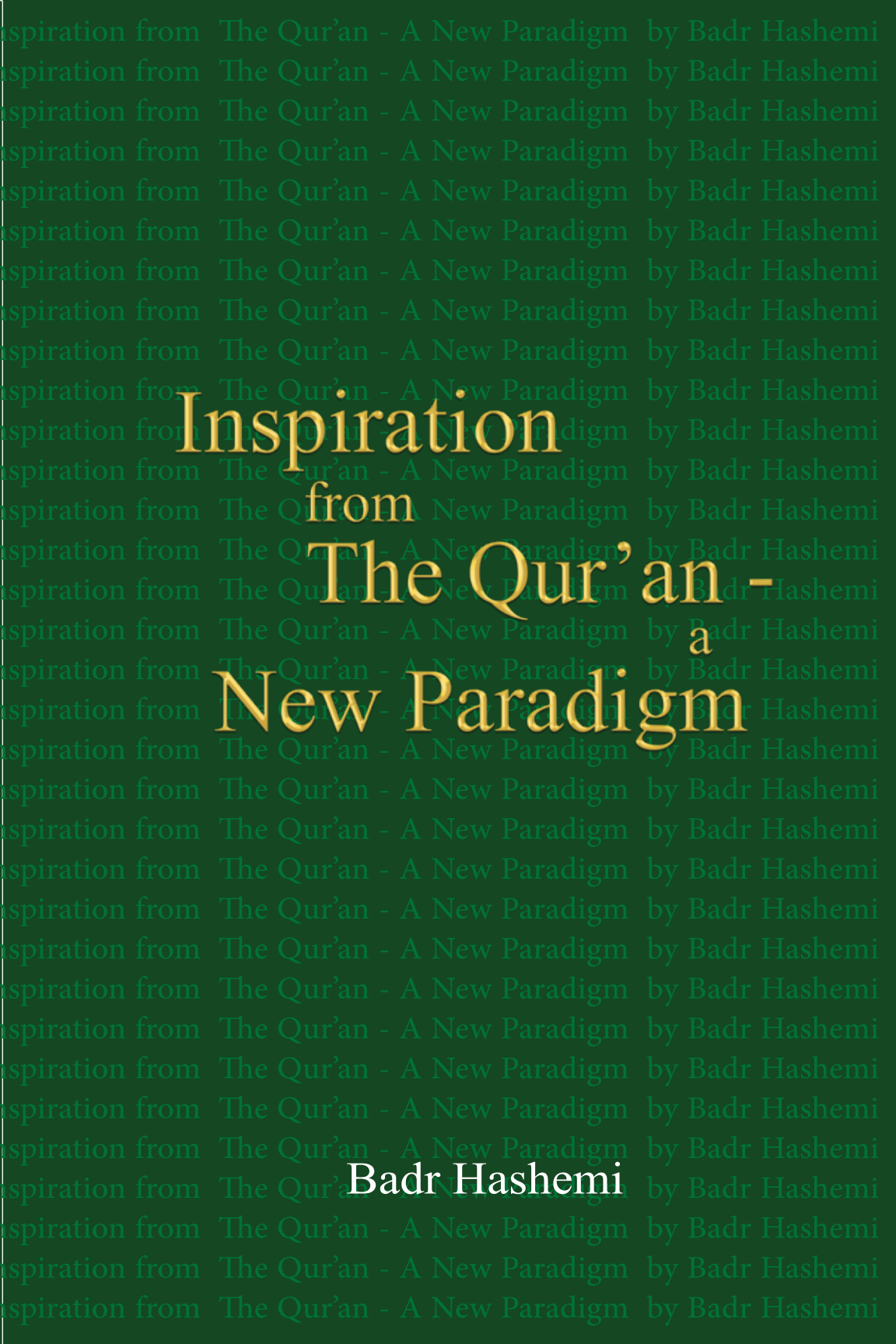




Inspiration from The Qur'an - a New Paradigm

Badr Hashemi

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Visualizing the Divine Wisdom

Professor Dr. Athar Mahboob (TI)
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 Former Vice Chancellor, Islamia University Bahawalpur (2019-2023)
 Former Founding Vice Chancellor,
 Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan (2015-2019)

It is simultaneously a matter of great honour and of immense pleasure to write an introduction to Dr. Badr Hashemi's book "Inspiration from The Qur'an – A New Paradigm". This book represents Dr. Badr Hashemi's more than seven decades of toiling with understanding the Quran, applying it to the contemporary world and making the message of the Quran reach wider audiences. Different chapters of the book cover diverse yet highly relevant and contemporary topics in depth. At the same time the diversity of the topics shows glimpses of the various aspects of the life and mission of Dr. Badr Hashemi.

The first six chapters discuss how Islam is a relevant and potent force in contemporary world and touch upon some important theological themes like concepts of prophethood, good deeds in Islam, etc. Chapter 2 titled "Images from the Prophet's Islamic Welfare State – Short Analysis in Pakistan's Perspective" is a prescriptive manual for revamping Pakistan, the country of Dr. Badr Hashemi's origin and always so very close to his heart. He has supported his various proposals for rejuvenating Pakistan's state and society with justification based on current real world data. His style overall is of a passionate scholar armed with knowledge and inspired by a mission. However, at places glimpses of his time spent in bureaucratic institutions also shows itself such as his extensive use of complementary words separated by the oblique sign.

Several chapters demonstrate Dr. Badr Hashemi's prowess in the exegesis of the Quran. His advanced studies and knowledge of economics and other social sciences, based on his professional work with global institutions, his vast international exposure coupled with his passionate seven decade journey into learning and mastering the meaning of the Quran has resulted in consolidating his intellectual perspectives. These perspective and his insights due to them, I believe, are highly valuable to the current and upcoming Muslim policy makers as the contemporary world continues to face existential challenges and it desperately needs the guidance of Allah's revelation and its exemplification by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) for survival. Dr. Badr Hashemi has explained in very accessible language how Quran provides answers to the challenges faced by contemporary Muslim societies as well as humanity at large.

The last and long chapter on "Challenges of Translating the Arabic Qur'an into English" can be regarded a highly useful treatise on the subject. English being the language of 20th and 21st centuries global citizenry requires that humanity be served by making the Quran's true message and meanings accessible to the citizens of the contemporary world. Dr. Badr Hashemi stands tall in the league of Quran translators in English language through his production of a unique translation which combines a scholarly translation of the Quran with references to Jewish and Christian scriptures, wherever applicable.

I believe ardently that Dr. Badr Hashemi's contribution through this work is valuable for me and will also be of great value to the wider contemporary global theological community. I am hopeful that the book will receive a large readership and create significant impact. One possible way to spread its contributions would be to conduct a book review and launch on Paul William's "Blogging Theology" Youtube channel.



The Exalted Themes

Professor Dr. Samina Nadeem
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The creation of man in the conceptual framework of time and space is an unfathomable episode. To welcome this enigmatic creation, the scale of eternity has been employed to bang the planets and sweep the waves of oceans to generate and facilitate the fertility of the environment with immense variegated masterpieces of growth. In fact, the lure and attraction of the world, to which the man comes crying with fear and sense of helplessness, resists to leave and death becomes tragic. Hence, the realm of metaphysics dominates while analyzing the purpose of existence and it becomes essential for the human mental capacity to grasp the source of knowledge through the heavenly books and messengers adorned by the Creator.

It is in this context, that the book in hand, “Inspiration from The Qur’an – A New Paradigm” appeals to the mind. The word ‘mind’ has been used in the proverbial essence only, as the actual transition comes from the ‘heart’. This is the beginning of the fundamental change, where the purpose of creation expounds through revelation of Divine Books and the role of prophets who directly obey the commands to establish a system based on righteousness in this world. The program of instructions gets completed with the Qur’an as the last book and prophet Mohammad as the last prophet. All mortals are supposed to be travelers who need to end their journey for a final day of judgement. Apparently, there seems no role of the evil, however, the innumerable human weaknesses bring in huge challenges where the circumstances of trial and test are met through underhand means of corrupt and illegal ways. This perspective has been dealt with in Chapter – 1 through the holy books which may be consulted as manuals to understand the most complex and enigmatic existence of man.

The resolve of an enigma begins with the catch of one strand entangled. Hence, a consistent effort to consult the divine manual and the injunctions of all the prophets, the task of handling all human dilemmas, social, political, ethical, economic and moral may get resolved to establish global and universal standards. Any system based on firm foundations rather than on the whims of some super political suppositions can bring in ideal universal reforms. Chapter 2 projects an exhaustive approach to the establishment of a home as a state in the world which will enable the promoters rewards in the hereafter. However, as the western thought begins and ends with its own definitions, churns out skeptical and biased views which will suit some of the communes for a limited time period. It is obvious that life does not begin with Renaissance and Humanism. In fact, the western thought is heavily influenced with the enlightenment of heavenly scriptures. The end of the chapter concludes with two mind maps which provide huge knowledge at a glance for the promotion of a Welfare state which promotes political and moral guideline for the whole community – Muslims or otherwise.

Among the five core pillars of Islam, the month of Ramadan is celebrated the most for consistency of a specific behavior through specified restrictions. With specific timings for eating and fasting, a training program initiates to regulate a routine for three decades. In order to experience the essence of hunger, it is essential to feel it to offer help to others in time of need through sharing one’s resources. The satisfaction received through such acts encourage a person to apply the same beyond Ramadan as well. The most significant feature of this month is the revelation of Qur’an. The significance of the first word of revelation “IQRA (Read)” is of multifaceted nature. The prophet Muhammad at the age of forty has been shown the exclusive role of the skills of reading and writing in the first five ayah revealed in CE 610 in a cave of Hira. It goes without

saying that at this age of maturity, for the development of cognition and elevation of intellect of higher order, the script becomes important. And it further adds, that the prophet had already accomplished and mastered the skills of communication with his brethren who had bestowed titles of “Sadiq” and “Amin” for his kind, caring, just and benevolent relationship (Ikhlaq). Chapter 3 propounds all the dimensions of the holy month of Ramadan including physical, spiritual, social, and economic through zakat, sadqa and fitrana.

Similarly, the book shows four other unique themes in chapters from 4 to 7, based on the art of interpreting surahs as case studies, the logical and cultural comprehension of the title “Ummy”, the importance and significance of critical thinkers and the translation of Qur’an in English through a lens of techniques, literary devices and concepts employed in eight different translations. Through a magnified depiction of historic and linguistic excellence, the author does justice to bring out new perspectives leading on to an approach where recognition of religious knowledge becomes crystalized and abstract is substantiated as reality. With numerous quotations from Qur’an and hadith, the reader can be led into a realm of blessings where his submission will become his ultimate reward.



Author's Note

Praise be to Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) – the One and only God of everyone and everything, who revealed the Qur'an as a 'Balance' so that people remain on the path of justice and distinguish the truth and the falsehood in their lives, living and dealing. He has commanded us to reflect on the Qur'an, bearing in mind that it can only be properly understood by those firmly established in knowledge (*Olul 'Ilm/Rasikhuna Fi al-'Ilam*), and will only be kept in remembrance by those who are endowed with insight (*Olul Albab*).

The epistemological aspect of the Qur'an deals with the act of reflecting and investigating (*tadabbur and tafakkar*), which is to be human beings' foremost duty. This process is essential in order for people to know their Creator (*Rabb/Khaliq*), themselves, and the world around them. Knowledge of the Creator and of ourselves leads us to search for satisfying answers to life's pressing questions.

The better we understand the sources, types and purposes of knowledge, ways of applying and benefitting from knowledge, and the ways in which knowledge is compiled, transmitted and developed, the better able we will be to test the knowledge we have and to link it to the laws and patterns of our own and universal existence.

The Qur'anic Revelation sets forth a series of concepts/themes which, taken together, sum up the universal truths of the Religion of Islam. However, there is no way to understand the Qur'an properly without studying its concepts and themes, which is key to accessing the Will of Allah.

Consequently, this book contains a mixture of theological perspectives dealing with concepts of prophecy and prophethood, the theme of Prophet's model of anatomy of Islamic welfare state, the spirituality of Ramadan fasting, understanding the underlying meaning of the rhetorical refrains in Surah Al-Rahman, the concept of an 'Ummi' Prophet who was heavenly gifted with a perfect linguistic masterpiece, the importance of creating leaders with critical thinking skills - *Rasikhuna Fi al-'Ilam* and *Olul Albab*, and a detailed explanation and comparative analysis of the challenges of translating the Arabic Qur'an - *The Word of Allah* - in the English language - *Word of human being*.

I am grateful to Professor Dr. Athar Mahboob (TI) for meticulously reviewing the manuscript and making useful suggestions that have been taken on board.

May Allah make this book a source of guidance for those who seek guidance, aiding a new generation to think for themselves and making them capable of coming to their own conclusions.

I seek Allah's forgiveness for the existence of any imperfections and oversights that may exist in my work. May Allah accept this work, and make it a source of forgiveness for me and those who benefit from it when we are called to account at the Time of Final Judgment.

Badr Hashemi

January 2025

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Theological Perspectives - Prophecy and Prophethood

Abstract

The Paper assumes that the roots of Prophecy and Prophethood may be traced back to the early beginnings of the Abrahamic religion. Prophecy is essentially a challenge to established institutions whether religious, political, or social, by mediating between a 'higher' authority and the lay public. But Prophets establish their authority by being apart from the social order upheld by established institutions and asserting the values of a more transcendent order.

Rapid material growth, spiritual decline and social changes introduced a host of challenges against which the Prophets struggled. Each one made his own contribution to religious understanding and stressed the necessity of faith, righteousness, moral conduct, human responsibility, universalism and worship of Allah/Yahweh - the One and Only God of everyone through faithfulness.

The Prophets being convinced that Allah would fulfil His Promises only as the people were faithful in worship and in righteousness, endeavoured to revive a listless faith. They depended upon direct relationship with The Almighty, and were concerned with immediate human problems, insisted on standards of moral conduct, taught that all the world would learn to worship the Creator and Sustainer of the World, and believed in success through human effort guided by Divine Inspiration. They believed that evil would perish at the end of time, and a new era of blessedness established. Prophecy ceased with the Qur'an and the Prophethood with Muhammad.

Prologue

The human species were created in the Divine Image¹ for the purpose of implementing the Divine² Order/Law on the Planet Earth.³ The Planet was designed to be a habitat for them along with other creations which were to facilitate the human life *cycle* – birth/life, death and resurrection.

The Divine Guidance was promised - Q. 02:38 -

فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

'So whenever Guidance comes to you from ME *through a scripture and a messenger*; then

1 This does not mean that Allah^(EA) is in human form, but rather, that humans are in the 'Divine Image' in their moral, spiritual and intellectual nature; or perhaps a reflection of the Divine Attributes – *Asma ul-Husna wa Sifat al-Ulya*. See Q. 15:29; 18:09, 99; 32:09; 38:72. || Torah/Genesis 1.27.

2 The Divine Entity may be known as YHWH/Yahweh, God or Allah – The Almighty.

3 Q. 02:30. | 'I am going to *create human being from earth and place him as a caretaker on the earth.*'

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

whoever would follow MY Guidance - they will have nothing to fear, nor will they regret' *for they will always find MY help and support at hand.*⁴

The Guidance would be delivered through MY Angelic Messenger and comprise communications - labelled as *Wahy*⁵/Revelation – to the designated person(s) who would receive it to proclaim it to a larger audience/designated community. The person(s) who would receive it will be known as Prophet(s)/human Messenger(s). Thus, the revelation/prophecy and Prophethood were intertwined, especially in the Abrahamic religions – namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The notion of revelation was central to these faiths because the authority got back to revelations The Almighty vouchsafed to various Prophets starting from Adam through Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and finally to Muhammad - may Allah^(EA)'s peace and blessings be upon them.

Revelation/Prophecy

This term - Revelation/Prophecy, '*wahy*' in Arabic - is strongly connected to the Prophethood. Linguistically, it is used six times in the Qur'an:

- (i) the laws of nature – Q. 41:12 –

أَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَّمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا

assigned to each *celestial realm* its mandate – (The Sacred Arabic Text employs the term '*awha*' literally means 'revelation' – which I have rendered as 'assigned' - here it is used for Allah^(EA)'s assigning to each its special task.)

- (ii) natural instincts – Q. 16:68,

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ

And consider how your Rabb - *The Lord* inspired the honeybee, i.e., *female honeybee* through creating instincts to construct the honeycomb.

- (ii) inspiration – Q. 28:07,

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنِ أَرْضِعِيهِ

And so when Moses was born, WE inspired Moses' mother.

- (ii) signals or gestures to communicate – Q. 06:112,

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا

4 Given that Paraphrasing/translation of the Qur'anic Sacred Text looses its Semantics while rendering into any language, especially European/English, this paper uses the translation from "Allah Speaks to you in the Qur'an" by Badr Hashemi, 2023, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

5 It means to reveal, indicate, point out, inspire, speak secretly, say something in a whisper, etc. The root '*waha*' with its derivatives has been used about 78 times in The Qur'an.

that is how WE made enemies *and hostile opposition* for every Prophet - from among the Satans of the humans and the jinn, enticing one another with flowery discourse to delude them.

- (i) divine inspiration to the angels – Q. 08:12,

إِذْ يُوحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ

Remember when your Rabb - The Lord revealed on to the angels' to bring a message of hope and assurance to your heart.

- (i) divine revelation to the Prophets – Q. 04:163-164.

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالتَّيِّبِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَيْبُورًا وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْضُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا

Indeed, WE are sending down on to you *Our Last Scripture in the same way* as WE revealed on to Noah and the Prophets *who came* after him, and WE revealed on to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the clans⁶ of Jacob, and WE revealed on to Jesus, and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron, and Solomon, and to David WE gave the Psalms, and *to the Messengers* WE have narrated to you before, as well as Messengers WE have not narrated to you and to Moses Allah spoke directly.

Modus Operandi

The Qur'an mentions three forms of revelation – Q. 42:51.

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكْلِمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ

And it is not *fitting* for any human being that Allah should speak to him *directly*, except *it be* through Revelation, or from the other side of Veil of Grandeur where HE makes the person able to hear HIS Speech but without being able to see HIM, or assigning an angelic-messenger to reveal, with HIS authorization, whatever HE may Will to reveal.

Torah/Exodus 19:18-19 describes it as: 'Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for God had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently. The blare of the horn grew louder and louder..... God then speaks the Ten Commandments aloud for 40 days, Moses communes with

6 'al-Asbath' (plural) – the Sacred Arabic Text expression has been understood differently, like: patriarchs, offspring, descendants, etc. 'al-Asbath' rendered here as 'clans' were named after Prophet Yaqoob/Jacob^(P)'s sons and grandsons. See for details Torah/Deuteronomy 27:12-13.

God on the mountaintop, receiving a detailed body of laws when he returns to the people his face is radiant and the people are afraid to approach him. But Moses reassures them and relays to them all that God had told him....'

Prophet Isaiah⁷ writes that he 'received his message through visions, where he would see YHWH, the God of Israel, speaking to angelic beings that surrounded Him..... he would then write down the dialogue.....' This form of revelation constituted a major part of revelations of the Jewish Prophets till the time of their last Prophet from the Descendants of Prophet Jacob/إِسْرَائِيلَ نَبِيّ, namely Prophet Malachi^(P) in 516 BCE.⁸

The experience of Prophet Muhammad^(P) details five ways:

- (i) the Archangel Gabriel coming in the form of a human being,
- (ii) the Archangel revealing the Messages/Ayat without being seen by the Prophet,
- (iii) revelation commencing with a sound of a ringing bell,
- (iv) the Archangel appearing in his original form, and
- (v) the Archangel bringing the revelation when the Prophet was asleep.

The Prophethood

Man cannot earn or acquire Prophethood even if he undergoes various spiritual exercises and disciplines. It was indeed a bounty and favour from Allah^(EA) - Divine Gift - given to the one whom HE pleased. This was a Divine Appointment.

Islamic theology considers eight attributes of perfection for human Prophethood:

(i) infallibility, (ii) truthfulness, (iii) trustworthiness, (iv) impeccable morality of character, (v) intelligence and knowledge, (vi) adherence to the tenants of faith most fervently, (vii) be the living embodiments of Allah's religion, and (viii) super eloquence for conveying the Divine Message.

The Almighty set up the procedure and a criterion wherefrom HE would choose HIS Prophets. Consider Q. 03:33 and 34.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۚ ذُرِّيَّتًا بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ.....

7 8th Century BCE, Book of Isaiah. Hebrew Bible.

8 Q.04:48 states: *They think they will enter Paradise irrespective of what their beliefs are. They should know that surely, Allah does not forgive the ascribing of any entity to HIM - though HE may forgive for whatever is less than that to whoever HE may want. And whoever ascribes any entity to Allah has committed a sin most grievous-blasphemy!*

Indeed, Allah chose *for Prophethood* in preference to all people, Adam and Noah,⁹ and descendants of Abraham, and descendants of 'Imran.¹⁰

Also consider, Q. 02:124.

وَإِذْ أَمَرْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَامِلَتِ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي
قَالَ لَا يَتْلُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

And remember when his Rabb - *The Lord* put Abraham to trial by certain commands.¹¹ And he fulfilled them *in all earnest*. So, He – *his Rabb - The Lord* - told *him*: *In reward*, 'I am going to make you a spiritual leader¹² among the people of the world.' *To which Abraham* inquired: 'And of my descendants' - *make spiritual leaders from among them, too?* He said: 'MY Promise of spiritual leadership will not extend to the evildoers' *among them*.¹³

The message was clear that it is the 'faith/religion' and not genealogy that shall determine Prophet Abraham^(P)'s descendants as was in the case of Prophet Noah^(P) - Q.11:46.

The Prophets/Messengers were assigned two roles. One: as a 'Herald of good news' for those who followed them, and a 'Giver of warning' of the consequences for those who would not follow the Divine Guidance as advocated by His assigned Prophet/Messenger.) so that the people would have no plea before The Almighty - *at the Time of Final Judgement*, after *the coming of the Messengers* - Q.28:47.

فَيَقُولُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ وَنَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

9 From Adam^(P) unto Noah^(P)'s flood were 1,656 years. For when Adam was 150 years old, he begat Seth. Seth being 105 years, begat Enos. Enos, being 90 years, begat Cainan. Cainan, being 70 years, begat Mahaleel. Mahaleel, being 65 years, begat Jared. Jared, at the age of 162, begat Enoch. Enoch, being 65 years, begat Methuselah. Methuselah, at the age of 187, begat Lamech. Lamech, being 182 years, begat Noah. Noah, at the coming of the flood, was 600 years old. Source: Houston Baptist University.

10 It includes Prophet Zachariah^(P), Prophet Yahya^(P)/John the Baptist and Prophet Jesus^(P), son of Mary.

11 The literal meaning of the expression used in the Sacred Arabic Text '*kalimat*' (plural of *kalimah*) is 'words,' where it included, among other things, to sacrifice his first born (Prophet to be) Ishmael^(P), which he almost did - See Q.37:102-113; the 'fire' into which he was hurled by his own people but Allah^(EA) salvaged him - Q.21:68-69. See also Q.53:37. I have paraphrased it as 'commands' whereas it should be understood as 'obligations.'

12 The Arabic Sacred Text's term '*Imam*' can also mean 'role model.' This Ayah appears to be the basis of the Jewish claim that by virtue of their descentance from Prophet Abraham^(P), whom Allah^(EA) made 'a leader of mankind', they are 'Allah's chosen people'. This Ayah makes it clear that the exalted status of Prophet Abraham^(P) was not something that would automatically confer a comparable status on his descendants, and certainly not on the sinners/الظالمين among them. See for example Q.19:58-59, etc.

13 'Evildoers' is the rendering of the term الظالمين of the Sacred Arabic Text with root '*zalama*.' Its dictionary meanings comprise: to do wrong or evil, injustice/treat unjustly, oppress, harm, suppress, tyrannize, misuse, wrongdoing/act wrongfully, deprive someone of a right, unjustly/be guilty of injustice, wickedness/act wickedly, etc. The term is significant as it appears in 108 Ayat of 108 Surahs with the root being used about 289 times.

WE have assigned you - O The Prophet - as OUR Messenger lest they say during the Time of Final Judgment, when punishment befalls them as a result of what their hands have sent forward.¹⁴ 'O Our Rabb - The Lord! If only YOU had assigned a Messenger for us, we would have followed YOUR Messages diligently, and would have been among the true believers.'

The Message given to all Prophets had been essentially one and the same. It comprised four essentials:

- i. preach the Unshared Unity and Uniqueness of Allah^(EA)¹⁵, the life after this life, and everyone to submit in awe, reverence and worship to Allah^(EA)¹⁶;
- ii. teach man his duties to Allah^(EA) and to free him from the bondage of sin by following the guidance brought through the Prophet ;
- iii. give good news for compliance to the Message and warnings to its persistent disobedience; and
- iv. that Message was to be interpreted and transformed in practical life.

The Unshared Unity and Uniqueness of The Almighty¹⁷ as a deity without other beings/entities sharing that status constituted the single most important component of the Divine Message. Not believing such has been the single, unforgivable sin in religions of Abrahamic Faith.¹⁸

Initially, this scheme of things was perhaps limited to 'statues' usually rendered as 'god' or 'deity.' However, different 'symbols and entities of worship' multiplied in whom people invested divine or quasi-divine qualities, supernatural power that they perceived may influence their lives and fortunes, and these comprised idols (Q.02:257), statues (Q.13:16), sculptures, images, relics, deified forces/objects of nature, angels, jinn (Q.07:27; 18:50), satan, human beings (Q.04:139; 05:51; 09:23-24) and satan with his relationship with humans and devils (Q.07:30; 08:73; 16:100), etc.

14 Their deeds based on corrupted belief that had been 'sent forward' during their lifetime for judgment in the life after this life.

15 In an extended form, it also applies to 'tombs' of dead saintly persons, their relics, or their progeny being worshiped like idols. This points to the 'pseudo polytheism' of those who worship Allah 'to be seen of men' (Q.02:264; 04:38, 142; 08:47), for they have, in effect, taken 'a worshipful entity' - other than 'Allah' - the only entity to be worshiped.

16 The term '*Ibadah*' is usually translated as 'worship' while it implies total obedience and submission to Allah, absolute surrender to the Will of Allah which, among other things, includes 'worship.' So I have used 'submission' instead of 'worship.'

17 This is the rendering of the Arabic term with root '*sharika*' meaning: partnership, to be a companion, be a partner, making association with Allah, be a polytheist or idolator. '*Mushrik*' means the one who practices '*shirk*' - gives associate to Allah, etc. Words with this root are employed in the Qur'an about 168 times.

18 The second commandment of the Ten Commandments commands to 'worship only One God, YHWH, and that there is no other god.' In addition, Q. 04:116 asserts:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

| Allah will never forgive the sin of ascribing any entity of worship to HIM - but may forgive other than that for whoever HE wants. In fact, whoever ascribes any entity of worship to Allah has indeed strayed far straying.

In order to ensure compliance to the forgoing 'four essentials' it was made a part of the faith that at the end of time everyone will stand accountable for one's faith, deeds, dealings and speech. And within the realm of a new existence at the time of resurrection, each will be awarded a permanent life of either difficulty, hardship and suffocation, or of joys and pleasure – hell or paradise.

The Qur'anic vision of Prophetic history is both cyclical and linear. It describes a cycle where a Prophet's repeated warnings to communities about their unjust practices and lack of faith in and absence of reverence to HIM remained mired in their disbelief and heedlessness, whereupon they were not spared of the Divine Punishment. The pattern then continued with another Prophet and another community.

A variety of expressions are used of the Divine Punishment. Those who belied OUR Messages perished through drowning - Q. 07: 64 –

وَأَعْرَفْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ

others by devastating earthquake - Q. 07:78 –

فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الرِّجْفَ

and yet others by showers of brimstone - Q. 07: 84 –

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا

Thereafter, WE rained down upon the rest of them a rainstorm of blasted stones. See also Q.11:82 and 15:74 - the stones of baked clay - *hijarat al-sijil* - were rained upon them. Q.11:67 and 54:31 mention 'الصَّيْحَةُ' a dreadful cry/blast;

صَاعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ

'a thunderbolt' (Q.41:17; 51:44), etc. These expressions were the successive dimensions of the severity of the same phenomenon – Allah^(EA)'s Wrath and Vengeance. Torah/ Genesis 19:24 states - 'Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah Sulphur and Fire from the Lord out of heaven.'

The Message they scorned remained alive and continues to influence the lives of millions.

While delivering their messages to their audience, the Prophets^(P) encountered persecution at the hands of established institutions – political, religious and social – and above all their own people especially the wealthy, the privileged and the powerful. But they bore them patiently.

The cycle of prophecy and prophethood, however, did not continue indefinitely. It stopped. The prevalent Muslim-Christian-Jewish tradition maintains, 'Prophecy is not to be renewed until the Messianic Era.'¹⁹

The actual number of Prophets who were chosen and assigned by The Almighty throughout human history has never been ascertained with full agreement. However, according to Islam, The Almighty assigned Messengers to every community. The Jewish tradition numbers them as many as 55 – 48 males and 7 females.²⁰ The Qur'an enumerates 26 – from Adam^(P) to Muhammad^(P)²¹. However, the Prophetic tradition suggests as many as 124,000²² that may have been assigned to the Planet Earth.

The revealed Divine Scriptures may be several but a few are identified and mentioned in the Qur'an. These comprised Suhuf to Abraham^(P), Torah/*Towrah* to Moses^(P)²³,

19 Messianic Era is the future period on Planet Earth in which the Messiah^(P) will reign and bring peace and harmony, an era free of strife and hardship, and without crime, war and poverty for the promotion of the knowledge of the Creator. The theme of the Messiah is encapsulated in two of the most famous scriptural passages - *Isaiah 2:4 and 11:69*. The Messiah must arrive before the year 6000 from the time of creation. The Hebrew calendar dates to the time of creation, making this correspond to the year 2240 on the Gregorian Calendar/CE. Christians believe that Jesus^(P) will return to fully establish the Kingdom of God - Nicene Creed. The legend of the origin of Antichrist (= Belial) set forth by Gunkel and Bousset is that the Babylonian Tiamat, queen of the abyss of darkness and flood, aided by the powers of her infernal domain, rebels against the higher gods, but is defeated by the son of the gods, Marduk; and it gives rise to a human incarnation in the shape of the Antichrist with superhuman powers, the man who sets himself up as equal to God. The idea of Antichrist has made its way beyond the confines of Judaism and Christianity and has entered various literatures of the world—only, however, through the medium of Christianity. In Arabian literature, Antichrist is called '*Al Dajjal*' (the liar), or more fully, '*Al Masih al-Dajjal*' (the false Messiah). The name shows its Christian-Syriac source; for '*dajjal*' denotes 'lying' almost exclusively in the Christian dialect of Aramaic. In the Muslim account, *Dajjal* is really the Jewish pseudo-Messiah, and is slain by Jesus^(P) after he had long maintained his imposture. Of the numerous details concerning him, it is interesting to note that he is represented as a one-eyed monster. Muslims follow the Christian tradition. They state the *Mahdi*^(R) will arrive first, then Jesus^(P) will come and proclaim that the true leader is the Mahdi. A war will be fought, the *Dajjal* against the Mahdi and Jesus^(P). This war will mark the of the coming of the Last Hour. After Jesus^(P) slays the *Dajjal*, he will bear witness that Islam is the true and final word from Allah^(EA) to humanity. He will live for several years, marry, have children, and will be buried next to the Prophet Muhammad^(P) under the Green Dome in the Masjid Nabawi, Medeenah. Allah^(EA) Knows best.

20 The Jewish Prophets: Females - Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah (mother of Shmuel), Avigail (who became a wife of King David), Huldah (from the time of Jeremiah), Esther. Males - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Pinchas, Elkanah, Eli, Samuel, Gad, Nossan, King David, King Solomon, Aidoen the Golah, Micha Ben Yamla, Ovadiah, Achiah Hashiloni, Yehu Ben Hanani, Azaryah Ben Oded, Haziell from Bnei Masni, Eliezer his cousin, Morishah, Hoshea, Amos, Micha, Elijah, Elisha, Yonah Ben Amitai, Yeshayah, Joel, Nachum, Habakuk, Zephaniah, Uriah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Baruch, Neriah, Sharyah, Machsiyah, Hagai, Zechariah, Malachi, Mordechai. Sources: *Encyclopedia Judaica* «Sanhedrin». Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971; *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1980.

21 Adam (Adam), Idrees (Enoch), Nuḥ (Noah), Hud (Hud), Saleh (Shaleh), Ibrahim (Abraham), Lut (Lot), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya'qub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Ayyub (Job), Shu'ayb (Jethro), Musa (Moses), Haroon (Aaron), Dhu'l kifl (Ezekiel), Da'ud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Ilyas (Elijah), Al-Yas'a (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Zakariyya (Zachariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), 'Isa (Jesus) and Muhammad - peace be upon them all.

22 Quotation from Musnad Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, narrated by Abu Umamah al-Bahili relating a conversation that Abu Dharr^(R) had with The Prophet^(P). However, most scholars consider this hadith *da'if*. See islamweb.net/fatwa/.... Given that all numbers are correct, I am inclined to suggest that 124,000 would have been the number of Prophets^(P) assigned to the entire humanity spread on Planet Earth. Within this, 55 plus 3 = 58 may have been specific to the region of Bilad Ash-Sham of the time Prophet Abraham^(P) and Prophet Muhammad^(P), i.e., today's Arab Middle East.

23 Rabbinical Judaism suggests that there was an extended period of time after Prophet Moses^(P) – when he died by a 'divine kiss' at the age of 120 in 1271 BCE (the date is disputed) - other Prophets were assigned to them and so was Talmud.

Psalms/Zabur to David^(P), New Testament/*Injeel* to Jesus^{(P)24}, and the Qur'an to Muhammad^(P). These represented written records of the revelations that were grouped together and became a significant component of these Scriptures.

Central Issues to The Prophethood

Islam as presented in the Qur'an²⁵ and the Prophetic Tradition²⁶ represents a continuation of the major tenets of the previous Abrahamic religions: Judaism and Christianity. As all of them appeared in the same geographical zone with similar socio-cultural environment and recognize almost the same Prophets.²⁷ All three religions claim to be monotheistic and believe in Divine Revelation in which a contact between The Almighty and human-Prophets takes place through revelation. They focus on the ultimate relationship between the believers themselves on one hand, and with their Rabb – The Lord Creator and Sustainer on the other. This is why they emphasise the eternal relationship between The Creator and HIS creation in the worldly life, in the life after this life, at the Time of Final Judgement, and in Paradise and Hell.

Islam repeatedly emphasises that there is no concept of original sin (as the one in Christianity), nor is there any need of a vicarious atonement. The Prophet Muhammad^(P) emphasised that all humans are born sinless, but human weakness leads to sin. Thus, salvation in Islam cannot be attained by 'grace through faith in Prophet Jesus' Christ^(P) (Ephesians, 2:8-9/Salvation), but can only be achieved through simultaneous professing of faith and performance of good deeds, speech and dealings of righteousness. The concept of the faith is a composite one in Islam. It includes faith in Allah, His prophets, His revelations His angels, His absolute power to decree in all matters, and the life of hereafter. Deeds of righteousness is also a composite concept in Islam. It consists of both acts of worship and performance of Allah's commandments which include all possible manners of good deeds and etiquette such as feeding the hungry, helping the poor, taking care of the orphans, keeping anger under control, being forgiving and merciful, being good to neighbours, speaking gently and the list goes on.

