. The rich, instead of helping the poor and the needy, amassed wealth for themselves. The inevitable consequence was that the nation began to deteriorate. It believed that wealth would make it strong but wealth worked like a poison in its system and undermined it. It ruined itself by pursuing an ignoble end:

*“You are those who are called to spend in the way of God, yet among you there are those who hoard. And as for him who hoards he hoards only from his own self. And God is the rich and you are the poor. And if you turn away, He will exchange you for some other folk and they shall not be like you” (47:38)*

However strong and well-organised the government may be, it succumbs to its opponents because it was based on injustice and tyranny. The rivalries of political factions and the mounting discontent of the people under the oppressive rule, brings about the downfall of the organisation – even if it is not defeated on the field of battle. This is the fate of the unjust society:

*“Say: He is able to send punishment upon you from above you or from beneath your feet, or to confuse you into parties and make you taste the tyranny one of another” (6:65).*

The intellectuals are to blame if the nation pursues false values. If a nation begins to decay, the process usually starts at the top. The upper stratum of the society first becomes corrupt and the corruption spreads downwards. It is strange that men of high intelligence should be the first to be corrupted. It is because they cannot resist the temptation to use their intelligence to further their own interests:

*“And verily, We had empowered them with that wherewith We have not empowered you, and had assigned them ears and eyes and mind; but their ears and eyes and mind availed them naught, since they rejected the laws revealed by Allah: and what they used to mock befell them” (46:26).*

It is to this truth that the Qur'an directs our attention. Knowledge and understanding, wealth and power, skill and intelligence will not avail us if we adopt a course opposed to the eternal moral order, A social

system based on false values, on the glorification of wealth and power, may flourish for a time, but will ultimately crumble down.

In the course of a discussion of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Briffault has made some thought-provoking observations he observes that a society based on false principles inevitably disintegrates. I quote from Briffault:

*“What really happens is that the phase of society, the order of things in which disregard of right is habitual and accepted, inevitably deteriorates and perishes. However much the individual may temporarily benefit by inequity, the social organisation of which he is a part and the very class which enjoys the fruits of that inequity, suffer inevitable deterioration through its operation. They are unadapted to the facts of their environment. The wages of sin is death by the inevitable operation of natural selection” (Making Of Humanity p262)*

The Quran has the following advice to shake nations out of their slumber and greed:

*“And how many a community we have destroyed that exulted in but misused the means of livelihood! And ponder over their dwellings, which have not been inhabited after them save a little. And We, even We, were the inheritors” (28:58).*

Again this Book reminds the nations and individuals:

*“How many a city We have destroyed while it did wrong, so that it lies to this day in ruins, and how many deserted wells and lofty towers” (22:45).*

The Quran says of them that "they have been made into legends" (23:44).

How ephemeral is earthly glory is shown by the ruins of the great cities of the past:

“Say: Travel in the earth and see what was the end of the guilty” (27:69).

We are exhorted to study history, that we may avoid the path which led others to ruin. We are also advised to travel around in the world and carefully observe the life of contemporary nations. We will then see that knowledge, power, wealth, none of these can save a nation when it begins to pursue false values:

*“Have they not travelled in the land and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear! For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind”* (22:46).

The great lesson that the Qur'an teaches us is that individuals as well as nations are the architects of their own fate. The basic principle on the real basis of success and failure for mankind is set down in the following verse:

*“He sends down water from heaven, and the brooks flow according to their respective measures and the flood bears along a swelling foam. And from the metals which they melt in the fire, seeking to cast ornaments and necessaries, arises a scum like to it. Thus God coins (the similitude of) the truth and the falsehood. Then as for the foam, it passes away as scum upon the banks, while as for that which is beneficial to mankind, it remains in the earth. Thus Allah coins the similitudes”* (13:17)

The inviolable and unchangeable criterion is that:

*“Only that remains which is beneficial for the whole of mankind”; everything else passes away like scum”.*

This is the eternal immutable principle which throws light on the rise and fall of nations. As long as a nation is contributing something useful to mankind and adding to the store of goodness in the world, it prospers and flourishes. The moment it fails to do so, it starts on the downward course and finally ceases to play an effective role in world affairs.

Whether it disappears or lingers on for decades or even centuries is immaterial. The cosmic purpose has no use for it and works itself out through other nations. It is, therefore, clear that the nation which has identified its good with the good of mankind as a whole is following the right path. That nation is progressive which is creating something of value to mankind, something that enriches the life of all men. That nation will survive which strives to assure for all men a life of happiness, peace and prosperity.

Armed might, control over the forces of nature and wealth will not avail a nation if its policies are detrimental to the interest of mankind. It is bound to pass away, for, “Only that remains which is beneficial for mankind as a whole” (13:17).

About fifteen hundred years ago, a group of believers made this experiment most successfully, which, apart from the miraculous results it produced, proved that neither the Quranic Social Order was a utopia nor the programme laid down to establish it was unworkable. Their later generations, however, abandoned that course, with the result that they met the same fate as did the past nations who acted similarly. (This, by the way, is the negative proof of the efficacy of the Divine Law governing the rise and fall of nations). The Divine course is still there and can be taken up by any

nation who wishes to reach human destination safely and within the shortest possible time:

*“Say: The truth from your Lord is there; so let whosoever will accept, and let whosoever will reject” (18:29)*

## **Quran On Nature**

The Qur'an puts man in a meaningful relationship with nature. To grasp the significance of the Quranic view, we should compare it with two other views which are stoutly defended by some modern thinkers. According to one of these, nature is definitely hostile to man and takes a fiendish delight in bringing to naught his noblest enterprises.

Hardy and Schopenhauer took a gloomy view of life and felt that men could enjoy peace, the peace of insensibility, only when they ceased to exist. The other view is apparently more compatible with the findings of modern thought. According to it, nature is completely indifferent to man and his ideals. It simply does not care whether man succeeds or fails.

