

Chapter 5

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE QUR'AN

What makes this so called “Final Testament” so unique that the author offers it as the evidence of the existence of the Creator? Qur'an is a miracle of miracles, not just because it is supernatural, but because it can be verified by reason. Qur'an, on the face of it, is only a book, *albeit* that claims to be revelation. It is not a book of science, but very much a book of signs, providing evidence of the Creator in the far reaches of the universe, from within us and in the history of the people of old. It makes astounding claims about itself, about its unique style, its inimitable language, and consistent content free from contradictions.

UNIQUENESS OF QUR'AN

The entire argument in this book is based on the premise that Qur'an is so unique and matchless that it is a living testimony to the bold claims made in it by the Creator. It is word for word a revelation direct from the Creator which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad piecemeal over around 23 years, via the arch angel Gabriel.

This Qur'ân is not such as can be produced by other than Allah.

Qur'ân 10:37

Furthermore the Creator has made it easy to remember by heart, to ensure that it will withstand the vicissitudes of history and will not fall prey to what happened to all of the earlier revelations, that either got lost or got hugely adulterated, such that only translations or efforts at reconstruction have survived to reach us. It is no idle coincidence that today there are millions of Muslim men, women and children, all over the world who are fluent memorizers of this New Testament sized book rigorously from A to Z even when most of them can neither speak nor understand Arabic, the language of the Qur'an. Is there any such example which can be quoted or any other meaningful rationale rendered to explain this fantastic phenomenon?

The Qur'an boldly states that not only has it been preserved in its pristine form for all these 1400 years or so but the Creator is its guardian and preserver for all times to come since this is the final testament and the last of the revelations. This is the boldest and most unusual of a claim that is available to critics and whomever else for verification or falsification.

In fact the Creator throws another challenge to all comers and especially the opponent Arabs of the day, who prided themselves on their verbal and poetic prowess, to produce a *sura* (chapter) or even one verse like this, if they can! The amazing fact is that no one has succeeded convincingly in meeting this challenge to date.

If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ân, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.

Qur'ân 17: 88

Or do they say, "He forged it"? Say: "Bring then a Sura like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if it be that ye speak the truth!

Qur'ân 10:38

And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sura like thereunto; And call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah. If your (doubts) are true. But if ye cannot – And of a surety ye cannot.

Qur'ân 2:23 24

Significantly, Qur'an is the only revelation which lays so much stress on the need to employ one's intellect. It pointedly asks the believers not to blindly fall for the verses even of the Qur'an, like cattle, but to ponder, reflect and understand them. Without understanding how can one benefit from the guidance of the Creator, which after all is the real aim and goal of revelation?

Qur'an claims to be full of signs for those who are open to ponder and reflect. It claims that it shall continue to show such signs, in order to demonstrate that this indeed is the truth and a revelation from the mighty and omnipotent Creator, in:

1. The far reaches of the Universe
2. Within yourselves i.e. within human nature
3. And within the history of the people of old

The first of the above encompasses most of the physical and biological phenomenon concerning the creation of the Universe, the solar system, the earth, evolution and rise of life, conception and development of the embryo and its successive stages of development which have been listed (not exhaustively) in chapter 4. The interesting fact is that much of this information, described in the Qur'an is so much ahead of its time that no person, not to talk of in 7th century Arabia, but even until late 19th century, could have known the facts and information mentioned in the Qur'an.

COMPATIBILITY OF QUR'AN WITH MODERN KNOWLEDGE

Dr Maurice Bucaille, a Christian and a French surgeon, studying the incompatibility of scientific facts and Biblical statements in the 1960's decided to do a similar comparison with the Qur'an and was amazed to find in his own words that:

These scientific considerations, which are very specific to the Qur'an, greatly surprised me at first. Up till then, I had not thought it possible for one to find so many statements in a text compiled more than thirteen centuries ago referring to extremely diverse subjects and all of them totally in keeping with modern scientific knowledge.