Thus, personal righteousness must outweigh personal unrighteousness/sin at the Time of Final Judgment. Q.23:101-103 makes it abundantly clear. It reads:

فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ

24 See Q. 07:142 – 145; 20: 22 -77; 27: 07- 30; 28: 07-08.

25 Qur'an: The Sacred Text of Islam in Arabic comprises 114 Surahs/Chapters - revered as the Divine Word of Allah^(EA), dictated to Prophet Muhammad^(P) by the Arch-angel Gabriel^(P), and accepted as the foundation of Islamic thought, law, religion, culture, and politics.

26 Prophetic Tradition (Hadith): A large body of texts that involves a range of laws, principles, and instructions taken from the sayings, actions, and approvals (consents) of the Prophet Muhammad^(P).

27 Jews, Christians, and Muslims recognize almost the same prophets; however, Jews only recognise Moses^(P) and former prophets, Christians recognize Jesus^(P) and Moses^(P) but not Muhammad^(P), and Muslims recognize Jesus^(P), Moses^(P) and, of course, Muhammad^(P) and former Prophets.

Scales will be set up and whoever's weight of deeds, speech and dealings of righteousness is heavy in the scales, those – they will be the successful; but whoever's weight of deeds, speech and dealings of righteousness is light in the scales, those – they will have lost everything, including their souls. They are going to remain in the Hell forever.

Islam encourages its followers to adhere to ethical and moral values such as truth, justice and righteousness. As in Judaism, Islam sets detailed principles and laws that govern the mutual relationships among Muslims and with non-Muslims in times of peace and war. In many instances, the Qur'an provides historic insights about ancient communities in order to set an example for learning lesson(s).

Islam considers both the New Testament/*Injeel* and Torah to be genuine revelations from The Almighty notwithstanding that these Divine Texts have been subject to revisions and alteration over the centuries. For this reason, The Almighty assigned the Prophet Muhammad^(P) as the last Prophet and the last revelation to reintroduce the final revelation which was written down and remains unchanged since the Prophet Muhammad^(P)'s time.

The notion of The Almighty in Islam as in Christianity is that of the Universal Entity while in Judaism it is emphasised that the notion is exclusively focused on one nation - *بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ* | Descendants/Tribes of Prophet Jacob^(P).

The three Abrahamic religions generally portray the concept of 'Divine Entity' in the Old and New Testaments and the Qur'an in terms of metaphorical rather than literal language. In fact, one could argue that a believer's knowledge about HIM is deficient, thus the metaphorical language can be the optimal tool to employ in religious discourse when referring to the Divine Entity.

Metaphorical language possesses an ideological significance which should be investigated, and this can be achieved by showing how the metaphoric representation of a particular topic invokes differences in power, social practices, principles, thoughts and beliefs. Additionally, a religious discourse involves a system of ideas and beliefs which can evoke ideological implications. Hence, metaphors are used in religious discourse to associate some aspects of people's experiential and social knowledge of the real world and society with the system of beliefs and values that their religion encompasses. Metaphorical language facilitates understanding of the nature of The Almighty by directing the perception to HIS absolute intrinsic qualities. For example, The Almighty is conventionally represented as 'father' in Christianity and Judaism, and as 'light' in Islam. These images draw attention to symbolic qualities of the Divine Entity such as His Power, His Providential Care, His Indispensability and His Perfection.

One of the central understandings of Prophethood is related to the Prophets' humanness. The Prophets could not have a separate physical creation than other people's lives; they would walk, eat and drink just like everyone. Accordingly, the Prophets did not transcend normal human boundaries while conveying the Message. In other words, the institution of Prophethood and Prophecy/Revelation did not make them a deity or ascribed divinity to them.

Consider: Q. 18:110.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا
وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

Say *O The Prophet*: ‘I am just a human being like you. It is being revealed on to me that your Elah/Allah is One Elah/Allah – *The Only*. So whoever looks forward with hope to meeting his Rabb - *The Lord*, then let him practice righteousness, and not ascribe ny entity of *worship* in the worship of his Rabb - *The Lord*.’ Q. 41:06 repeats the theme as –

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ

Even in Judeo-Christian understanding were instances of deification: Uzair/Ezra was often semi-deified after Babylonia and was given the epithet of one like ‘son of God’.²⁸ The concept of ‘son of God’ or the divinity of Christ is also a central belief in Christianity.²⁹

The Qur’an was revealed via Archangel Gabriel^(P) to the Prophet Muhammad^(P) during the twenty-three years of his Prophetic Mission on different occasions during night and day, in both cities of Makkah and Madeenah³⁰, in such a manner that, although the words of the Qur’an came out of his mouth, its Author was Allah^(EA). It was Allah^(EA) speaking, not merely to the Prophet^(P) in 7th CE century Arabia, but from all eternity to all humankind.

Allah^(EA) Speaks directly in the Qur’an³¹, and the Prophet Muhammad^(P) is seen as a recipient to whom the Book was simply ‘sent down’... which is most significant in considering the historical basis for Islamic beliefs.³²

While there is a general and popular belief in the Divine Descent of the Qur’an, there does not appear to be a single understanding of the nature of the Qur’an as Divine

28 While Q. 09:30 refers to Uzair/Ezra as being revered as the ‘son of God’ by the Descendants of Prophet Jacob, the Qur’an does not include him in the list of Prophets.

29 This doctrine came to be accepted post Romanisation of Christianity in the 3rd Century CE when the emperor Constantine embraced Christianity and made it a state religion in 313 CE.

30 Out of the total 114 Surahs, 85 are reported to be of Makkan origin and 29 are of Medinan origin. The Medinan Surahs are the longer and comprise a much larger part of the Qur’an.

31 Direct address like: O The Believers, O The Messenger, O The Followers of Former Scriptures, O The Disbelievers, O The Descendants of Jacob, O The Wives of The Messenger, etc.

32 See (i) Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “General Introduction,” in Seyyed Hossein Nasr (General Editor), *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Harper One, 2015). (ii) Farid Esack, *The Qur’an: A User’s Guide: A Guide to its Key Themes, History and Interpretation* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2005). (iii) M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, “Qur’an and hadith,” in Tim Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). (iv) Gerard Bowering, “Qur’an,” in Gerhard Bowering, Patricia Crone, Wadad Kadi, Devin J. Stewart, Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Maham Mirza (eds.), *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 447-456: 448. (v) Carl W. Ernst, *How to Read the Qur’an: A New Guide, With Select Translations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). (vi) Fred Donner, “Islam’s Origins: Myth and Material Evidence,” Lecture Delivered at The American Academy in Berlin, 31 January 2019, accessed online 3/1/2019: <https://www.americanacademy.de/videoaudio/islams-originsmyth-and-material-evidence>.

Speech, Divine Writing, Divine Inspiration, Revelatory Recitation, or Scripture. Among the various ‘models of revelation’ that developed in the formative and classical periods as well as contemporary thinking³³ there has been a great variance about the source and modes of revelation, and the theological status of the earthly manifestations of revelation – the Arabic Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunnah, etc.

Muslim beliefs about the revelatory nature of the Arabic Qur'an cover a vast spectrum. They range from considering the Qur'an to be Allah's uncreated and eternal verbatim speech; a pre-existent scripture inscribed in heaven at the beginning of time; Allah's created speech generated in real-time in direct response to historical events; a temporally created verbal expression of Allah's eternal non-verbal speech; the

Prophet Muhammad^(P)'s divinely inspired words composed in response to his own circumstances; and a revelatory discourse of symbols and parables devised by Allah^(EA) to represent higher level spiritual truths.

The Qur'an in the form of a pre-conceived ‘scripture’ is Allah^(EA)'s literal, eternal, and verbatim word; that this Qur'anic ‘scripture’ was verbally dictated to Prophet Muhammad^(P) in the Arabic language by the Archangel Gabriel^(P); and that the Prophet^(P) recited this Qur'an verbatim while having no agency in the revelatory process.

The oft-repeated claim made in academic literature that Muslims generally regard the Arabic Qur'an as Allah^(EA)'s literal eternal speech or words – according to which Allah^(EA)'s Speech as eternal sounds and letters is ontologically identical to the Arabic Qur'an.

The Qur'an tells its audience that all Prophets of Allah – The Almighty were assigned to their respective communities where it employs the term ‘community/قَوْمٌ’. And they all addressed their people as O My Community يَا قَوْمُ – be it Prophet Noah^(P), Prophet Hud^(P), Prophet Saleh^(P), Prophet Sho'yab^(P), Prophet Abraham^(P), Prophet Lot^(P), Prophet Moses^(P) or Prophet Aaron^(P). Prophet Jesus^(P) always addressed the Descendants of Prophet Jacob/بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ.³⁴ But Prophet Muhammad^(P), the last Prophet, was assigned to all mankind till the end of time. His address to the audience was/is/will always be يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ/O the People – *people of the world!*

In order to add emphasis on the point, Q. 07:158 asserts:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَخِي الَّذِي يُوْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

And now say to them, O The Prophet! ‘O The People! The People of Torah and the

33 See Khalil Andani, 2020. Revelation in Islam – Qur'anic, Sunni and Ismaili Perspectives. Ph. D. Dissertation. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University.

34 See for example - Prophet Noah^(P) Q. 07:59, 60; 11:28-30; 23:23; 71:02. Prophet Saleh^(P) Q.07.73, 79; 11.61, 62, 64. Prophet Hud^(P) Q.07.65, 67; 11:50-52. Prophet Shoa'yab^(P) Q. 07:85; 11:84-85, 88-89, 92-93. Prophet Abraham^(P) Q. 06:78. Prophet Lot^(P) Q.07:80;11:78. Prophet Moses^(P) Q. 02:54; 20:86. Prophet Aaron^(P) Q. 20:90.

People of Injeel/New Testament! Indeed, I am the Messenger of Allah assigned to you – all of you. *I am the Messenger of The One to WHOM belongs the sovereignty over the celestial realm and the terrestrial world.* There is no entity of worship *and can never be* except HIM – *alone*, HE gives life as well as death. So believe in Allah and in HIS Messenger - the Ummay Prophet Muhammad, who *himself* believes in Allah and in HIS Words *revealed through the Divine Scriptures.* And follow him *obediently and diligently!* Thus, you may be guided' *aright and blessed.*

Cessation of Prophecy & The Prophethood

The Descendants of Prophet Abraham^(P) branched into two: Descendants of Prophet Ishmael^(P) and Descendants of Prophet Isaac^(P) بني إسرائيل. The first ended with Prophet Muhammad^(P) in 632 CE. The second ended with Prophet Malachi^(P) in 516 BCE.³⁵

The Descendants of 'Imran, connecting upstream with Prophet Isaac^(P) started with Prophet Zacharia^(P) through Prophet John the Baptist/Yahya^(P) and ended with Prophet Jesus^(P) son of Mary, who 'disappeared' sometimes around 30 CE.³⁶

Malachi^(P) is believed to be the last Prophet in his branch of being a descendant of Prophet Isaac^(P)³⁷, and so is Prophet Jesus^(P) in his branch of Imran, and Prophet Muhammad^(P) from the side Prophet Ismael^(P). The cession of prophecy³⁸ to each happened in sequence, or gradually over a time of approximately a thousand year: 516 BCE, 30 CE, and finally 632 CE.

Thus, overall, the Prophet Muhammad^(P) was the last and final Prophet through whom Allah^(EA) spoke, after whom there is to be no other. This finality of the Prophet^(P), and consequently, cession of Prophecy and Prophethood may also be understood through Q.33:40.

35 His Divine Mission was assigned during the Persian period. He authored the Book of Malachi which constitutes the last Book of Tanakh.

36 Born in 4 BCE with the name of Yeshua, he spoke Aramaic, and 'disappeared' sometime somewhere between 30-36 CE. The Christian belief holds that 'he was raised up to the heavens' – a perception that seeped on to Muslims and it became a part of their 'faith' too.

37 According to a prevalent Jewish tradition, Malachi was the last prophet (see, for example, Tosefta Sotah 3:3; Yoma 9b; Sanhedrin 11a). Even if Malachi were the last of the biblical prophets, there is no statement at the end of his book or anywhere else in the Bible stating categorically that prophecy had ceased. For example, Nehemiah battled false prophets (Neh. 6:5–7, 11–13) but did not negate the existence of prophecy in principle. Nevertheless, the tradition that Malachi was the last prophet opened the interpretive possibility that Malachi was conscious of the impending end of prophecy.

38 The traditional Jewish thought as to why prophecy ceased suggests three factors: (i) Over 200 years before Malachi, the Prophet Amos predicted that a time is coming—declares my Lord God—when I will send a famine upon the land: not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord. Men shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it (Amos 8:11–12). (ii) Destruction of the Temple. Ezekiel chapters 8–10 describe a vision wherein God shows the Prophet the rampant idolatry in Jerusalem. God's Presence abandons the Temple and goes into exile. Radak (on Ezek. 9:3) explains that the absence of God's Presence ultimately contributed to the disappearance of Prophecy. According to Malbim, there no longer was any need for Prophecy since the message had already been given through earlier Prophets. (iii) Metaphysical Spiritual Transition. Based on the rabbinic chronology, the Greek Empire began immediately following the end of the Biblical period, so this time frame would synchronize with Malachi. Following this chronological assumption, R. Zadok HaKohen of Lublin observed that a metaphysical transition to an age of reason occurred in Israel and in Greece at the same time.

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

O The Faithful! Know that the Prophet Muhammad is not the father of any of your men,³⁹ but he is the Messenger of Allah, and he is also the Seal - the Last - of the Prophets.⁴⁰ Indeed, Allah is always Aware of everything.

The cessation of prophecy and prophethood left behind a legacy of the Eternal Divine Word – The Qur'an. Q. 02:106 declares:-

مَا نُنْسخُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنْسىهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلِهَا ۗ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Whenever WE *withdraw or cancel* an Ayah *altogether in terms of religious obligation sent to an earlier Prophet* or cause it to be forgotten,⁴¹ WE replace it *later* with a better one than it, or one like it.⁴² Do you not know that Allah Manifests Sovereignty over all existence!?⁴³ And also Q. 07:185 -

39 Reference to Zayd bin Harithah^(R), Prophet^(P)'s helper, whom he called 'my son' according to the customs then and now, and that such addresses do not create biological relationship. Nevertheless, The Prophet^(P) did have 3 sons who passed away in their infancy. Thus, his descendancy discontinued during his lifetime by Divine Decree.

40 The Sacred Arabic Text expression of '*khatam*' may have a dual connotation: (i) the last end of the Divine Prophets, just as a seal - '*khatam*' - marks the end of a document; (ii) '*khatam*' may also be synonymous with '*khitaam*', meaning the end or conclusion. Thus, The Qur'an and The Prophet Muhammad^(P) both must be regarded as the culmination and the end of all Divine Revelations and the Institution of Prophethood. See also Q.05:48. Allah^(EA) blessed him^(P) with sons, but did not let anyone survive so as to put a 'seal' on the lineage, lest someone claims Prophethood. Therefore, any individual claiming to be a prophet after The Prophet Muhammad^(P) is not accepted as a Divine Messenger by the Muslims.

41 This Ayah may be considered together with Q.13:39; 16:101; 22:52.

42 This Ayah is generally taken to mean that some Ayat of The Qur'an were abrogated and later substituted. It is said that the number of such Ayat may have been between 05 and 550. I believe that abrogation is not a part of the phenomenon for the Divine Revelations, but supersession is. The Qur'an is Divine! Its text is sacred! It is not subject to abrogation/amendments. I perceive it as self-defeating argument that 'process of abrogation contributes a great deal to Islam's dynamism for preaching Islam and transforming people into true and perfect Muslims (Unal and others). In fact, this Ayah was in response to a doubt which the Jews tried to implant in the minds of Muslims. If both the earlier Scriptures and The Qur'an were revelations from Allah^(EA), why was it – they asked – that the injunctions found in the earlier Scriptures had been replaced by new ones in The Qur'an?' This Ayah – Q.02:106 - refers to all Divine Revelations contained in the Testaments of Noah^(P), Abraham^(P), Moses^(P) and Jesus^(P). Every successive revelation may have annulled some or certain parts of its predecessor Revelation, notwithstanding that basics remained unchanged, namely, Unshared Unity, Uniqueness and Divinity of Allah^(EA) and the framework for conduct conforming to the Divine Principles of equity and justice. Thus, 'cause it to be forgotten' perfectly fits with all former Divine Scriptures. The Torah revealed on to Moses^(P) and The Injeel/New Testament revealed onto Jesus^(P) have been 'caused to be forgotten.' What exists is a human compilation by apostles of Moses^(P) and Jesus^(P). The Qur'an annulled certain parts of The Torah and brought others which were 'better.' Consider punishments for murder and adultery. The Torah decrees death by stoning for both. The Injeel/New Testament decrees 'Those who kill by sword must die by sword'. The Qur'an decrees a 3-step approach for victims of murder, namely, forgiveness, compromise with blood money, murder for murder. In case of adultery, the Torah sentences death by stoning while The Qur'an commands 100 lashes in public. And so forth. Matters of certain 'religious' practices allegedly associated with Islam and The Qur'an may be related to culture or tradition of a society. It may be pertinent to bear in mind that certain sayings attributed to Prophet Jesus^(P) in Matthew 5:21-48 and 15:10-20 'alter' various commandments of the Torah, and the remarks at Mark 7:19, which declares all foods 'clean' despite the Torah's explicit dietary restrictions. And so are the injunctions pertaining to inheritance and testimony in the court of law, etc. See Badr's 'Essence of Islam.'

43 '*Nansakh/Mansukh*' of the Sacred Arabic Text coming from root '*n-s-kh*' – appearing four times in The Qur'an – Q.02:106; 07:154; 22:52; 45:29. It is usually rendered as 'abrogation' though it would have been more appropriate to be rendered as 'to erase' or 'to obliterate' or even 'duplicate' or 'forgotten.' There is a consideration that '*naskh*' may relate to the replacement of one legal ruling with another that is instituted or

فَبَايَ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ.....

So in what *other kind of a Discourse*⁴⁴ would they *possibly* believe after this *Qur'an* – if they do not believe in this now?

The Qur'an is making an important point here that all the previous Divine Scriptures - whether sent down on to Prophet Abraham^(P), or Prophet Moses^(P) or Prophet Jesus^(P) - are superseded by the Qur'an. This is the Final and Eternal Word of Allah^(EA) to entire humanity to the End of Time.

Once the Prophets passed away and the Divine Revelations came to an end, the religious authority shifted to the learned and wise/sages. The revealed texts were interpreted and explained by canonical texts. Jews were guided by various forms of Rabbinic literature, the Christians revered the Gospels compiled by Prophet Jesus^(P)' apostles, and the Muslims resorted to the Sunnah and Ahadith of the Prophet Muhammad^(P).

Conclusion

Although Prophecy ceased with Prophet Muhammad^(P) some 1,500 years ago, the underlying spiritual struggle continues to manifest in contemporary society by existence of a 'compelling pull' toward spiritual and holy men that accord near-infallibility to the people.

Though that appeal may be understandable, it must be remembered that these individuals are not prophets and therefore do not have access to certain divine knowledge that many accord to them; and in an age lacking prophecy we have a far greater responsibility to learn the Qur'an and pray, and to take that spiritual energy to infuse every aspect of our lives with sanctity.



revealed later. There is a dominant perception among Muslim scholars that certain Ayat were 'abrogated' and later substituted. I perceive it as a self-defeating argument that 'process of abrogation' contributes a great deal to 'Islam's dynamism for preaching Islam and transforming people into true and perfect Muslims.' In fact, this Ayah was in response to a doubt which the Jews tried to implant in the minds of Muslims. If the earlier Scriptures and the Qur'an were revelations from The Almighty, why was it - they asked - that the Injunctions found in the earlier Scriptures had been replaced by ones in The Qur'an? This particular Ayah - 02:106 - refers to all Divine Revelations contained in the Testaments of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus. Every revelation may have annulled some or certain parts of its predecessor Revelation, notwithstanding that basics remained unchanged, namely, Unshared Unity, Uniqueness and Divinity of Allah - The One and Only God of everyone.

44 The Sacred Arabic Text uses the term of '*hadith*' meaning 'report;' it may also be translated as 'proclamation,' 'discourse,' or simply 'message' - but here it implies 'The Divine Writ.'

Images from the Prophet's Islamic Welfare State - Short Analysis in Pakistan's Perspective¹

Abstract

In theory, social welfare encompasses various policies and interventions designed to improve the overall welfare of individuals, families, and communities. It includes economic, health, educational, housing, income maintenance and social support systems that contribute to people's well-being, and reduce inequality, poverty, and social exclusion. These programs play a crucial role in supporting poor, develop mentally challenged, and disadvantaged groups in society. Policies may also prevent social disintegration and maintain equilibrium.

The Prophet Muhammad's model of a welfare state, established on Divine Guidelines and exemplified in his lifetime and the early Islamic community of Medeenah, is an idealized concept. It recognized that true well-being encompasses all dimensions of human life emphasizing governance, justice, equality, and compassion as well as moral, spiritual, social wellbeing and political dimensions for all members of society. While its principles are universally relevant, this paper considers its applicability in Pakistan's perspective.

Keywords: Allah, The Qur'an, the Prophet, Madeenah, social-welfare, welfare state.

Theoretical Perspectives

Social welfare has evolved over centuries, influenced by cultural, economic, and political factors. Early forms of social welfare included charity, religious institutions, and mutual aid societies. The emergence of the modern welfare state in the 20th Century marked a significant shift toward government-led social programs.² This perspective

1 The paper derives its intellectual content from the PowerPoint Presentation titled 'Images from the Prophet's Islamic State' by Badr Hashemi. Charlotte. 2022.

2 In the Western perspective, historically the idea of modern welfare state and social welfare was introduced in the 17th and 18th centuries during era of industrial revolution after successful renaissance in Europe especially in Britain. Practically it was brought into practice in the 20th century after 'Great Depression' in Europe to re-establish and reconstruct the European economy and society. See Chan Joseph, "Giving priority to the worst off: A Confucian Perspective on the social welfare", Confucianism in the Modern World, (eds.), Denial Bell and Hahm Chaibong) (Cambridge: University Press, 2003). The Great Depression of (1929-1939) was like a natural disaster. It wiped out millions of investors in USA and Europe in this era. See Shaprio, Willaim E, the New Book of Knowledge (Danbury: Grolier Inc., 1983), 13: 221. Goetz, Philip W, ed., The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (London; Britannica Inc., 1983), 17: 614. The New Book of Knowledge addresses this issue as; "The need for such a system (Social Security and Welfare) become sharper in the 1930's, during the Great Depression. Millions of people lost their jobs and many faced starvation. This experience helped bring about a national security system under the Social Security Act which was passed in 1935 (USA)." Now many versions of welfare states have been introduced in the west. The basic duty of welfare state is to compensate the poor and needy people of the society. This concept was adopted in the West in the 20th Century. According to a statement of the

views social welfare as a fundamental human right; thus everyone has the right to access essential services, regardless of one's socio-economic status.

The concept encompasses various activities and interventions designed to improve the overall welfare of individuals, families, and communities. It includes economic, health, educational, housing and social support systems that contribute to people's well-being. It seeks to reduce inequality, poverty, and social exclusion. Policies may also prevent social disintegration and maintain equilibrium.

The classical theory of social welfare, rooted in the works of Adam Smith and other economists of the 18th and 19th centuries,³ posits that the free market is the most effective mechanism for achieving social welfare. This theory assumes that individuals acting in their own self-interest will lead to socially beneficial outcomes, such as economic growth and innovation.

Consequently, the government's role in social welfare should be minimal, limited to protecting property rights, enforcing contracts, and providing public goods that the market cannot supply. This *laissez-faire*⁴ approach is based on the belief that the market is self-correcting and that government intervention would only disrupt the natural order of things.

However, classical theory has been criticized for its failure to account for market failures and the unequal distribution of wealth and power, as well as its lack of attention to social justice and human rights, as it prioritizes economic growth and efficiency over social and political equality.

In fact, social welfare draws from diverse theoretical perspectives, each shaping policy design and implementation. Balancing rights, utility, and societal needs remains an ongoing challenge. As societies evolve, the concept and application of social welfare continue to adapt to changing contexts.

New Encyclopaedia of Britannica; "In the 20th century the concept of state was ranged from anarchism in which the state was deemed unnecessarily and even harmful in that it operated in some form of correction to the welfare state, in which the government was held to be responsible for the survival of its members, guaranteeing subsistence to those lacking it." One thing which is very interesting that West is not founder to introduce a welfare state but now it has become very advance in social welfare, welfare state and society. It is a momentous fact that Islam had taken practical initiative for establishing the first welfare state and society under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdallah (CE 570-632).

3 Besides Adam Smith, other key figures associated with the classical theory of social welfare include Jeremy Bentham, David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and Carl Menger.

4 *Laissez-faire* is a policy or doctrine of minimum governmental interference in the economic affairs of individuals and society. It is based on the idea that people should be free to buy and sell goods and services without too many laws and rules.

Divine Orientation⁵

The Qur'an provides detailed guidance on justice, compassion, honesty, kindness, and ethical behaviour in various aspects of life. It condemns corruption, bribery, and dishonesty, urging believers to uphold integrity in all aspects of life.

The concept of justice is rooted in Allah's Divine nature – Q. 04:40 emphasizes the importance of treating others fairly and avoiding oppression.⁶ The Prophet quoted Allah as saying, 'O My Servants, I have forbidden injustice upon myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not commit injustice.' This connection between human behaviour and Allah's sacred attributes encourages us to emulate virtues such as compassion, generosity, and advocacy for the oppressed.

Q. 70:23-35 is the one that presents a summary of the Qur'anic social perspective⁷ beside Q. 93:09-10; 92:04-10, 18-21; 90:13-17; 89:17-20; 76:08-09; 61:02-03; 49:13, and 23:01-11, etc. Q. 02:177 declares that only virtue in Islam is being righteous⁸ - not race or nation - it explains righteousness as:

‘.... Righteousness/Piety is believing in Allah *of Absolute Unity and Uniqueness*, and the Last Hour, and the angels and the Scriptures, and the Prophets; giving money, despite one's love of it, to the relatives, and the orphans, and the poor, and

5 The Qur'an, New Testament, and Torah share fundamental principles that guide believers toward practicing righteousness, upright living and moral conduct. While they may differ in specific details, they converge on universal moral values: compassion, justice, honesty, and care for others. Believers across these religious traditions strive to live by these Divine Injunctions, seeking guidance from their respective sacred texts. The Qur'an provides detailed guidance on justice, compassion, honesty, kindness, and ethical behaviour in various aspects of life. It condemns corruption, bribery, and dishonesty, urging believers to uphold integrity in all aspects of life. Central themes in the New Testament are compassion, forgiveness, honesty, integrity, and moral living. Its teachings emphasize love for one's neighbour (Matthew 22:39) and criticizes hypocrisy, greed, and exploitation. The Torah (Five Books of Moses) emphasizes honouring parents, avoiding theft, false witness, and coveting. It provides detailed laws on ethical conduct, social justice, and fair treatment. It emphasizes compassion for the vulnerable, including widows, orphans, and strangers. It contains guidelines for ethical living, including prohibitions against murder, adultery/same-gender relationship, and theft, etc.

6 Q. 04:40 - Indeed, Allah is never unfair to *anyone even* by as much as a speck's weight *of wrong*, while if there be a good deed *that one has done*, He will multiply its *reward*, and *on the top of this*, He will also grant an immense reward from Himself *beyond what onemay have merited*.

7 الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَعْلُومٌ لِلْسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بَيَّوْمَ الدِّينِ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ إِلَّا عَلَى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ فَمَنْ ابْتَغَى وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ . أُولَئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُكْرَّمُونَ They persevere in their Salat/Prayers and devotional obligations, and in whose wealth there would always be a rightful share of charity/alms - for the bagger and the deprived – the one who would have been deprived of his livelihood, and those who would affirm the truth of the Time of Judgment, and those who would endeavour to seek Countenance of Allah in every manner as they are fearful of the punishment of their Rabb - The Lord Supreme. Indeed, no one can feel wholly secure from the punishment of their Rabb - The Lord Supreme. And those who would guard the chastity of their private parts, from all except their own spouses and those whom you rightfully acquired in the qital/battle – a 7th century practice when the prisoners of war will be taken as servant - they would not be blamed, but whoever would seek ways other than those, it is then those who will be overstepping the limits. However, those who would faithfully fulfil their promises, contracts, trusts and oaths, and stand firmly by their testimonies in the court of law, and take due care of their Salat/Prayers and their devotional obligations - they all will dwell in Paradise, highly honoured.

8 See Illustration 1.

the travellers *in need*, and the beggars, and for *freeing the captives* and paying out the *Zakat/annual charity*, and fulfilling their *promises, contracts and agreements* they have given, and enduring adversity and hardship in the time of peril...’⁹

Islam places great emphasis on helping those in need. Almsgiving (Zakat) is a pillar of faith. Believers are obligated to give a portion of their wealth to support the poor and needy. Q. 09:60 states: The *Zakat/annual charity* is meant only for: the poor and the needy, and those administering it, and those whose hearts *you* wish to win over *to Islam*, and the freeing of captives, and those over-burdened with debt, and the Cause of Allah, and the traveler *in need of help*. *These are the Orders* by Allah.

Furthermore, Q. 70:24-25 states:

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

‘and in whose wealth there would *always* be a *rightful share of charity/alms* for the bagger and the deprived – *the one who would have been deprived of his livelihood*. This reinforces the idea that wealth is not solely for personal gain but also for the welfare of others².

Additionally, those who spend their wealth in charity, both openly and secretly, are promised reward from Allah – Q. 02:274 states:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Those who give away in alms of their wealth, throughout the night and throughout the day privately and publicly, for them - their reward will be with their Lord. And neither will befall them *any* fear nor will they grieve *in the Hereafter*.

Q. 02:153 encourages believers to seek help through patience and prayer. Patience in adversity and compassion toward others are essential qualities. It states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

O The Faithful! Seek *Divine* help through perseverance and prayers *against hardships and tribulations, and in fulfilling the obligations of Allah and HIS creation*. Indeed, Allah is *always* with those who endure *in hard times with perseverance and prayers*.

Furthermore, acts of kindness, whether in times of ease or hardship, are highly regarded. Q. 03:134 states:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

9 English Translation and Paraphrasing of the Sacred Arabic Text of the Holy Qur'an throughout this Paper is taken from 'Allah Speaks to you in The Qur'an' by Badr Hashemi. 2024. ISBN 979-8-218-97245-5.

‘...those who give out *in alms* in *their* good times as well as in *their* bad times, and who restrain their temper and pardon *other* people's *faults*. And Allah loves *such* people who seek excellence in virtue.’

The vision of equality in the Qur'an calls for equal human dignity in social, economic, and spiritual spheres of life. Embracing divine justice means advocating for fairness and kindness toward all.

The Qur'an explicitly condemns bribery which corrupts society and leads to loss of rights, as well as corruption, emphasizing their detrimental impact on society. Q. 02:188 states:

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

And do not devour one another's possessions, *property and assets* by unscrupulous means and do not bribe the officials *in authority*, intending to usurp *rightful* possession of the others sinfully, knowing *well* what you are doing.¹⁰

Q. 83:01-03

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ

sternly rebuke those who engage in fraud by providing less than the rightful amount during business transactions. Dishonest dealers will face humiliation and punishment on the Day of Judgment for their cheating: ‘Woe to the defrauders. Those who, when they take a measure from people, take full measure, yet when they give them a measure or weight, give less than is due.’

Q. 06:152 emphasizes fair treatment in business dealings and prohibits reducing the rights of others. It reads:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدُوا ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۚ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Do not draw *anywhere* near to the property/*wealth* of the orphan, but for betterment of *his/her* interest, until he/*she* attains his/*her* full maturity, and give in full measure, and

10 The Hadith reinforce Qur'anic injunctions against cheating, deception, and dishonesty. Bribery is considered a grave sin, and those who accept bribes consume ill-gotten gains. See also Q. 05:42, 62-63. They are willing to be listeners to the lies and falsehood, and consumers of what is unlawful. | سَمِعُوا لِكُذِّبِ الْكَلْبِ لِلشَّيْءِ وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكْلِهِمُ الشَّحْتَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ لَوْلَا يُنَهَاهُمْ الرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَخْبَارُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ الْإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ الشَّحْتَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ |

And you can see most of them rushing into sin and transgression and consuming whatever is the unlawful. Evil indeed is what they are doing! Why is it not that the rabbis and scholars forbid them from sinful utterances and from consuming of what is the unlawful? Evil indeed is what they practice.

full weight, in justice. WE do not burden anyone beyond his/her capacity *to establish justice*. And whenever you speak, then be just, even though it be *against* a family member, and fulfil Allah's Covenant.

Q. 17:35 establishes that cheating in commercial transactions by giving less than due, through fraud or dishonesty, is a major sin in Islam. It reads:

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ إِذَا كِلْتُمْ وَزَنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

And fill up the measure *to your customers* whenever you measure *for them*, and weigh with accurate scales. That is *only* fair and better in the end *for success in the Hereafter*.

While the Qur'an does not use the term 'lewdness' explicitly, it emphasizes modesty, purity, and moral conduct. Q. 17:23 encourages kindness toward parents and respectful behaviour, reflecting moral values. It reads:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبْلَغُنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرُ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

And your Lord has decreed that you worship no one *else* but HIM *alone*. And that you be kind to your parents - whether one of them, or both of them, reach old age in your lifetime, never say *even* 'Uff' to them *out of irritation* – and do not *shout at them*, or repulse them, but *rather* speak to them with respectful words: *gently and graciously*. And conduct yourself humbly toward them, out of *your affection for them*.

The Qur'an consistently emphasizes justice, honesty, and integrity. Believers are encouraged to avoid corruption, dishonesty, and any form of immorality. The Qur'an provides guidance on human and social welfare. In fact, the concept of justice is rooted in Allah's Divine nature – Q. 04:40 emphasizes the importance of treating others fairly and avoiding oppression.¹¹ The Prophet quoted Allah as saying, 'O My Servants, I have forbidden injustice upon myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not commit injustice.' This connection between human behaviour and Allah's attributes encourages us to emulate virtues such as compassion, generosity, and advocacy for the oppressed.

In summary, the Qur'an provides clear guidance on ethical conduct, condemning bribery, corruption, cheating, and promoting moral values. It emphasizes justice, compassion, charity, and solidarity. It encourages believers to actively contribute to the welfare of society, especially by assisting those in need. These are the essential parameters for ethical business practices and an upright community.

11 وَإِنَّ تِلْكَ حَسَنَةٌ يُضَاعَفُهَا وَيُؤْتَىٰ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ | Indeed, Allah is never unfair to anyone even by as much as a speck's weight of wrong, while if there be a good deed that one has done, He will multiply its reward, and on the top of this, He will also grant an immense reward from Himself beyond what one may have merited.