The Qur'an presents nature as friendly to man, responsive to his intellect and sympathetic to his moral endeavour. Both nature and man have been created by a wise and benevolent God and fundamentally there is no conflict between them. Man can develop only with the help of nature. This help he can obtain provided he acquires knowledge of nature and utilises it for the achievement of his moral ends in the light of Divine Guidance.

The knowledge referred to is scientific knowledge. The only method by which he can study nature profitably is the scientific method.

Equipped with scientific knowledge he can bend nature to his service. Natural forces can be made to serve man.

Man, as the verses quoted below show, occupies a privileged position in the physical world and it is his destiny to become master of it:

*“God has pressed into the service of man the sun and the moon, to perform their courses, and He has pressed the night and the day into his service” (14:33).*

The Quran further elucidates::

*“And He has made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; it is all from Him. Lo! herein verily are signs for people who reflect” (45:13).*

## **Quranic Concept Of Knowledge**

The Qur'an distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge – perceptual and conceptual. Through perceptual knowledge we become aware of and deal with that portion of the physical environment which surrounds us and what happens in it.

Through conceptual knowledge we rise above the particularity of concrete facts and cognise the unities which underlie the multiplicity of the world. The conceptual framework we build up is far removed from the rich vivid concrete reality of the actual world, yet it gives us an insight into the working of the nature.

The Qur'an exhorts man to use his senses and observe nature diligently. This is the first step in getting to know nature and its way:

*“And follow not that whereof you have no knowledge. Lo! the hearing and the sight and the fuaad (heart) – each of these will be questioned” (17:36).*

Those who do not make proper use of their senses and mental powers sink to the animal level.

*“Many of the people, both civilised and nomads, live a life which dooms them to hell” (7:179).*

The reason for this is that

*“They have hearts wherewith they understand not, have eyes wherewith they see not, and have ears wherewith they hear not” (7:179).*

The result is that they cease to be rational beings.

*“These are like cattle: nay, but they are worse. These are the neglectful” (7:179).*

In sharp contrast to such people are those who ponder over God's creation, for they know that

*“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, are surely signs to men of understanding” (3:189).*

They are the men:

*“Who keep in their mind (the laws of) God standing and sitting and reclining, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth” (7:190).*

When they reflect on the grandeur of nature, they are deeply moved and exclaim:

*"Our Lord! You have not created all this in vain"*(3:190)

The Qur'an speaks of those who study nature and try to discover the laws that govern it as "men of knowledge and insight"; because, says the Qur'an:

*"Lo ! in the heavens and the earth are signs for believers"* (45:3).

We can now ask whom does the Qur'an regard as men of knowledge – Ulamaa. A clue is provided by the verses quoted below.

*"Have you seen that God causes water to fall from the sky and produces therewith fruit of diverse hues, and among the hills are streaks white and red, of diverse hues and others raven-black. And of men and beasts and cattle in like manner diverse hues. It is the 'Ulamaa – men of knowledge – among His servants who (reflecting upon the magnitude of the creation and the Divine laws governing it) feel awe and are wonder struck"* (35:27-28).

We find in these verses a clear reference to generic sciences. The men of knowledge are, therefore, those who have acquired knowledge of these natural phenomena, that is, they are the men whom we now call scientists. The sphere of work of the 'Ulamaa is the science of man and nature. It is obvious that the "Muslim 'Ulama" have since long, relinquished their proper object of study and have applied their keen intellect to matters of far less importance.

Absorbed in matters relating to ritual and ceremonial acts, which are the adjuncts of institutional religion, they could not spare the time to observe and study nature as they had been commanded to do by God. Instead of ranging over the wide expanse of the world of nature, their

mind moved in a narrow circle with the result that it has lost its vigour and flexibility. It is high time they turned their attention to the proper object of study – the signs and portents of God, the varied phenomena of nature and the human mind:

## **Fundamental Values of Quran**

Some of the fundamental values taught by Quran are as follows:

### **Respect For Whole Humanity**

The very fact that every human child at his birth is equally endowed with a Self or Personality, entitles every individual as a human entity to equal esteem and respect; and no distinction whatsoever should, therefore, be allowed to the incidence of birth, family, tribe, race or community, nationality, religion or sex, for, says the Qur'an:

*“Verily We have honoured all children of Adam (equally)”* (17:70)

### **Unity Of Humanity**

All human beings, according to the Qur'an, are the members of one brotherhood and branches of the same

tree:

*“Mankind is one community”* (2:213).

Racial distinction or dividing mankind into different compartments of communities and nations by drawing lines on the globe is antagonistic to the very idea of humanity as a single entity, and is against the intents and purpose of nature. There is only one criterion for a division and no other – that those who believe in the eternal

Values are members of one community, and those who chose not to do so and lead their lives against them, go to the other side.

## **Freedom**

According to the Qur'an, every human being is born free, and, therefore, should ever remain free; and freedom means that none, whosoever he may be, can extort obedience from another human being. In the Islamic Society, only the Quranic laws shall be obeyed. This is synonymous with the obedience of God, for very plainly asserts the Qur'an:

*“It is not right of any man that God should give him the Book and authority and (even) Prophethood and he should say to men "obey me instead of God" (3:78).*

In fact, the Islamic Society is the agency for the execution of the Quranic laws; and this constitutes the main criterion to distinguish between the Muslim and non-Muslim creed:

*“And whoever judges not by what Allah has revealed, those are the unbelievers” (5:44).*

## **Freedom Of Will – No Compulsion**

The responsibility for the act of a human being is determined by his own volition and intent, so much so, that if one is forced to believe something or is prevailed upon with force and compulsion against his will to act in a particular manner, he would not be held responsible for such belief or action, for, Faith is the other name for full conviction. Says the Qur'an:

*“There is no compulsion in Deen (Islam)” (2:256),*

The Quran further clarifies:

*“And say: The truth is from your Creator, so let him who pleases believe, and let him who pleases reject” (18:29).*

## **Justice**

Justice is one of the fundamental Values of Quran (16:90), and no distinction is allowed in this respect between friend and foe, for; says the Qur'an:

*“And let not the hatred of a people incite you to act unjustly. Be just: that is nearer to observance of duty”(5:8).*

As regards the courts of justice, we have been very clearly guided by the Qur'an:

(1) Confound not truth with falsehood (2:42),

(2) Nor knowingly conceal the truth (2:42).