..... I could not find a single error in the Qur'an. I had to stop and ask myself if a man was the author of the Qur'an, how could he have written facts in the seventh century A.D. that today is shown to be in keeping with modern scientific knowledge ... what human explanation can there be to this observation...

Dr. Maurice Bucaille goes to says that:

at the height of Islam, between the 8th and 12th centuries A.D. at a time when restrictions on scientific development were in force in the Christian world, a very large number of studies and discoveries were being made at Islamic Universities. It was there that the remarkable cultural resources of the time were to be found. The Caliph's Library at Cordoba contained 400,000 volumes ...Greek, Indian and Persian sciences were taught. This is why scholars from all over Europe went to study at Cordoba, just as today people go to the United States to perfect their studies. A very great number of ancient manuscripts have come down to us thanks to cultivated Arabs who acted as the vehicle for the culture of conquered countries. We are also greatly indebted to Arabic culture for mathematics (algebra was an Arabic invention) astronomy, physics (optics), geology, botany, medicine etc.

..... How could a man, from being illiterate become the most important author, in terms of literary merit, in the whole of Arabic literature? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at the time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncements on the subject? for me, there can be no human explanation to the Qur'an.

This exercise of the amazing compatibility of Qur'an with modern knowledge has been repeated by many, including the present author, who finds this to be a demonstrable fact. There is just one instance where I have had difficulty with the contents of the Quran and that refers to the long ages of the pre-Noah prophets where interestingly both the Bible and the Qur'an talk of ages well into hundreds of years, which must be accepted, and are not in line with modern knowledge on the subject. But then who is to say that an adequate explanation

may not be forth coming with improved knowledge, as happens so often in science.

In all other instances, including evolution of life Qur'an has no conflict with modern knowledge (as far as facts are concerned). When it comes to the philosophical implications the two are wide apart, as has been shown in this collection and will be further elaborated in my forthcoming book. In fact the Qur'an goes much further than materialistic evolution and points to the continuation of evolutionary development even after death when it says that our souls (the real human essence) will be freed from the constraints of this material body so that its further development can continue unhindered and unencumbered by the drag of our material body.

RATIONALISTS PAINE AND KANT ECHOING THE QUR'AN

Additionally two strong voices of the enlightenment, Thomas Paine and Immanuel Kant echo wonderfully some of the beautiful statements made in the Qur'an as will be seen in the following quotes:

Thomas Paine, in *Age of Reason* (Nu Vision Publications, LLC '07; ISBN#1-59547-910-4) puts in a plea to atheists:

lest in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government, and of false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true

The philosopher knows that the laws of the Creator have never changed, with respect either to the principles of science, or the properties of matter. Why then is it to be supposed that they have changed with respect to man?

Age of Reason, p. 173

Compare this with the Qur'an: "God does not change His Laws!"

As Paine states again:

Do we not see a fair creation prepared to receive us the instant we are born—a world furnished to our hands that cost us nothing? Is it we that light up the sun; that pour down the rain; and fill the earth with abundance? Whether we sleep or awake the vast machinery of the universe still goes on. Are these things and the blessings they indicate in future, nothing to us?

Age of Reason, p.33

It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a word of God can unite. The Creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this word of God reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible Whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not wanting to withhold the abundance even from the unthankful. In fine do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called the Creation.

Age of Reason p.48

It is only by exercise of reason that, man can discover God.

Age of Reason, p.49

Kant said in his *Kritik derpraktischen Vernunfe*, 1788, that:

Two things fill the soul with wonder and reverence, increasing evermore as I meditate more deeply upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.

Compare with the following Qur'anic verse and see its modernity.

We will show them our signs in the Universe and within themselves, until it becomes manifest unto them that this (The Qur'an) is the truth.

Al Qur'an, 41:53

The case being made in this book is that Qur'an is full of evidence to show beyond any reasonable doubt to anyone willing to listen that it is a unique product which cannot possibly be the handiwork of humans. However as the Qur'an points out, it deliberately refrains from giving such overwhelming proof which simply will have to be accepted even by hardcore skeptics for the reason that God's design wants humans to be able to exercise their freedom of choice.