Glimpses of The Prophet's Model¹²

The model was structured on the Qur'anic guidelines¹³ and the Prophet's wisdom, teachings and consultations.¹⁴ Parameters of the model included justice, equity, and economic prosperity for all members of society, regardless of their faith, race or tribe. The state was to be fully responsible for ensuring their basic needs, and safeguarding their rights.

This holistic approach to welfare,¹⁵ which encompasses material, moral, ideological and spiritual dimensions offers valuable insights for modern states striving to achieve the total welfare of their citizens. In fact, the Prophet's model is not only a historical reality but also a blueprint and a viable model for contemporary societies seeking to balance material prosperity with spiritual well-being.

The Prophet's approach to statecraft and governance was deeply intertwined with his Divine Mission and the teachings of Qur'an/Islam. His leadership was not merely a political authority but also a spiritual and moral guide for the community. The anatomy of the state under the Prophet¹⁶ can be understood through the lens of three core tasks that he was assigned in guiding the believers through the (i) reciting the revelations, (ii) purifying their hearts, and (iii) teaching wisdom and knowledge - Q. 03:164.¹⁷

The first task was to recite the revelations of the Qur'an to the people. The recitation served to educate the people about the divine message, informing them of the distinction between good and evil, lawful and unlawful. It was a means to elevate the community from ignorance to enlightenment, providing them with the knowledge necessary to make moral and ethical decisions.

12 Major part of this section has been adopted from 'Muhammad – The Recipient of The Qur'an'. Pp xx-iv-xxxiii. 'English Paraphrasing of The Divine Qur'an' by Badr Hashemi. Jointly published by the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, and BZ University, Multan, Pakistan. Second Edition. 2023. ISBN 978-1-7923-8701-2. US LCCN 2022362541.

13 The Prophet's Model is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an. Here are some key linkages between the model's parameters and relevant Qur'anic Ayat: (i) Fair distribution of wealth - Q. 51:19. (ii) Social justice - Q. 04:135; 17:70. (iii) Human dignity - Q. 17:70; 21:105. (iv) Empowerment - Q. 21:105; 95:04. Additionally, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of *Zakat* (charity) – Q. 24:37; *Sadaqat* (voluntary charity) – Q. 02:215; *Khums* (one-fifth tax) – Q. 08:41.

14 Q. 42:38 – وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ and settle their affairs through consultations among themselves' The Prophet regarded consultation as his duty and bound himself by the opinion of the majority as he did before the battle of Uhud.

15 The term 'social welfare,' 'social justice,' 'social reform' and/or 'social development' does not have a precise definition. However, this jargon refers to a wide range of policies, activities and services for health, housing, income maintenance, education and social work. In fact, it instills a wide-range of issues extending far beyond the actions of a government, the means by which welfare is developed in a society and delivered to its people. This was the main target of Islam. Thus, social solidarity was apparent in all aspects of The Prophet's Message.

16 See Illustration 2.

17 03:164 - لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ | Allah has been Gracious to the believers by assigning them a Messenger *Muhammad* from among themselves, reciting to them His Messages from *The Qur'an*, purifying them of *polytheism, dogma and taboos*, and teaching them of the Law of governance, and the Wisdom - though they were clearly lost in error before.

The second task was the moral purification of the community. The Prophet focused on weeding out evil and promoting virtue. This purification process was essential for the development of a just and moral society. It was believed that knowledge without morality could lead to self-destruction, hence the emphasis on cultivating a virtuous character was paramount.

The third task was to impart wisdom and knowledge. After the hearts were purified, they became receptive to the comprehensive knowledge of the Qur'an, which balanced worldly knowledge with religious understanding. The Prophet's teachings through his actions, sayings, and approvals nurtured the capacity for wisdom, defined as the righteousness of deeds, dealings and motives.

The Prophet's state was not just a political entity but a community bound by faith and moral values. The governance was based on the principles of justice, equality, and the welfare of the community. The state was responsible for ensuring the well-being of its citizens,¹⁸ both spiritually and materially. The Prophet's leadership exemplified a model where the ruler is also a shepherd, caring for and guiding his flock towards righteousness and prosperity.

In short, the anatomy of the state under the Prophet was a unique blend of religious and political governance aimed at creating a society that was spiritually enlightened, morally upright, and socially just. It was a state where the ruler was not just a political leader but a spiritual guide, leading by example and striving for the betterment of the entire community.

The Prophet's life and mission made an overwhelming appeal to the masses. It uplifted the status of women, gave rights to the underprivileged, and regulated the moral and social life of the disenfranchised.

He introduced a new moral order that shook the very foundations of the then Arabian society. It comprised:

1. A believer's life and living is not for self or family or tribal interest, but for seeking Allah's Pleasure (*Li Wajhi Allahil Karim*).
2. Belief in the Time of Final Judgment and the Resurrection - adding a new dimension of human responsibility and accountability.
3. Tribal vengeance and retaliation were subordinated to a belief in and reward from a Just and Merciful Creator and Judge – Allah.
4. Each person was personally accountable not to tribal customary law but to an overriding Divine Law.¹⁹

18 The Islamic system of social security has several programs for the citizens of the country. It includes maintenance allowances, family allowances, widow's allowances, orphans' allowances, old-age pensions, unemployment allowances, medical aid, etc. The Islamic State is also responsible for providing financial aid to the debtors so they can pay off their debt burden. It also helps the prisoners and captives in the provision of food and clothing. It is the obligatory duty of an Islamic state to establish guest houses in every city of the state. See The Islamic Welfare State. Al Qalam, December 2019, Vol 24, Issue :2.

19 Thus, a society based on tribal affiliation and man-made family/tribal law and custom was replaced by a religiously bonded community - *Ummah* - governed by Allah's Law and the practice of His Prophet.

This 'economy of poverty' prevailed in Islamic theory and practice up until the 13th and 14th centuries. It was based on a notion that wealth is to be circulated and purified, in part, through charity. This uniquely Islamic conceptualization views charity, generosity, poverty, and the poor as a form of reciprocation for Allah's divine beneficence. With the poor as the focal point of this economic paradigm, the Quran's teachings on poverty exerted a substantial, even transformative influence on Arabia, the Near East, and beyond.²⁴

Allah's Injunctions required the believers to live their lives not only for their own personal interest, but also as agents of mercy to mankind through the spirit of *ukhuwwah* (all-encompassing brotherhood) where later part of Q.05:02 states:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

'....support each other in righteousness and piety, and do not support each other in sinfulness and hostility....' This all-encompassing brotherhood transcended beyond lineage and kinship.

An important landmark of the pivotal role of unity in Islamic tradition was the establishment of *ukhuwwah* between the *Ansar* and *Muhajireen*²⁵ according to which

the beggars, and for *freeing the captives*; and establishing the *Salat/Prayers*, and paying out the *Zakat/annual charity*, and fulfilling their *promises, contracts and agreements* they have given, and enduring adversity and hardship in the time of peril. It is they who Affirm the Truth, and it is they who *thus* remain Mindful of Allah's *obedience*. This Ayah encapsulates the essence of Islamic social welfare, emphasizing the importance of supporting the less fortunate as a fundamental aspect of righteousness and faith. It highlights the comprehensive approach to charity in Islam, which includes giving to relatives, orphans, the needy, travellers, those who ask for help, and for freeing slaves, as well as establishing prayer and giving out Zakat (almsgiving).

24: 'It is a religious obligation of Muslims to contribute as much as Islamic State demands to fulfil the needs of the poor if Zakat revenues are insufficient.' Argues Afzal-ur-Rahman, *Economic Doctrines of Islam*, Volume 2, Islamic Publication, 1975. He quotes a few sayings of great jurists like Ibn Hazm. 'Whoever has an extra camel, let him give it to him who has it not and needs it; whoever has surplus food, let him give it to him who is without it.' Most jurists before Ibn Hazm had mentioned only extreme thirst as a justification for individual violence. He criticizes them and says that if thirst justifies it, why not starvation or lack of coverage which might prove equally fatal. 'He says that if a person is dying of thirst or hunger and the person possessing water and food refuses to help him, the hungry or the thirsty man has a right to take it by force.'¹⁹ In the context of the Qur'an and Islamic history, the *Ansar* and *Muhajireen* were two significant groups among the early Muslim community. The *Muhajireen* (Emigrants) were the early converts who migrated from Makkah to Madeenah. They left behind their homes, wealth, and families for the sake of their faith and in support of the Prophet. The *Ansar* (Helpers) were the inhabitants of Madeenah who welcomed the *Muhajireen*. They offered them refuge, shared their wealth, and stood by them in the struggle to establish and spread Islam. Their generosity and support were crucial in helping the *Muhajireen* settle and integrate into the Medean society. The relationship between the *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* was characterized by a profound sense of brotherhood and unity. This bond was further strengthened by the Prophet through a pact known as *Al-Muakhaat*, which paired individuals from both groups as brothers, signifying their mutual support and solidarity. Both groups are highly regarded in Islamic tradition for their sacrifices and commitment to the cause of Islam.

25. Q. 59:09 - وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ - And in spoils of war there would also be a share for those in Madeenah who had provided them with shelter, and had accepted the Faith before them; they love those who had taken refuge with them, and they find no hesitation in their hearts in helping them, and readily prefer them over themselves, even when they needed what they gave away. Indeed, whoever would overcome one's greed, those - they will be successful.

the former agreed to share their wealth and property with the *Muhajireen* and gave a portion of their homes to their families for use, and allowed them to farm on their lands under a system of sharecropping. Q. 59:09 records appreciation for the *Ansars'* altruistic spirit of contribution for the welfare of the *Muhajireen*.

Thus, the foundations of a 'welfare society' were laid down that connected individuals and brought them to a state of social cohesion. Social welfare started in two forms:

First, 'Zakat' - an obligatory charity that purifies one's self and possessions given out annually for benefit of the poor, destitute, marginalized and others.

Second by public works: the purchase and construction of wells. Upon his hijra to Madeenah, The Prophet found only one well to be used for public benefit, which was bought and used by the general public. After the Prophet's declaration that 'water' was a better form of sadaqah (charity), many of his companions sponsored the digging of new wells.

During the Caliphate,²⁶ the Muslims repaired many of the aging wells in the lands they conquered. These projects were financed through the institution of 'waqf.' The fundamental idea of waqf was to bring the profound ideal of philanthropic and benevolent attitudes within society into reality.

The idea of the waqf is very inclusive and expanded beyond religion to social and welfare purposes. The Prophet encouraged his companions to use waqf for both religious and worldly purposes. The establishment of mosques for worship and community activities, building wells for the use of the early Muslim community in Madeenah, horses for use in battles and lands cultivated for feeding the poor were all financed by waqfs under the supervision and guidance of The Prophet himself.

One would contend that it was due to the vast and wide practice of *waqf* throughout Muslim history that individuals and society became economically empowered, thus minimizing the role of state in education,²⁷ welfare and even healthcare. In fact, it continued to become the heartbeat of the Muslim community and survived in its religious as well as worldly forms.

26. The references to the Caliphate after the Prophet (CE 632) imply the establishment of a system of governance to lead the Muslim community, or *Ummah*. The Caliphate was both a religious and political entity, with the Caliph being considered the successor to the Prophet in terms of leading the Islamic state.

27. The Prophet put strong stress on education and made it obligatory upon every Muslim to acquire education and knowledge. The Caliphs remained persistent in accomplishing the duty of the state to educate the people. The Qur'an, Hadith and later governance of Caliphs made it one of the very important duties of the Islamic State to provide education to all its citizens. There is a misconception about the Islamic state only promotes the education of the Qur'an and Hadith. Islam gives significant importance to others to humanities, sciences and other technical subjects. It is evident that before the start of a renaissance in Europe, Muslims scholars had done scholarly works in science and philosophy. All these subjects were taught in the Madrasa of the Islamic states.

The dynamo of civil society was not personal interest but it was a paradigm that reflected the degree of religiosity of individuals in maintaining their vertical relationship with Allah, and their horizontal relationship with their brothers and sisters – the people. The role of the state was ‘minimal’ and ‘limited’ to allow other representatives of society to have their share in power and decision-making.

The state functioned as the protector of people, of their security and freedom. It maintained law and order and regulated the market and public goods without interfering in the market process through central planning. Institutional checks and balances and effective watchdogs restrained arbitrary state action.

The administrative structure of the Prophet’s governance was a pioneering model of leadership and statecraft that has been studied and admired for centuries. The administration was founded on the principles of justice, equality, and welfare of the people. As the head of state, he was the representative of Almighty Allah. He also held the roles of chief justice and chief supervisor of economics, with Almighty Allah as their only trustee.

The Prophet’s administration was characterized by a well-organized and established centre where all officers and departments were busy in their works. A key aspect of his administration was the purification of the government from all kinds of corruption. For this purpose, he purified the hearts and minds of the people spiritually and socially, enabling him to properly train and guide his people.

The Prophet’s government system included legislative, executive, and judiciary authorities. He was the lawgiver, chief justice, and supreme military commander, ensuring that sovereignty belonged to Allah while he served as the head of the state.

Many of the rules and regulations he laid out, in accordance with Qur’anic command, coincided with contemporary policies used today in many nations and even in the United Nations.

The administrative structure of governance was a comprehensive system that integrated spiritual guidance with political authority. It was a model of good governance that emphasized ethical leadership, structured organization, and the welfare of the community. The principles and practices of his administration continue to influence modern governance, demonstrating the timeless relevance of his leadership.

Lands of Crescent²⁸

The countries, spanning from Southeast Asia to North Africa, have diverse cultures, languages, and traditions, but all are united by their common belief in Islam. Despite their varying governmental structures, social customs, and economic contexts, they share a rich Islamic history and collectively impact geopolitics, history, and culture.²⁹

While the Prophet's Model provides valuable insights, its direct application requires thoughtful adaptation to the realities of today's world. Balancing tradition with innovation is essential to create just and compassionate societies.

Scholars and policymakers have debated how to adapt Islamic principles to the present context. Some argue for a reinterpretation of Islamic teachings to align with current needs, while others advocate for a return to the original model – 'back to the Qur'an, back to the hadith.'

The Prophet's model of a welfare state has inspired and influenced social welfare systems in various countries. While no country has fully replicated the exact model, some have incorporated elements of it into their social policies and programs.³⁰ Here are a few examples:

1. Saudi Arabia: Implements a modernized version of zakat, with a 2.5% tax on wealth, and distributes it to the poor and vulnerable.

28 Islamic welfare state has various dimensions and responsibilities but also various interpretations by different sects of the Muslims. This is always an ideal model of state for every Muslim but in spite of strong aspiration for the creation of an Islamic welfare state, one cannot find a single Islamic state in the world to be presented as a model. Another strange thing is that in different Islamic states, different roots have been adopted for achieving this goal. In Afghanistan for instance, the Taliban started an armed struggle for the creation of an Islamic State. On 4th April 1996, Mullah Umer, the supreme leader of the Taliban was declared Amir-ul-Momineen (Commander of the faithful). This also led to the same type of struggle in the Khyber Pakhtunkhah Province of Pakistan. In Turkey, The Welfare Party was established. This party conceived of democracy in instrumental terms, serving their quest to move the Turkish state and Turkish society in a more Islamist direction. The Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) is a transnational Sunni Islamic organization founded in Egypt by Islamic scholar Hassan al-Banna in 1928 but it is more popularly associated with the name of Syed Qutb Shaheed whose classical Tafseer of The Qur'an, *Fi Zilalil Qur'an*, created a new wave of renaissance among the Muslim all over the world. Initially, as a Pan-Islamic, religious, and social movement but later it advanced into the political arena, aiming the establishment of a state ruled by Sharia law. This party spread the famous slogan worldwide being: 'Islam is the Solution'.

29 The Muslim world is at the bottom rung of participatory democracy, representative governance, and political stability in comparison to the rest of the world. Prevalent and perpetual social disintegration, economic stagnation, and resistance to modernity are all problems in search of answers whose validity and relevance are constantly questioned. Some have vested hopes in the ideal of an 'Islamic state,' but very few have defined such a loosely defined state, and even fewer have critically analysed or offered its theoretical parameters.

30 If the Islamic state in Prophet's era appears to us not to be as advanced as the state in its modern sense, it is necessary to keep in mind that this state was established almost 15 centuries ago in a land/country whose political life was based on centuries old tribal values, traditions, and system.

2. Iran: Has a comprehensive social welfare system, including healthcare, education, and poverty reduction programs, inspired by Islamic principles.
3. Malaysia: Implements a dual-system approach, combining modern social welfare programs with Islamic values and principles.
4. Turkey: Has a robust social security system, including healthcare and pension programs, influenced by Ottoman-era Islamic social welfare traditions.
5. Indonesia: Incorporates Islamic values and principles into its social welfare programs, including poverty reduction and education initiatives.
6. United Arab Emirates: Provides a comprehensive social welfare system, including healthcare, education, and housing support, inspired by Islamic values.
7. Qatar: Implements a modernized version of zakat, with a 2.5% tax on wealth, and distributes it to the poor and vulnerable, in addition to other social welfare programs.

These countries have adapted elements of the Prophet's model to their unique contexts, combining Islamic principles with modern social welfare approaches. However, it is important to note that the implementation and effectiveness of these systems vary, and not all countries that claim to follow Islamic principles necessarily adhere to the Prophet's model in its entirety.

Good business practices such as fair pricing, quality products and services, honouring contracts and agreements, avoiding fraud and deception, and protecting the environment are reflected in the business practices of many Muslim entrepreneurs, who prioritize social responsibility and sustainability. This has had a profound impact on ethics, morality, and good business practices in Pakistan, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Malaysia.

A study by the World Bank³¹ found that countries with higher levels of Islamic finance, such as Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, have lower levels of corruption and bribery. Another study³² found that Muslim entrepreneurs in Pakistan and Iran prioritize ethical business practices, including honesty and fairness, over profit maximization.

In addition, some non-Muslim countries have also incorporated elements of the Prophet's model, such as:

1. Sweden: Implements a robust social welfare system, including universal healthcare and education.
2. Canada: Has a comprehensive social welfare system, including healthcare, education, and poverty reduction programs.

³¹ World Bank, 2019.

³² The International Journal of Business and Management. IJBM, 2020.

These countries demonstrate that the principles of social justice, compassion, and equality, embodied in the Prophet's model can inspire social welfare systems across diverse cultural and religious contexts.

Case Study – Pakistan³³

Pakistan's socio-economic profile presents a complex and challenging landscape. With a population of over 230 million growing at an annual rate of more than 2 percent, it faces significant development challenges, including a high poverty rate, a low literacy rate, and a widespread lack of access to basic services.

The following represent country's socio-economic profile:³⁴

1. GDP per capita (2020): \$1,563 (World Bank)
2. Poverty Headcount Ratio (2020): 39.3% (World Bank)
3. Access to basic necessities:
 - Food: 73% of population has access to sufficient food (2019, World Food Programme)
 - Water: 91% of population has access to improved water sources (2020, WHO)
 - Shelter: 77% of population lives in permanent dwellings (2017, PBS)
1. Education:
 - Literacy rate (2019): 59.1% (PBS)
 - Enrolment rates:
 - Primary (2019): 81% (PBS)
 - Secondary (2019): 44% (PBS)
 - Education quality: Ranks 150th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index (2020, UNDP)

33 According to the Constitution of Pakistan, Pakistan is an Islamic state with Islam as the official religion of the country and all laws should conform to Sharia. In 1977, General Zia-ul-Haq promised to establish an Islamic state and enforce Sharia law. The main focus of his policy of Islamization was regulative, punitive and extractive but with little attempt to bring socio-economic equality under Islamic law. Several religious political parties have the aspiration for enforcement of Sharia which will ultimately lead to the emergence of the Islamic welfare state. In the 2018 elections, the MMA election manifesto was the implementation of Shariat laws. A militant group named Tehreek Nifaz-e-Shariat Mohammadi tried to enforce Shariah law in the Malakand Division of Pakistan. All these historical events indicate a strong desire in Pakistan for the Islamic welfare state. In 2015, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, a religious political organization promised the same. And finally, in 2018, Pakistan Tehrik Insaf expressed its aspiration to make Pakistan an Islamic welfare state on the principles of the earlier Riyasat-i-Madeenah - a society based on justice, compassion and human dignity. This was nothing different from other leaders of the Muslim world like Turkey's Erdogan or Mursi in Egypt. But all sloggong in Pakistan was political (i.e. non serious, non-committal) and a pipe-dream. Nothing was done on ground by any party.

34 These parameters are based on available data and may not reflect the current situation, 2024. Additionally, these are just a few examples of socio-economic/welfare indicators and do not represent an exhaustive list.

2. Healthcare:

- Life expectancy (2020): 66.4 years (WHO)
- Infant mortality rate (2020): 61.2 deaths per 1,000 live births (WHO)
- Access to healthcare facilities: 72% of population has access to essential health services (2019, WHO)

3. Social Security:

- Coverage: 15.6% of population has access to social safety nets (2019, World Bank)
- Adequacy: Ranks 102nd out of 187 countries in the Social Protection Index (2020, UNDP)

4. Social Inclusion:

- Gender empowerment: Ranks 151st out of 189 countries in the Gender Development Index (2020, UNDP)
- Minority empowerment: Ranks 105th out of 113 countries in the Minority Rights Index (2020, Minority Rights Group International)

The country's economic growth has been hindered by political instability, corruption, and a heavy burden of foreign debt. Despite these challenges, Pakistan has made some invisible progress in recent years, with increasing investments in infrastructure and industry. However, addressing the socio-economic disparities and ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth remains a pressing priority.

Moral decadence

Pakistan is an Islamic Republic³⁵ but has witnessed a steady decline in moral values and faces serious challenges in terms of corruption and peacefulness leaving a profound impact on the country's social fabric. For example:

1. Pakistan is ranked 108th out of 143 countries in the World Happiness Report 2024.³⁶
2. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score is 29 out of 100 for the year 2023, indicating a perception of significant corruption within the country. This score places it at 133rd out of 180 countries.
3. In terms of the Global Peace Index (GPI), its ranking is 146th out of 163 countries in the year 2023. The GPI measures the relative position of nations peacefulness, and this ranking suggests challenges in terms of peace and security within the country.

One of the primary indicators of moral decay is the rampant corruption that plagues Pakistan's political and bureaucratic institutions. The country ranks among the most corrupt

³⁵ Pakistan is an Islamic and ideological country with Islamic rules and values in its Constitution. Under the Constitution of Pakistan, Islamic law is a source of legislation and the judiciary has the power to adjudicate disputes in accordance with it. However, the extent to which Islamic law is incorporated into the legal system varies depending on the particular legal issue and the jurisdiction in which it is being considered.

³⁶ The report evaluates various factors such as GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and perceptions of corruption to determine the happiness level.

nations globally, with bribery, embezzlement, and nepotism becoming an entrenched part of the system. This culture of corruption has trickled down to the grassroots level.

Furthermore, the country is marred by discrimination and injustice. This has led to a decline in empathy and compassion. Moral values are deeply intertwined with the country's religious and cultural ethos. Principles such as *taqwa* (consciousness of Allah), *'adl* (justice), *ihsan* (benevolence), *akhlaq* (ethics), and *rahmah* (mercy) are considered significant. These values guide behaviour, foster social solidarity, and provide a sense of meaning and purpose for individuals and groups within the society.

However, there are concerns about the decay of moral values, with some attributing this to the absence of the rule of law and justice. Addressing these issues is seen as essential for promoting social harmony and cohesion, and for ensuring that moral codes are consistent with the foundational principles of Pakistani society

The education system has also suffered a significant decline, leading to a lack of critical thinking and moral awareness among the younger generation. The emphasis on rote learning and memorization has replaced critical thinking and ethical inquiry, producing individuals who are ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of modern life.³⁷

Reclaim its moral footing

Given that Pakistan's population and the society is rapidly losing its understanding of the basic tenants of ethics and morality - everyone appears to have lost a sense of *rushd* and *hidayah*. One way to revitalize the Faith/*Iman* is to use *Da'wa*. Islamic concept of *da'wa* aims at intellectual, spiritual, and socio-economic developments of individuals and society at large. Thus, *da'wa* is a holistic approach to human life.

To arrest this decline, Pakistan may consider employing a variant or selected segments of the Prophet's Model. This would not mean that a case is being made for a theocratic framework with diverse interpretations of the Islamic Laws.³⁸ The point is to apply the Model for revival of the most critical areas namely moral values, social services, and education.

37 See 'Why is it imperative to produce critical thinkers for better understanding of Creational Theology?' Paper presented by Badr Hashemi in EdTech International Conference, June 9-10, 2023, Islamabad. Pakistan.

38 Islamic law, or Sharia, is the legal framework that governs the Muslim world. It is derived from the Qur'an and the Hadith, and is based on Islamic principles of justice.

- Sharia covers all aspects of life, including family law, contract law, criminal law, and financial law. In Pakistan, Sharia is enshrined in the Constitution and forms the basis of the country's legal system.
- There are two principal schools of thought in Islam: Sunni and Shia. Sunni are sub-divided into Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali. Each school has its own interpretations of Sharia.
- Islamic law is not static; it evolves over time in response to changing needs and circumstances. However, certain core principles remain constant, such as the prohibition on murder, robbery, and adultery.
- The role of Islamic law in Pakistan's legal system is significant; it provides a framework for resolving disputes in accordance with Islamic principles of justice.

There are two perspectives on this issue. One is that it provides a moral and ethical framework for society, promoting justice, equality, and compassion. It is reckoned that implementing Sharia would help address issues like corruption, poverty, inequality, and promote a more just and equitable society beside revitalizing the decadence of ethics, morality and righteousness. The other perspective is that Sharia is open to interpretation and has been used to justify punishments, discrimination against women and minorities, and restrictions on individual freedoms.

By acknowledging and addressing these challenges, Pakistan can begin to reclaim its moral footing and build a society that values compassion, honesty, and justice for all. Pakistan Tablighi Jamat, a non-political and non-partisan missionary movement, can play a supportive and positive role in creating social change and addressing socio-moral issues in several ways:

1. Promote moral values such as honesty, compassion, and justice, which are essential for creating a just and equitable society.
2. Emphasize the importance of education, particularly for girls and marginalized communities, to empower individuals and communities.
3. Organize community service projects, such as healthcare initiatives, disaster relief, and poverty alleviation programs, to promote social responsibility.
4. Engage in interfaith dialogue and collaborative efforts with government and other religious groups to promote understanding, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence.
5. Provide support to marginalized communities, such as women, minorities, and the poor, to promote social inclusion and equality.
6. Play a crucial role in countering extremist narratives and promoting a peaceful, inclusive interpretation of Islam.
7. Engage in outreach efforts to build bridges with other communities, fostering greater understanding and cooperation.

Poverty Reduction

The government espouses four major poverty alleviation programs. These include Benazir Income Support Program (BISP),³⁹ Ehsaas,⁴⁰ Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF),⁴¹ and Kamyab Jawan Program.⁴² These programs are part of Pakistan's broader strategy to tackle poverty and achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

39 BISP - Benazir Income Support Programme is a significant social safety net in Pakistan, established in July 2008. Named after the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, BISP was initiated by the political party she headed (PPP) to mitigate the impact of inflation and economic slowdown on the poor, particularly focusing on consumption smoothing and poverty reduction. The World Bank has been a major foreign backer, providing significant funding.

40 'Ehsaas' is yet another overarching program launched in 2019, built on the framework developed under BISP. (The Program may have been closed down).

41 The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) was established with the aim of combating poverty and empowering economically disadvantaged communities. It operates on a model of public-private partnership and is considered one of the country's leading agencies for poverty reduction. PPAF's approach to alleviating poverty is multi-faceted, focusing on various aspects such as: (i) Financial Inclusion, (ii) Capacity Building & Skills Enhancement, (iii) Sustainable Livelihoods, (iv) Infrastructure Development/Implementing projects related to health, education, water, and infrastructure to improve the quality of life, and (v) Assisting households affected by natural disasters and managing reconstruction efforts, like rebuilding houses after earthquakes.

42 Kamyab Jawan Program is the first of its kind in Pakistan. It provides assistance and resources to youth on a national level. Through this platform, the country's youth ages 15 to 29 will benefit from youth empowerment programs, loans for youth entrepreneurs and start-ups, youth legislations and youth councils. Through this program, Pakistani youth are finally being integrated into civil institutions and given opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty. (The Program may have closed down even before it could take-off).

particularly SDG1, which aims to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. The World Bank also supports social protection initiatives by providing research and data to assist in poverty reduction efforts.

BISP is one of South Asia's largest cash transfer programs and Pakistan's flagship social protection initiative. It currently caters to 5.7 million ultra-poor families via unconditional cash transfers. However, the program has been criticized for creating a culture of dependency and politically favoured class of beneficiaries besides hundreds of 'ghost' beneficiaries. So the program needs to be reformed and remodelled so as to create a self-respecting class of people with small skills.

Instead of launching new programs there is an urgent need of the integration of more than 134 fragmented and insufficiently managed social protection programs, and prone to political manipulation.

Remodelling of BISP may be considered along the following lines:

1. Integrate vocational training and skills development programs into BISP, focusing on entrepreneurship, craftsmanship, and cottage industries.
2. Tie cash transfers to specific conditions, such as:
 - School attendance for children
 - Health check-ups and vaccinations
 - Participation in skills training or community development projects
3. Implement a gradual phase-out strategy, reducing cash transfers as beneficiaries become self-sufficient through acquired skills and income generation.
4. Offer microfinance opportunities and support entrepreneurship initiatives, enabling beneficiaries to start small businesses at/from home and become economically independent.
5. Encourage community participation and social responsibility among beneficiaries, promoting a sense of ownership and social cohesion.
6. Ensure transparency in beneficiary selection, cash transfers, and program monitoring, with accountability mechanisms in place to prevent political favouritism.
7. Foster partnerships with NGOs, private sector organizations, and community groups to enhance program effectiveness, skills training, and job placement.
8. Prioritize support for the most vulnerable populations, including women and people with disabilities.
9. Regularly assess program impact, tracking progress toward self-sufficiency and skill acquisition among beneficiaries.

10. Develop a clear exit strategy, gradually transitioning beneficiaries from cash transfers to self-sustaining livelihoods, ensuring long-term economic independence.

By implementing these reforms, BISP can empower a self-respecting class of people with small skills, promoting economic independence, and breaking the cycle of political favouritism and dependency.

Taking care of the poor is at the core of Qur'anic teachings – it has been emphasised more than thirty times. The Qur'an and Sunnah emphatically and constantly encourage Muslims to engage in the social welfare programmes and remind them of their social responsibilities.

Pakistan should make the handling of its poverty and social welfare as the top priority – its poor, destitute, homeless. It should encourage private social welfare organizations/trusts to expand their footprint. Philanthropists and wealthy individuals should be encouraged to take the 'guardianship' of poor families in their areas and constituencies, and provide basic items of food, clothing and pay for their utility bills as a never-ending service in pursuance of the Qur'anic Teachings and The Prophetic practice of '*ukhuwwah*' and '*Al-Muakhaat*'.

It may also be a prudent initiative to build 'low cost' multiple-storey apartment buildings on the Government non-cultivable land for the poor and give the ownership right on gratis. This may also house all private housing societies thus creating new townships and cities and releasing pressure from urban housing and agricultural land.

Corruption Eradication

Pakistan must prioritize corruption eradication to ensure a prosperous and just future. This requires a comprehensive strategy to tackle moral, financial, and business corruption:

- Strengthen and independence of anti-corruption agencies like NAB, FIA and FBR.⁴³
- Implement a merit-based appointment process for key positions.
- Enact and enforce laws criminalizing corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion.
- Strengthen audit and accountability mechanisms.
- Implement e-governance and digitalization to reduce human interaction and increase transparency.
- Make public officials' assets and tax records publicly accessible.

43. NAB, FIA and FBR stand for National Accountability Bureau and Federal Board of Revenue. NAB is Pakistan's apex anti-corruption organization. FIA is to enforcement of laws relating to smuggling, narcotics, currency offences, foreigners, immigration & passports and offences having inter-provincial ramification. FBR is to check, supervise, ascertain, monitor, reconcile and properly enforce, in whole of Pakistan, the Withholding regime and other relevant provisions of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 and Sales Tax of 1990.

- Incorporate anti-corruption education in school curricula.
- Encourage civil society and media to promote transparency and accountability.
- Encourage corporate social responsibility and ethical practices.
- Foster a culture of transparency and accountability within businesses.
- Encourage and support civil society organizations fighting corruption.
- Implement international best practices and standards in anti-corruption efforts.
- Demonstrate a strong political commitment to eradicating corruption.
- Lead by example, with top leaders setting a tone of transparency and accountability.

Need for an urgent Austerity Plan

Pakistan's total outstanding external debt reached US \$ 131.2 billion by December 2023, i.e., 37.2 % of the country's Nominal GDP.⁴⁴ When compared with its neighbours, India is having approximately half of Pakistan's ratio (18.9%) and Bangladesh having even less (13.73%).⁴⁵

The poverty rate in Pakistan is estimated at 39.3% for 2020–21, for India 25%⁴⁶ and for Bangladesh 20.5%.⁴⁷

Given the high levels of foreign debt and poverty at home, Pakistan needs to design an Austerity Plan with a focus on equity and long-term sustainability. The following parameters may be considered:

1. Target reductions in government spending, particularly in areas that may not directly affect the most vulnerable segments of the population. This could include cutting down on non-essential government functions and overheads.⁴⁸
2. Increase revenue through measures such as higher taxes on luxury goods and services, which are more likely to be consumed by the privileged. This approach aligns with the principle of the privileged giving up certain privileges.

44 CEIC calculates External Debt as % of Nominal GDP from annual External Debt and annual Nominal GDP. The State Bank of Pakistan provides External Debt in USD. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics provides Nominal GDP in local currency. External Debt as % of Nominal GDP is in annual frequency, ending in June of each year. [CEIC is a platform at Cornell University (USA) that selects and curates relevant macroeconomic and alternative data series for economists and investment professionals to gain insight into markets, with a focus on emerging economies.]

45 It's important to consider that these figures can be influenced by various factors, including the size of the economy, the structure of debt, and the terms of borrowing.

46 Niti Aayog reported that 25% of the population in India are poor as of 2024

47 World Bank for both Pakistan and Bangladesh.

48 Public Expenditure Cuts may involve:

- the salaries and pensions of the heads of all civil, military, judiciary, public sector, parliamentarians - should be capped with a maximum of or equivalent to National Pay Scale/Grade 22;
- all pension privileges and perks like cars, staff and security should cease;
- air travel within the country and overseas should be minimised and all meetings conducted via video links;
- all heads and chief executives should voluntarily give up receiving their salaries and perks: it includes the President, Governors, Chief Ministers, Ministers – federal as well as provincial; and Chiefs of the higher judiciary, armed and para-military forces.