(3) Hide not testimony (2:283).

(4) Evidence must be given truthfully (4:135).

(5) And be ye not an advocate for the fraudulent (4:105).

(6) And never be a supporter of the guilty (28:17).

(7) “Be staunch in justice, witnesses for God, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man for, God is nearer unto both (than you are). So follow not passions lest you lapse (from truth) and if you lapse or fall away, then lo! God is ever informed of what you do” (4:135).

## Criteria For Superiority

The intrinsic value of every individual human being is uniformly equal, but the criterion for determining the relative position and status of every individual rests on his own personal merits and character:

*“And for all there are ranks according to what they do” (46:19),*

The principle underlying is this:

*“The noblest of you in the sight of God is the best in conduct” (49:13)*

*“Human beings, We created you all from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes as a means of identity. Verily the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing of you” (49:13)*

In this verse the whole of mankind has been addressed to reform it of the great evil that has always been causing universal disruption in the world, that is, the prejudices based on race, colour, language, ethnicity and nationality. On account of these prejudices man in every age has generally been discarding humanity and drawing around himself some small circles and regarding those born within those circles as his own people and those outside them as others. This division into Us and Them is the cause of massive injustices on earth and has been rooted out by the principles laid down by the Quran.

## Quran Deserves Reflection

It is also emphatically declared that the Qur'an has been sent down to be understood and reflected upon:

*“A Book We have sent down, [it is] full of blessings, that men may ponder over its messages, and those who possess understanding may take them to heart” (38:29).*

*“What, do they not ponder the Qur'an? Or, is it that there are locks on their hearts” (47:24).*

Following are the examples from the companions of Prophet pbuh, on how they viewed recitation and reflection on Quran:

Anas Ibn Malik once said:

*'Often one recites the Qur'an, but the Qur'an curses him because he does not understand it.'*

The sign of faith, according to Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, is to understand the Qur'an:

*'We have lived long ... a time has come when I see a man who is given the whole Qur'an before he has acquired faith; he reads all the pages between al-Fatihah and its end, without knowing its commands, its threats, and the places in it where he should pause he scatters it like the scattering of one fleeing in haste'*

Aishah once heard a man babbling over the Qur'an and said:

*'He has neither read the Qur'an nor kept silent.'*

Ali said:

*'There is no good in the Qur'an reading which is not pondered over.'*

Abu Sulayman al-Darani said:

*'I recite a verse and remain with it for four or five nights and do not pass on to another verse unless I have ended my thinking on it.'*

The Qur'an is guidance for every person and understanding it is therefore vital; otherwise it will remain no more than a sacrament. The beauty of reflecting and pondering on the Quran is that it opens its vast and unfathomable ocean of means contained within it to anyone who makes a sincere effort to listen and ponder. Whether or not one has mastered all the Quranic disciplines, the need to devote oneself, to personally pondering over the Qur'an remains.

The Qur'an itself commands:

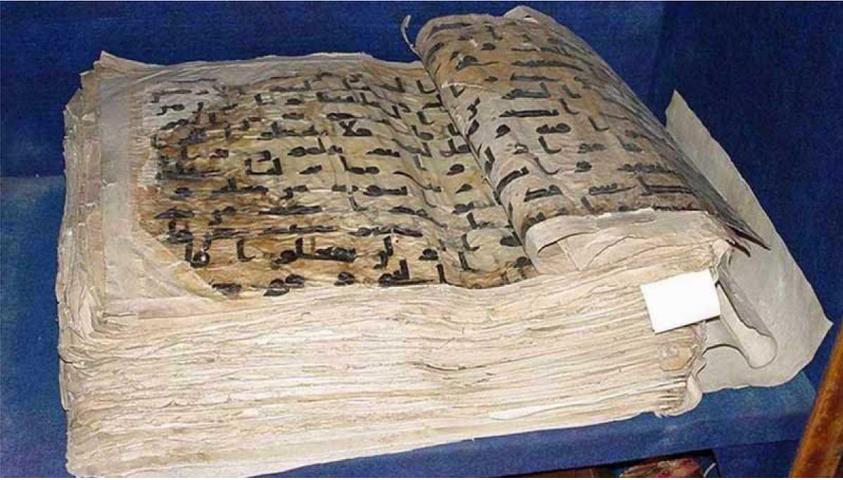
*'When the Qur'an is read, listen attentively, and fall silent, so that you may be blessed with mercy' (7: 204).*

Obviously when God is speaking you must fall silent, but the Arabic word used for 'listening' denotes not merely an act of 'physical hearing' but also a particular state of attention and acceptance.

Prolonged companionship with the Qur'an must become one of your most cherished desires and occupations. Read it, therefore, as often and as much as you can. Spend as much time with it as you can find, especially the hours of night- which are salubrious and especially conducive for pondering and reflection-free from all distractions!

## **Preservation Of The Quran**

The Quran is very unique in being the only revealed book that has survived in its original form. The Quran alludes to this:



Oldest Manuscript of Quran in Tashkent Capital of Uzbekistan

*“We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)” (15:9)*

The Quran was written down at the time of Prophet Muhammed pbuh and he made fool proof arrangements to hand it down to the companions who guarded it with their lives.

Memorisation as well as writing it down, were used to get the Quran preserved for all times to come. In the times of its revelation, when writing was scarcely used, memory and oral transmission was exercised and strengthened to a degree now almost unknown’ relates Michael Zwettler.

Prophet Muhammed pbuh was obviously the First Memorizer of the Quran. It was in this ‘oral’ society that Prophet pbuh was born in Mecca in the year 570 C.E. At the age of 40, he started receiving divine Revelations from the One God, Allah, through Archangel Gabriel. This process of divine revelations continued for about 22.5 years just before he passed away.