Qur'an loudly proclaims that "There is no compulsion in Faith."

An overwhelming proof would take away the freedom given to God's own creation which is not part of His design. However, short of that, all kinds of evidence from different quarters is marshaled to enable humans to make a rational choice in freely accepting that there is no other reasonable explanation for the origin of the Qur'an besides what it states that it is a direct communication from the Creator of the Worlds.

PROPHESIES

This evidence is spread over the pages of the Qur'an and has been marshaled from different areas. Here is an example of one of the prophecies made in the Qur'an, which the Prophet's opponents made fun of when it was revealed, but it came true, to their chagrin within a few years, as predicted:

The Roman empire has been defeated in a land close by; But they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious – within a few years. With God is the Decision, In the past and in the future: On that day shall the Believers rejoice.

Qur'ân 30: 2-4

The above prophecy was revealed to Prophet Muhammed in the year 615-16 of the Christian era. Byzantium (Eastern Roman Empire) had lost Jerusalem to the Persians, and Christianity had been humbled by Magians. In this prolonged encounter between the two superpowers of the day, the Mushriks (polytheists) of Makkah derived vicarious pleasure in the discomfiture of the Romans by the pagan Persians.

the pagan Arabs naturally sided with the Persians in their zeal, and thought that the destruction of the Christian power of Rome would also mean a setback to the message of the Prophet, the true successor to Christ... while the whole world believed that the Roman empire was being defeated by Persia, it was prophesized in the Qur'an that the Persian victory was short-lived and that within a period of a few years the Romans would conquer again and deal a deadly blow at the Persians.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (well known translator of the Qur'an)

Within ten years of the revelation of this divine prediction, the most improbable prophecy at the time was fulfilled!

CHALLENGE OF THE QUR'AN

The Prophet claimed that the Holy Qur'ân was from God Almighty, and that it was revealed to him. The proof of its divine authorship is its own beauty and nature, and the circumstances in which it was promulgated. To prove the veracity of this claim, the unbelievers were challenged. Can they produce even one sura (chapter) like it? This is a standing challenge! An eternal prophecy of mankind's inability to equal or excel, or to rival successfully any of its chapters.

There are millions of Christian Arabs living today, with Arabic as their mother tongue. The Christians claim that there are at least 10-15 million Coptic Christians in Egypt alone and these are not all *fellaheen*.¹ Here is the challenge of God in His Own words:

If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ân, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.

Qur'ân 17: 88

Or do they say, "He forged it"? Say: "Bring then a Sura like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if it be that ye speak the truth!

Qur'ân 10: 38

AMAZING IMPACT OF QUR'AN ON SEVENTH CENTURY ARABIA AND THE WORLD

The world has never witnessed the burst of physical and intellectual energy released following the advent of the Qur'ân in the seventh century. It made the primitive Arabian Bedouins masters of the land from China in the East to Spain in the West in less than a hundred years and propelled them to an intellectual adventure which led to Europe's way to enlightenment and discovery. It combined the unique physical outburst of the Mongol conquests with the even more impressive intellectual awakening of the fifty years of Pericles Greece. The extent, depth and intensity of this change had not been seen by mankind before or since, including even the subsequent remarkable contributions of Europe and the West. Phillip Hitti, the reputable historian of the Arabs puts it thus:

After the death of the Prophet sterile Arabia seems to have been converted as if by magic into a nursery of heroes the like of whom both in number

and quality is hard to find anywhere. The military campaigns of Khalid ibn-al-Walid and Amr ibn-al-As which ensued in al Iraq, Persia, Syria and Egypt are among the most brilliantly executed in the history of warfare and bear favorable comparison with those of Napoleon, Hannibal or Alexander.

History of the Arabs, p. 142

This has led me to remark that the roads from "Athens and Jerusalem meet in Mecca."