3. Ensure that austerity measures do not disproportionately affect low-income groups. This could involve protecting or even increasing funding for essential services like healthcare and education.
4. While austerity typically involves cutting expenditures, it is also important to consider policies that can stimulate economic growth, such as targeted investments in infrastructure and/or small businesses.
5. Consider the decentralization of fiscal responsibilities to lower levels of government, which may be more attuned to the local needs and can manage resources more efficiently.
6. Establish strong mechanisms for transparency and accountability to ensure that the austerity measures are implemented effectively and fairly.
7. Engage with the public, especially the privileged class, to foster a sense of shared sacrifice and gain support for voluntary contributions and/or giving up of privileges/perks.

Conclusions

The Prophetic model of social welfare is rooted in the principles of mutual responsibility, social balance, and the avoidance of circulation of wealth among the rich, emphasizing a holistic approach that combines individual charity with state responsibility to ensure justice and compassion in society. In Pakistan, the application of this model can be transformative, as it aligns with the country's constitutional obligations and societal values based on *Adl-wa-Ehsan* - justice and benevolence, and *Haqooq-ul-Ibad*, rights of the people.

By leveraging traditional Islamic instruments of social welfare such as *Zakat*, *Khums*, *Waqf* and *Ukhuwwah*, alongside modern social services, Pakistan can reduce poverty and income inequality and create a robust welfare system that not only addresses the immediate needs of the underprivileged but also fosters long-term social development and cohesion. This approach could enhance the quality of life for millions, particularly if the private religious sector, which already provides significant social services, is integrated into a comprehensive national welfare strategy.

Furthermore, the Model's emphasis on education, healthcare, and social services resonates with Pakistan's constitutional obligations under Article 38, which mandates the state to provide basic necessities like food, clothing, and shelter to its citizens. Empirical research has shown that countries with strong social safety nets and redistributive policies, like the Prophet's Model, experience improved human development outcomes and economic growth. Therefore, exploring the applicability of this model in Pakistan's context can offer valuable insights for policymakers seeking to create a more equitable and prosperous society.



Illustration 1

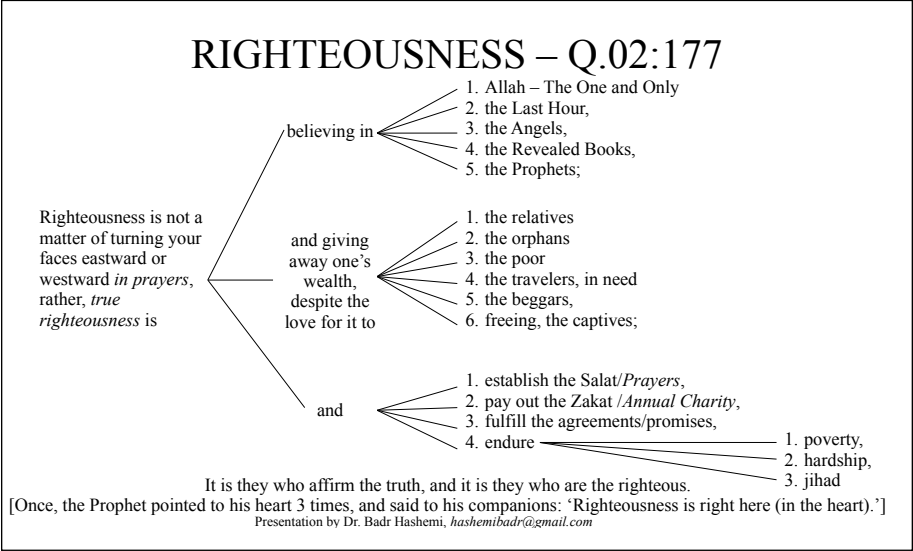
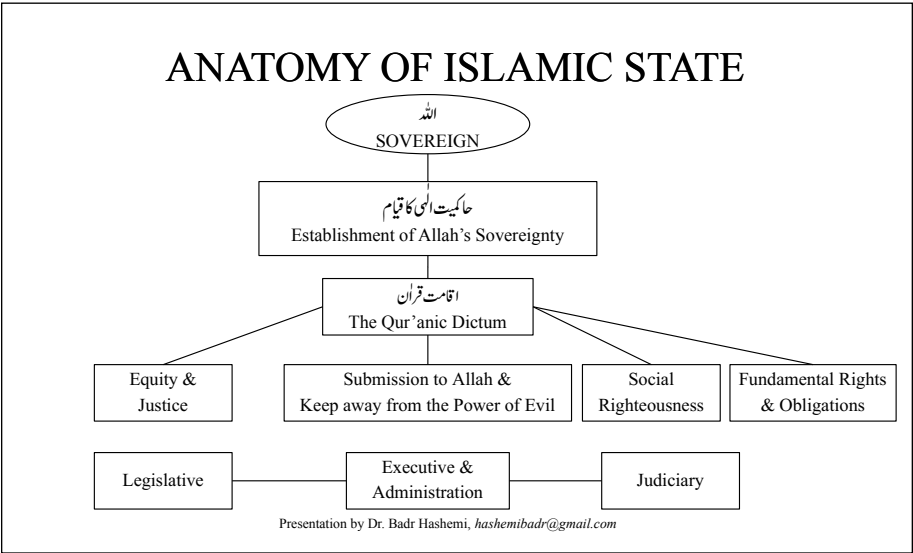


Illustration 2



Ramadan - Anniversary Celebrations of The Qur'an

Abstract

Islam is one of the dominant religions of the world. Its followers constitute about 25 percent of the world population with fast growing rates. The Asia-Pacific is the home of more than half of the world's Muslim population.

Religious practices of Islam resemble the practices in vogue of all heavenly revealed religions. Fasting is the one that is common with others to purify one's soul and seek closeness to Allah – the One God everyone and everything - and it is specific to the month of Ramadan – the month which witnessed the Revelation of The Qur'an.

The Paper examines the practice of Fasting which is obligatory to all post-puberty Muslims during dawn-to-dusk hours for one lunar month. The Divine law is flexible and provides exemptions for the elderly, ill, nursing mothers and those travelling.

Ideally, Ramadan is the month of optimising one's spiritual elevation and serving it as a religious catalyst for refining social behaviour and improving relationships with both Allah – the Exalted and the Almighty - and those with whom they interact most closely – family and friends.

Principal activities comprise the Fasting, reading the Qur'an, praying at designated times, offering extended prayers of *traweeh*, additional pre-dawn prayers of *qiyam al-layl*, and secluded meditation in *masajid* during the last ten days of Ramadan – *I'tikaf*. In addition, restraint from various temptations, vain talk, expressing anger, and other behaviours that reflect lapses in moral composure.

Key words: Ramadan, Fasting, Taqwa, Prayers, Dhikr, Traweeh, Qiyam, Huda, 'Itikaf, Qur'an, Masjid.

Perspective

The Prophet to be - Muhammad ibn Abdallah¹ - was a regular visitor to a cave named Hira in the greyish black rugged mountain range facing the Sacred Ka'bah in Holy Makkah. He would spend weeks and months in a row in the ultra-dense spiritual space of the cave in solitude, meditation and worshipful devotion.

It was the year CE 610, one night, after midnight, in the later part of the month of Ramadan² that became the temporal container of one of Islam's most magnanimous events. This blessed night came to be known as the Night of Great Eminence,³ and the sacred space of the cave as the Cave of Hira, and the otherwise innocuous mountain became Jabal al-Nur – the Mountain of Light.⁴

1 570-632 CE. Makkah-Madenah. Arabia.

2 Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic Lunar Calendar.

3 See The Qur'an | Surah 97. Al-Qadr. Ayat 01-05.

4 See 'Living with The Prophet Muhammad'. Narrative by Badr Hashemi. ISBN 978-1532-32228-0

Muhammad ibn Abdallah's soul was spiritually cleansed, the Prophethood was conferred upon him, and first Divine Revelation – '*Iqra*' - was pronounced on to him. He descended the Mountain like gold refined by Divine Light. It was not the same Muhammad who had ascended the Mountain. He was assigned a Mission which would have reduced the mountains to rubble had it descended upon them.⁵

The revelation left a permanent imprint on space and time. In the ultra-dense spiritual space of the Cave, in isolation, a profound spiritual opening took place. But despite the gravity and magnitude of that, society was the domain in which that spirituality had to be actualised and propagated. He thus descended from the hyper-spiritual to the mundane. Prophet Muhammad was to continue to spend time in spaces of isolation, long nights in prayer, and in I'tikaf.

The phenomenon of Revelation was staggered over a 23-year span of time. The Qur'an is a wrap-up of all former revelations as well as the institution of Prophethood with Prophet Muhammad – peace and blessings be upon him - as the Closing Final Seal of the Prophets.⁶

The Message of the Qur'an is universal and eternal. It runs across civilizations, space and time. It talks about universal brotherhood and invites followers of all former revelations to agree on a common discourse with Islam for collective societal welfare and interfaith harmony.⁷

Islam is built on the foundation of Five Pillars⁸. Fasting⁹ during Ramadan is the Second Pillar¹⁰. Ramadan is not tied to any particular season of the year, but shifts by approximately eleven days on the Gregorian Calendar each year. Thus, Fasting during summer months where the days are longer and hotter presents different challenges than Fasting during the winter months, which are colder and shorter.

The Ramadan Fasting is to be considered as a celebration of the Divine Descent of The Qur'an. The Fasting is intended to create nourishment of one's soul by dawn-to-dusk¹¹

5 Ibid. See also The Qur'an | Surah 59. Al-Hashr. Ayah 21.

6 See 'Theological Perspectives – Prophecy and Prophethood' by Badr Hashemi. Journal of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony. Vol 3. Issue 1. Spring 2024.

7 The Qur'an | Surah 03, Aal-'Imran. Ayah 64.

8 Five are: Shahadah | The is no entity of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; Siyam | Ramadan Fasting; Salat | Five Time Daily Mandatory Prayers; Zakat | Annual Charity; and Hajj | Annual Pilgrimage to the Sacred Ka'bah in Holy Makkah.

9 29 or 30 days from dawn to dusk; abstinence from almost everything.

10 Abu Hurayrah^(R) reported that the Messenger of Allah^(P) said that Allah^(EA) says: 'Every act of son of Adam is for him, except Fasting. It is exclusively meant for Me and I alone will reward it.' See The Book of Muslim 1151d. Book of Fasting. This beautiful hadith emphasizes that fasting during Ramadan is a high-value spiritual act, performed solely for the sake of Allah^(EA). The reward for Fasting is exclusive to Him, and it serves as a means of forgiveness for our previous oversights and transgressions. The other report by Abu Hurayrah^(R) suggests that the Prophet^(P) said: 'Fasting is a shield; so when one of you is Fasting he should neither indulge in obscene language nor should he raise his voice in anger. If someone attacks him or insults him, let him say: 'I am Fasting!' See The Book of Muslim 1151, 13:212.

11 Since the Fasting is from dawn to dusk, the duration of fasting time changes depending on the season and location. Near polar regions, Fasting can be real long hours in summer or just a few hours in winter.

abstinence from all foods, beverages (including water), cohabitation and behaviour that runs counter to decency. One can engage in these activities – with the exception of maintaining decent behaviour which is to be continued at all times - once Fasting is broken and restart Fasting the next dawn. The cycle continues for a whole lunar month of 29 or 30 days.

Ramadan Fasting is one of the most observed of all the Pillars of Islam, with a vast majority of Muslims practising it. It is obligatory for all Muslims, men and women, from the age of puberty. Younger children are encouraged to fast for half a day from their pre-teens to condition them to dawn-dusk Fasting¹².

Ramadan has a tremendous spiritual value during which one finds oneself more connected to Allah^(EA). It involves a combination of worship-practices like Dhikr¹³, Traweeh¹⁴, Qiyam Al-Layl¹⁵ and I'tikaf.¹⁶ In addition, believers engage in intensive reading sessions of The Qur'an. The Qur'an is recited beautifully all the time with *du'a*/supplications and *nasheeds-na'at*/spiritual melodies - though little consideration is given to their profound heavenly messages and their implications for thought and everyday life.¹⁷

It is the Prophetic practice to take a meal at pre-dawn time/*suhoor*. There is a custom of gathering around the *Iftar* (the Fast breaking time) along with family and community members which fosters a feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood. The rich organise iftar/dinners for the poor.¹⁸ Those exempted from Fasting include young children, menstruating and pregnant women, the elderly, the sick and the travellers.

12 Parents encourage their younger kids to Fast linking it with different incentives of kids' choice. I as a parent and now as a grandparent extensively practice this incentive scheme!

13 Dhikr broadly refers to the state of being in which one remembers Allah^(EA). This can manifest in a specific practice such as repeatedly saying Allah^(EA)'s Sacred Names and Attributes, or using a rosary.

14 Traweeh is the form of worship where the Qur'an is recited by the Prayer Leader (Imam) to a congregation; it comprises 8-12-20 raka' and the recitation is completed towards the close of Ramadan. Taraweeh as an additional prayer is held in Ramadan after the '*Isha*' prayer in which long portions of the Qur'an (usually one Juz') are recited, taking more than an hour. The Prophet^(P) never offered the way offered in present times. The only evidence on the Prophet^(P)'s such prayers that he offered is reflected in Qur'an | Ayah 01, Surah 73, Al-Mozzammil – which connects with *Qiyam Al-Layl* rather than *Traweeh*.

15 Qiyam Al-Layl, another form of intensive worship; it is practiced after the midnight till pre-dawn for all 29/30 nights or at least during the last 10 nights. This a worship in congregation where The Qur'an is recited and completed.

16 I'tikaf is an act of worship conducted in the last 10 days-nights of Ramadan, in which one lives in the masjid for the entirety of the time, spent in worship, not leaving except for necessities. The Prophet^(P) performed I'tikaf every year. It seems then that solitude and isolation is a spiritual whetstone, undertaken habitually by the Prophet^(P), in which great ravines of religious fervour open.

17 Sometimes one seriously wonders how much spirituality has been injected into those in principle extremely meritorious deeds. One further wonders if we emphasize too much quantity at the expense of quality and the form and appearances at the expense of the substance and soul. In fact, The Qur'an turns out to be the most read book in the world but least understood and very little practiced. The millions who read it, do not understand a bit of it. They only read to seek the spiritual rewards in the realm of the Hereafter.

18 In the past few decades, Muslim minorities in western countries have started to invite their non-Muslim friends to *iftar* dinners. Muslim organisations have annual *iftar* dinners for their associates and supporters. Presidents of the US have also held *iftar* dinners in the White House.

Eventually, the Fasting help in practicing self-control and ameliorates to eliminate addictions such as - smoking, lying, gossiping - and developing healthy life style¹⁹. The constant exercise of willpower not to eat, drink or deny temptations sends a strong message that it is the human will, hence the soul/*nafs*²⁰ that is in control.

Fasting is not just about staying hungry or thirsty, it is also to struggle to contain other harmful behaviours. The Prophet^(P) remarked:

*Whoever doesn't give up lying and acting on lies during fasting,
then Allah has no need for him to give up food and drink.*

Therefore, the fundamental spiritual benefit of Fasting is to exercise the will-power and attain self-control, essential for success in life.

The Prophet is also reported to have said:

*Ramadan is the month whose beginning (first ten days) is mercy,
whose middle (second ten days) is forgiveness and whose end
(last ten days) is freedom from fire.*

The end of Ramadan – the last third - instead of being most spiritually charged and infused with most intensive spiritual pursuits, normally becomes lost in consumerism and glitz on account of the approaching excessive Eid celebrations.

Ramadan culminates in a day-long celebration (*Eid al-Fitr*), where a special morning prayer is offered in congregation followed by visits to family and friends. Charity, called *fitrana*, is given to the poor to ensure no one is left out of the celebrations and the joy of success that comes with Fasting.

Spiritual Dimensions of Ramadan

The Qur'an highlights Ramadan's significance in three dimensions:

- i. Revelation of the Qur'an for guidance of the mankind;
- ii. the night of the Revelation which is supremely exceptional; and

¹⁹ This is a hypothesis. In practice, it is just the opposite where people have a strong tendency to consume more, add on enormous calories and excessive weight. One positive result may be for the one to drop out one addiction during Ramadan.

²⁰ '*Nafs*' is the Qur'anic term which is rendered as 'soul' in English. The term is multifaceted and holds deep significance. The Qur'an lists 4 dimensions: (i) *Nafs al-Amara*: This aspect of the soul is associated with natural instincts. It represents our primal desires and inclinations. (ii) *Nafs al-Mulhamah*: this soul is characterized by consciousness; it is the seat of our inner awareness and understanding. (iii) *Nafs al-Lawwamah*: It is the part of us that feels remorse and self-criticism when we deviate from what is right. (iv) *Nafs al-Mutma'innah*: this soul embodies serenity. It represents a state of inner tranquillity and alignment with divine wisdom.

iii. the objective of Fasting being nourishment of one's *taqwa*.

a. The Qur'an for Guidance

Consider Ayah 185, Surah 02, Al-Baqarah:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ²¹

The month of Ramadan²¹ is that
in which the Qur'an was revealed:
guidance for the mankind, and
with clear messages of guidance, and
as a standard for distinguishing right from wrong.

The Qur'an invites the mankind - all humans regardless of one's caste, colour, creed, or gender to seek guidance from the Revelations.²² The Sacred Arabic Text employs the term '*huda*'²³ two times; the first implies it as noun and the second emphasises clarity of its messages with regard to distinguishing the right from the wrong – *halal* from *haram*, licit from illicit – do's and don't do's.

'*Huda*' is rendered as 'guidance' – implies guidance to living a life of righteousness in deeds, dealings and speech according to the faith of Islam. The month of Ramadan reminds one of the Fasting as a gratitude for revelation of the Qur'an, which, by definition, is the source of eternal guidance for living a life that would be pleasing to Allah and that it brings blessing into our lives.

Righteousness is the quality or state of being morally correct and justifiable. It can be considered synonymous with 'rightness' or being 'upright'. It also helps us to avoid being judgmental. It is not just a personal matter; it also has implications for society as a whole. When people live righteously, it creates a more just and peaceful world.

b. the Supremely Exceptional Night

Consider Ayat 01-05, Surah 97, Al-Qadr that set the backdrop of the revelation of The Qur'an.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ
وَمَا أَذْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ

²¹ The 9th month of the Islamic Lunar Calendar.

²² ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ | However, Ayah 02, Surah 02, al-Baqarah specifies it to be source of guidance especially for the *muttaqeen* – the definition and scope of which follows vide Ayat 03-04 of the same Surah.

²³ '*Huda*' occurs 85 times and is also one of the several names of The Qur'an.

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ
تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ
سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

Indeed, We sent this down – *The Qur'an* –
during the Night of Great Eminence.
And what may enable you to perceive the Night of Great Eminence?
The Night of Great Eminence is better than a thousand months.²⁴
The Angels descend in it and the Spirit by the
Command of their Lord for every matter.²⁵
Peace *prevails* till the rising of the dawn.

The value of the time of Revelation of The Qur'an - that started with '*Iqra*'²⁶ - is termed as the Night of Great Eminence²⁷ whose spiritual value is far more than the lifetime of a believer's worshipful devotion.

The night is great because of what the Qur'an includes: an ideology, a basis for values and standards and a comprehensive code of moral and social behaviour, all of which promote peace within the human soul and in the world at large. It is great because of the descent of the angels, and Gabriel in particular, by their Lord's leave, carrying the Qur'an. They fill all the space between heaven and earth in such a splendid, universal celebration, vividly portrayed in this Surah.

This signifies one of the last ten nights of Ramadan in which there was no similar night in the life of a believer²⁸. It also highlights descent of the Divine Revelation and 'a conscious realization of the sanctity of this night that acts as a shield against unworthy thoughts and inclinations.'

It is the night of perfect communion between this Worldly Realm and the Higher Realm - an event unparalleled in the history of mankind for its splendour and the significance it has for the life of mankind as a whole. Its greatness is far beyond human perception.

24 So that its light may spread throughout the universe, and divine peace may spread in human life and conscience. The figure here does not signify a precise number. It simply denotes something very high. Many thousands of months and many thousands of years have passed without leaving behind a fraction of the changes and results brought about during that blessed night.

25 On that night every matter of significance was made plain and distinct; new values and standards were established; the fortunes of nations were determined; and values and standards were sorted out.

26 The Qur'an. Surah 96, al-Alaq.

27 Various scholars have termed it as 'Destiny', 'Power', 'Glory', 'Fate', 'Majesty', 'Honour', etc.

28 The exact date of The Night is not specified in The Qur'an. However, the Prophet^(p) is reported to have said to 'find' it within the last ten odd nights of Ramadan, i.e., 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, or 29th.

This night is also referred to in Q. 44:03-06.²⁹ It is clearly established that it is a night during the month of Ramadan - Q. 02:185.³⁰ This means that the Night of Great Eminence marked the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet^(P) and his mission of delivering it to mankind.

'Qadar' – no matter how it is translated, it highlights the basic features of the Faith of Islam: it means the well-planned system established by Allah^(EA) for this existence, the general laws, and the rules by which He linked the causes with its effects. This contention is referred to in many Ayat of the Qur'an. Consider the following:

- (i) Q. 13:08 - everything with Him has its *precise* measure - بِمِقْدَارٍ | *miqdaar*.
- (ii) Q. 15:21 - And there is not a thing but its treasures are with Us, and We do not give of each except in a known *and determined* measure – بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ | *bi-qadar ma'loom*.
- (iii) Q.54:49 - We have, indeed, created everything *of the universe* in *due* measure *and proportion* – بِقَدَرٍ | *bi.qadar*.

The Prophet used to 'celebrate' this auspicious night every Ramadan during its last ten nights³¹ by resorting to complete and uninterrupted spiritual solitude, devotion and meditation in the Masjid³² with no contact with family, friends and world at large.

The Prophet^(P) taught an easy and enjoyable way to commemorate it, so that our souls may always be in close communion with it and with the universal event which it witnessed. He has urged to spend this night of each year in devotion. He said: 'Seek the Night in the last ten nights of Ramadan.'³³ He also said: 'Whoever spends the Night in worship, with a pure motive of faith/*eman* and devotion, will have all his past sins forgiven.'³⁴ His followers continue doing it regardless to time and space to the end of time – with all obedience and reverence.³⁵

29 Q. 44:03-06. We revealed it – *The Qur'an* - during a night full of blessings. Because with it We had planned to warn people. On that night every matter of wisdom was made distinct – by Our Command. Indeed, We had decided to send Our Messengers to these people for guidance - as a Mercy from your Rabb - The Lord to humankind. Indeed, He - He is The All-Listening of their sayings, The All-Knowing of their intentions and actions.

30 Q. 02:185. The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur'an was began to be revealed: as a source of guidance for the people, and with clear messages of guidance, and as a standard for distinguishing right from wrong.

31 But in the last year of his life, the Prophet^(P) practiced it for 20 nights-days.

32 Masjid: Arabic term for mosque.

33 Related by Books of Bokhari and Muslim.

34 Ibid.

35 The Prophet^(P) is reported to have said: 'Indeed, this month has presented itself to you. There is a night within it that is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived of it has been deprived of all good. None is deprived of its good but that he is truly deprived.' Report by Anas ibn Malik^(R) carried in The Book of Ibn Majah.

c. Fasting nourishes *Taqwa*.

Ayah 183, Surah 02, Al-Baqarah explains:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O The Faithful!³⁶

Fasting³⁷ is made mandatory on you, just as it was made mandatory on those before you – Jews³⁸ and Christians³⁹, etc.
so that you may exercise *taqwa*.

The sole purpose of Fasting⁴⁰ is to attain '*taqwa*' which implies becoming pious in behaviour, speech and dealings, and dedicated in devotion to Allah^(EA). Thus, it is an exercise for one month to mould one's soul in '*taqwa*' – where one feeds the soul and by consequence starves the body.

In essence, *taqwa* evokes the sense of protecting oneself from moral peril, preserving one's virtue, and guarding against evil and displeasure of Allah^(EA).

It is a central Qur'anic concept and a constant awareness of Allah^(EA)'s Presence, Power and Providence. It is contrasted with evil, wrongdoing, sinfulness and transgression. It is a kind of awareness or consciousness using which one protects oneself from delving into evil. It is also used in the context of fearing and obeying.

It is the spiritual journey of life but it is not a meditative state which takes one away from worldly affairs. It is a way of finding one's route through life, which in its social and political dimensions requires justices and fairness.

This creates a cohesion between the spiritual activity of the believer, his conscience and consciousness, and the granting of mercy and blessings from Allah^(EA) in the form of guidance that leads to increased awareness of His Presence, Power and Providence.

36 This a direct address to the Muslim Faithful. It occurs 89 times throughout The Qur'an. The Faithful is portrayed in. Q. 02:03-04; 08:02-04; 23:01-11, 57-61, etc.

37 Abstinence, dawn to dusk every day without interruption, from all types of food, fruits, beverages, cohabitation with spouses, smoking, vulgar conversations, and behaviour that runs counter to decency.

38 Fasting in Judaism serves as a powerful spiritual practice, allowing individuals to reflect, repent, and connect with their faith during significant moments in the Jewish calendar. Starting with Yom Kippur: This is the holiest day of the year for Jews. On Yom Kippur, they fast for 25 hours, abstaining from food, drink (including water), and other physical pleasures. The focus during this time is on atonement and prayer. Apart from Yom Kippur, there are 25 other events associated with fasting. These fasts commemorate various significant moments, such as: 18th of Tammuz: Commemorates the breaking of the tablets, the cessation of regular sacrifices, and historical events like the Romans raiding Jerusalem. Tisha B'Av: Marks the destruction of the Temple. 10th of Tevet: A minor fast day associated with mourning and reflection. No Fasting on Shabbat, the month of Nisan, any other holiday or festival (except for Yom Kippur), for the ill, and pregnant women.

39 Christian fasting is about drawing near to God, seeking His guidance, and growing spiritually. As John Piper beautifully puts it, fasting is like a 'homesickness for God' – a hunger that leads us to rely on Him more deeply.

40 See The Prophetic saying vide Hadith No. 118. Volume 03. The Book of Bokhari.

This cumulative process increases *taqwa* in the believer as a distinguished companion of The Prophet^(P), Ubbayy bin Ka'b^(R) described a *muttaqi* to be a person who walks through thorny bushes, taking care that his clothes are not caught in bushes and be torn by their branches and thorns.

Taqwa is one of the most widely used terms in religious literature and has been mentioned more than 260 times in various forms in the Qur'an⁴¹ - both as a noun and verb. *Taqwa* is a deep, heartfelt awareness of Allah's omnipresence, an ever-present sense of His Watchfulness. It is the delicate balance between the fear of His Displeasure and the hopeful anticipation of His Mercy. This inner consciousness prompts one to live righteously, with integrity both in public and in private.⁴²

Also, since protection from something requires a feeling of fear alongside it, it may in some cases metaphorically refer to 'avoidance' or 'fear.' Both meanings may be accurate although there is no evidence to confirm that this metaphorically means 'fear' or 'restraint.'⁴³

In short, *taqwa* encompasses vigilance, mindfulness, and a deep sense of responsibility toward Allah^(EA). It prompts believers to protect themselves spiritually, maintain

integrity and seek closeness to Allah^(EA) and live with consciousness and reverence. Most English Translations render it as 'fear of Allah' as being 'conscious' or 'wary of Allah.'⁴⁴

Fasting with Ease & Convenience

Notwithstanding that the Fasting is mandatory, a believer's convenience to do so is not set aside in circumstances where he/she may not be able to Fast. There are exemptions: travellers, elderly, sick, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers on the condition they make up missing days at a suitable time after Ramadan. The elderly and ill compensate for days not fasted by making '*fidya*' - a small donation to charity - for each day – to feed the poor two times a day.

41 The Oxford Dictionary of Islam. John L. Esposito. NY. 2004.

42 See 'The Divine Qur'an – Treasure of The Faith of Islam. English Translation and Paraphrasing of the Sacred Arabic Text by Badr Hashemi.' 4 Volumes. ISBN 978-1-7923-8701-2. US LCCN 2022362541.

43 See Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an. مفردات القرآن راغب اصفهانی | Fazalur Rahman explains: In Islamic theology, the words 'fear' and '*taqwa*' are used interchangeably. However, '*taqwa*' is a special fear, which is peculiar to humans and it is a normative fear, an epistemic fear of ever falling short of the absolute. This is cognitive and moral dynamism, and a certain fearful appreciation of the inadequacy of the actual is a necessary condition of this dynamism and this applies to all forms, cognition, moral actions, etc. This dynamism of *taqwa* presupposes a transcendent norm of judgement, an absolute point of reference, which is God.' So '*taqwa*' is a form of apprehension or fear from an absolutist worldview, which comes as a result of reflection on the limitedness of our modes of cognition, knowledge, and actions. One who is *muttaqi* can never be absolutist or dogmatist in their approach. It's the realisation of these limitations that leads to the development of other virtues like humbleness, tolerance, and respect for pluralism which are essential for being *muttaqi*.

44 Hilali-Khan, Abdallah Yusuf Ali and others.

Consider Ayat 184 and 185, Surah 02, al-Baqarah that reads:

فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ
 *يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ

But whoever among you may be ill or on a journey, *then*
let him/her Fast by corresponding number of days later.
 Allah wishes to bring you ease, and does not wish to cause you hardship.
 And that you can *later* complete the count of the days *you missed*.

However, having allowed the concession, the Ayah reminds the believer that it is better to Fast, if *only* you knew *the spiritual value and the reward for it*:

وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

Further Concessions with Caution

Taking cognizance of the desire and need of married couples to cohabitate during the Fasting, Ayah 187, Surah 02, Al-Baqarah allows an allowance:

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ

It has been made lawful for you to cohabitate with your wives during the nights of the Fast, *i.e., from post-dusk to pre-dawn*.
 They are *as close as a garment to you* in as much as you are *as close as a garment for them, and a source of mutual pleasure*.

The Ayah adds a caution:

وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا

Furthermore, cohabitation with your spouses is not allowed *at any time* while you are secluded in the Masajid for devotional retreat and meditation - *'Itikaf*.⁴⁵

These are the limits by Allah;
 thus, never draw anywhere near them *and cause a breach*.

كَذَلِكَ يَبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

In this way Allah makes clear His Rules for *those people who Fast*,
 so that they may learn self-restraint *and, at the same time, remain Allah-reverent*.

45 The last ten night of Ramadan when a believer (males only) relocates himself from home to the masjid for spiritual solitude and meditation with no contact with family and friends. The Prophet^(p) used to perform I'tikaf every year. It seems then that solitude and meditation is a spiritual whetstone, undertaken habitually by the Prophet^(p), in which great ravines of religious fervour open. Within Islamic Law, it is designated as Sunnah Mua'kiddah Kifayah – a highly emphasised act that a community of Muslims must fulfil; even if one person fulfils this practice, this is sufficient on behalf of the collective.

Wrap-Up

Ramadan Fasting of 29 or 30 days ends with a day-long celebration starting with morning prayers in congregation after the sun-rise in addition to the regular 5-time daily prayers. It is called '*Eid*' – meaning happiness, feast, rejoicing and festivity. It is a world-wide festival to break the Fast.

The degree of satisfaction and happiness at the successful completion of Ramadan Fasting is directly correlated to the achievement of its objective: attaining *taqwa*. The level of *taqwa* – i.e., level of piety and righteousness in one's deeds, dealings and speech - increases with Fasting which is not only abstention from food and beverages and long hours of worship and spiritual retreat but a sustainable self-restraint from social evils, immorality, vulgarity and evil thinking, etc. In the Qur'anic jargon it is '*nafs ammara*' which makes one slave of such 'desires'.

Thus, if Fasting has elevated the level of one's *taqwa* and humbled one's *nafs ammara*⁴⁶, it is only then that Fasting has been beneficial. But if one has only been pursuing the quantitative goal of completing the recital of The Qur'an tens of time, and offering tens over tens of extended prayers without transforming the Divine message and demands of the prayers into one's soul, then one has definitely compromised the qualitative goal with quantitative objective.

Let the believer not forget that Allah^(EA) does not need our Fasting; it is we who need the benefits of Fasting attained through raised level of *taqwa* and restrained *nafs*

ammara to attain salvation and His Pleasure. May Allah^(EA) provide us all the next Ramadan an opportunity to optimize the level of *taqwa* and a restrained *nafs ammara* through humbleness, tolerance, respect for pluralism and become a better Muslim and hence a better world citizen.



⁴⁶ *Nafs al-Amaara*: This aspect of the soul is associated with natural instincts. It represents our primal desires and inclinations. See also Footnote 20 above.

Towards Understanding

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

Short Study of Surah Al-Rahman

Abstract

The 114 Surah of the Qur'an resonate with Allah's Majestic Names and Exclusive Attributes. One of these Majestic Names الرَّحْمَنُ is used as an equivalent to the Majestic Name Allah, and the two can be used interchangeably¹. While Allah's Graciousness and Blessings benefit people, other creations and all existence, its style of reminding is exceptional in one Surah, Al-Rahman which is pronounced as Ar-Rahman.

The central theme of the Surah is the overwhelming and boundless mercy and power of Allah. Through rhetorical questions like 'Which of the favors of your Rabb/Lord will you deny?' (فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ), it invites reflection on Allah's mercy, creation, and miraculous wonders in the universe; calls upon jinn and human to acknowledge His Powers, and submit to His Will. The guilty are dealt with first, together with the challenge to escape the judgment. This group is dispensed with quickly (through three Ayat and refrains), in order to get back to speak at length of bounties².

Discussion

The thematic structure of the Surah³ is reflected in the grammatical structure, which employs the dual form of many verbs and pronouns, and is addressed to both the human and the jinn through His Prophet, Muhammad ibn Abdallah⁴, who was, thus understood, assigned to both the creations. It describes their creation, reminds them that everything in this universe has a finite lifespan after which it will cease to exist, and then resurrected to face the consequences of its endeavors. Ayat 26 to 28 convey profound messages:

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ
وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

1. See Q. 17:110.

2. The initial 12 Ayat serve as an introduction to the Surah. They describe Allah's attributes of mercy, creation, sustenance and power. By presenting these aspects first, the Surah sets the tone for what follows—the repeated refrain emphasizing gratitude for divine blessings. By withholding the refrain initially, the Surah creates anticipation. When the refrain finally appears, it reinforces the message powerfully. It prompts self-reflection and invites the audience to appreciate Allah's countless blessings. The absence of the refrain in the first 12 Ayat highlights the deliberate design and invites us to ponder deeply.

3. 'Introduction to the Surah,' see Badr Hashemi, 'Introducing The Qur'an.' Or visit www.quranhighlights.com

4. 570-632. Hijaz. Arabian Peninsula.

Everyone *and everything* on it – *terrestrial world* –
 is *transitory and* going to perish with *cosmic catastrophes*,
 and all that to remain forever will be
 the Presence and Power of your Rabb⁵
 Full of Splendor and Full of Honor⁶.
 So which of the Unique Attributes of your Rabb,
Al-Hayyu and *Al-Qayyum*
 can you both refuse to *believe*.⁷

It is a reminder of the impermanence of worldly existence. Everything we see around us—people, animals, plants, and even civilizations—will eventually come to an end. Our material possessions, achievements, and pleasures are temporary. Amid this impermanence, Allah's eternal existence remains unchanged. His majesty and splendor endure forever. Allah alone is everlasting, and His Attributes are beyond comparison.