Prophet Muhammed pbuh miraculously memorized each revelation and used to proclaim it to his Companions. Angel Gabriel used to refresh the Quranic memory of the Prophet each year.

*‘The Prophet was the most generous person, and he used to become more so (generous) particularly in the month of Ramadan because Gabriel used to meet him every night of the month of Ramadan till it elapsed. God’s Messenger used to recite the Qur’an for him. When Gabriel met him, he used to become more generous than the fast wind in doing good’. (Muslim)*

Some of the companions who memorized the Quran were: ‘Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Ibn Masud, Abu Huraira, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Amr bin al-As, Aisha, Hafsa, and Umm Salama’. (Suyuti Itqan)

Over the past 15 centuries, there have arisen throughout the various regions of the Islamic world, thousands of schools devoted especially to the teaching of the Quran; for the purpose of memorization of the Quran. Such Hufaaz (those who memorised the whole Quran) are present in thousands throughout the world in our time.

Prophet Muhammed pbuh was very vigilant in preserving the Quran in the written form from the very beginning up until the last revelation. The Prophet himself was unlettered, did not know how to read and write, therefore he called upon his numerous scribes to write the revelation for him. Complete Quran thus existed in written form in the lifetime of the Prophet.

Whenever a new revelation used to come to him, the Prophet would immediately call one of his scribes to write it down.

*‘Some people visited Zaid Ibn Thabit (one of the scribes of the Prophet) and asked him to tell them some stories about Allah’s Messenger. He replied: "I was his (Prophet’s) neighbour, and when the inspiration descended on him he sent for me and I went to him and wrote it down for him..." (Tirmidhi)*

Zaid is reported to have said:

*‘We use to compile the Qur’an from small scraps in the presence of the Apostle’. (Suyuti, Itqan)*

‘The Prophet, while in Madinah, had about 48 scribes who use to write for him’. (Suyuti)

During the Prophet’s last pilgrimage, he gave a sermon in which he said:

*‘I have left with you something which if you will hold fast to it you will never fall into error – a plain indication, the Book of God (Quran) and the practice of his Prophet...’ (Ibn Hisham)*

‘Besides the official manuscripts of the Quran kept with the Prophet, many of his companions use to possess their own written copies of the revelation’. (Suyuti)

‘A list of Companions of whom it is related that they had their own written collections included the following: Ibn Mas’ud, Ubay bin Ka’b, Ali, Ibn Abbas, Abu Musa, Hafsa, Anas bin Malik, Umar, Zaid bin Thabit, Ibn Al-Zubair, Abdullah ibn Amr, Aisha, Salim, Umm Salama, Ubaid bin Umar’. (Abu Dawud)

‘The best known among these (Prophet’s Scribes) are: Ibn Masud, Ubay bin Kab and Zaid bin Thabit’. (Suyuti)

‘Aisha and Hafsa, the wives of the Prophet had their own scripts written after the Prophet had died’. (Muwatta)

‘Two of the five copies of the Qur’an which were originally prepared in the time of Caliph Uthman, are still available to us today (One in Tashkent and the other in Turkey) and their text and arrangement can be compared, by anyone who cares to do, with any other copy of the Quran, be it in print or handwritten, from any place or period of time. They will be found identical’.

It can now be proclaimed, through the evidences provided above, with full conviction and certainty that the Prophet memorized the entire Quran, had it written down in front of him through his scribes, many of his companions memorized the entire revelation and in turn possessed their own private copies for recitation and contemplation. This process of dual preservation of the Quran in written and in the memory was carried in each subsequent generation till our time, without any deletion, interpolation or corruption of this Divine Book.

Sir William Muir, Orientalist of the 19th century states, "*There is probably no other book in the world which has remained twelve centuries (now fifteen) with so pure a text*". (Life Of Mohamet Vol 1)

This divine protection provided to the Quran, the Last Revealed Guide to Humanity, is proclaimed by One God in the Quran as quoted above (Quran : 15:9).

## **Structure Of The Quran**

There are 114 Chapters called Surahs in the Quran, each divided into verses. The chapters or surahs are of unequal length; the shortest chapter (Al-Kawthar) has only three ayat (verses) while the longest (Al-Baqarah) contains 286 verses. Of the 114 chapters in the Quran,

87 are classified as Makkan (revealed whilst the Prophet was in Makkah), while 27 are Medinan (revealed after he migrated to Medina).

The word "Aya" has been used in the Quran to mean "Sign from God". So, each verse of the Quran is indeed a "Sign from God".

The total number of verses in the Quran is 6348. This includes 112 unnumbered (In the name of Allah the most Compassionate, most Merciful), also known as Basmalabs, which occur at the beginning of the Surahs. Without the unnumbered Basmalabs, the total number of verses in the Quran is 6236.

The Quran can also be divided into 30 parts, of almost equal length, each part is called Juz'. That means each Juz' is 1/30ths of the Quran. Each Surah is divided into several sections known as Rukus. A Ruku consists of a number of verses; all of which deal with one topic. There are 540 Rukus in the Quran. These Rukus of the Quran is a relatively new phenomenon that did not exist at the time of Prophet Muhammed pbuh nor at the time of his companions.

The Quran is also divided into 7 equal parts called Manazil. Each Manzil consists of one seventh (1/7 th) of the Quran. Each of the Manazil is short enough to be recited in one week. Aside from the division of the Quran into 114 Suras (chapters), the Manazil are the only other division method mentioned in the Hadith(sayings of the Prophet pbuh).

One could start from Fatiha on the first day and each day stop at one Manzil and then continue from the following locations until the whole Quran is complete over a span of 7 days.