By leading us to a common ideology, based on universal brotherhood of humankind, justice, merit, rights of the underprivileged, disabled, and deprived (including women), rationality and objectivity; will open up mankind's horizons; build trust and confidence which is so badly needed to end the frenzy of terror that is creeping up on our world.

Evidence will be presented from a number of quarters and angles which it is hoped would be enough to convince any rational and objective person beyond any reasonable doubt that Qur'an simply cannot be the product of human mind/s. It can only come from either an advanced alien civilization (of which there is no internal evidence in the Book) or it is from the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, which the Book boldly states to be the case.

Critics often state that Qur'an is not for modern times. It does not subscribe to the values of modern civilization emanating from the enlightenment. As I have stated earlier, the core values of enlightenment i.e. the call for reason and evidence itself were actually kicked off by the Qur'an in the 7th century, almost a 1000 yrs before the advent of the European Enlightenment, which occurred through ideas filtering into Europe via the then Muslim provinces of Spain and Sicily.

Concerning Islam and modernity, in particular, let us not be swayed by the popular press but listen to an authority e.g. Harvard anthropology Professor Ernest Gellner who has the following to say on the subject in his book *Muslim Society*:

By various obvious criteria—universalism, structuralism, spiritual egalitarianism, the extension of full participation in the sacred community not to one, or some, but to all, and the rational

systematization of social life – Islam is, of the three great Western monotheisms, the one closest to modernity.

FAITHLINES – Muslim conceptions of Islam and society by Prof. Riaz Hussain, Oxford Press '02

BOLD CLAIMS OF QUR'AN

We will show them our signs in the Universe and within themselves, until it becomes manifest unto them that this (The Qur'an) is the truth.
Al Qur'an, 41: 53

If it had been from other than God you would have found in it many inconsistencies.

Al Qur'an

This is the Book (the Qur'an) whereof there is no doubt"

Al Qur'an, 2:2

SUMMATION

The important points made in this book can be summarized as follows:

- Acceptance of the Creator's existence, being a reality, is the ultimate answer to the problems of mankind. The Atheism vs. God debate has to be resolved once and for all. However, this must take place with the pen and not the sword.
- Unity and peace in this world can only come through that choice – by aligning ourselves and society with the Creator's design and more importantly to position ourselves correctly for the next stage of evolution, for death is not the end and only the hereafter is everlasting (as described by authentic revelation).
- The above calls for an urgent need to differentiate authentic revelation from tampered versions of revelations, which can only be done through the effective use of reason and evidence (my article in Zygon September '08 deals with how to go about this).
- Authentic revelation then must be studied and examined afresh, using reason and evidence to find out its guidance for today's world.

- Qur'an is the final revelation and testament from the Creator. It is not a monopoly of the Muslims but is meant to guide all of humanity. Qur'an is by no means the root cause of terrorism, militancy or extremism; rather it is turning their backs on the Qur'an which has brought the Muslims to this state. Resultantly, the world must take care in not throwing away the baby with the bathwater. Sustainable development of civilization and its future depends upon our correct assessment of the situation.

Once a group of right minded people own the message of the Qur'an and implement its guidance, the kind of unrivalled burst of energy that took place around Arabia and the Middle East in the Middle ages could be duplicated once again, on a much larger scale in the whole world, nay the solar system, if not beyond. What a remarkable feat that would be, when there will be heaven on earth with all of mankind reaping the fruits, not only in this world but more importantly in the hereafter. Qur'an promises that, indeed one day soon, that will happen. Willy nilly the world is moving towards the value system of nature expressed in the Qur'an. Nothing can stop this process. It is like water going downhill. It is a law of nature. If mankind willingly accepts this guidance then the progress will be rapid and on an accelerated basis as happened at the time of the Prophet Mohammad, otherwise progress will be slow and tortuous and may cost mankind unnecessary time and energy. Humankind cannot afford to defy this guidance, in our own interests, if we wish to survive and embark on a course of sustainable development.