Thematically, the Surah can be divided into roughly 3 units:

1. Ayat - 01-30: deal with bounties of this world displaying Allah's creative power and mercy and challenges the addressees (human and jinn) - *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ* – repeated after Ayah 12 as a refrain;
2. Ayat - 31-45: describe the Final Judgment and contains a challenge for both to escape the judgment, the guilty will not escape the punishment and will be consigned to hell-fire;
3. Ayat - 46-78: deal with bounties and delights that await the pious in Paradise.

The first Ayah of first Surah, al-Fatihah – Q.01:01, establishes that the two words al-Rahman⁸ and al-Raheem refer to Allah, the Almighty. They are used extensively, together and separately, throughout the Qur'an to describe or refer to Allah, the Almighty. Both have the same root: *rahm*, which could mean 'womb' or 'place of origin'. Derivatives of this word are *raheem* (merciful) and *rahma* (mercy).

However, the name *Al-Rahman* has a different meaning from *rahim* but is related to *Al-Raheem*. The name Al-Rahman is used as equivalent to the Blessed Name Allah, and the two can be used interchangeably as described in Surah 17 – Al-Isra', Ayah 110:

5. It occurs 969 times in The Qur'an. See some at Q. 01:01, 28:30, 96:01, See 'The Divine 99' by Badr Hashemi, ISBN 978-1-4951-2588-1.

6. 'Dhul-Jalaal wal Ikraam' of the Sacred Arabic Text is one of the epithets of the Majestic Names and Attributes of Allah (EA). It means: Full of Majesty, Generosity, Glory and Honor. Lord Majestic and Noble. It occurs as Wa Yabqa Wajhu Rabbika Dhul-Jalaal-i wal-Ikraam in Q.55:27; and Tabaarak-asmu-Rabbika Dhil-Jalaal-i wal-Ikraam in Q.55:78. While 'Dhu' and 'Dhi' appear different in construction, both are Demonstrative Pronouns and carry the same meaning. ||. Bible/1 Timothy 1:17. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. ||. Revelation 4:9. And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever.

7. Translation and Paraphrasing in English of the Sacred Arabic Text throughout this Paper is taken from 'Allah Speaks to you I n The Qur'an' by Badr Hashemi. ISBN 979-8-218-97245-5.

8. Pronounced as Arr-Rahman.

قُلِ
ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ
أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا
فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

Say:

Call upon Him by *the Name of Allah*, or
call upon Him by *the Name of Al-Rahman* –
regardless by whichever Name you call upon Him –
it is just the same,

because for Him are the Names *and Attributes*, the Most Awesome

When the two names, al-Rahman and al-Raheem, are used together (in that order) in the Qur'an, their usage clearly declares the ultimate authority and power of Allah. Surah 19, Maryam, is the one in which the name al-Rahman is mentioned most frequently⁹.

The name al-Raheem is mentioned in the Qur'an exactly twice as many times (114 times) as the name al-Rahman (57 times), thus His Power, being the stricter element, is balanced with twice as much mercy, so that His Mercy extends over all that exists – Surah 7. al-'Araf, Ayah156:

رَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

My mercy encompasses everything

The name, al-Rahman embraces all existence with mercy, grace, and favor without discrimination as He gives life, maintains, provides, and equips all with the capacities necessary for each as a manifestation of the Majestic Attribute: The Ever-Compassionate, The Lord of Infinite Mercy - الرَّحْمَنُ.¹⁰

The mention of 'Teaching the Qur'an'¹¹ - عَلَّمَ الْفُرَّاقَ | Ayah 02 - comes as the first

9.16 times.

10. 'Ar-Rahman' of the Sacred Arabic Text is one of the traditionally enumerated epithets of the Majestic Names and Attributes of Allah(EA), al-Asmal-Husna wa Sifat al-'Ulya, on which is based its systematic expositions about the Divine Essence – dhat - and its Attributes – sifat. It means The Dispenser of Grace, The Benevolent, The Beneficent, The Merciful to all, The Most Gracious.

11. 'Al-Qur'an' of the Sacred Arabic Text - literally meaning 'recitation' or 'reading' – occurs some 70 times and has several distinct connotations. The Qur'an with a definite article come close to its meaning as the name of Muslim Divine Scripture - Q.09:111. But he word 'Qur'an' can also denote a single passage or 'unit' of revelation – Ayah or part of a Surah – Q.10:61; 13:31; 72:01. In most cases it describes the revelation 'sent down to The Prophet(P)' – Q.20:02; 76:23, but it can also refer to something in Allah(EA)'s possession, 'more' than what was revealed – Q.17:82; 43:02-04. In still other passages 'The Qur'an' refers to a collection of revelations in The Prophet(P)'s possession, which he is commanded to recite, convey or read aloud – Q.16:98; 17:45; 27:92. The first addressee was The Prophet(P) to whom 'He taught you, among other things, what you did not know' – Q.04:113. On a spiritual plane, as much as teachers may strive in teaching, these are secondary causes, and the primary cause is Allah(EA). Thus, whenever someone comes to be taught, He is the teacher. Furthermore, He taught Adam the names, all of them – Q.02:31; And We taught him, David, the artisanary of garments for you – Q.21:80; And He will teach him, Jesus, the book and the wisdom – Q.03:48; We taught him, Khidr (name not appearing in The Qur'an), knowledge from Us – Q.18:65; and He taught people of the world explication – Q.55:04. One interpretation is said to be that 'qur'an' here means 'to read' – as in Q. 96:01, thus Q.55:02 will be read as: 'The One Who taught to read.' This interpretation may be misleading as 'The Qur'an' with a definite article 'al' - as it appears in the Arabic Sacred Text - signifies The Book of Qur'an, the Divine Scripture.

predicate of الرَّحْمَنُ before the creation of human species - خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ | Ayah 03 is significant¹². While the natural order might suggest mentioning creation first, this sequence emphasizes the Divine origin and purpose of the Qur'an. It highlights that the Qur'an is not a product of human thought but a direct teaching from the Merciful Allah Himself الرَّحْمَنُ. By placing it before the creation of human species, Allah underscores the importance of guidance through His Revealed Scripture/الرَّحْمَنُ The Qur'an and lasting effect of spiritual benefit¹³.

His beneficence in 'Teaching the Qur'an'¹⁴ is so important that it was pointed out in the first Ayat of the Scripture/Qur'an to be revealed – Surah 96, 'Alaq, Ayat 03-04:

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

Recite!

For your Rabb is the Most Bountiful.

It is He Who teaches human being by means of the Pen, and
Who teaches human being what he does not know.

As well as on other occasions such as Surah 04, An-Nisa', Ayah 113:

وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ
وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

so when Allah has revealed onto you the Divine Book – *The Qur'an* - and the
Wisdom,

and taught you what you did not know before.

And Allah's Favors on you – *O The Prophet* - have been immeasurable indeed.

47 Ayat¹⁵ of the Surah constantly remind of His Mercy and Favors by taking care of them spiritually by teaching them The Qur'an, giving them worldly skills and intelligence as a part of the material welfare and having created this beautiful world full of wonders all around.

The Surah continues by mentioning that He, *Al-Rahman*, teaches *us* the Qur'an, and that He created human species and taught them to distinguish between things (including right from wrong). His creation of the celestial objects and the prostration/submission (to the purpose for which Allah created them) of plants and the trees, all are mentioned and all demonstrate His great and ultimate Creative Power over all things as the Almighty. He also includes a warning in the first set of Ayat to people not to be unfair in weighing (i.e. not to cheat others for one's own personal gain).

12.It is also clear from these 2 Ayat and throughout that the Surah is built on dualism:

12.(٢) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ (٣)(٤) عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ Dualism and contrast are the obvious feature throughout the Surah.

13.See Zamakhshari's Al-Kashshaf, and Razi's Tafseer.

14.Since the context of the Surah relates to His bounty 'Taught The Qur'an' (عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ) is used rather than the normal 'sent it down' (أَنْزَلَ الْقُرْآنَ).

15.Total 78 less 31 of refrain.

Three Ayat 07-09 mention 'the Balance' three times consecutively between heaven and earth, the Balance is 'set up' even before the earth is mentioned. The passage stresses the importance of keeping 'just' balance with no excess or deficiency¹⁶. The verb وَضَعَهَا (set up) is used with الْمِيزَانَ | *mizan* rather than أَنْزَلَ | *anzala* (brought down) as in Q.42:17 to emphasize the significance of the balance here, and using the same verb وَضَعَهَا | *vada'a* with الْأَرْضَ highlights the crucial importance of maintaining the balance on earth.

Skimping the balance elsewhere in the Qur'an has a concrete significance. However, in its present context it carries additional metaphorical meaning for due recognition of Allah's bounties. Thus, the balance may be understood to imply the dynamic equilibrium the skimping of which will be catastrophic for the universe as well as the human and jinn.

Ayat 33-34 convey a profound message. It challenges the addressees to 'have the ability to pass through the spherical regions of celestial realm and the terrestrial world to escape Allah's judgment and punishment. If you do, then go ahead and try. But you cannot pass through them except with *exceptional* power'¹⁷. It underscores the limitations of human and jinn existence.

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ
إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
فَانْفُذُوا
لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ ۖ

O Communities of Jinn¹⁹ and Human²⁰!

If you reckon that you have the ability to pass through and beyond
the spherical regions of the celestial realm and the terrestrial world
to escape Allah's Judgment and Punishment,
then go ahead and try.

But you cannot pass through them and beyond without *exceptional* power'.

16.The emphatic repetition of Mizan/balance is also observed in Q. 11:84-85, 26:181-183, 57:25, 83:01-03.

17.Earth is surrounded by a system of magnetic fields called the magnetosphere. This protective shield shields the earthly planet from harmful solar and cosmic particle radiation. When solar material streams strike the magnetosphere, they can become trapped and held in two donut-shaped belts around the Earth called the Van Allen Belts. These belts restrain particles, causing them to travel along Earth's magnetic field lines, continually bouncing back and forth from pole to pole. However, it is important to note that Earth's magnetosphere is not perfect; solar wind variations can disturb it, leading to geomagnetic storms that can penetrate our atmosphere and disrupt navigation systems and power grids.

18. هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَّةٌ -

19.The term 'jinn' occurs more than twenty nine times in the Qur'an. There is a whole Surah 72, named Surah al-Jinn, which speaks clearly and explicitly about the species. The jinn live in a world we cannot see. They eat, drink and procreate. Similar to humans, some are righteous while others are not. The jinn were created before the creation of mankind, and their origin is from fire (Q.15.26-27). They are a part of the Divine creation separate from humanity and the angels, but they share certain qualities with humans, like intellect, discrimination and the capacity for freedom. They have the power to choose between true and false, right and wrong, etc. Q.51.56 indicate the existence of the jinn: 'I created the jinn and human to worship me.'

20.'Insaan' of the Sacred Arabic Text may be understood as the human being, people, generic noun, all genders.

Given the scientific knowledge and technological breakthroughs, it appears to have become possible for the human to pass through the magnetosphere and reach out to solar and cosmic objects. But still it cannot escape Allah's judgment and punishment.

This Ayah states that it is possible to travel and even go beyond the regions or layers of the heavens and the earth. Unal²¹ states that 'The Prophet^(P) achieved both in his body and spirit – '*al-Mi'raaj*' - the Ascension. It also suggests that it can be possible to make this journey by means of an authority (scientific knowledge); however, it may not be possible to go beyond the heavens by means of science. Nevertheless, the Ayah may also be suggesting that the immaterial dimensions of existence can 'scientifically' be discovered and established.' The Arabic term '*aqtaar*', which has been translated as spherical regions, means regions or layers with a diameter, and, therefore, spherical regions.

The refrain²² *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ* in this Surah asks both humans and jinn to consider their Rabb's/Lord's marvels of creation and blissful bounties - from the intricate design of a leaf to the vastness of the cosmos, and acknowledge Allah's wisdom and mercy, power and might.

This Ayah - *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ* - crux of the Surah²³, repeats itself 31 times to emphasize the majestic wonders of Al-Rahman. reinforces gratitude, underscores the value of blessings, and serves as a powerful reminder to appreciate Allah's favors and avoid ingratitude²⁴.

The Ayah appears between descriptions of various blessings and punishments. This placement highlights the value of these boons and emphasizes that denying them is a grave mistake. Whether it is creation, language, justice/punishment, or sustenance,

21. The Qur'an. Annotated Interpretation in Modern English, Ali Unal. ISBN 978-1-59784-000-2.

22. This is the key phrase in this Ayah. It is generally captured as 'without (Our) Authority.' However, I understand it somewhat differently and have rendered it as 'without (exceptional) power.' The word 'sultan' is employed elsewhere in the Qur'an, e. g. Q. 69:29 Others occur in Surah 54, Al-Qamar, 6 times: *فَعَلَّ مِنْ مُلْكِهِ* | Surah 77, Al-Mursalat, 10 times: *وَيُلْ يُؤْمِرُ لِلْمَكْذِبِينَ* | Surah 27, An-Namal, 5 times, *أَلِلَّهِ مَعَ اللَّهِ*

23.(i) This Ayah – Q.55:13 - is repeated thirty one times throughout the Surah, which constitutes the most reiteration throughout The Qur'an. Dual pronouns of 'you' and 'your' are usually taken to refer to both human and jinn on the basis of Q.55:33 where they are addressed directly. (ii) The Sacred Arabic Text uses the expression of 'Aala'ye' within the same Ayah as many times, which literally means 'blessings' or 'bounties' or even 'favors.' However, in a departure from the conventional rendering, this meaning has been rendered in line with Divine Power/Powers – Qudrat - reflected in His Exalted Names and Majestic Attributes. (iii) It is narrated by Jabir bin 'Abd Allah al-Ansari(R) that 'The Prophet of Allah(P) was reciting Surah Ar-Rahman to us, and when he completed it, he said: 'What is wrong with you that you have been silent throughout? Certainly, the jinn are more responsive than you. Not once did I recite this Ayah 13 to them — So which of your Rabb's favors will you deny? — but that they said, 'Not one of your graces, our Rabb, do we deny, for all praise belongs to You'. At-Tirmidhi recorded it and observed: 'This Hadith is Gharib/weak!' See also Q.53:55.

24. *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ* - the interrogative is meant to be understood as an affirmative, judging by what is reported by way of an isnaad from Jabir bin 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah was reciting Surah al-Rahman to us, and when he completed it, he said, 'What is wrong with you that you have been silent throughout? In fact, the jinn are more responsive than you. Not once did I recite this Ayah to them but that they said, 'Not one of Your graces, our Lord, do we deny, for all praise belongs to You'.

each 'favor' deserves acknowledgment. The repetition occurs in specific contexts:

1. Ayat 31-45 after warnings about Hell's torments
Those who deny Allah's favors risk Hell²⁵.
2. Ayat 46-78 after descriptions of Paradise
Those who believe and act/live righteously will enter Paradise²⁶.

The Sacred Arabic Text of the Ayah uses the plural noun 'الآء' | Alaa²⁷ within the same Surah as many times, which literally means 'blessings' or 'bounties' or 'favors' or 'beneficence' or even 'benefits', etc., but as the above refrain, which is repeated many times bears not only on the bounties which Allah bestows on His creation but, more generally, on manifestations of His creativeness and might, power and wonders of power, or excellent manifestations of power. and النعم are the two terms employed in the Qur'an. While both are used interchangeably²⁸, there is a subtle difference - الآء may imply sun, moon and rain. while النعم²⁹.

25. Generally, the Qur'an mentions punishment 117 times.

26. Generally, the Qur'an mentions forgiveness 234 times.

27. The terms الآء | Alaa also appears elsewhere in the Qur'an. See for example, Q.07:69 and 74; Q. 53:55, etc.

28. See Q. 14:32-34: وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا Q. 16:10-18, وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا Q. 27:60-64, وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ Q. 30:20-27, etc.

29. الفرق بين النعم والء معظم اللغويين يعتبر الآء والنعم بمعنى واحد، وهناك من رأى أن النعم هي الخيرات الخاصة التي ينعم الله تعالى. بها على الإنسان في نفسه مثل نعمة الصحة والعافية... وأن الآء هي النعم العظيمة العامة التي تتوالى في الكون والحياة مثل تسخير الشمس والقمر والأنهار والبحار والأمطار...

النعم والآء ليستا متضادتين تمام الضد ولكنهما ليستا سواء كما يظن الكثير فالنعم من نَعَم وهو الطيب والرغد والسعة والراحة والبيان ومنها الأنعام والنعموة والنعيم والضد لها البؤس

والبؤس من بئس وهو الشدة والمشقة والبلاء ومنه البأس قال الله {وقل الحق من ربكم فمن شاء فليؤمن ومن شاء فليكفر إنا اعتدنا للظالمين نارا أحاط بهم سرادقها وإن يستغيثوا يغاثوا بماء كالمهل يشوي الوجوه بئس الشراب وساءت مرتفعاً} فترى ما في الآية من الشدة والبأس ثم يقول تعالى {إن الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات إنا لا نضيع أجر من أحسن عملاً أولئك لهم جنات عدن تجري من تحتهم الأنهار يحلون فيها من أساور من ذهب ويلبسون ثيابا خضرا من سندس وإستبرق متكئين فيها على الأرائك نعم الثواب وحسنت مرتفعاً} وأما الآء ففيها من البأس ما فيها وهي من ألا من الشدة والاستطاعة والقدرة والسلطان والفرقان هكذا يعلمنا القرآن فلم تذكر الآء في القرآن إلا في ثلاث سور الأعراف والنجم والرحمن

أول ما قيلت قيلت في قوم عاد الذين قال الله فيهم {فأما عاد فاستكبروا في الأرض بغير الحق وقالوا من أشد منا قوة أولم يروا أن الله الذي خلقهم هو أشد منهم قوة وكانوا بآياتنا يجحدون} يكفي ما في اسمهم من الشدة والعدوان قال الله {والى عاد أخاهم هودا قال يا قوم اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره أفلا تتقون قال الملأ الذين كفروا من قومه إنا لنراك في سفاهة وإنا لنظنك من الكاذبين قال يا قوم ليس بي سفاهة ولكني رسول من رب العالمين أبلغكم رسالات ربي وأنا لكم ناصح أمين أوعجبتكم أن جاءكم ذكر من ربكم على رجل منكم لينذركم واذكروا إذ جعلكم خلفاء من بعد قوم نوح وزادكم في الخلق بسطة فاذكروا آلاء الله لعلكم تفلحون قالوا أجبنا لنعدب الله وحده ونذر ما كان يعيد أبائنا فأتنا بما تعدنا إن كنت من الصادقين قال قد وقع عليكم من ربكم رجس وغضب أتجادلوني في أسماء سميتوها أنتم وآبائكم ما نزل الله بها من سلطان فانتظروا إني معكم من المنتظرين فأعجبتهم والذين معه برحمة منا وقطعنا دابر الذين كذبوا بآياتنا وما كانوا مؤمنين} نرى ما في الآية من الشدة والبأس والقوة والاستكبار فلقد جاء هود لينذرهم فهل ينذروهم بالنعم أم بالقوة والأخذ والإحاطة ثم تلت هذه آيات في حق ثمود كلها عتوا استكباراً من ملأ الكافرين بقوتهم وشدتهم فأنذرهم صالح بأس ربهم الذي جعل لهم هذه القوة يتخذون القصور وينحتون الجبال فاقرواها وتدبروا وفي سورة النجم يشابه السياق فالسورة كلها على القدرة والحكمة أن إلى الله المنتهى وأنه هو أضحك وأبكى وأنه هو أمات وأحيا وأنه خلق الزوجين الذكر والأنثى وأن عليه النشأة الأخرى وأنه هو أغنى وأقنى وأنه أهلك عاد الأولى وثمود فما أبقي وقوم نوح فقال الله {فبأي آلاء ربك تتمازى} ثم يتبعها التنذير وأما التي في سورة الرحمن وهي التبس على الكثير أمرها فيكشفها أن جاءت في سورة الرحمن والرحمن اسم ملك وجلال على غير ما يظن الكثير فلربما كاد الرحمن أن يكون ضدا للرحيم يعني أن مريم لم تلجأ إلا إليه ولم يخوف إبراهيم أباه إلا به ولا يكلأونا بالليل والنهار إلا الرحمن يكفي أن الرحمن على العرش استوى ومن مثل هذا كثير لعلنا نفصل فيها في سؤال آخر فأما الآء فلترى ما في سورة الرحمن من الآلاء (حسبان-يسجدان-رفعها-تطغوا-الميزان-القسط-خلق-برزخ-المنشآت-فان-يبقي-الجلال والإكرام-شان-سفنرخ-استطعتهم-انفدوا-سلطان-تنتصران-يؤخذ-هذه جهنم التي يكذب بها المجرمون) فأين النعم بل هي آلاء الله فبأي آلاء ربكم تكذبان فمن كذب بجهنم كذب بآلاء الله فهي من الآئ حتى عندما أَرَادَ الله أن يذكر ما في الجنة من نعيم بدأ قوله به {ولم يخاف مقام ربه جنتان} أي أن الجنة ليست إلا لمن خاف فألو كان في الآلاء نعم ففيها ما فيها مما علمنا ونشأ الله الإصابتة ونعوذ به أن يضلل سعينا وقد تكون آلاء الله نعمة للمؤمنين إذ يكف الله بها عنهم الكافرين قال الله {يا أيها الذين آمنوا اذكروا نعمت الله عليكم إذ هم قوم أن يسلطوا عليكم أيديهم فكف أيديهم عنكم} والله أعلم

It may be argued that the phrase **الْأَلَاءُ** | Alaa' can also be a manifestation of His Majestic Names and Exclusive Attributes given its connectivity with Q. 55:78, **تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ** / *Tabaraka Ismo Rabbika Dhi Jalal wal Ikram* consider the 31 times recurring phrase as linked to every Majestic Divine Name and Exclusive Attribute.

Ayah`16 - Then which of the Creative Powers of your Rabb – Al-Khaaliq³⁰/*The Creator* will you both challenge?

Ayah 18 - So which of the Supreme Powers of your Rabb³¹ - The Lord Creator and Sustainer will you both repudiate?

Ayah 21 - Which, then, of the Miraculous Wonders of your Rabb – Al-Baari³²/*The Originator* would you both not *even* acknowledge?

Ayah 23 - So which of the Unprecedented Wonders of your Rabb – Dhul-Quwwa³³/*The Lord of All Power* will you both belie?

Ayah 25 - So which of the Supreme Wonders of your Rabb – Al-Maalik³⁴/*Who Rules Supreme* will the both of you deny?

Ayah 28 - So which of the Unique Attributes of your Rabb – Al-Hayye³⁵ and Al-

30. 'al-Khaaliq' occurs 8 times vide Q.06:102, 13:16, 15:86, 23:14, 36:81, 39:62, 40:62 and 59:24 in its various forms such as 'Al-Khallaq' and 'Ahsan-ul-Khaaliqeen' vide 'al-Khaaliq' The Creator of all things. The One who creates from nothing, creating at the same time the state, condition and sustenance for all the creation. Allah(EA) is Al-Khaaliq as He plans, establishes and defines the state of things before they actually come into existence. This includes the conditions and sustenance for all that He creates establishing the how, when, and where creation is to take place.

31. Rabb' - the expression of the Sacred Arabic Text is used for Allah(EA) about 969 times in The Qur'an. It is usually rendered in English as 'Lord', which I consider as too limited to convey essence of the expression 'Rabb.' Hence, I have retained it as it appears in the Sacred Arabic Text and used it as 'Rabb - The Lord'. It conveys not only the idea of fostering, bringing up and nourishing but also that of regulating, completing, accomplishing, sustaining and perfecting. It also means originator of things and their combiner to create new forms Q.01:01, etc.

²⁷ Rabb - the expression of the Sacred Arabic Text is used for Allah(EA) about 969 times in The Qur'an. It is usually rendered in English as 'Lord', which I consider as too limited to convey essence of the expression 'Rabb.' Hence, I have retained it as it appears in the Sacred Arabic Text and used it as 'Rabb - The Lord'. It conveys not only the idea of fostering, bringing up and nourishing but also that of regulating, completing, accomplishing, sustaining and perfecting. It also means originator of things and their combiner to create new forms.

32. 'al-Baari' of the Sacred Arabic Text is one of the epithets of the Majestic Names and Attributes of Allah(EA). It occurs once in Q.59:24. It means The Maker, The Originator. Allah(EA) manifests the quality of Al-Bari by bringing into being perfect harmony not only everything within itself but with other creation in relation to each other as well – all inter-connected. When one part of this connectivity is affected, all parts are affected. And the time when inter-connectivity breaks, it would herald the emergence of a new creation.

33. 'Dhul-Quwwati' is mentioned in Q.51:58. It means: The Extremely Powerful. The Possessor of All Strength. Allah(EA) is Al-Qawi'yy because He has the power and strength that is unlimited and unconditional as He creates millions of galaxies with the same ease as millions of bees.

34. 'Al-Maalik' mentioned in Q. 01:03, etc. means: The Absolute Ruler. The Eternal Lord. The Sovereign Supreme. The King. The Owner of all creation and existence from eternity to infinity. The One with the complete Dominion. The Master. It occurs once as Allahumma Maalik-al-Mulk in Q.03:26.

35. 'Al-Hayyu' and 'Al-Qayyum' appear vide Q.02:255, 03:02 and 20:111, etc. 'Al-Hayyu' means: The Ever-Living. The Eternal. The One who lives and never dies. Al-Qayyum requires nothing to exist. The Self-Subsistent Fount of All Being. The Eternal. The Self-Existing, i.e. Al-Qayyum requires nothing to exist.

Qayyum/*The Ever-Living, The Self-Subsisting* - can you both refuse to believe?

Ayah 30 - So which of your Rabb's Attribute of Al-Mughni/*The Enricher* can you both even disavow?

Ayah 32 - *We will then see* which of the bounties of your Rabb - *The Lord* have you both – *jinn and human* – been denying?

Ayah 34 - So which aspect of Al-Qaadir³⁶, Al-Qadeer and Al-Muqtadir/*the Overpowering Might* of your Rabb can you both refute?

Ayah 36 -Then which of your Rabb – Al-Darr³⁷/*The Lord's Power* can you both, *jinn and human*, deny?

Ayah 38 - So which of your Rabb's *Overwhelming Powers* – Al-Qawiyye³⁸ and Dhil-Quwwa will you both denounce?

Ayah 40 - *We shall see* which of the Powers of your Rabb – Al-Haseeb³⁹/*The Lord's Judgment* will you both then question?

Ayah 42 - So which of the Powers of Muntaqim⁴⁰/*Venegeance* of your Rabb will the two of you not admit?

Ayah 45 - So which of the Exalted Attributes of your Rabb – Al-Jabbar⁴¹ and Al-Qahhar/*The Overpowering Restorer or the Lord who subdues wrong and evil* will the two of you deny?

36. 'Al-Qaadir' (active particle) and its variants 'Al-Qadeer' and 'Al-Muqtadir' - 'Al-Qadir' appears vide Q.06:65, 17:99, 75:40 and 86:08, etc., and it means: The Omnipotent. The Possessor of Power. The Powerful. The One Who Rules Supreme. 'Al-Qadeer' appears in Q.02:20, 03:26, 04:133, 05:120, 06:17, 08:41, etc. 'Al-Muqtadir' appears in Q.18:45, 54:42 and 54:55, and it means The Absolute in Power. The Creator of All Power. The Respected. The Determiner. The Dominant. Allah not only creates all power but controls it too. Through this control, He creates what He Wills. If He Wills, He can strengthen the weak, and, weaken the strong. Allah(EA) strengthens those who seek His obedience and follow His commands by giving them wisdom, patience, and perseverance, and weakens those who follow their ego by increasing their ambition and self-conceitedness.

37. 'Al-'Dhaarr' means: The Afflicter. The Creator of the harmful. It is the opposite of Al-Nafi'y - The Creator of the Beneficial. 'Al-'Dharr' is derived from the Noun Dharra'o, meaning 'adversity and hardship' in Q.02:214; and, as Dhurr (Asm Mansub, nominative case) meaning 'harm, affliction' in Q.06:17 and 11:10.

38. 'Al-Qawi' and 'dhul-Quwwah' - the two appear vide Q.11:66, 22:40, 42:19, etc. and Q.51:58 respectively. 'Al-Qawi' means: The Extremely Powerful. The Possessor of All Strength. Allah is Al-Qawi 'yy because He has the power and strength that is unlimited and unconditional as He creates millions of galaxies with the same ease as millions of bees.

39. 'Al-Haseeb' means: The Supreme who takes one to account. The Reckoner at the Time of Final Judgment. The Bringer of Judgment. It appears vide Q.04:06, 04:86 and 33:39, etc.

40.. 'Al-Muntaqim' and 'Dhu-n-Tiqam' - Al-Muntaqim is the opposite of Al-'Afuu. It may mean: (i) The Avenger of Evil Who avenges the arrogant, punishes the criminal, and intensifies the punishment of the tyrant; (ii) The One who brings or exacts retribution after having excused them, forgiven earlier sins, given them many warnings, made repentance possible, and granted them respite to reconsider. It occurs as variants in forms of Azeez-un Dhu-n-Tiqam as Verbal Noun (Ism Al-Masdar) in Q.14:47; and as Inna Min-al-Mu-jrimeen-a Mutaqimun (an Active Particle from one of the derived stems) in Q.32:22, 43:41, 44:16, meaning those who punish, take revenge, etc.

41.. 'Al-Jabbaar' and 'Al-Qahhaar' : 'Al-Jabbaar' is coercive over everyone but no one can coercive Him; it occurs in Q.59:23. 'Al-Qahhaar' is the One Who breaks the backs of His enemies and dominates over them by executing punishment; it occurs in Q.12:39, 38:65, 39:04 and 40:16.

Ayah 47 - So which of the Blessings of your Rabb – Ar-Raheem⁴²/*The Lord of Infinite Beneficence* will you both refuse?

Ayah 49 - So which of the Graceful Favors of your Rabb – Al-Kareem⁴³/*The Generous* the two of you *ever* renounce?

Ayah 51 - So which of the Blessed Favors of your Rabb – Al-Wahhab⁴⁴/*The Lord Bountiful* would you both not acknowledge?

Ayah 53 - So which of the Unparalleled Favors of your Rabb – Ar-Razzaq⁴⁵/*The Lord of Sustenance* will you be denying?

Ayah 55 - So which of the Kindness of your Rabb – Al-Mughni⁴⁶/*The Lord of Benevolence* can the two of you refuse to admit?

Ayah 57 - So which of the Graceful Favors of your Rabb – Al-Wadood⁴⁷/*The Lord of Affection* will you both rebuff?

Ayah 59 - So which of the Blessed Favors of your Rabb – An-Naf'ey⁴⁸/*The Benefactor* will the two of you discard?

Ayah 61 - So which of the blessings of your Rabb – Al-Hameed⁴⁹/*The Lord of Goodness* can the two of you confute?

42. 'Ar-Raheem' means: The Ever-Caring. The Merciful. The Compassionate to all. The Source of Infinite Beneficence. The Giver of Intensive Form of Mercy. The Dispenser of Grace. It occurs 115 times in The Qur'an, e.g. 01:02, 02:163, 27:30, 41:02, 59:22, etc.

43. 'Al-Kareem' means: The Bountiful. The Generous. The Munificent. The Venerable. The Prime. Al-Kareem is the quality where one forgives while having the power to exact retribution, etc. It occurs as Ma Gharraka Bi-Rabb-i-k-Al-Kareem in Q.82:06; as Ghaniyy-un Kareem in Q.27:40; and as Huwa Rabb ul 'Arshi-Al-Kareem in Q.23:116.

44. 'Al-Wahhaab' means: The Bestower of Blessings. The Giver of Gifts. The All Bountiful. The Ever-Giving. The Immensely Generous. Al-Wahhaab is the Attribute of Allah that gives Gifts of Nature, grants sustenance to every living being without measure, and cures from all diseases. It occurs as Innaka Anta-Al-Wahhaab in Q.03:08 and 38:35; and in combination with Al-Azeed as Rabbi-k-Al-Azeed Al-Wahhaab in Q.38:09.

45. Ar-Razzaq' occurs in Q.51:58. Other variants comprise Ar-Raaziq (Q.05:114) and Khayr-ur-Raaziqeen (Q.05:114, 23:72 and 34:39). 'Ar-Razzaq' also means The Great Provider of Sustenance.

46. Al-Mughni 'means: The Enricher. The One who gives wealth and prosperity. The One Who satisfies the needs of others. It occurs as a variant Yughni (Imperfect Tense), meaning 'He shall enrich,' in Q.09:28; 24:32; and as Aghna (Perfect Tense), meaning 'He fulfills the needs,' in Q.53:48. It is also a derivative of Al-Ghaniyy in Q.47:38.

47. 'Al-Wadood' also means Full of Mercy and Affection. It appears in Q.11:90 and 85:14.

48. 'An-Naafe'y' means The Propitious. The Benefactor. The Source of Goodness. The Creator of the Beneficial. [An-Naafe'y is not mentioned in The Qur'an. Al-Tirmidhi 3508 lists it as a Divine Attribute].

49. 'Al-Hameed' means: The Laudable. The Embodiment of Good. The One to Whom All Praise is due. Allah is Al-Hameed by virtue of His praising Himself from eternity, and by virtue of human beings' praising Him to infinity. This fact of Allāh being praised stems from His Attributes of Majesty, Exaltation, Perfection, and from the point of view of those who make mention of Him by remembering and reciting His Uniquely Beautiful Names and Attributes. It occurs in combinations as Al-Ghaniyy Al-Hamid in Q.22:64; 31:26; 35:15; 57:24; Al-'Aziz Al-Hamid in Q.14:01; 34:06; 85:08; Al-Waliyy Al-Hameed in Q.42:28; Ghaniyy-un Hameed in Q.02:267; 04:131; 14:08; 31:12; Hakeem-in-Hameed in Q.41:42; and, Hameed-um-Majeed in Q.11:73.

Ayah 63 - So which of the Eternal Favors of your Rabb – Al-Basith⁵⁰/*The Benevolent* will you both dispute?

Ayah 65 - So how many of the Blessings of your Rabb – Al-Kareem⁵¹/*The Bountiful* will you both dismiss?

Ayah 67 -. So how many of the Infinite Favors of your Rabb – Ash-Shakoor⁵²/*Who is ?Appreciative of your good deeds* will you both not appreciate

Ayah 69 - So which of the Kindness of your Rabb – Al-Haleem⁵³/*The Clement* will you both refuse?

Ayah 71 - So which of the Graceful Favors bestowed by your Rabb – Al-Barr⁵⁴/*the Beneficent* will you both not acknowledge?

Ayah 73 - So which of your Rabb – Al-Wadood⁵⁵/*the Affectionate* will the two of you ever disawe?

Ayah 75 - So which of the Blissful Bounties of your Rabb – Al-Lateef⁵⁶/*the Benignant* will you both refuse to acknowledge?

50. 'Al-Basith' means: The Extender/Expander of worldly benevolence. The One who amplifies abundance, joy, relief and ease. Al-Basith is the opposite of Al-Qaabidh. It is that Divine Attribute which makes plentiful the means of subsistence to whoever He Wills through His mercy, and Who breathes the soul into the bodies at the time of their being given life. Q.02:245 sets the Divine Attribute as: '... It is Allah Who withholds, and it is Allah Who gives abundantly...'