## Remarkable Structure

The Qur'an itself confirms the unlettered nature of Prophet:

*“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel...”*  
[7:157]

Throughout his life, prior to Prophethood, Muhammed pbuh did not have a reputation for poetry. In fact we know from history that at a personal level he disliked it and wasn't a skilled poet. There are instances where he attempted to relate some poetry and would jumble the words up:

*“Qatadah narrated, Aisha was asked: Did the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, use to relate anything from poetry?” She said: It was most detestable thing to him except that (at times) he used to relate a verse from the person of Banu Qays and he jumbled it up. Abu Bakr told him it was not like that. So the Prophet of Allah said, “By Allah I am not a poet and neither is it appropriate for me.”* (Tabari)

The Qur'an was originally delivered to its first audience in the form of speech through recitation. Remarkably the Qur'an did not have the opportunity for an editorial process, as many verses were revealed on the spot as a response to unexpected questions and challenges that were brought forward to Prophet Muhammad from both believers and non-believers.

The 6,236 verses that make up the Qur'an were revealed gradually over a period of 23 years. It did not go through multiple revisions as it was revealed:

*“And those who disbelieve say, “Why was the Qur’an not revealed to him all at once?” Thus [it is] that We may strengthen thereby your heart. And We have spaced it distinctly. [25:32]*

Most people would assume that the Qur’an was revealed chronologically, starting with its first chapter and ending with its final chapter. However, the Qur’an isn’t like most books. You may be surprised to learn that the 6,236 verses that make up the Qur’an were not revealed sequentially in order. Chapter 1 was not followed by chapters 2, 3, 4 (and so on) as one would write a conventional book.

Rather, chapter 96 was followed by chapter 68, which was followed by chapter 73 (and so on). Moreover, a few of the chapters of the Qur’an are quite large in size, with hundreds of verses. They were not revealed all at once, some chapters were revealed over a span of many years, with the revelation of their verses being interspaced with the revelation of verses from other chapters.

In light of these circumstances, wouldn’t you expect the structure of the Qur’an to be jumbled? It would be difficult to plan an ordered structure in advance, when verses are being revealed in such an apparently random fashion. What we find against all odds however, is that the Qur’an contains the sophisticated structure of ring composition.

The Qur’an is a very unique book in terms of its composition. Its 114 chapters (or ‘Surahs’ in Arabic) are not arranged chronologically or thematically. Even within the individual chapters, numerous topics can be covered with sudden switches from one topic to another and then back again.

This unique structure at face value may appear to be disjointed. However, modern research has discovered a sophisticated structural coherence in the Qur'an known as ring composition

## **Ring Composition In Quran**

Ring composition has been explained by Mary Douglas in her book "Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition". In ring compositions there must be a correspondence between the beginning and the end. It is structured as a sort of circle, or mirror image. The central meaning of the text is placed at its centre. The second half mirrors the first half, in reverse order — e.g., A, B, C, D, C', B', A'.

The correspondence usually involves the repetition of a striking or evident word or phrase, and there must be a clear thematic connection between the two sections. The correspondence serves to complete the circle and provide closure. Also, the internal sections – within the ring – must correspond to each other.

To put it in simple terms; ring composition is the equivalent of putting a mirror in the middle – what is mentioned in the first half will be reflected in the second half.

### Example of Surah Baqarah:

Surah al-Baqarah, which we are going to use as a case study in this article, happens to be the longest chapter of the Qur'an and was revealed over a span of over nine years. Surah Al-Baqarah consists of 286 verses and can be divided into nine main sections based on theme/topic (verse numbers in parenthesis):

1. Faith vs. unbelief (1 – 20).
2. Allah’s creation and knowledge (21 – 39).
3. Deliverance of Law to Children of Israel (40 – 103).
4. Abraham was tested (104 – 141).
5. Ka’ba is the new qibla (142 – 152).
6. Muslims will be tested (153 – 177).
7. Deliverance of Law to Muslims (178 – 253).
8. Allah’s creation and knowledge (254 – 284).
9. Faith vs. unbelief (285 – 286).

Re-arranging this list to fit into a ring composition:

- A Faith vs. unbelief (1 – 20).  
 ——B Allah’s creation and knowledge (21 – 39).  
 —————C Deliverance of Law to Children of Israel (40 – 103).  
 —————D Abraham was tested (104 – 141).  
 —————E Ka’ba is the new Qibla (142 – 152).  
 —————D’ Muslims will be tested (153 – 177).  
 —————C’ Deliverance of Law to Muslims (178 – 253).  
 ——B’ Allah’s creation and knowledge (254 – 284).  
 A’ Faith vs. unbelief (285 – 286).

A noteworthy point is that the middle of Surah Al-Baqarah, the 143rd verse, mentions an important turning point for the Muslims:

*“Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you. And We appointed the qiblah which ye formerly observed only that We might know him who follows the messenger,*

*from him who turns on his heels. In truth it was a hard (test) save for those whom God guided. But it was not god's purpose that your faith should be in vain, for God is Full of Pity, Merciful toward mankind. [2: 143]*

This turning point was the change in Qiblah, the direction of the daily prayers, from Jerusalem to Makkah. This represented a big test for the believers. We find the mention of this important turning point in exactly the middle of the chapter. Moreover this verse even contains the word 'middle'!

Raymond K Farrin, author of "Surat al-Baqarah – A Structural Analysis", concludes on Surah al-Baqarah's ring composition:

*"Indeed this sura exhibits marvellous justness of design. It is precisely and tightly arranged, as we have seen, according to the principles of ring composition; even the section lengths fit perfectly in the overall scheme. Moreover, the precise structure serves as a guide, pointing to key themes in the sura. These occur, according to the logic of the pattern, at the centers of individual rings and, particularly, at the center of the whole sura. At the center of the sura, again, one finds instructions to face Mecca — this being a test of faith; identification of the Muslims as a new, middle community; and the message that all people, regardless of their qibla or spiritual orientation, should race to do good and God will bring them together."*

This precision in the arrangement of the verses is in fact astonishing when we consider the timing of the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an. As Dr Abdullah Draz, Professor of Islamic Studies, eloquently puts it:

*“When we consider carefully the timing of the revelation of the Qur’anic passages and surahs [chapters] and their arrangement, we are profoundly astonished. We almost belie what we see and hear. We then begin to ask ourselves for an explanation of this highly improbable phenomenon: is it not true that this new passage of revelation has just been heard as new, addressing a particular event which is its only concern? Yet it sounds as though it is neither new nor separate from the rest. It seems as if it has been, along with the rest of the Qur’an, perfectly impressed on this man’s mind long before he has recited it to us...*

*When we consider such detailed instructions on the arrangement of passages and surahs we are bound to conclude that there is a complete and detailed plan assigning the position of each passage before they are all revealed. Indeed the arrangement is made before the reasons leading to the revelation of any passage occur, and even before the start of the preliminary causes of such events... Such are the plain facts about the arrangement of the Qur’an as it was revealed in separate verses, passages and surahs over a period of 23 years. What does that tell us about its source?”(Quran an Eternal Challenge)*

Ring composition has great exegetical application. For a ring structure not only holds the text together, but also gives focus to the important words and themes. By means of concentric patterning, ring composition calls attention to the centre – we are drawn to look here for the essential message. As Mary Douglas notes concisely, “The meaning is in the middle.”

It also serves as an aid in memorisation, especially useful given the length of Surah al-Baqarah. In his study of ancient poetry, Cedric Whitman found that ring composition simultaneously performed both

aesthetic and mnemonic functions. It aids memorisation by permitting the oral poet to easily recall the basic formulae of the composition during performances.

## **Some Astounding Aspects:**

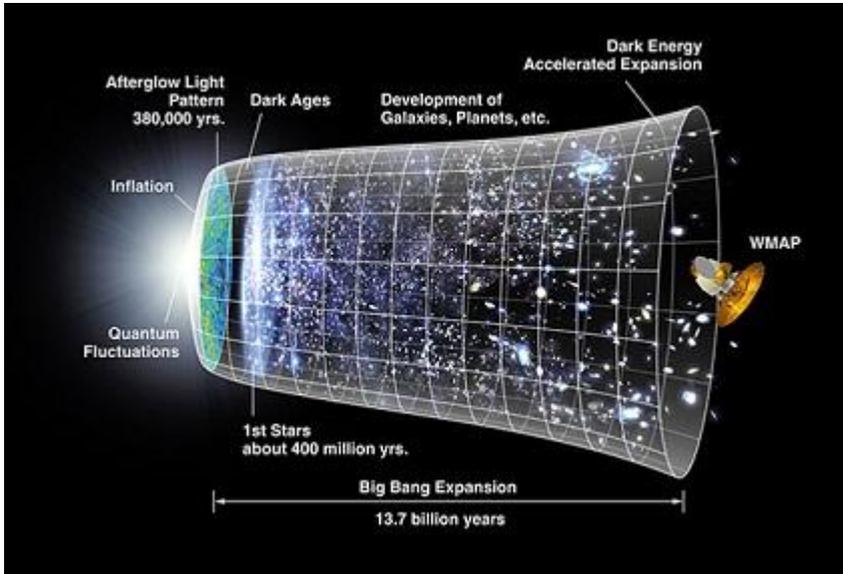
### Age of our Universe/earth:

Time is relative. We know from Einstein that my clock and your clock will not run at the same rate. Time (or rate of our clocks) depends on acceleration and/or gravity. If my clock accelerates and/or is in a strong gravitational field then it will run slower than your clock. Quran 22.47 compares time on Earth with time at Paradise/Hell (1 day vs 1000 years). While Quran 70.4 compares time on Earth with time in wormholes (1 day vs 50,000 years).

The theory of general relativity says that time passes slower near an object more massive than Earth (clocks run slower in stronger gravitational fields). So according to general relativity, time should pass in Paradise/Hell much slower than on Earth. It is stated in the Quran that 1 day in Paradise/Hell measures a 1000 years on Earth:

“They challenge you to bring forth that torture [in Hell] and God will not break His promise; a day of your Lord [Paradise/Hell] is like a thousand years of what you count” (22:47)

Our solar system is 4.57 billion years old. Earth started accreting concurrently with the sun and our neighbouring planets 4.57 bln years ago. However the universe is  $13.7 \pm 0.2$  bln years old. This places the age of Earth at one third the age of the universe ( $4.57 \text{ bln} / 13.7 \text{ bln} = 1/3$ ). The Quran says that in God's Throne time Earth is 2 days old while the Heavens, Earth and everything in between are 6 days old ( $2/6 = 1/3$ ):



*[Quran 7.54] “And your Lord, Allah, who created the Heavens and the Earth in six days and then settled on the Throne...”*

Those six days are on the Throne; so the frame of reference for creation is the Throne, not Earth.

*[Quran 41.9] Say: "Is it that you deny Him [God] who created the Earth in two days? And you claim others to be equal to Him? He is the Lord of (all) the Worlds."*

*[Quran 50.38] “And we have created the Heavens and Earth and EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN in six days and We were not touched by fatigue”*

All those days are on the Throne; the frame of reference for creation is still the Throne. When God says that He created the Heavens, Earth and EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN (including you and me) in six days this means that He is referring to the period of existence. Earth has been in existence for 2 days (out of 6). This puts the age of earth to be  $1/3$  of that of the universe.

In God's Throne time, Earth is 2 days old while the Heavens, Earth and everything in between are 6 days old. This makes the age of Earth to be one third the age of the universe ( $2/6 = 1/3$ ). Similarly in Earth time, the age of Earth is 4.57 billion years while the age of the universe is 13.7 billion years; this is also one third ( $4.57 \text{ bln}/13.7 \text{ bln} = 1/3$ ).

So it is the same ratio in Earth time or in God's Throne time. The theory of general relativity explains why time at God's Throne passes slower than on Earth. General relativity explains why 6 days passed at God's Throne but we measured it as 13.7 billion years (that is each day at God's Throne measures around 2.28 billion years on Earth). Such is the wondrous nature of this Book!