51. 'Al-Kareem' means: The Bountiful. The Generous. The Munificent. The Venerable. The Prime. Al Kareem is the quality where one forgives while having the power to exact retribution, etc. It occurs as Ma Gharraaka Bi-Rabb-i-k-Al-Kareem in Q.82:06; as Ghaniyy-un Kareem in Q.27:40; and as Huwa Rabb ul 'Arshi-Al-Kareem in Q.23:116.

52. 'Ash-Shakoor' means The Benefactor. The One Who is Appreciative. The Acknowledger of Thanksgiving. The Ever-Responsive to Gratitude. It occurs as Inna-Hu Ghafoor-un Shakoor in Q.35:30; Inna Rabba-na La- Ghafoor-un Shakoor in Q.35:34; 42:23; and as Wal-Allah-Hu Shakoor-un Haleem in Q.64:17, etc. A variant of the epithet appears as Shaakir-an-'Aleem-a (Shaakir is both Ism Mansub and Sift F'iliyyah, meaning 'Grateful' and 'Appreciative' as in Q.04:147).

53. 'Al-Haleem' means The Forbearing. The Clement. The Gentle. The Indulgent. Al-Haleem is an Attribute which shows neither anger nor rage upon observing disobedience or violation. It is not prompted by haste and recklessness to take swift vengeance even though it has unlimited power to do so. Q.35:45 asserts: 'If Allah took people to task by that which they deserve, He would not leave a single living creature on the surface of the earth.' It occurs in combination with other Divine Attributes, such as Ghafoor-un Haleem in Q.02:225, 235; 03:155; 05:101; 17:44; 35:41; Shakoor-un Haleem in Q.64:17; 'Aleem- un Haleem in Q.04:12; 33:51; and Ghaniyy-un Haleem in Q.02:263, 04:12, 05:101, 17:44, 22:59, 35:41.

54. 'Al-Barr' means: The Source of all Goodness. The Great Benefactor. The Righteous. The Beneficent One. The Benign. These are all the qualities of The One Who is The Merciful, and Who loves good ('al-barr') for His servants. If He chooses to punish, the punishment never goes beyond the misdeed committed, while His rewards are ten times greater for a good deed than the deed itself. As The Source of All Goodness, He rewards good intentions even if these are not carried out. It occurs only once as Inna-Hu Huw-Al-Barrur-Raheem in Q.52:28.

55. 'Al-Wadood' means: The Affectionate. All Tender. The Fount of Love. Full of Mercy and Ever-Caring. Al-Wadood meaning 'loving' is articulately balanced by its counterpoint in Q.05:54, depicting Divine Love answered by human love: 'He loves them as they love Him.' It occurs as Wadood-un in combination with Raheem-un in Q.11:90; and as Al-Wadood-o with Al-Ghafoor-o in Q.85:14.

56. 'Al-Lateef' eans: The Benignant. The Subtle. The Knower of Subtleties. The Gentle. The Benevolent. The All-Refined. The Unfathomable. Al-Lateef combines gentleness in action with delicacy of perception. It occurs in combination with the Divine Attribute of Al-Khabeer as Huw-Al-Lateef-u-Al-Khabeer in Q.06:103 and 67:14; Inn-Allah-a Lateef-un Khabeer-a in Q.22:63; 31:16; and Inn-Allāh-a Kana Lateef-an Khabeer-a in Q.33:34.

Ayah 77 - So how many of the pleasures from your Rabb – Al-Ra'oof⁵⁷/the All-Caring will you both be denying?

Consider another scenario. Ayah 18 of Surah 19, Maryam, Syedah Maryam seeks protection from al-Rahman, *the Most Powerful, the Almighty*, against the one whom she perceives as a man entering her private chamber, but who in fact is the Archangel Gabriel.

قَالَتْ
إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ
إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا

She screamed: *Go away.*
I definitely seek protection of The Almighty, against your *evil designs.*
Do not come near me if you have any fear of Him
and abstain from committing any evil.

Also in the same Surah, consider Ayat 44 and 45, where Prophet Ibrahim tells his father Azar:

يَا أَبَتِ
لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ
إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا

O my dear father!
Do not worship the Satan *by becoming an instrument in his hand*
and following his instigation to worship idols.
In fact, the Satan has always been disobedient to The Almighty

يَا أَبَتِ
إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ
فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا

O my dear father!
In fact, I fear that a suffering may afflict you from The Almighty, *and,*
then you would *realize in the Hereafter that you had actually become*
Satan's companion in Hell.

Again, the direct reference is to the Power of Allah but there is also an implication that a Merciful Allah would not wish Satan to be the guide of anyone.

57. 'Ar-Ra'oof' is Allah's quality of having pity on others, where pity is the intensification of mercy. Therefore, it has nearly the same meaning as The Compassionate though in an intensified form. Other possible meanings comprise: The All Caring. The Benignant. The Gracious. The Tenderly Kind. The Clement. It occurs as Wallah-o Ra'oof -um bil- Ibaad in Q.02:207, 03:30; and in combination with Raheem as Inna-Al-lah-a bi-Nas-i La- Ra'oof -un Raheem-un in Q.02:143; 09:117; 22:65; 57:09; 59:10.

In the same Surah 19, Maryam, Ayat 85–96⁵⁸, one of the most powerful and definitive uses of the meaning of the Divine Name الرَّحْمَنُ, and used here repeatedly, forcefully condemns the idol-worship of Prophet Jesus by Christians and any allegation that the Almighty shares power with any other being, or procreates. Allah is the only one Creator of everyone and everything, and there is absolutely none like Him, and everything else is His creation and dependent.

These Ayat mention that the mountains, the heavens and the earth all prostrate/submit in awe and worship of al-Rahman. The emphasis here is obviously on Allah's power and ultimate authority, but there is also the subtle reference to the mercy with which He applies that authority. In every instance of the usage of the Majestic Name al-Rahman in the Qur'an, it shows the appropriateness of this Name to the most graphic description of Allah's Power and Authority, the Power and Authority which belongs solely to Him - The Almighty.

In Surah 20, Taha', following a powerful account of the Time of Final Judgement and Allah's Power at that Time, Ayat 108 and 109 give an awesome description of His Authority and Power when all will be totally submitted to Him and no intercession will be allowed.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا
يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا

At that Time, everyone will follow the Caller/*Calling Voice* from which there will be no escape.

Then all voices will be silenced in awe of الرَّحْمَنُ,
and you will hear nothing but murmuring in subdued voices.

At that Time, intercession will be of no benefit to anyone –
except for the one to whom الرَّحْمَنُ will have granted permission to intercede,
and whose word *of faith* pleased Him.

يَوْمَ نُحْشِرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ وَفْدًا (85) وَنَسُوفُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ وَفْدًا (86) لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا (87) (88) لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِذَا (89) تَكَادَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًا (90) أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا (91) وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا (92) إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتَى الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا (93) لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا (94) وَكُلُّهُمْ (95) آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا (96) إِنْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا (96)

Q.19:85 - The Time will surely come when WE are going to gather the Allah-conscious before The Immensely Merciful - all in one delegation. 19:86 - And WE will drive the sinful to Hell-fire - thirsty like a herd of cattle being driven to well. 19:87 - They will not have the power of intercession for them, except for the one who has permission from the Immensely Merciful. 19:88 - Moreover, they allege: 'The Immensely Merciful has taken to Himself a son.' 19:89 - Indeed, by this monstrous allegation you have uttered a hideous thing of blasphemy, 19:90 - it is as if the celestial realm might almost explode and rent into fragments, and the terrestrial world burst and split asunder, and the mountains crumble to pieces, 19:91 - for that people have ascribed a son to the Immensely Merciful, 19:92 - while it is not befitting to His Majesty that the Immensely Merciful should take a son to Himself. 19:93 - Given that all existence in the Universe is submitting to Allah, and that He has neither a son, nor a spouse, nor a partner, there is no one, including Jesus son of Mary, in the celestial realm and the terrestrial world who will come to the Immensely Merciful except as a humble servant - in total worshipful submission. Q.19:94 - Indeed, He has kept a count of them all/acts – and counted them exactly, one-by-one, 19:95 and, during the Time of Final Judgment, every one of them will appear before Him alone. Q.19:96 - Surely those who believe and practice righteousness – for them the Immensely Merciful will show affection.

These two Ayat are followed by Ayah 110, a vivid description of Divine Omniscience, and by Ayah 111, which state:

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا
وَعَنَتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ ۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا

All faces will be submitted to the Living, the Eternal (*al-Hayy al-Qayyum*), and that those who carry the burden of even a single act of evil doing/being unjust will be doomed.

Is the appropriate description for this set of acts ‘the Merciful’ – or is it more appropriately understood to be the description of ‘the Almighty’? While He is also the All-Merciful, it might be argued that we must first fear His Power and Authority before we can be eligible for consideration of His Mercy. Hence the cumulative language found here emphasizes Divine Power and Authority.

Tabari⁵⁹ regards the term ‘آلاء | Alaa’, in this context, as synonymous with *qudrah* – ‘power’ or ‘powers’. So reading of the Ayah *fabi-ayyi alaa i Rabbikuma* should be read and understood as *fabi-ayyi qudrat-Allah*.

Ibn Jarir has taken ‘Alaa’ in the meaning of power and might in his commentary of Ayat 37-38:

إِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

*What may happen when the celestial realm will split open/disintegrate,
and turns rosy-red like crimson leather.*

So which of your Rabb’s Overwhelming Powers/*Al-Qawi and Dhul-Quwwah*
will you both denounce?

Razi⁶⁰ has also made this observation in his commentary of Ayat 14-16:

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ
وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

He created the human *species* of animated clay,
malleable like that of pottery.
And He created the jinn *species* of the fusion of fire.
Then which of the Creative Powers of your Rabb –
Al-Khaaliq will you both challenge?

59. See Tafseer Muhammad bin Jareer Al-Tabari

60. See Tafseer Al-Fakhr Al-Razi

These Ayat do not describe the blessings but the Powers of Allah, and in the commentary of Ayat 22-23, these describe the wonders of power and not the blessings.

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

From both of these *sweet and salty seas*
come out the pearls and the corals
of various shades, qualities and sizes.
So which of the Unprecedented Wonders of your Rabb –
Dhul-Quwwati will you both belie?

Zamakhshari⁶¹ considers blessings even in Ayat 41-45 for those who were warned beforehand: out of His benevolence, He did not leave them in darkness about the ultimate fate that awaits sinners.

يُعَرَّفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ
فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالتَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ
هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ
يُطَوَّفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آتٍ
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

The criminals *among the jinn and the human*
will be recognized by their foreheads/marks,
and will be seized by their forelocks/hair and their feet.
So which of the Powers of Vengeance of your Rabb –
Al-Muntaqim and '*Dhu-n-Tiqam* will the two of you not admit?
They would be told:

This is the Hell, the existence of which you, the criminals
used to belie, *deny and ridicule.*

They will go round and round between it and HellFire –
that will burn but not consume them - and hot scalding water.

So which of the Exalted Attributes of your Rabb –
Al-Jabbaar and '*Al-Qahhaar* will the two of you deny?

However, the punishment will be for those who deny – Q. 77:15 | وَيُلْىٰ يُومِئِدِ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ – and the challenge فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ is in fact for those who may deny the encompassing bounties.

61. See Tafseer Al-Kashshaf, Jarallah Al-Zamashkhari

Conclusion

The Surah describes numerous blessings bestowed by Allah upon humanity including creation, guidance, sustenance, and endowed them with the ability to speak and communicate. This gift of articulate speech is a sign of Allah's mercy and wisdom. The refrain 'Which of your Rabb's favors will you both deny?' throughout the Surah reinforces the message. It encourages gratitude and reflection on the countless blessings we receive.



The Qur'an and the Ummi Prophet: A New Representation

Abstract

The Prophet Muhammad is often referred to as the '*Ummi Prophet*'. This label signifies that he was unlettered - he had not received formal worldly education. His knowledge and wisdom, however, extended far beyond what one might expect from an uneducated person. His profound understanding and management of the community demonstrated a level of insight beyond mere illiteracy.

Some scholars interpret the term '*ummi*' as emphasizing the purity and sincerity of the Prophet's character. It highlights that he was untouched by the influence of formal education or human teachings.

This popular perception is gauged with The Qur'anic use of the term and its variants. The contexts of each may be different but the thread is common. The manner the Qur'an uses the term demonstrates that it does not mean illiterate or, at least, is not employed in this meaning. Rather, it uses the word in reference to a people who, unlike the Jews and Christians, had not received or been instructed in the Inspired Divine Scriptures. However, the Qur'an never mentions that The Prophet was not capable of reading or writing. It merely says that he had neither studied nor written any Divine Scripture.

The conclusion emerges that it is quite probable that the view held by the Muslim scholars may have been developed in defence of the accusations by the Prophet's adversaries – then and now - that The Qur'an was not a heavenly revelation but a plagiarism of the former Scriptures, which The Prophet developed.

The Qur'an rejects this assertion and considers it a blatant falsehood. It challenges its opponents to produce even one single Surah of the same spiritual, linguistic and intellectual merit as the Qur'an. The challenge remains a challenge through generations¹ since the times of 7th Century CE

Key words: Qur'an, Hadith, *Ummi*. Prophet.

1. 02.23

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

31.11

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ فَقُلْ بَلْ بَعَثْتُ سُبْحَانَ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَادْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

17.88

قُلْ لَنْ أَجْتُمِعَ الْإِنْسَ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

43-33.25

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقْوَلُهُ بِإِلَافٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ. فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

Professor Angelika Neuwirth FBA, a professor of Qur'anic Studies at Freie University in Berlin, argues that the Qur'an has never been successfully challenged by anyone, past or present: ...no one has succeeded, this is right... I really think that the Qur'an has even brought Western researchers embarrassment, who weren't able to clarify how suddenly in an environment where there was not any appreciable written text, appeared the Qur'an with its richness of ideas and its magnificent wordings. See Angelika Neuwirth - Wikipedia

Introduction

Muhammad - The Blessed – born in 570 CE is last in the line of Judeo-Christian Prophets². His early life is vividly captured in The Qur'an.³ He was a shepherd for his uncle in pre-teens, and from early teens he started leading the trade caravans to Syria on behalf of his uncle⁴ and others.⁵ When he was approaching twenties, he was involved in al-Fijar series of battles and was then among those who negotiated the Treaty of al-Fudul or Hilf al-Fudul.⁶

He was also the key person in resolving the intra-Tribal disputes and feuds especially when the matter of placing the Hajr al-Aswad/The Black Stone at its designated place in Holy Ka'bah came up which had been displaced by a natural disaster. His wisdom, integrity, honesty was widely acclaimed and he came to be popularly known as 'The Truthful' and 'The Trustworthy.'

The Hira Episode

It was year 610 CE that Muhammad, The Blessed, started withdrawing himself from worldly engagements and increasingly spending his days and nights in a cave, named Hira at rugged mountainous range of Noor in the outskirts of Sacred Makkah. He was absorbing himself in meditation and prayers for very long hours.

His meditation did not mean abandoning the world, but being a part of the worldly life and changing the world spiritually, morally, socially and politically – making it one world for everyone without class and tribal differentials where One Supreme Divine Entity provided guidance for life and living.⁷

It was the wee hours of one night during the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan that he was in awe with the presence of The Archangel Gabriel and his group. The Divine Revelation was being revealed on to him with the opening word in Arabic '*Iqra!*'⁸ Muhammad's soul was spiritually cleansed – it was gold refined by Divine Light.

The Arabic Sacred Text of the first Divine Revelation read as follows:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ
اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

2. Theological Perspectives – Prophecy and Prophethood. By Badr Hashemi. Journal of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony, Vol 3, Issue 1, Spring 2024. PP 235-252.

3. Q. 93:06-08.

4. Sayed Abu Talib.

5. Sayedah Khadija bint al-Khuwaylid.

6. CE 590, to establish justice for all through collective action to support the oppressed in Makkah.

7. 'Images from The Prophet's Islamic State' - PowerPoint Presentation by Badr Hashemi. NC. USA. 2023.

8. Q.96:01-05.

O The Prophet!

Recite!

By the *Blessed* Name of your *Lord*,
Who creates *every existence*, *especially* –
- creates the human being out of a *clinging* blood clots.

Recite!!

For your *Lord* is the Most Bountiful,
He Who teaches *human being* by *means* of the Pen, and
teaches human being what he does not know.⁹

The Arabic word '*Iqra*' is generally rendered as 'Read' or 'Recite', but the implications of the English rendering are diverse, to mean: proclaim, declare, profess, announce, etc. The Prophet's experience at the time of Revelation is briefly described:¹⁰

The Angel said: Read! I said: I cannot read.

Then he took me and squeezed me vehemently

and then let me go and repeated:

Read! I said: I cannot read.

Then he took me second and

third time and squeezed me vehemently each time and

then let me go every time and repeated:

Read! And I started reading - Q. 96:01-05.

If '*Iqra*' is taken to mean 'read' then it implies that the Archangel had a written material that was displayed before The Prophet to which he said: '*ma ana bi qari*/I cannot read.' However, if it is taken to mean 'Recite' then he started reciting it as it was recited to him.

If the heavenly command was 'Read' and it was said 'I cannot read' - one wonders if the Source of Divine Revelation did not know that the recipient of the revelation was not able to read!?

The foregoing Hadith narrative of the Hira Episode is at considerable variance with the Qur'anic Ayah/Statement at Q.75:18 -

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَكَ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ

Therefore, when We have recited it *to you*, *then you will* follow its recitation.

The former gives the impression that he could not read as he was not a literate. The latter clearly states that the Revelation was being recited to him and he was reciting it after the recital. And this procedure may have continued for most of the time throughout the 23-year phased period of his Divine Mission.

9. English translation/paraphrasing of the Sacred Arabic Text throughout this paper is taken from "Allah Speaks to you in The Qur'an" by Badr Hashemi. ISBN 979-8-218-97245-5.

10. نَزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الْوَحْيُ الْمَرْسُلاً مِنْ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ، وَلَمْ يَشْعُرْ إِلَّا وَجِبْرِيلَ وَاقِفَتْ أَمَامَ عَيْنَيْهِ يَقُولُ لَهُ: «اقْرَأْ»، فَاجَابَهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ»، أَي: كَيْفَ اسْتَطِيعُ الْقِرَاءَةَ وَأَنَا أَمِّي لَا أَقْرَأُ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا عَلَّمَ لِي بِهَا؟ فَأَمْسَكَ بِهِ جِبْرِيلُ وَاحْتَضَنَهُ وَضَمَّهُ ضَمَّةً شَدِيدَةً، حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنْهُ أَقْصَى مَا تَحْتَمِلُهُ الطَّاقَةُ الْبَشَرِيَّةُ، وَإِنَّمَا فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ؛ إِيْنَانًا لَهُ، وَتَقْوِيَةً لِنَفْسِهِ، وَتَنْشِيطًا لِقَلْبِهِ عَلَى تَلْقَى الْوَحْيِ الْإِلَهِيِّ، ثُمَّ أَطْلَقَهُ، وَقَدْ أَعَادَ عَلَيْهِ الْمَلَكُ جِبْرِيلَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مَرَّةً ثَانِيَةً، وَأَعْتَدَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَرَ لَهُ فِي الْمَرَّةِ الْأُولَى، وَفِي الثَّالِثَةِ ضَمَّهُ الْمَلَكُ، وَقَالَ لَهُ: «اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ؛ أَي: اقْرَأْ مَا أَقُولُ لَكَ، وَأَنْبِئْهُ بِكَ مُسْتَعِيبًا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ وَحَوْلَهُ وَقُوَّتِهِ، وَإِقْدَارِهِ لَكَ عَلَى الْقِرَاءَةِ؛ فَإِنَّ الْخَالِقَ الْعَظِيمَ الَّذِي وَهَبَ الْوُجُودَ لِكُلِّ مَوْجُودٍ، وَأَوْجَدَ الْأَشْيَاءَ عَلَى غَيْرِ مِثَالٍ سَابِقٍ؛ قَادِرٌ عَلَى تَمْكِينِكَ مِنَ الْقِرَاءَةِ دُونَ أَنْ تَتَوَقَّرَ فِيكَ أَسْبَابُهَا، وَأَقْرَأَ آوَّلَ سُورَةِ الْعَلَقِ حَتَّى بَلَغَ: عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

Source: The Book of Bokhari. Hadith 6982, narrated by Sayedah Aisha bint Sayed Abu Bakr, may Allah Subhanahu be pleased with both.

The Qur'anic terms *Iqra* or *Itlu* or *Qul* introduce more than three hundred Ayat/Statements and do not always mean that one is reading something written on a paper, but are commonly used in the sense of reading behind someone or reading from the mind. This is particularly made clear in Q. 75:15-18¹¹. The Prophet is told by Allah, Exalted and Almighty, not to be hasty with the Qur'an while it is revealed on to him, because 'it is for Us to ensure its preservation *in your heart* and *enable you its recitation*. Therefore, when We have recited it *to you*, *then you will follow its recitation*.'

Therefore, when We have recited/read it, follow its recital/reading' does not say that first it is recite/read out to the Prophet then he must write it down and then recite/read it. It commands him to recite/read as it is recited/read to him.

Q. 87:06 reiterates - 'We shall make you recite it so that you will not forget *any part of it when you recite*.'¹²

Allah was literally putting the sacred words into the Prophet's mouth and teaching him how to recite/read them out. As the prophecy of Torah/Deuteronomy 18 says: 'I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My Words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.'

The Hira Episode does not appear to have been at the centre stage of any controversy or debate in Makkkan social life. Notwithstanding that Makkans would be least concerned about his ability or inability to read and write, the Prophet had not publically declared his Divine Mission until he was asked to do so vide Q. 74:01-08. The interim time is said to have been around three years or so.¹³

The Makkkan and Judeo-Christian communities were certainly alarmed as a consequence of the Hira Episode, though for different reasons, and it is not the objective of this Paper.

Anatomy of Ummiy & Ummiyun

The expression 'ummiy', an Arabic word, appears several times in different Ayat/Statements of the Qur'an. Each of the Ayah/Statement is constructed differently with subtle differences in connotations. In its stand-alone connotation, it refers to the person of Prophet Muhammad, the blessed – Q.07:157-158; 62:02.

لَا تَعْجَلْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِيُعْجَلَ بِهِ
إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ
فَإِذَا قَرَأَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ

Meaning: *O The Prophet! Do not move your tongue in hurry, trying to hasten memorization of the Revelation, lest you may forget a part of it.* In fact, it is for Us to ensure its preservation *in your heart* and *enable you its recitation*. Therefore, when We have recited it *to you*, *then you will follow its recitation*.

سَتَقْرَأَهُ فَلَا تَنْسَى

13. The period was known as 'Fatrat' – period of relaxation. The Prophet did his teaching and preaching in hidden until he was commanded to publicise it in accordance with Q.15:94 - قَاصِدٌ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضُ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Meaning: *O The Prophet! Your disbelieving detractors would not be able to thwart your Mission, the instructions follow: So Proclaim publicly with what you are commanded to proclaim, and ignore those who ascribe entities of worship to Allah.*

The Arabic word '*ummy*' is the singular form of '*ummiyun*.' The Qur'an mentions it three times in the following manner:

1. Q. 07:157¹⁴. Those who follow the Messenger, the *Umyy* Prophet *Muhammad*,
whom they find written down in *their own Scriptures* –
2. Q. 07:158¹⁵. Indeed, I am the Messenger of Allah *assigned* to you all.....
So believe in Allah and in His Messenger - the *Umyy* Prophet *Muhammad*
...
3. Q. 62:02¹⁶. It is He Who assigned among *ummiyun* a Messenger –
Muhammad- from among themselves to recite His Messages *from The Qur'an* to them ...

The above Ayat/Statements state that '*ummiyun*' were assigned a Prophet from among themselves who was also '*ummy*' – i.e. he belonged to a community in Makkah which had neither received a Prophet nor a Divine Scripture, unlike the Jews and Christians.

The Qur'an employs the Arabic term of '*ummiyun*' in the following manner:

1. Q. 02:78. And some of them (Jews) are *ummiyun*. They have no firm knowledge of their *own* Scripture, so they *only* make *some* conjectures, i.e., *their talk is all surmise*.
2. Q. 03:20. And ask Followers of *Former* Divine Scriptures as well as *ummiyun* - *those who are not followers of any Divine Scripture*.....
3. Q. 03:75. Yet there are some among the Jews, whom if you give *even* a dinar, he will not return it to you saying: 'We are under no obligation *by our faith* to return it to the '*Ummiyun*' (non-Jews).
4. Q. 06:155-157. *We have sent down The Qur'an*, lest you *have an excuse* to say: 'The Book that was sent before us was meant *only* for two religious groups: *the Jews and the Christians*. And, we were indeed not familiar with their *religious* teachings.' Or lest you *also* say *as an excuse* that: 'Had the Scripture been sent down to us, we would surely have been better guided than them'
5. Q. 28:46 - so that you may warn this people to whom no Warner/Prophet came before you *for a longtime after Ishmael*, and thus they may be reminded *and take heed*.
6. Q. 32:03. In fact, this is The Truth from your *Lord*. *Its purpose* is that you may warn a people to whom no Warner had been assigned before you *from the time of Ishmael, the first born of Abraham*, so that they may *reflect upon it* and be guided *aright*.

14. الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْنُوزًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي الشُّرَاةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ. فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ ۙ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

15. قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ۚ قَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

16. هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

7. Q. 34.44 - And We (Allah) had neither given them any Scriptures which they studied, nor had assigned to them any Warner before you.
8. Q. 37.168-69 - If *only* we had a Reminder of the like those who lived before us, meaning *before the coming of The Prophet Muhammad*, we would have surely been the sincere servants of Allah - *practicing His Religion in its entirety and diligently*.

Thus it appears that ‘*ummiyun*’ comprised two groups. One group of those who belonged to Judaism and were uneducated about tenants of their Divine Scripture. Other group comprised a people who were neither Jews nor Christian and to whom no Prophet had been assigned and had no Divine Scripture for guidance, but they had wished to have one.

Are The Prophets taught and tutored?

The Qur'an maintains that Allah – The One and Only God of Absolute Unity and Uniqueness – is the only source of teaching and wisdom for all Prophets and Messengers assigned to the human species on planet earth – from Adam to Muhammad. These heavenly assigned human beings were neither taught by any human teacher nor trained in any educational institution. Consider some examples:

1. Q. 02:31. And (Allah) taught Adam the knowledge of everything.
2. Q. 03.48. And He (Allah) will teach Jesus the Law and the Wisdom.
3. Q. 04.113. Allah has revealed onto you (O The Prophet) the Divine Book of Qur'an and the Wisdom, and taught you what you did not know before.
4. Q. 12.06. You (Allah) have given me (Joseph) authority, and taught me the interpretation of and the ability to explain events and dreams.
5. Q. 12.68. But it was only a desire Jacob had, for indeed he had knowledge, as We (Allah) had taught him.
6. Q. 16:102-103. Say *O The Prophet: The 'Spirit of Holiness brings it - the Qur'an - down to me from your Lord with all truth in order to reassure those who believe, and as a source of guidance and good news to all those who submit themselves to Allah. And indeed We Know well that they are saying: 'It is only a man who is teaching him' all this. They make this allegation even though the language of the one to whom they falsely allude to is a non-Arab, whereas this language of The Qur'an is eloquent Arabic. So how can a non-Arab be teaching him Arabic?*
7. Q. 18.66. Moses asked the Sage: 'May I accompany you so that you will teach me something of the knowledge and wisdom you have been heavenly taught (by Allah)?'
8. Q. 21.80. And We (Allah) also taught him (David) the craft of making garments to protect you from ...
9. Q. 34.10 - And We (Allah) taught him (David) how to make the iron malleable for him – meaning taught him the art of metal working.
10. Q. 36.69 - And We (Allah) did not teach (The Prophet) poetry.
11. Q. 53:01-05. By the star when it sets. Your companion – *Prophet Muhammad - who has lived amongst you for forty years* is neither

strayed nor deluded, nor does he speak out of his own *personal* desire *with regard to what he recites to you of The Qur'an, that which he conveys to you* it is nothing but a *Divine* Revelation, *being revealed on to him* - taught him by the One of Awesome in Power.

Thus it is quite conceivable that all Prophets may not have been formally educated, and, hence were unschooled and untaught. And so was the Prophet Muhammad. Wisdom and knowledge flowed down to the Prophets from Allah, the only divine and supreme source of knowledge and wisdom, through His enlightenment, inspiration and revelations.¹⁷

Further Analysis

Thus an *ummy* is not an illiterate, at least as far as the Qur'an is concerned, but a person who has not read the Divine Scriptures and/or received any formal instructions about their contents, or had not been taught the Divine Scriptures by learned scholars or teachers, but received his knowledge about them by direct revelation or inspiration. The Qur'an makes a similar claim regarding Prophet Muhammad, that he was not taught by a human being but by One of Awesome in Power.

Consider Q. 16:102-103

Say *O The Prophet: The 'Spirit of Holiness brings it - the Qur'an - down to me from your Lord with all truth in order to reassure those who believe, and as a source of guidance and good news to all those who submit' themselves to Allah.* And indeed We Know *well* that they are saying: 'It is only a man who is teaching him' *all this. They make this allegation even though* the language of the one to whom they falsely allude to is a non-Arab, whereas this language *of The Qur'an* is eloquent Arabic. *So how can a non-Arab be teaching him Arabic?*

In sum, the manner The Qur'an uses the term *ummy* demonstrates that it does not mean illiterate or, at least, is not employed in this meaning. Rather, it uses the word in reference to a people who, unlike the Jews and Christians, had not received or been instructed in the Divine Scriptures.

However, the Qur'an never says that The Prophet was not capable of reading or writing. It merely says that he had neither studied nor written any Divine Scripture. It actually refers to the Prophet's status with regard to the Abrahamic tradition, namely, that 'one not of those who studied the Scriptures'

17. While the above argument is presented, one needs to be mindful that the Torah appears to state that 'prophets were expected to read and write': Moses - Exodus 17:14. Also, Torah was given over to what are known as 'the writing prophets' to capture the divinely-inspired statements in writing. The Qur'an is different - it is the actual 'Spoken Word of Allah' and there is nothing else like it in the world. The 'Spoken Word' was conveyed to Prophet Mohammad via the Archangel Gabriel and then he dictated to secretaries who wrote and, in parallel, was also being committed to memory by tens of believers. Thus, there is considerable pragmatism in the argument that Prophet Muhammad did not have to be educated, like the Hebrew Prophets, to be 'the writing prophet.' The *modus operandi* of divine revelations were different.

Popular Perception

The traditional view of the term *ummi* is just the opposite. Muslim scholars understand *ummi* as 'not a literate' and as unequivocally identifying The Prophet as 'not a literate Prophet' - a view that has come to constitute an article of faith and spirituality in Islam¹⁸. It is stated that among the Prophet's miracles, one of the most impressive was his illiteracy. The fact that he conveyed the Divine Message despite lacking formal education underscores the miraculous nature of the Qur'anic revelation. His being *ummi* serves as a testament to the authenticity and divine origin of the Qur'an, which he received through revelation.¹⁹

It is maintained that the *ummi* status of The Prophet signifies the universal nature of his message, the inclusivity of Islam, and the remarkable global impact and spread of the faith. Despite his unlettered background, The Prophet's teachings continue to inspire millions, fostering unity among diverse communities and serving as a beacon of guidance for humanity. The *ummi* Messenger exemplifies the ability of Islam to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers, embracing the beauty of diversity within the global Muslim community.

18. *Ummi* has been a discussion point by many for many years and the endeavours continue. The following is a summary of different understandings and interpretations:

1. The word when used for the Prophet means unschooled or unlettered but not illiterate or ignorant.
2. He could not read or write anything but had plenty of intuitive knowledge.
3. The meaning of *ummah* is creation, and *ummi* is the one who has remained in his original state, i.e. the form of innocence and illiteracy.
4. The expression is related to *ummah* i.e. nation, where majority of its people could not read and write; hence, a person who is like the common people and is unacquainted with reading and writing is called *ummi*.
5. The word is related to *umm* meaning mother. This has two connotations: (i) it is said to mean a person who by birth is unfamiliar with reading and writing; (ii) mother is so much in love with her child that she does not entrust the child to any outside teacher other than herself. In the same way, Allah loves His Messenger so much so that He teaches him rather than allowing his mind to be touched by a human teacher.
6. Makkah is also referred to as *Umm al-Qura* and its resident is called *ummi*; thus, by definition, the Prophet was *ummi*, i.e., the Prophet of Makkah.
7. The term *ummi* was applied to Arab polytheists because of their unfamiliarity with ancient Semitic texts, and, not being a follower of Judaism or Christianity.

Source: Annexure Four, Treasure of The Faith of Islam – The Qur'an. English Translation and Paraphrasing by Badr Hashemi. Vol Two of Six. ISBN 978-1-4951-1945-3. See also 'Muhammad, the Illiterate Prophet: An Islamic Creed in the Qur'an and Qur'anic Exegesis.' Sebastian Gunter. Journal of Qur'anic Studies, Edinburgh University Press.

19. 'He (the Prophet) was *ummi*; he did not read or write.... Allah [himself] taught him all the virtues of character, the praiseworthy ways of behaving and the information about the ancients and the following generations.' In the course of time, the notion of the illiterate Prophet of Islam came to be a central argument in defending Islam against opponents who attempted to discredit The Prophet and his message. Moreover, for the exegetes and Muslim scholars in medieval and modern times, this concept also underscores the inimitability and uniqueness of The Qur'an in terms of content, form and style - its miraculous nature and the outstanding place Islam and its Prophet deserve within the canon of the Abrahamic monotheistic religions. In other words, The Prophet's illiteracy came to be seen as a particularly excellent sign and proof of the genuineness and nobility of his Prophethood. See Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Fiqh-us-Seerah – Understanding the Life of Prophet Muhammad*. International Institute of Islamic Thought. VA. USA. Also see 'Textual Analysis of the Term *ummi*: A New Perspective. Mohammad Reza Aram. Burhan Journal of Qur'anic Studies. Vol02. No.01. 2017.

Allah sets the final word in Q. 29:48:

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا لَا زِتَابَ الْمُبِطِلُونَ

O The Prophet! You were never accustomed to reading - i.e., you were never taught to read - any Divinely Inspired Scripture before this Qur'an was revealed onto you, or to write with own your right or left hand to be a literate in the general sense. Otherwise, the perpetrators of falsehood would indeed have had some reason to doubt its Divine descent.

Conclusion

An examination of how the Qur'an uses the term *ummi* shows that it does not mean illiterate or, at least, is not employed in this meaning. It is employed only in one sense which has been retrieved from all the Ayat/Statements that carry this word – those who had not received any Divine Scripture, they were unlike the Jews and the Christians. Other views, contrary to these, may have roots and reasons outside The Qur'an.