### Prefrontal Cortex of Brain!

The frontal part of the brain handles lies. For centuries it was thought that the frontal part of the human brain handled vision (simply because it is near the eyes). Today we know that this is false. The part that handles vision turned out to be at the rear of the brain. The front part of the brain is called the prefrontal cortex and is responsible for concocting lies. Pathological liars have more prefrontal white matter:

"Liars showed a relatively widespread increase in white matter (23-36%) in orbitofrontal, middle and inferior, but not superior, frontal

gyri compared with antisocial and normal controls. This white matter increase may predispose some individuals to pathological lying."

Yang Y, Raine A, Narr KL, Lencz T, LaCasse L, Colletti P, Toga AW. *Localisation of increased prefrontal white matter in pathological liars.* [Br J Psychiatry. 2007 Feb;190:174-5.](#) PubMed PMID: 17267937.

*"No indeed; if he does not desist, We shall drag him by the forelock; A lying sinful forehead"* (96:15-16).

The Quran says that disbelievers will be dragged from their lying forehead which turned out to be the part where lies are concocted. It is only the most powerful of books that has the ability to shake the very core of human understanding that can bring out such clear and miraculously accurate statement for men of knowledge!

## **Conclusion:**

The first audiences of the Quran were the desert-dwellers of Arabia, who were proud of their language skills. Their material possessions were meagre, but their language was far in advance of their culture. They earned their livelihood by trading and took many trips abroad to buy and sell goods. Their long journeys across the desert provided them the time to ponder about nature, and the order of the nature of things. They were very meticulous in their choice of words, and very specific in their speech.

They adored oratory and diction, and effective communication. They were skilful in the articulation of finer thoughts, and quite adroit in their expression of ideas. Words were their wares, and eloquence was their fetish and forte. Communicating finer thoughts in the finest form was their obsession. Composing poetry and prose was their passion. They vied each other in their ability to be fluent and

eloquent. They produced elegant literature of high quality, even though the subjects they chose were mostly petty and profane.

They squandered their skills in embellishing the tales of their tryst, their amorous exploits and adventures, the exaggerated and boastful accounts of their valour in warfare, and the virtues of their wine and women. Their written literature was scanty, but they had a prolific memory and committed thousands of quotes, anecdotes and poems to memory. Their literature was passed along to subsequent generations by oral traditions. So proud were they of their diction and eloquence that they declared themselves to be the masters of the language, and others to be deprived of the faculty of speech. Compared to theirs, other languages were merely the crude communications of inarticulate mute men. They referred to all non-Arabs as ‘Ajums’, those suffering from a speech impediment.

When the Arabs first heard the Quran, they were awe-struck by its eloquence and listened in amazement. Never before in their life had they heard such a stunning and stately sermon. Their instincts convinced them that such a noble and impressive discourse could only be a divine diction, not a human creation. It was far more sublime and solemn than all their literature put together.

The Quran proclaimed that it was not a man-made composition, and challenged its audience to present any composition that matches its style and elegance. It declared that humans would fail to produce a single composition to match its caliber, even if they joined hands and converged and coordinated their efforts. It threw the gauntlet,

*“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our slave [Muhammad], then produce a Surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than God, if you should be truthful.”*

(Quran 2:23)

The masters of the Arabic language failed to find any flaw or lapse in the language of the Quran. They acknowledged defeat and expressed their inability to match it. Many were so mesmerized by its message that they embraced Islam right there and then. The enthusiastic orators found themselves at a loss for words. They were humbled by the matchless quality of the words of the Quran.

Man is the subject of the Quran. It narrates the story of man as an integral whole, and it describes all the stages of man's journey to his ultimate destination-- birth, life, death, resurrection, the judgment of his deeds and depending upon the judgment, heaven or hell.

Man's five senses do not enable him to perceive an existence beyond the confines of this physical world. The eyes do not see light emanating from the other world, and the ears do not detect sounds from the other side. The hands cannot feel, the nose cannot smell, and the tongue cannot taste anything that is not of this world. The mind therefore fails to perceive the presence of the world beyond.

The great beyond lies past the borders of death. Resurrection, the judgment of deeds, and heaven and hell are events scheduled to take place there. Fluently and poignantly, and with an aura of confidence, the Quran describes these events in detail. It narrates with the knowledge of certainty. It discusses the events of the other world with the same ease and eloquence as the events of this world. Ever since it was first revealed its diction and eloquence remain unsurpassed, not only in Arabic but also in all languages of the world. The challenge still stands. Man will never be able to match its literary quality.

The difference between it and the work of the poets, writers and philosophers is not only that of degree or quality, but also that of character and class. It did not stoop down to the earthy model of distortion and dishonesty. Rather, it aggrandized and sanitized the standards of literature, and introduced it to a new height. It imposed a tougher requirement for literary standard and demanded absolute honesty and accuracy. It refused to espouse fiction and the art of fictionalizing facts, and spurned exaggeration. It did not win by using the ways and means of the other literary works.

The Quran reminds us to ponder over some of the most frequently observable phenomenon taking place regularly, in our environment, to reach conclusions with objectivity and evidence:

*“God is He Who has created the heavens and the earth and sends down water from the sky, and thereby brought forth fruits as provision for you; and He has made the ships **to be of service to you**, that they may sail through the sea by His Command; and He has made rivers **to be of service to you**. And He has made the sun and the moon, both constantly pursuing their courses, **to be of service to you**; and He has made the night and the day, **to be of service to you**.”*  
*And Who gave you all that you asked Him for. Were you to count the favours of God you shall never be able to encompass them. Verily man is highly unjust, exceedingly ungrateful. (Q. 14:32-34)*

Upon reading the translation of these verses, you have to pause and reflect upon the amazing way in which God worded this message and how it was able to impact us—even someone who can't even understand the Arabic language. We know the sun, moon, night, and day to be parts of nature. They are simple, overlooked aspects of our lives. But the Quran described them as things God made of service to

us, humankind. If the sun moved a tad away from the earth, we would all freeze, and if it moved a tad closer we would all melt.