Why is it imperative to produce critical thinkers for better understanding of Creational Theology?

Keynote, Session 4.

International EdTech Conference, June 9-10, 2023, Islamabad.

I do not appear to have a title for my presentation this morning, but I do have a question to answer – like a school exam. The question is: Why is it imperative to produce critical thinkers for better understanding of Creational Theology?

The key words here are: Critical Thinkers/Thinking, and Creational Theology. I will start talking about the former first.

Critical thinking has various definitions. I regard it to be ‘the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication’.¹ To produce critical thinkers, it is imperative to imbibe the very fundamental skill of critical thinking in students.

Education is one of the most important factors in developing the skill of critical thinking. In Pakistan’s severely lacking education there is a failure in the provision of high-quality education to enhance a student’s intellect, while the cultural values are significantly affecting the promotion and subsequent fostering of these skills. We are out of touch with the demands of the 21st Century.

Our human capital is low and has improved only marginally over the past several decades. A study by the World Bank shows that Pakistan’s Human Capital Index (HCI) of 0.41 is low both in absolute and relative terms, meaning that a baby born in Pakistan today will only be 41% as productive as he/she could be if he/she enjoyed complete education.

Furthermore, only 4% of our youth secure admissions to universities just because the pre-university education standards (which is the base of university education) are incredibly low. The degrees the students obtain are not commensurate with titles of their degrees and the knowledge associated with them. Therefore, higher education cannot be improved until the pre-university education is drastically improved.

We need to design a set of synergistic curricular and co-curricular activities across all levels of education. This would involve a redesign of informed approaches to sustainability and delivery of the education process. A notable feature of the process is the focus on nurturing students enabling them to fare well in this increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and competitive world.

1. See <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766>

The education system should equip students with relevant knowledge, provide them with life-enabling skills helping them develop the right abilities, making them holistically competent individuals, as well as prepared world-force, and responsible citizens.

The notion of holistically competent students or fully functioning individuals could be addressed by relating it to the concept of *Uhlul Albaab* – a term used in the Majestic Qur'an 16 times.² I will talk about this concept later in this presentation.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invested in uplifting research and formulated policies that resulted in the increase of research output. However, there continues to be a lack of critical thinking skills and the quality of published research remains questionable.

Between the years from 2006 to 2015, Pakistan had increased its research productivity as evidenced by the increase of research papers published - from 2,000 to 9,000.³ A scientometric analysis of the research output of SAARC countries revealed that in the past decade Pakistan has been the second largest publisher of research output after India. However, 70% of these researches did not meet the global criteria, i. e., it lacks relevant qualities that add to global knowledge by posing important questions that have been empirically tested.⁴ Such research impacts societies either directly or indirectly giving them global relevance.

The impact of papers from Pakistan is the lowest among all SAARC countries and highly cited papers from Pakistan only make up for 0.01% of the total research papers produced between 2006 and 2015. Good quality research work is only possible if researchers (and the entire student population) are taught to think critically.

The only official document that guided our nation to its future, namely 'The Vision 2030'⁵ (released in 2007) had no mention of the phrase 'critical thinking skills.' However, the document became a victim of political vendetta by change of regime.

Thus, to develop thinking minds that would have creative qualities without focusing on the development of critical thinking skills is a far-fetched idea in Pakistan.

I will now talk about the second key word of the question: Creational Theology. And I will start by sharing a borrowed definition. It is one that views humanity and the natural world through the lens of creation theology, beginning with The Creator –

² See footnote 5.

³ HEC, 2016.

⁴ Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2005.

⁵ Pakistan in the 21st Century. Planning Commission. 2007. Government of Pakistan. Islamabad.

Allah^(EA)/Rabb⁷ - and asking how being HIS creatures affects our identity and roles, and interactions in the world, and how it transforms our theological understanding.

The 7th Century of Islamic times represented the era of not only faith, but a new socio-political order and a new ontology of the reason. It was in fact birth of 'inductive intellect' where the Qur'an⁸ shaped the human mind to adapt to the new ontological ground of reason and mode of thinking.

The Qur'an is a Divine Book for all times. It is a source of enlightenment by way of its universal message, Divine Revelation, comprehensive guidance, ethical framework, spiritual insights, and intellectual stimulation.

We believe that its teachings are relevant and applicable to people of all backgrounds and can serve as a timeless source of wisdom and enlightenment in our personal and communal lives.

The Qur'an poses rhetorical questions, invites reflection of the natural world, and presents logical arguments to strengthen faith and understanding. This aspect of the Qur'an promotes intellectual enlightenment, critical thinking and encourages individuals to seek knowledge and understanding beyond surface-level interpretations.

In Islamic epistemology there are various sources and means of knowledge, including Revelation⁹ (*wahy*) whereas the dominant Western epistemology has been a

6 Allah – It is a proper name for the Almighty and Supreme Being: The One God, singular, who does not have a gender, parents, siblings, spouse, daughters and/or sons. Allah is above and beyond all description; there is nothing whatever like Him.

7 Rabb - The expression is usually rendered in English as Lord. In fact, it conveys not only the idea of fostering, bringing up and nourishing but also that of regulating, completing, accomplishing, sustaining and perfecting, it also means originator of things and their combiner to create new forms.

8 Qur'an, The – the absolute and unchanging Word of Allah^(EA) with spiritually nourishing latent content: a divine, eternal and dynamic text. Among other matters, The Qur'an identifies scientific phenomena including creation of cosmos, space and earth, astronomy, earth science, water cycle, animal and plant kingdoms, human reproduction, etc. The term Qur'an which, whenever it appears without the definite article '*al*' it denotes a solemn recitation, recital or discourse. In all its manifestations, it comprises 30 Juz'/Parts of equal length and consists of 114 Surahs/Chapters of unequal length.

9 This term - Revelation/Prophecy, '*wahy*' in Arabic - is strongly connected to the Prophethood. The Qur'an mentions three forms of revelation – Q. 42:51.

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بَلَدْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ﴾

And it is not *fitting* for any human being that Allah should speak to him *directly*, except *it be* through Revelation, or from the other side of Veil of Grandeur where HE makes the person able to hear HIS Speech but without being able to see HIM, or assigning an angelic-messenger to reveal, with HIS authorization, whatever HE may Will to reveal. Torah/Exodus 19:18-19 describes it as: 'Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for God had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently. The blare of the horn grew louder and louder..... God then speaks the Ten Commandments aloud for 40 days, Moses communes with God on the mountaintop, receiving a detailed body of laws when he returns to the people his face is radiant and the people are afraid to approach him. But Moses reassures them and relays to them all that God had told him....' Prophet Isaiah writes that he 'received his message through visions, where he would see YHWH, the God of Israel, speaking to angelic beings that surrounded Him..... he would then write down the dialogue.....' This form of revelation constituted a major part of revelations of the Jewish Prophets till the time of their last Prophet from the Descendants of Prophet Jacob (إِسْرَافِيل), namely Prophet Malachi^(P) in 516 BCE. The experience of Prophet Muhammad^(P) details

combination of empiricism and rationalism. In Islam the Revelation is the first source and means of knowledge touching on many domains of knowledge, wisdom and providing foundations to build on.

The Qur'an employs two terms very frequently: 'reflecting' and using 'reason'. These terms refer to understanding, analysing, conceptualizing, and being critical. And it demands critical thinking and critical thinkers to understand its Message by contemplation, reflection, and reasoning dismissing passive and dormant readers that are termed as 'deaf' and 'dumb'!

Consider Q. Al-Hajj/22:46. 'Why do they not travel through the lands of archaeological sites where ruins of earlier nations lie so that their hearts contemplate on these scenes with an eye to learn lessons, and their ears hear the punishment stories of the past? In fact, it is not the eyes that go blind, rather, it is the hearts - that are within their chests – that go blind!'

There is frequent mention of 'contemplation' (*tafakur*), 'reflection' (*tadabbur*), 'understanding' and 'reasoning' - these concepts are mentioned in the Qur'an in various morphological forms.

Before I get into the details of these concepts, I would like to focus on the phrase - '*Ulul Albaab*.'¹⁰ It has two parts, '*ulul*' and '*albaab*.' The first means someone who

five ways: (i) the Archangel Gabriel coming in the form of a human being, (ii) the Archangel revealing the Messages/Ayat without being seen by the Prophet, (iii) revelation commencing with a sound of a ringing bell, (iv) the Archangel appearing in his original form, and (v) the Archangel bringing the revelation when the Prophet was asleep.

10 Q. 02. 197 - The Hajj is during months well known. So whoever undertakes the Hajj during this period must abstain from all sort of foul behaviour in particular: - no cohabitation with your spouses, and - no wicked conduct and obscene language, and - no quarrelling and wrangling during the Hajj. And whatever good you do, rest assured, Allah knows it. Provide well for your pilgrimage, yet the best of all provisions is Allah-consciousness. And be conscious of ME, O People of Understanding and insight - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 02.269 - HE grants the wisdom to whoever HE wants. And whoever is granted the wisdom, is indeed abundantly blessed. Yet no one takes heed except People of Understanding - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 03:07 - It is HE WHO has sent down The Book of Qur'an on to you, O The Prophet. Among its Messages are some are literal. These Messages are the Foundation of the Book. However, there are also some Messages which are metaphorical and symbolic - open to a variety of meanings and interpretations. Those who are twisted of mind and infected with viciousness look for Messages which are metaphorical and symbolic, seeking mischief and giving them their literal meanings, while no one knows their literal meanings except Allah. However, those with insight, affirm: 'We believe in the whole of it, as all of these are from our Rabb - The Lord.' Yet no one will understand this except those with insight - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 03.190 - Indeed, - in the creation of celestial realm and the terrestrial world, and - in the alternation of the night-time and the daytime, are Wondrous Signs for a people of intellect and understanding - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 05:100 - Tell them: 'The bad and the good are never equal, even though abundance of the bad may greatly impress you. So fear Allah's disobedience – O People of Understanding - *Ulul Albaab*. Thus you may succeed by being saved from Allah's wrath and torment.

Q. 12:111 - Certainly in their accounts of punishment is a lesson for people of understanding - *Ulul Albaab*. This proclamation – The Qur'an - is not a fictitious account, but a confirmation of Divine Books which were revealed before this. The Qur'an is a clear account of everything that one needs for the proper observance of life, and a source of guidance and mercy for a believing people - as they are the ones to benefit from it.

Q. 13:19 - Is the one who knows what is being sent down on to you from your Rabb - The Lord is the truth, and so believes in it, like the one who is blind and does not believe it to be so? No! It is only those with intellect who take heed - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 14:52 - This – The Qur'an - is a Proclamation for all people - all humanity. So that they may be warned by it, and they may know that HE is only One Allah. And that those with understanding - *Ulul Albaab* - may

owns something special. The latter is the plural form of '*al-luub*' which means brain or mind or intellect. Putting together, the phrase talks about the people of sound intellect, mature and deep understanding, people with knowledge, wisdom, and critical thinking. The Qur'an uses this phrase to speak of the perfect human personality typology. Thus, our education system needs to be restructured and remodelled to produce *Ulul Albaab*!

I will backtrack to discuss the other terms. The term '*Tafakkur*' has various meanings: 'to think deeply', 'to meditate', 'to be thoughtful', 'contemplation', 'reflecting', 'considering', 'meditating' and 'thinking'. In religious sense it means 'to reflect and to meditate over the creation of Allah^(EA), to think deeply and ponder over the Ayat¹¹/ Signs.

Consider Q. Al-Baqarah/02:266¹² – 'Would any of you wish to have an orchard full of date palms and grapevines with streams of running water through it, and in it are fruits of all kinds? Then one is overtaken by old age, while his children are still young and weak. Then a fiery whirlwind strikes it – *the orchard*. And it gets burned. In this way Allah^(EA) makes HIS Messages clear to you, so that you may contemplate.'

أَيُّودُ أَخَذَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَجِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضِعْفَاءُ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Q. Al-An'am/06:50 – 'So tell them O The Prophet: 'You ask me to bring you miracles to prove the truthfulness of my Divine Mission. However, let me tell you that I do not proclaim to you that I possess Allah's Treasures, - nor do I know of that which is

reflect over its Message to understand that HE is Allah - The One and Only.

Q. 38:29 - This is a Blessed Book - The Qur'an – which WE have sent down to you, so that those with understanding - *Ulul Albaab* - may contemplate over its Messages and take heed.

Q. 38:43 - Then, WE restored his family to him, and the like of them - grandchildren, as a Favour from US, and a lesson for those with understanding - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 39:09 - Can the one who submits to Allah in worship during hours of the nighttime, prostrating himself and standing in prayer, being mindful of the Hereafter, and hoping for the mercy of his Rabb - The Lord be like the one who disbelieves? No! Ask them: 'Can those who know the truth be equal to those who do not know?' It is only those with understanding who will take heed - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 39:18 - MY servants are those who listen attentively to the Word of the Qur'an, and thus follow and practice it in the best way possible. These are the ones whom Allah has guided aright, and it is they – they are the people with understanding and insight - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 39:21 - Do you not observe that Allah sends down rain water from the sky clouds, then lets it penetrate the ground to form springs? Then, through it, HE makes vegetation of varying tastes, forms and colours to sprout, then they grow until you see them yellowing pale, then HE turns it all into dry chaff, stubble. Indeed, in all this is a lesson for those with understanding and insight - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 40:54 - as a means of Guidance and Remembrance for those with intellect among them to contemplate and take heed - *Ulul Albaab*.

Q. 65:10 - Allah has prepared for them yet a more woeful punishment. Therefore, be fearfully conscious of Allah, O you men of wisdom - *Ulul Albaab* - who believe! Allah has indeed sent down to you a Reminder

11 Ayah/Ayat/Sign(s) - refer to the basic 'units' of revelation or 'Revelation' in general. Depending upon the context, Ayah can also refer to 'natural phenomenon' (as Signs of Allah^(EA)'s Power and Providence), to 'miracles' and other extraordinary events (associated with Allah^(EA)'s Messengers). For details see Annex 4, The Divine Qur'an – Treasure of the Faith of Islam. Explanatory Notes by Badr Hashemi. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, 2023. Pakistan.

12 Translation/Paraphrasing of the Qur'anic Sacred Text throughout this paper is taken from 'Allah Speaks to you in The Qur'an' by Badr Hashemi. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. 2023.

beyond my *human* perception, - nor do I claim to you: 'I am an angel.' I am following with due diligence only what is being revealed on to me' by way of The Qur'an. *Then* ask them: 'Will a blind person be like one who can see?' Not at all! Will you, then, not think *it over and come to believe?*'

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ ۚ إِنِّي أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ ۚ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Q. Al-'Araaf/07:176 – 'And had WE desired, WE could have exalted him through them - *knowledge of the Torah*. but he loved baseness of the earthly life, and followed his own whims - so WE abased him. His likeness was the likeness of a dog - who hangs out his tongue, if you push it away, and still hangs it out, if you leave it. Such is the likeness of a people who belie and deny OUR Messages. So, recount this account to them - perhaps they will be motivated to reflect and thus believe.' It is used in the sense that people should use their intellect so that they may understand *Allah's Ayat* –

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۚ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنِ خَمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَتْرَكهُ يَلْهَثُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ فَاقْصُصْ الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Q. Yunus/10:03 – 'Surely, your Rabb - The Lord is Allah – The One and Only God, WHO created the celestial realm and the terrestrial world in six days/time spans, then settled over The Throne of Almighty, directing all affairs. No one can intercede with HIM on behalf of anyone except after HIS permission. This is Allah, your Rabb - The Lord! So, submit to HIM in awe, reverence, and worship! Will you not then reflect?'

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۚ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ ۚ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۚ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

Another term *Tazakkir* implies that the Qur'an is a source of thinking and people are asked to attempt to achieve optimal understanding by understanding the Qur'an.

Q. Yunus/10:24 – 'Indeed, the likeliness of the life of this world is like the water which WE send down from the sky clouds. And it mingles with the vegetation/plants of the earth to sprout to life from which people and livestock eat. But when the earth is embellished and adorned with gold, and its people begin to think that vegetation/crops are under control, but then OUR Command comes upon it - night or day, whereupon WE turn it - *vegetation/crops* - into a field mown down, as though there was nothing there the day before. This is how WE explain OUR Messages for a people who reflect. The likeness of this worldly life is as the rain (water) which we send down from the sky.... Thus, do we explain the Ayat¹³ in detail for a people *who reflect, or who think or ponder.*'

13. See footnote 7.

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنِ بِالْأَمْسِ ۚ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

This is a beautiful parable, explaining the nature of our present life. The rain comes down in drops and mingles with the earth. Through it, by Allah^(EA)'s matchless artistry, the womb of the earth is made fruitful.... The earth is covered with bravery of green and gold and all kinds of colours ... but a hailstorm or a blast, a frost or a volcanic eruption comes and destroys it, and the bravery and beauty of yesterday is destroyed. All that is left in ashes and dust. What more can we get from this physical material life?

Q. Ar-Ra'd/13:03 – 'And it is HE WHO spread out the earth, and placed firm mountains upon it, and running rivers, and made two of a pair of every fruit/plant-vegetation, and HE covers up the daytime with the night-time. Indeed, these are the wonders of HIS Unique Creative Power for a people who reflect.'

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا ۚ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الْمَمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشَى اللَّيْلُ النَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Q. An-Nahl/16:44 – 'WE had assigned the earlier Messengers with clear Signs and the Scriptures, just as WE are now sending it on to you, O The Prophet, the Reminder - the Qur'an, so that you may explain clearly to the people what has been sent down to/for them, and that they may think about it and follow.'

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۖ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

The term *Tafakkur* indicates that clear signs and inspired books were revealed to many Prophets^(P) and so did Allah^(EA)'s Message come to The Prophet Muhammad^(P)¹⁴.

Q. Zumar/39:42 – 'Allah takes away the peoples' souls by assigning HIS angel of death at the time of their death, as well as the souls which do not die during their sleep. Thus, HE withholds the souls of those for whom HE has decreed death but sends back the other souls to their sleeping bodies to live till a specified time of life set by HIM. Certainly, in all such situations are signs for a people who reflect - this Ayah declares that one should understand the life and death, sleep and dreams as there are Signs¹⁵ in it for those who ponder with critical mind and for those who understand.'

14. As-Sayyid Muhammad ibn Abdallah, 570-632. Madeenah, Saudi Arabia. See for details: 'Living with the Prophet Muhammad'. Badr Hashemi. The Holy Qur'an Research Foundation, Islamabad. 2021.

15. See footnote 7.

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Q. Al-Hashr/59:21 – ‘Had WE made this, *The Qur'an*, to descend onto a mountain endowed with intellect and comprehension granted to human being, you would have certainly seen it humbled and splitting in its awe of Allah? And such are the similes WE cite for a people so that they may reflect - *and believe in the Divine Origin of The Qur'an and model their lives accordingly*.

لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهَا هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْنَاهُ خَاشِعًا مُّصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Two ideas come to mind when considering a mountain: ‘height’ and ‘ruggedness.’ The reality is that Allah^(EA)’s Revelation is so sublime and so powerful *and convincing* that even the hard rock would split under the weight of its words and message. But humanity has become so arrogant to consider itself superior to it and so hard-hearted that it is hardly affected by the powerful message of the Qur'an.

The term ‘*tadabbur*’ and its various forms are found in Q. An-Nisa/04:82;¹⁶ Muhammad/47:24;¹⁷ Al-Muminoon/23:68¹⁸ and Saad/38:29,¹⁹ and it is a command for the people to contemplate the Ayat of the Qur'an.

Q. Saad/38:29 states – ‘This is a Blessed Book which WE have revealed on to you, so that they might reflect (*Li yata dabbaroo/do tadabbur*) upon its Ayat and that those of understanding and critical thinking – *Ulul Albaab* - would be reminded.’

One who only reads or listens to the Qur'an without pondering over its meanings may get spiritual reward but not the guidance. Allah^(EA) said, ‘Do they not then deeply ponder over the Qur'an, or are there locks upon their hearts?’ - Muhammad/47:24.

There is nothing more beneficial for the heart than reading the Qur'an with contemplation and reflection. It inspires love and longing for Allah^(EA). It generates awe of HIM and hope in HIM. It makes one turn in repentance to HIM and rely on HIM. It causes one to fully submit to HIM, leave matters in HIS Hands and be pleased with HIS Decree. It inspires patience and gratitude and is a means of acquiring qualities that enliven the soul.

The term ‘Reasoning’ has been mentioned more than any other terminology in the Qur'an making it a critical concept encouraging people to use reasoning in understanding the natural phenomenon and cosmology.

16. Will they not contemplate on The Qur'an to understand its Message and be convinced about its Divine Descent? Had it been from any other source than Allah, they would have surely found many discrepancies, contradictions, and variations within it.

17. Will they not, then, contemplate The Qur'an to learn and seek guidance, or are there locks on their hearts?

18. Have they, then, not tried to understand this Word of Allah in the Qur'an? Or has something now come to them that did not come to their forefathers long before?

19. This is a Blessed Book - The Qur'an – which WE have sent down to you, so that those with understanding may contemplate over its Messages and take heed.

The Qur'an states: 'Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night-time and the daytime; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the benefit of mankind; in the rain which Allah^(EA) sends down from the skies, and the life which HE gives therewith to the earth that is lifeless; in the creators of all kinds that HE scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth - (*here*) indeed are Signs for a people who exercise wisdom with critical thinking' - *Ulul Albaab*.

Allah^(EA) reveals his Words (*Kalimat*) and Signs (*Ayat*) so people may reason. The Qur'an states: 'Thus does Allah Make clear HIS Signs²⁰ to you: in order that you may understand.' The worst before Allah are those who do not use their reason as the Qur'an demands: 'For the worst of persons in the Sight of Allah^(EA) are the deaf and the dumb - those who do not understand' and 'among them are some who (*pretend to*) listen to you, but you cannot make the deaf to hear - even though they are without understanding.'

Q. Al-Baqarah/02:269 states: HE grants wisdom to whoever HE Wants. And whoever is granted wisdom, is indeed abundantly blessed. Yet no one takes heed except people of understanding with critical mind - *Ulul Albaab*.

Islam provides us the spiritual guidance that illuminates the faculties of reason and perception that enables us to function properly and urges us to a deeper insight into the reality of the heaven and the earth because Allah^(EA) created them as a source of guidance for us.

So why is it imperative to produce critical thinkers for better understanding of Creational Theology? It is imperative to raise critical thinkers - *Ulul Albaab*²¹ - for understanding the inspiring Message of The Qur'an - which demands understanding, reflection, and critical mindset – and to mould oneself in its teachings, live a life as mandated by the Qur'an, and to guide others to the Divine Guidance.



20. See Footnote 7.

21. See Footnote 2.

Challenges of Translating the Arabic Qur'an into English¹ A Comparative Study of Eight Leading Translations

Abstract

Any translation of the Arabic Qur'an in English or any European language is likely to be imperfect. This is primarily due to the differences in the language, semantics, idiom, style and culture. Almost fifty such translations have appeared in the last fifty years, both by Muslim and other scholars, but none can claim any perfection in imaging the Arabic Qur'an. Nevertheless, there are some that are faithful to word-by-word (literal) or sense-for-sense (free) translation, but most lack the flavor of the Qur'anic essence and image either due to the translating approach, or inadequate understanding of the meaning of Sacred Arabic Text, or constraints of eloquence of the English language.

This paper examines eight of the leading translations and draws conclusions relating to the use of translation techniques and literary devices and concepts that add beauty to the eloquence of Arabic Qur'an and makes it a living and literary masterpiece. It is found that the meaning of the lexical expressions have been maintained to a high degree in the process of translation and the use of literary devices has been adequately captured by the selected translations.

Key Words

The Arabic Qur'an, Translation/Meaning, Transliteration, Metaphors (Aistiearat), Metonymy (Alkinaya), Ellipsis (alqite alnaaqis), Irony (sukhria), Polysemy (Almufaraqa), Sarcasm (Sukhria), Embed (Tadmin), Parables (al'amthal), xxx (Aistitrad), and Euphemism (Kinayatun).

استعارات، الكناية، القطع الناقص، المفارقة، سخرية، تضمين، الأمثال، استطراد، كناية

Introduction

The Qur'an is the grand finale of all Divine Revelations and the Ultimate Truth. Allah, The Exalted and The Almighty, guaranteed to preserve its Sacred Arabic Text in its entirety and original form safe from any satanic change.²

1. English is the dominant language of the world and a major portion of the world population (Muslims and non-Muslims) is learning the Arabic Qur'an through its English translations, the question would be how accurate and communicative these translations are, and to what extent do they reflect the original meaning in an effective manner. Accordingly, there is a continuous need to evaluate the existing English translations of the Arabic Qur'an and to improve their quality. It is in this context that we see 'English Translation and Paraphrasing of The Qur'an' by Badr Hashemi (ISBN # 978-1-7923-8701-2), as an addition to this ever-progressing exercise.

2. Quran/Ayah 09, Surah 15, Al-Hijr.

Enriched with a harmonic combination of inimitable phonetic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, and cultural features that can never be found in any other text - it is a master piece of the most awe-inspiring revelation that has been bestowed on humanity as a matchless Divine Scripture.

The power of the Qur'anic language stems not only from its sound and structure, but also from its words which if replaced by other words, the result would be a loss of meaning, effect and harmony, etc. Every word, if not every letter, in the Qur'an contributes to its power and miraculous nature. In fact, what distinguishes this language is mainly the choice of words and the economy of expression.

The use of linguistic and rhetorical features are peculiar and challenge the translators³ especially when translating literary devices. However, even if the translator succeeds in transferring the semantic meanings of a given text, there will be an inevitable loss in the pragmatic and implied meanings. In other words, there is no exact match between two texts in terms of linguistic realization, context of situation, and context of culture.⁴ Indeed, translatability and/or its opposite might appear on the lexical, phrasal, or textual level or all levels at once, of any given text.⁵

The Arabic Qur'an is a 'sea of rhetoric' - it exhibits an unparalleled frequency of rhetorical features, surpassing any other Arabic text, classical or contemporary. The use of rhetoric in the Qur'an stands out from any other type of discourse. It employs a wider range and frequency of rhetorical features than any other rhymed prose; past or present.

The Qur'an uses eloquent Arabic language of the highest standard as well as a plethora of literary devices, the hallmark of any *magnum opus*. At times it employs short and fast paced Ayat/ Qur'anic Statements resembling the beatings of the heart, whilst other times slow, meticulous and clear instructive Ayat are used to lay down points of law.

However, in any translation of the Arabic Qur'an⁶, one should look for one thing: How close it gets to communicating the meaning of the original, that inimitable Divine Text,⁷ the very sounds of which, move men and women to tears and joy?⁸

3. See (i) 'Towards a structured theory on Qur'an translation for theoretical relevance and practical adequacy to Qur'an translation.' Adam Ahmed. July 2014, University of Westminster. UK. (ii) Aiwei Shi, 'Accommodation in Translation,' <http://www.proz.com/translation-articles>. (iii) Rnbeli Johnson, 'Cultural Implications for Translation,' <http://w1.w.proz.com/translation-articles/> ..

4. The relationship between language and culture is one of 'interwoven elements. They are closely inter-related because languages do not operate in isolation but within and as part of cultures. That metaphor as a part of a language is considered as a culture-specific and can be captured by the fact that cultural differences are associated with language differences. Metaphors carry the cultural heritage of specific language. It is therefore described as the mirror that reflects the language culture.

5. J. Myhill Problems in Lexical Semantics in the Old Testament, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1997.

6. Qur'an in Arabic – this phrase occurs four times in The Qur'an. It may imply (i) it is a translation into Arabic of the heavenly archetype/'Mother of the Book'; or (ii) it is an answer to an objection that Hebrew was thought to be the exclusive language of Divine Revelation.

7. C. F. Bosworth and M. E. Richardson. Commentary on the Qur'an, Vol. 1, prepared by Richard Bell, 1991. 'closely examined the Qur'anic text verse by verse, and observing the lengths of verses, their external and internal rhymes and assonances came to acknowledge that the structure of the Qur'an was far more complex than had hitherto been believed.'

8. Qur'an/Ayah 23, Surah 39, Az-Zumar.

Purpose, Methodology and Data

This is a qualitative descriptive study where linguistic analysis and comparative stylistic approaches have been employed in the analysis. It has three objectives:

- (i) to develop a Comparative Study to assess whether or not the meaning and message of The Arabic Qur'an has been adequately maintained while translating into English. A sample of two Surah – Q. 02 and Q. 112 – were taken which are the most widely read, recited and memorized by almost every Muslim;
- (ii) to undertake specific Case Studies to assess whether or not the selected literary devices - metaphors, metonymy, ellipsis, polysemy, irony/sarcasm, embed, parables, digression and euphemism - have been adequately identified in the Arabic Qur'an and sufficiently rendered in English by employing contextual approach as these cannot rest on their literal meaning alone;
- (iii) to see whether the words, phrases and clauses that are translated are based on the nuances of the words which are closely related to the intended meaning as these are some of the areas where the Qur'an translations, especially ones with commentary, usually differ from each other and where they can be assessed objectively.

Ideology and axiology play a role in the translator's choice of a linguistic form amongst other alternatives. As an example, translator may (and do) resort to various strategies to strengthen or undermine particular aspects of the narratives they mediate, explicitly or implicitly. Such manipulations are more specific to religious discourse.

I have been particularly mindful of the above factor while making a choice of the English translations as sources of data for analysis of this paper. With one exception of a Christian academic A. J. Arberry (Arb), whom I have known in person at the University of Cambridge (UK) as a non-partisan scholar, others were/are believers and good Muslims: (Late) Muhammad Asad (Asd), Badr Hashemi (Bdr), Abdul Haleem (Hlm), (Late) Taqi Hilali-Muhammad Mohsin (HnM), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Nsr), Ali Unal (Unl) and (Late) Abdallah Yusuf Ali (Ysf).⁹ They all meet the criteria that are required for higher

9. Daoud Mohammad Nassimi [A Thematic Comparative Review of some English Translations - Thesis Submitted to The University of Birmingham for the Degree of Ph.D.] provides the following background information about the translations and the translators that have been selected for this paper. However, I have added a few phrases here and there of the information about them that I have. (i) *The Koran Interpreted* – a Translation. Arberry, A.J. 2008, Oxford University Press. He argued that the Qur'an should be ranked among the greatest masterpieces of mankind on the basis of his study pertaining to the intricate and richly varied rhymes. He concedes the Muslim claim that the Qur'an is untranslatable, and calls it is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both. He has tried to compose clear English, avoiding the Biblical style favoured by some of his predecessors, especially (Late) Abdallah Yusuf Ali (Ysf) and (Late) Muhammad Asad (Asd). He was different from his predecessors because he neither adopted chronological order of the Qur'an nor had any negative agenda. As an interpreter of the Qur'an he would always be remembered not only in the West but also by the scholars of the East and his translation would be regarded as an authoritative version of the Qur'an. (ii) *The Message of The Quran*, Muhammad Asad, 1980. Dar Al-Andalus Limited, Gibraltar. This translation was first printed and distributed gratis (in two volumes) worldwide by Saudi Arabia. It is distinguished with certain features such as: its academic style and approach, its use of idiomatic and formal English, a logic-oriented approach in explaining some difficult Ayat and relating certain concepts and contexts, and paraphrasing certain sentences in the text to make the English sentence sound better.

quality translations¹⁰, namely: command of the Arabic language, knowledge of the exact meanings of the Arabic words and idioms,¹¹ command of the English language, expertise in text analysis, and knowledge of the Arab ancient history and culture.

It may be noted that the Arabic Qur'an does not have different versions like the Bible, so it is all the same translated by different people in different languages - The Arabic

It is a good translation, fits well for someone reading from a traditional Judeo-Christian background. (iii) Abdel Haleem, M. A. S. A. 2010, Oxford University Press. He uses clear and simplified modern English that makes the text reader-friendly and easy to follow. One notable linguistic feature of his translation is its consideration for shifts in pronouns that occur sometimes within one Ayah. These shifts do not translate into English, so his method for clarifying them is to insert bracketed notes of who is being addressed. In addition, he keeps his translation deeply rooted in the original Arabic meanings and classical exegesis. (iv) English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary of The Noble Qur'an by. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan. 2011, King Fahd Complex. Madinah. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This translation is printed and distributed gratis by Saudi Arabia. It is recognized for its features, such as its extra caution to avoid being apologetic and taking any risk of some liberal modern interpretations. Some readers, however, are distracted by the extensive notes contained in the body of the English text itself, rather than in footnotes accompanying the translation - too many words within the parenthesis, not translating many Arabic words and leaving them in Arabic, sometimes being too literal, limiting the meaning only to narrations from earlier Muslims, its lack of consideration sometimes for the non-Muslim readers, its use of some unrelated Ahadith, its ignoring of historical context of some Ayat, etc. What makes this translation even more annoying is their unnecessary insertion of both the Arabic and English forms of historical names. (v) Interpretation of The Meaning of The Noble Quran, Ali, A. Yusuf, 2013, Amana Publications. USA. This translation has been recognized for its unique features: use of chaste English, his vast knowledge of traditional Qur'anic sciences and the views of major commentators, and his broad knowledge of life and issues in the Western world. (vi) The Annotated Translation and Interpretation of The Qur'an in Modern English, 2006. Unal Ali – Tughra Books. The translation comes with interpretation and exposition on the meaning of Qur'anic Ayat in conjunction with the reasons for revelation or the circumstances of revelation with extensive notes of explanation from various authoritative sources on the *tafsir* of the Qur'an. It aims to present all truth which he has found to be in compliance with the essentials of *Islam*. It contains many explanatory parentheticals. The work focuses particularly on the *scientific facts of the Qur'an, the proofs for God's existence, and the purpose of life, etc.* (vii) The Study Qur'an, A new translation and commentary. Sayyed Hossein Nasr, 2019. Harper One, USA. This Quranic translation is unexceptional. Nasr produces an equivalent of the King James Bible idiom, with 'God' as the inevitable rendering of the divine Name and the similarly Anglicized Englishing of the names of prophets, angels, places etc. The methodology falls short of that requirement even as it mimicks the activity of *tafsir* and *ijtihad* in many places. In terms of presenting Islam to non-Muslims in an advantageous light in the post-9/11 world, it would have been a commendable effort that filled a void. However, the fact that it is, at best, mainstream in many places and absolutely heterodox in many others makes it uncommendable in absolute terms. Those who are looking for a truly reliable holistic digest of the mercy-oriented, reason-grounded book of law, wisdom, prophets and devotion that is the Qur'an in light of its native principles of mass transmission, consensus, abrogation, jurisprudence and the inexhaustible troves of divinely-inspired Arabic polysemy and Prophetic directives, must keep looking. In many instances, the translation provides lucid, powerful commentary on Ayat related to the hereafter, repentance, virtue, and self-discipline. (viii) English Translation and Paraphrasing of The Qur'an. Badr Hashemi, 2022. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and BUZ University, Multan. Pakistan. This translation and paraphrasing of the Qur'an promises to be a useful addition to the list of translations that are already available. It has important features that are going to be really helpful to the seekers of the simple meanings of the Qur'an and deeper knowledge of the last of the revealed Books of Allah: The language is the modern English which doesn't cause the reader to pause and wonder what exactly is he/she reading. One of its major strengths lies in its extensive reliance on references and explanations - the entire text is annotated in a meticulous and detailed way. Moreover, the Index is one of the features of the book that students and teachers may find very helpful. Reading this translation/paraphrasing shall be a pleasant experience. By and large, he has done remarkably well to remain diligently loyal to Allah's Word.