The moon is a sight to be seen—it hypnotizes every time as it shines, bold and gold in the night sky. The day gives us opportunity to earn our livelihood and take care of our families, and the night provides us with much needed time for rest. We do not ever think about it, but as the verse says—yes, God made these things to be of service to us. This makes you intrigued enough to ponder on the rest of the message of the Quran.

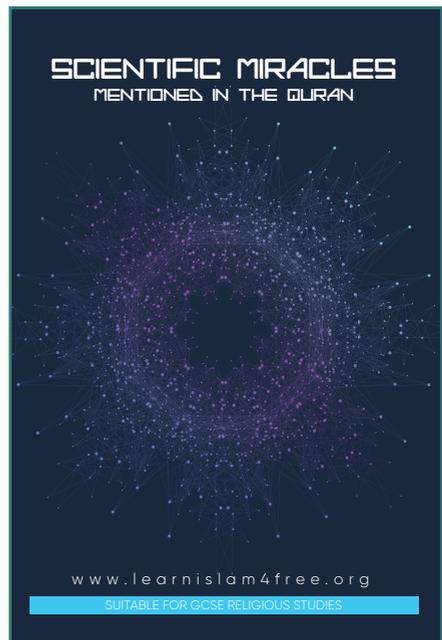
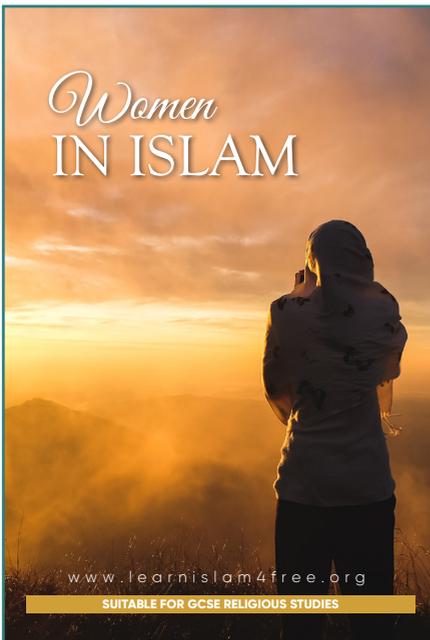
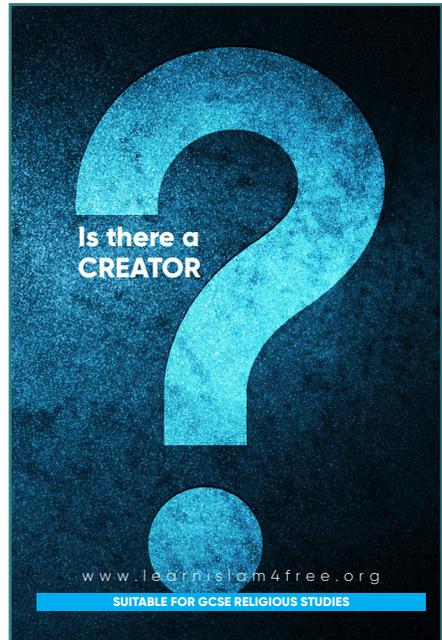
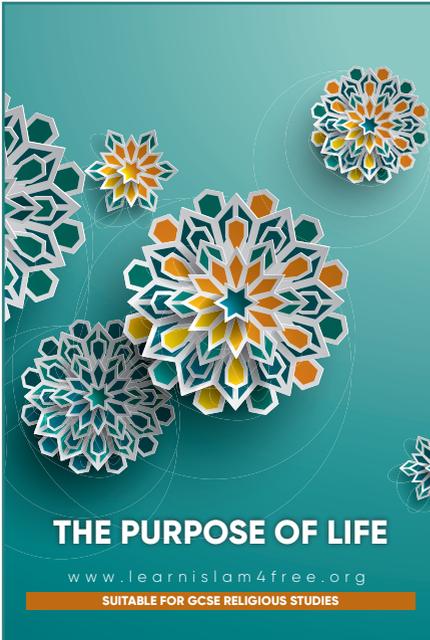
When you continue reading the same chapter, the very next verse delivers yet another blow of reflection your way:

*“And He gave you of all that you asked for, and if you count the Blessings of God, never will you be able to count them.”* (Q. 14:34)

It is the strength of this very appeal and charm that the verses of Quran hold in them that attracts the most desolate and barren hearts into reflection, thought provocation and ultimately into action!

This book will never cease to amaze mankind in every which way they look at it! It shook the world the first time and will continue to awaken it every time the world turns to it.

## OTHER ESSENTIAL READINGS



## Booklets

1. The Quran
2. The Book That Shook The World
3. World's First Written Constitution
4. The Sharia Law
5. The Purpose Of Life
6. The People Of The Book
7. What Is Islam?
8. The Concept Of God In Islam
9. Jesus In Quran
10. Did Jesus Predict Coming Of Muhammad?
11. Common Misconceptions About Islam
12. Is There A Creator?
13. Women In Islam
14. The Hijab
15. Scientific Miracles Mentioned In The Quran
16. Message To Mankind
17. Islam's Solution To Terrorism
18. Islam For The 21st Century
19. Muhammed pbuh The True Role Model
20. Muhammed pbuh As A Teacher
21. Morals And Manners Of Muhammed pbuh
22. Marriage-Relevance And Importance
23. For Those Who Reflect
24. Salah-Islamic Prayer
25. Fasting In Islam
26. Hajj-The Islamic Pilgrimage
27. Islam Has No Clergy
28. Islam Against Sectarianism
29. Concept Of Halal & Haram In Islam
30. What Is Bank Interest And Riba?
31. Is There Life After Death?
32. What Is Zakah?
33. Role Of Masjid And Imam
34. What Is Shahdah?
35. The Wakeup Call
36. Islam Against Racism
37. Remembrance Of God
38. The Book Of Prayers
39. Etiquettes In Islam
40. The Rights Of Parents And Children
41. Beautiful Stories Of Prophet Muhammed pbuh For Children - Book 1
42. Moral Stories For Children - Book 2
43. The Book Of Manners For Children - Book 3
44. Islam For Children
45. The New Muslim Book