10. Abdol-Mehdi Riazi: 'The Invisible in Translation.' Paper presented at International Conference in Language and Translation at Bahrain University, 2002.

11. Confusion between different Arabic words. For example, Menezes mistakenly translated Abu Bakr (the name of the Prophet's famous Companion) as "the father of the virgin." Apart from the fact that this is a proper name, and is not meant to be translated, the word for virgin is *bikr* and not *bakr*. Mistaking Arabic for Hebrew or Syriac. Watt concluded that the meaning of '*rujz*' in Q.74:04 was the same as the Syriac *rugza*, which means 'wrath' whereas the real meaning is 'pollution' (which is used in the verse to signify idols). Some confusion with Hebrew traditions as well. For example, Jeffery confused the Arabic '*sakinah*' in Q.48:04, which means tranquility, with the Hebrew '*shekinah*', which has a different meaning.

Qur'an remains unchanged. Each one of the selected translations provide the translation of the whole Arabic Qur'an – 114 Surah. In fact, five of these translations are more of an encyclopedia – everyone in its own right – Yusuf (Ysf), Asad (Asd), Unal (Unl), Nasr (Nsr) and Badr (Bdr).

Comparative Study

Generally speaking, it should be borne in mind that doing translation is not a mere replacement of lexical and grammatical items but that there are also cultural and situational aspects which should be taken into consideration as cultures and situations are not always the same in different languages¹² - the situational aspects assume special importance in the Qur'anic context as these relate to the circumstances when a particular Ayah/Surah/Injunction was revealed so its contextual relevance would assume significance while rendering it to another language.

While words and conceptions function as the frame of Qur'anic meaning, the difference between the Arabic idioms from the English is a matter of its syntactic cast and the mode in which it conveys ideas.¹³ It is exclusively due to the extreme flexibility of Arabic grammar owing to the peculiar system of verbal 'roots' and the numerous stem-forms which can be derived from them. Any translation, however meticulously written, can only provide an understanding of the meaning or approximate meaning of the Arabic Qur'an.

Furthermore, the Qur'an is laden with culture-specific elements that are alien and thus, incomprehensible to non-Arabs/non-Muslims. This is because The Qur'an was revealed in an Arab context of culture that is entirely alien to an audience outside the Arabian Peninsula. Generally, Qur'anic cultural elements are interwoven with Arabic-specific linguistic patterns. In addition, there are connotational overtones in the cultural and linguistic patterns. This means that Qur'anic-specific cultural features are translation-resistant.

Take the example of the word 'Allah.'¹⁴ It is translated as 'God' in English. But the two words have different meanings. The Christian concept of 'God' as Father, Son and Holy

12. The recent dramatic global growth in conversions to Islam and multicultural communities, which can only increase in coming generations, means that a much wider, essentially non-Muslim audience in many different parts of the world is inevitably will turn to the Qur'an - almost always in translation. So that an increasingly significant proportion of those non-Arab Muslims will also turn to translations for all the multiple roles it necessarily plays in the practice and deepening of their faith.

13. The fact remains that there are many mismatches between Arabic and English in terms of tenses, aspects, syntactic features, and stylistic features.

14. It becomes a serious problem for those terms that have no direct equivalent in English, for examples, *Rabb*, *taqwa*, *shirk*, *ghayb Samawat/Sama'*, *jahannum*, *dhikr*, *jannah*, and *tawbah*, etc. The English translations of these terms do not convey the full semantic and liturgical scope as well as other Qur'anic terms. It may also be noted that The Arabic Qur'an makes frequent use of 'wau.' It has force, not only that of 'and' but also of 'however,' 'but,' 'when,' 'yet.' At times, when used after each in a series of names, it is used instead of comma. To translate it only as 'and' would be to misrepresent the Sacred Arabic Text, or to leave it un-translated would be injustice to the translation. Similarly, 'au' rendered as 'or' but may also imply, depending on the context, *but*, *unless/except*, *but not when*, *until*, and *either...or*. They represent the different meanings that 'aw' has, namely alternative, uncertainty, deliberate ambiguity, division, absolute addition, exception, continuance of an action to a specified time, and nexus question.

Spirit reflects Christian theological ideas that do not accommodate the Qur'anic notion of 'Allah.' Muslims have a semantically different image of 'God' - the Unshared Unity and Oneness and Uniqueness of God with whom no one else can be associated. Thus, the English translation will not be faithful without taking culture into consideration.

Part 1

A comparative study of eight leading translations in English reveals a considerable variation in rendering of some key words, terms and expressions of the Sacred Arabic Text. A sample of such words/expressions is taken from the two Surah: Q.01:01-07 and Q.112:01-04.

Q.01:01-07 is one of the very early revelations to The Prophet Mohammed^(P)¹⁵, and based on some traditions, it was the first complete Surah that was revealed. It carries at least three titles: *al-Fatihah*, *Sab'a al-Mathani*, and *Umm al-Kitab* - literally meaning Mother of the Book, as it contains the condensed version of the fundamental principles laid down in The Qur'an. The Prophet^(P) is reported to have said: A Salat Prayer during which al-Fatihah is not recited is deficient.¹⁶ And whoever recites this Surah would earn the spiritual reward for reciting two-thirds of the whole Qur'an, as well as the reward equivalent to providing charity to all faithful men and women all over the globe.¹⁷

Sample 1

Title of the Surah: *Al-Fatihah*

Q. 01:01-07

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ
نَسْتَعِينُ ۝ أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝

Transliteration: 01. Bismillah hir rahman nir Raheem. 02. Alhamdu lillaahi Rabbil 'aalameen 03. Ar-Rahmaanir-Raheem 04. Maaliki Yawmid-Deen 05. Iyyaaka na'budu wa iyyaaka nasta'een. Ihdinas-Siraatal-Mustaqeem. 06. Siraatal-lazeena an'amta 'alaihim 07. ghayril-maghdoobi 'alaihim wa lad-daaalleen.

15. The Prophet, As-Sayyed Muhammad^(P) ibn Abdallah, 570-632 CE.

16. The Book of Bokhari (Hadith # 723), and the book of Muslim (Hadith # 394).

17. Abul Kalam Azad, The opening chapter of the Qur'an (rendered by Syed Abdul Latif). Islamic Book Trust. Kuala Lumpur, 2001. Ebrahim Kazim, Contemplating Suratul Fatihah, Islamic Centre. Trinidad, 1997. Ahmad Zaki Hammad, The Opening to the Quran. Quranic Literacy Institute, Chicago, 1996.

Comparative Matrix - *Al-Fatihah*

Q. 01:01-07

Arb	01. In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. 02. Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being, 03. the All-merciful, the All-compassionate, 04. The Master of the Day of Doom. 05. Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succor. 06. Guide us in the straight path, 07. The path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom Thou art wrathful, nor of those who are astray.
Asd	01. In the name of God, The Most Gracious, The Dispenser of Grace. 02. All Praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds, 03. the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace, 04. Lord of the Day of Judgment! 05. Thee alone do we worship; and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid. 06. Guide us the straight way. 07. The way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, not of those who have been condemned [by Thee], nor of those who go astray!
Hlm	01. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy! 02. Praise belongs to God, Lord of the Worlds, 03. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy, 04. Master of the Day of Judgement. 05. It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help. 06. Guide us to the straight path:- 07. The path of those You have blessed, those who incur no anger and who have not gone astray.
HnM	01. In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 02. All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists.) 03. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 04. The Only Owner (and the only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e., the Day of Resurrection.) 05. You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). 06. Guide us to the Straight Way. 07. The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews) nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians).

Ysf	01. In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. 02. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds. 03. Most Gracious, Most Merciful; 04. Master of the Day of Judgment. 05. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. 06. Show us the straight way. 07. The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.
Unl	01. In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate. 02. All praise and gratitude (whoever gives these to whomever for whatever reason and in whatever way from the first day of creation until eternity) are for God, the Lord of the worlds. 03. The All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate, 04. The Master of the Day of Judgment. 05. You alone do we worship, and from You alone do we seek help. 06. Guide us to the Straight Path. 07. The Path of those whom You have favored, not of those who have incurred (Your) wrath (punishment and condemnation), nor of those who are astray.
Nsr	01. In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. 02. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, 03. the Compassionate, the Merciful, 04. Master of the Day of Judgment. 05. Thee we worship and from Thee we seek help. 06. Guide us upon the straight path 07. The path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those who incur wrath, nor of those who are astray.
Bdr	01. <i>I/We begin by the Blessed Name of Allah. The Immensely-Merciful to all, The Infinitely-Compassionate to everyone.</i> 02. <i>All Praise and Gratitude is for Allah alone, while one can never adequately praise Him and express gratitude. Rabb - The Lord Creator and the Lord Sustainer of all existence from infinity to eternity.</i> 03. <i>Allah - The Immensely-Merciful to all, Allah - The Infinitely-Compassionate to everyone.</i> 04. <i>Allah is the sole and the Supreme Authority on all judgments at the Time of Final Judgment.</i> 05. <i>It is You alone – O Allah! – we consciously submit to in worship, awe and reverence, and, it is to You alone – O Allah! – we call for help, mercy and compassion.</i> 06. <i>Guide us to the righteous approach of understanding and practicing Islam in all its connotations, and set us firmly upon it.</i> 07. <i>The approach of those whom You favor and bless and, not of those who incur Your Wrath, and not of those too who are misguided and lost and are disfavored by You.</i>

The word 'Allah' – with root: 'a', 'l', 'h' – is ubiquitous in the Book. The Qur'an has many references to Allah^(EA) and to His close relationship with the world; Allah^(EA) is said to be closer to the human being than is the jugular vein - Q.50:16. Everything in the universe is regarded as a sign (*ayah*) of His Presence and Providence and human beings need to use their intelligence to interpret these signs. Intelligent reflection on Allah^(EA)'s signs confirms the existence of Allah^(EA) and of the divine and directed nature of the world's design.

Allah^(EA) is incomparable and cannot be completely known. Our knowledge of Allah^(EA) is limited, but we can reflect on His Majestic Attributes – 99 – through meditating on his Beautiful Sacred Names which appear alongside or sometimes as substitutes for the Name Allah^(EA).¹⁸ Allah^(EA) is the creator and teacher of human beings who through the Qur'an and earlier messages instructs humanity in how to live. He has created us to submit to Him in reverence, awe and worship, and He notes our conduct and award us accordingly.

Translating 'Allah' as 'God' by Arb, Asd, Hlm, Unl and Nsr is not being faithful to the Sacred Arabic Text and is misleading – former being a symbol of 'Unshared Unity, Oneness' (*Tawheed*) and the later being a symbol of 'Trinity' (*Taslees*). If the purpose was to use a term that is already known to the audience, then that should not have been the purpose of translation.

Besides Allah^(EA), there are three key words/expressions in this Surah: (i) '*na'budo*' (root word - 'a', 'b', 'd'), (ii) '*Sirat-al Mustaqeem*' (root word - 's', 'r', 't'; 'q', 'w', 'm'), and (iii) '*maghdoob*' (root word - 'gh', 'd', 'b') '*daaalleen*' (root word - 'd', 'l', 'l').

'*Na'budo*' has been rendered as 'worship' (it is a Biblical term) by seven of the eight translators. In fact, '*abd*', '*ibadah*' conveys the sense of submission, obedience, servitude and being a slave in addition to worship. While these four meanings are all intended in the Qur'anic usage of this word, all translations, exception being the one by Arb (serve) and Bdr (submit) have reduced its meaning to only ritual worship.

Seven of the eight translators have translated the Qur'anic term '*Sirat-al Mustaqeem*' as 'Straight Path/Way' leaving the reader in difficulty in understanding the meaning of this term¹⁹. Arb and Hlm have not added any words to say what it means; Asd, HnM, Unl, Nsr and Bdr have added words in italics/brackets to convey its intended meaning; Bdr has added a detailed footnote expressing the meaning of this phrase.²⁰

18. See 'The Divine 99' by Badr Hashemi.

19.²² Bible/Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV) gives a different understanding of The Straight Way/Path: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.'

20. Bdr adds this footnote: '*Sirat Mustaqeem*' of the Sacred Arabic Text is generally understood as 'The Right/ Straight Path.' The theme occurs in various combinations, such as *Sirati Rabbika Mustaqima*' (Q.06:126), '*Sirati Mustaqiman*' (Q.06:153), '*Siratikal Mustaqim*' (Q.07:16), *Siratil Aziz al-Hameed*' (Q.14:01, 22:24, 34:06), '*Siratan Aliyya Mustaqiman*' (Q.15:41), '*Siratan Sawiyya*' (Q.19:43), '*Sawa as-Sirat*' (Q.38:22), '*Sirati Allah*' (Q.42:53), etc. The Qur'an advises the believers to follow 'The Right/Straight Path' by avoid-

The concept of '*Sirat-al Mustaqeem*' represents very concisely the idea that Islam is a direct route to the truth, and that Allah^(EA) provides us with guidance through the Qur'an. However, one of its interpretations stress the naturalness of belief and of the rules of Islam, emphasizing that both the religion and the world have been made for human beings and so are not difficult to understand.

The 'straight path/way' is thus in accordance with humanity's natural inclinations (*fitrah*) – i.e., that human beings are inclined by their inner nature to submit to the Will of Allah^(EA) - Q.30:30. However, one must be wary of the evil thoughts and temptations incited by Satan in an effort to lead people 'astray' from the Straight Path/Way but Allah^(EA)'s guidance will suffice to keep one on 'the path of those with whom Allah^(EA) is pleased' – Q.01:07.

HnM specify Jews as '*maghdoob*' and Christians as '*daaalleen*' – naming the two religious communities is too limited in the perceived context. Bdr maintains, and rightly so, that it relates to those communities and nations that are mentioned in the 'punishment' stories of the Qur'an which he mentions in his footnote. Seven translators have employed the past tense and similar words for translation, he uses the present continuous tense for, as he explains: 'the phenomenon of the Divine Wrath and Anger and Punishment has always been and would always be relevant to those communities that persistently deny and disobey His Commandments conveyed through Allah's designated Messengers/ Prophets.'

In support of his argument, Bdr highlights some contemporary examples, like 2004 deadliest disaster in the South Asian tsunami which effected 7 countries and killed 226,408; 2007 UK floods; 2010 earthquake in Haiti; 2011 Virginia earthquake; 2012 Hurricanes Isaac, Sandy, Katrina, etc. – were considered by the religious leaders, Muslims, Christians and Jews, as Divine Punishments for the alleged sinful crimes like abortion, homosexuality, and decaying social morality. The Qur'an sets out a general framework for such people in Q.03:90, 106.²¹

ing crimes against equality, family, humanity, fairness and integrity. These values are personal moral values and not, by itself, a license to punish people who violate those values. The legal limits restrict what we may and may not do to protect ourselves against such fault lines. Q.06:150-153, 02:275 and 17:26-30 provide a listing of key parameters: (i) do not worship any entity besides Him; (ii) be kind to your parents; (iii) do not kill your children for fear of impoverishment; (iv) do not come anywhere near lewdness/adultery/LGBT – Q.17:32, incest – Q.04:22-23, and homosexuality – Q.07:80-81; (v) do not kill any person except in pursuit of justice and do not murder – also Q.17:33; (vi) do not come anywhere near the assets of the orphan, except for what is best, until he/she reaches maturity; (vii) give honest full measure and weigh equitably – also Q.17:34-35; (viii) be honest in giving testimony/witness even if it may be against a relative; (ix) keep your promise made to Allah^(EA); (x) do not indulge in the business of interest – Q.02:275; (xi) be sparing and kind, instead of being greedy and insulting – Q.17:26-30; do not consume those items of food that are prohibited – Q.05:03, 06:118, 145. This is My Path, Right/Straight. So follow it! And do not follow the other paths lest they divert you from His Path.

21.The Divine Wrath manifests itself by way of 'supernatural' and 'natural' disasters. The Qur'an mentions communities as well as individuals who became victims of Allah^(EA)'s Wrath: the People of Prophet Nuh/Noah^(P) (Q.26:106-102); the People of Prophet Saleh^(P)/People of Thamud (Q.07:76-78; 11:61-68); the People of Prophet Lut/Lot^(P) (Q.26:160-175); the People of Prophet Sho'yab^(P)/Midian (Q.11:84-94); Ayka (Q.26:176-191); the People of Prophet Hud^(P)/Ad (Q.11:50-60; 26:123-140); Pharaoh (Q.03:11; 11:96-99;

'*an'amta 'alaihim*' – Q. 01:07- may be understood to mean the recipients of Allah^(EA)'s favor, namely, the Prophets, those who follow them, the martyrs (those who chooses to sacrifice their life or face pain and suffering instead of giving up something they hold religiously sacred), and the righteous (Q.04:69), and not those who appear, briefly, to enjoy worldly prosperity and success; all too often, these people are among those whom Allah^(EA) has condemned because they have lost sight of '*Sirat-al Mustaqeem*'. This negative explanation makes it quite clear that '*in'am*' (favor) denotes all those real and abiding favors and blessings which one receives in reward for righteous conduct through Allah^(EA)'s approval and pleasure, rather than those apparent and fleeting favors which the Pharaohs, Nimrods and Korahs (Qaruns) used to receive in the past, and which are enjoyed even today by people notorious for oppression, evil and corruption.

Sample 2

Title of the Surah: *al-Ikhlās*

Q.112

'*Ikhlās*' means The Purity of Faith, because it contains the declaration of Allah^(EA)'s transcendence, a confirmation of His Unshared Unity, a disavowal of His dependence on causes, and a refutation of the disbelievers' notions about the divine and divinity. It is also called Surah *at-Tawheed*, meaning Declaration of Allah^(EA)'s Unshared Unity and Oneness and Uniqueness - pure and undefiled.

This Surah firmly establishes the Islamic belief in Allah^(EA)'s Unshared Unity and Oneness just as Surah Al-Kafirun (Q.109) is a denunciation of any similarity or meeting point between the Islamic concept of Allah^(EA)'s Unshared Unity and Oneness and any belief that ascribes human form or personality to Allah^(EA). Each Surah deals with Allah^(EA)'s Unshared Unity and Oneness from a different angle. The Prophet^(P) used to start his day by reciting these two Surah in the Sunnah Prayer before the Mandatory Prayer of post-dawn/Fajr. The Prophet^(P) is reported to have remarked that this Surah is equivalent to one-third of the whole Qur'an.²²

Q.112:01-04

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝

01. Qul²³ huwal laahu ahad. 02. Allah hus-samad. 03. Lam yalid wa lam yoolad. 04. Wa lam yakul-lahoo kufuwan ahad.

20:78-79); the People of Prophet Musa/ Moses^(P) (Q.02:88-90; 20:81; 60:13); etc.

22. See The Book of Bokhari, Hadith # 6643, and 'Introducing The Qur'an', by Badr Hashemi.

23. '*Qul*' of the Sacred Arabic Text is an imperative and occurs more than 300 times throughout The Qur'an. It may mean 'say', 'proclaim', 'speak' as the context may demand. In almost all cases, it is understood as addressing only The Prophet^(P), but sometimes believers are also addressed: Q.03:84; 112:01.

Comparative Matrix - *Al-Ikhlās*

Q. 112:01-04

Arb	01. Say: 'He is God, One, 02. God, the Everlasting Refuge, 03. who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, 04. and equal to Him is not any one.'
Asd	01. He is the One God. 02. God the Eternal, the Uncaused Cause of All Being. 03. He begets not, and neither is He begotten; 04. And there is nothing that could be compared with Him.
Hlm	01. Say, He is God the One, 02. God the eternal. 03. He begot no one nor was He begotten. 04. No one is comparable to Him.
HnM	01. Say (O Muhammad): He is Allah, (the) One. 02. Allah is Self-Sufficient Master. Whom all creatures need (He neither eats nor drinks). 03. He begets not, nor was He begotten. 04. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.
Ysf	01. Say: He is Allah, the One <i>and Only</i> ; 02. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; 03. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten. 04. And there is none like unto Him.
Unl,	01. Say: He, God, the Unique One of Absolute Unity. 02. God, the Eternally-Besought-of-All (Himself in no need of anything). 03. He begets not, nor is He begotten. 04. And comparable to Him there is none.
Nsr	01. Say, He, God, is One, 02. God, the Eternally Sufficient unto Himself. 03. He begets not; nor was He begotten. 04. And none is like unto Him
Bdr	01. Proclaim <i>the truth</i> : He is Allah, the One <i>and Only</i> . 02. Allah, the Eternally-Besought of all <i>at times of need while He seeks none</i> . 03. <i>He has no family</i> . Neither giving birth to <i>nor parenting anyone: no son, no daughter, no downstream family</i> , nor being born of <i>anyone: no parents, no siblings, no upstream family</i> . 04. And <i>equal or comparable</i> to Him is no one, <i>has never been any, and shall never be any</i> .

There are three key concepts here: '*Ahad*,' '*As-Samad*' and '*Lam yalid wa lam yoolad*.'

'*Ahad*' refers to Allah^(EA)'s Unshared Unity – this term is much more precise than the more frequently used term, '*Waahid*,' which means 'one'. '*Ahad*' has the added connotations of absolute and continuous unity and an absence of equals – this connotation has been captured by adding '*the Only*' by Bdr, Ysf. Unl renders it as 'One of Absolute Unity.' Other translators have missed to offer an explanation.

'*As-Samad*' is from the root 's', 'm', 'd' which occurs only once here in the Qur'an. It has several classical Arabic connotations: to endeavor, to reach or attain something, to turn to, to need, to direct oneself toward, or aim toward something, to set up, to erect something, to be impenetrable, solid, to remain unaffected, unchanged, to be sublime, and everlasting.

The first is the idea of self-sustaining, being self-sufficient and independent of all things. These names come together to paint a picture that He is indeed alone, indivisible, and unique. There is no entity of worship outside of Him who we can sufficiently rely upon. So we turn to Him alone for all our needs, and He is enough for the believer. All our troubles, needs, and wants are handled perfectly in the care of Allah-us Samad.

'*Lam yalid wa lam yoolad*' – coming from the root 'w', 'l', 'd' - is another phrase that need to be understood. '*yalid*' means give birth to, generate, produce, sire, beget. '*yoolad*' means birthed, born, generated, produced, sired, and begotten.

Seven translations capture it as 'He begets not; nor was He begotten.' While this translation is fairly appropriate to convey the essence and meaning of the Sacred Arabic Text, Bdr has given a better wording: *He has no family*. 'Neither giving birth to nor parenting anyone: no son, no daughter; no downstream family, nor being born of anyone: no parents, no siblings, no upstream family'.

Part 2

In this part, I shall focus on the translations of ten literary devices - metaphors, metonymy, ellipsis, polysemy, irony, sarcasm, embed, digression, parable and euphemism. I shall use eight leading English translations and examine the extent to which the translators have been faithful and successful in capturing and conveying the meaning and messages of these ten devices - samples for this exercise comprise 50 Ayat from 40 Surah.

Case Study – 1

Metaphors²⁴ are a form of figurative language, which refer to words or expressions that mean something different from their literal meaning. The use of metaphors along with other rhetorical usages is a feature of the Arabic Qur'an.

24. *Aistiearat*/استعارات

In Surah al-Baqarah alone, there are at least 15 metaphorical Ayat/Statements. Some common examples of such metaphor may include the references to disbelievers 'unable to hear or see,' meaning that they are incapable of discerning the truth (of Islam). They have 'veils over their hearts, heaviness in their ears.' (Q.18:57), or they are covered in darkness (Q.10:27). Similarly, in Q. 47:04 - '*hatta tada 'a l-harbu awzaraha*' meaning 'until the war lays down its burdens' - war is represented as a warrior who lays down the burden of arms after the war.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Yusuf*

Q.12:09

اَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اظْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ ﴿٩﴾

Uqtuloo Yoosufa awitra hoohu ardany yakhlu lakum wajhu abeekum wa takoonoo mim ba'dihee qawman saaliheen.

Title of the Surah: *Yusuf*

Q.12:84

وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسَفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزَنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾

Wa tawallaa 'anhum wa qaala yaaa asafaa 'alaa Yoosufa wabyaddat 'aynaahu minal huzni fahuwa kazeem.

Title of the Surah: *al-Ankabut*

Q.29:41

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعُنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعُنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

Masalul lazeenat takhazoo min doonil laahi awliyaaa'a kamasalil 'ankaboot, ittakhazat baitaa; wa inna awhanal buyooti la baitul 'ankaboot; law kaanooyal'moon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 1

Q.12:09; 12:84; 29:41.

Arb	12:09 - Kill you Joseph, or cast him forth into some land, that your father's face may be free for you. 12:84 - And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow. 29:41 - The likeness of those who have taken to them protectors, apart from God, is as the likeness of the spider that takes to itself a house; and surely the frailest of houses is the house of the spider, did they but know.
Asd	12:09 - Slay Joseph, or else drive him away to some [faraway] land, so that your father's regard may be for you alone. 12:84 - And his eyes became dim from the grief. 29:41 – The parable of those who take [beings or forces] other than God for their protectors is that of the spider which makes for itself a house: for, behold, the frailest of all houses is the spider's house. Could they but understand this!
Hlm	12:09 - Kill Joseph or banish him to another land, and your father's attention will be free to turn to you. 12:84 - And his eyes turned white because of the grief. 29:41- Those who take protectors other than God can be compared to spiders building themselves houses– the spider's is the frailest of all houses– if only they could understand.
HnM	12:09 - Kill Yusuf or cast him out to some (other) land, so that the favor of your father may be given to you alone. 12:84 - And he lost his sight because of the sorrow. 29:41 – The likeness of those who take (false deities as) <i>Awliya</i> (protectors, helpers) other than Allah is the likeliness of a spider who builds (for itself) a house, but verily, the frailest (weakest) of houses is the spider's house – if they but know.
Ysf	12:09 - Slay ye Joseph or cast him out to some (unknown) land, that so the favor of your father may be given to you alone. 12:84 - And his eyes became white with sorrow. 29:41 - The parable of those who take protectors other than Allah is that of the spider, who builds (to itself) a house; but truly the flimsiest of houses is the spider's house; if they but knew.

Unl	12:09 - Kill Joseph, or cast him out in some distant land so that your father's attention should turn only to you. 12:84 - And his eyes turned white because of the grief. 29:41- The parable of those who take to them other than God for guardians (to entrust their affairs to) is like a spider: it has made for itself a house, and surely the frailest of houses is the spider's house. If only they knew this.
Nsr	12:09 - Slay Joseph, or cast him out to some land, that your father's concern might be for you. 12:84 - His eyes had turned white with grief. 29:41 - The parable of those who take protectors apart from God is that of the spider that makes a house. Truly the frailest of houses is the spider's house, if they but knew.
Bdr	12:09 - Kill Joseph or drive him away in some <i>distant</i> land, so that your father's affection will be exclusively for you. 12:84 - And he lost his <i>eye</i>-sight because of the <i>anguish and</i> grief. 29:41 - The likeness of those who take protectors other than Allah is the likeness of the she-spider: it makes a house for itself of delicate webs, but, undoubtedly, the spider's house is the weakest of houses - if only they can understand.

Q. 12:09 - The metaphorical expression in this Ayah *yakhlu lakum wajhu abeekum* means that the attention and affection of the father will be passed on to his sons after killing Joseph, who received more love and care from his father. The more focused translation of the metaphor appears to be of Bdr's, while Unl, Ysf, HnM also capture the essence, but Arb and Asd do not. In fact, Arb's literal translation 'that your father's face may be free for you' does not make sense and is misleading for the readers.

Q.12:84 - The metaphorical expression in this Ayah '*wabyaddat 'aynaahu*' means that the effect of the loss of Joseph was so severe that his father lost his sight. In this case, it is only two translations (Bdr and HnM) that convey the empirical meaning; the others do not.

Q.29:41 – The Ayah uses both a simile and a metaphor to draw a parallel between the weak and vulnerable structure of a spider's web and those entities whom some people take as protectors beside Allah^(EA). And just as the spider's house becomes scattered dust, so too do the creeds and rituals of those who worship entities other than Allah become scattered dust and their deeds come to naught. In this way, this Ayah points to pseudo-polytheism of those who worship Allah^(EA) to be seen of men, for they have, in effect, taken a worshipful entity other than Allah^(EA).

Case Study – 2

Metonymy²⁵ - it is a figure of speech in which an object or idea is referred to by the name of something closely associated with it, as opposed to by its own name. It involves a word or phrase substituting or standing in for another word or phrase. Translating metonymy creates problems while finding out the intended, desired and hidden meaning as substitutes - this substitution is conditioned by the existence of a contiguity relation between the literal and figurative meanings and the existence of an implicit clue indicating that the literal meaning is not intended.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *al-Baqarah*

Q.02:279

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾

Fail lam taf'aloo faazanoo biharbim minal laahi wa Rasoolihee wa in tubtum falakum ru'oosu amwaalikum laa tazlimoonaa wa laa tuzlamoon.

Title of the Surah: *at-Tawbah*

Q. 09:61

وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ قُلْ أُذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

Wa minhumul lazeena yu'zoonan nabiyya wa yaqooloonaa huwa uzun; qul uzunu khairil lakum yu'minu billaahi wa yu'minu lil mu'mineena wa rahmatul lil lazeena aamanoo minkum; wallazeena yu'zoonaa Rasoolal laahi lahum 'azaabun 'aleem.

25. *Alkinaya*/الكناية

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 2

Q. 02:279; 09:61.

Arb	02:279 - But if you do not, then take notice that God shall war with you, and His Messenger; yet if you repent, you shall have your principal, unwronging and unwronged. 09:61 - And some of them hurt the Prophet, saying, 'He is an ear!' Say: 'An ear of good for you; he believes in God, and believes the believers, and he is a mercy to the believers among you. Those who hurt God's Messenger -- for them awaits a painful chastisement.'
Asd	02:279 - for if you do it not, then know that you are at war with God and His Apostle. But if you repent, then you shall be entitled to [the return of] your principal you will do no wrong, and neither will you be wronged. 09:61 – And among those [enemies of the truth] there are such as malign the Prophet by saying, “He is all ear.” Say: “[Yes,] he is all ear, [listening] to what is good for you! He believes in God, and trusts the believers, and is [a manifestation of God’s] grace towards such of you as have [truly] attained to faith. And as for those who malign God’s Apostle - grievous suffering awaits them [in the life to come]!”
Hlm	02:279 - If you do not, then be warned of war from God and His Messenger. You shall have your capital if you repent, and without suffering loss or causing others to suffer loss. 09:61 - There are others who insult the Prophet by saying, 'He will listen to anything.' Say, 'He listens for your own good: he believes in God, trusts the believers, and is a mercy for those of you who believe.' An agonizing torment awaits those who insult God's Messenger.
HnM	02:279 – But if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Seal not unjustly, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly. 09:61 – And among them are men who annoy the Prophet (Muhammed saw), and say: He is lending his ears (to every news). Say: He listens to what is best for you; he believes in Allah, has faith in the believers and is a mercy to those who believe. But those who annoy Allah's Messenger will have a painful torment.
Ysf	02:279 - If ye do it not, Take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger. But if ye turn back, ye shall have your capital sums: Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. 09:61 - Among them are men who molest the Prophet and say, “He is (all) ear.” Say, “He listens to what is best for you: he believes in Allah, has faith in the Believers, and is a Mercy to those of you who believe.” But those who molest the Messenger will have a grievous penalty.

Unl	02:279 - If ye do it not, Take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger. But if ye turn back, ye shall have your capital sums: Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. 09:61 - Among them (the hypocrites) are those who hurt the Prophet and say (of him): "He is all ear (listening to everyone and disposed to believe them)." Say: "Yes, he is all ear, listening to what is best for you; he believes in God, and trusts the believers, and a great mercy for those among you who believe." Those who hurt God's Messenger – for them is a painful punishment.
Nsr	02:279 - And if you do not, then take notice of a war from God and His Messenger. If you repent, you shall have the principal of your wealth, and you shall neither wrong nor be wronged. 09:61 - And among them are those who torment the Prophet, and say, "He is an ear." Say, "An ear that is good for you. He believes in God and he has faith in the believers, and he is a mercy to those among you who believe." And [as for] those who torment the Messenger of God, theirs shall be a painful punishment.
Bdr	02:279 - And in case you do not <i>stop</i>, then be warned of a war from Allah and His Messenger <i>Muhammad</i>. However, if you repent <i>sincerely even now and give it up for good</i>, then you will have your principal <i>capital</i>. Thus you will neither be doing wrong to others nor will you be wronged. 09:61 - There are some among them - <i>the hypocrites</i> - who offend the Prophet when they allege: 'He will listen to anybody.' Tell them: 'He listens for your <i>own</i> good, and - he trusts in Allah, and - he believes <i>in the integrity</i> of the believers, and - he is a mercy/<i>blessing</i> for those among you who <i>truly</i> believe.' Whoever offends Allah's Messenger is going to have a painful punishment.

Q.02.279 – 'war' is the common term used by all translators as the literal translation of '*harb*' - in fact, it implies a grave situation such that they have made themselves the enemies of or hostile to Allah and the Messenger. Tabari explains - at the Time of Resurrection it will be said to the one who partook *riba*/interest money: 'Take up your sword for war.' Ibn Kathir and Razi state – The practice of *riba* can be a cause of taking up arms against violators on the part of legitimate authority, forcing them to give up their gains from *riba* or fighting them if they refuse to relinquish them or desist.' 'War' should have been substituted by a phrase like 'a grave situation.'

Q.09:61 – '*huwa uzun*' – literally meaning 'he is an ear' – it is an idiomatic expression used as an insult to imply that the Prophet^(P) was easily swayed by what he heard; he was gullible. Arb, Asd, Ysf, Unl, Nsr, Ysf translate it literally; HnM put it as 'he is lending his ear;' Bdr renders it as 'he will listen to anybody.'

Case Study – 3

Ellipsis ²⁶ is the omission from speech or writing of a word or words that are considered residuary or still able to be understood from contextual clues. However, it is very rare for an ellipsis to occur without a linguistic antecedent. The way English uses ellipsis, it is sometimes necessary to add the elided words (which usually appear in brackets or italics) to complete a sentence in the translation.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Yusuf*

Q.12:82

وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

Was'alil qaryatal latee kunnaa feehaa wal'eeral lateee aqbalnaa feehaa wa innaa lasaadiqoon

Title of the Surah: *Ghafir*

Q.40:79

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

Allaahul lazee ja'ala lakumul an'aama litarkaboo minhaa wa minhaa taakuloon.

26. /القطع الناقص/ *alqite alnaaqis*

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 3

Q. 12:82; 40:79.

Arb	12:82 - Enquire of the city wherein we were, and the caravan in which we approached. 40:79 - It is God who appointed for you the cattle, some of them to ride and of some you eat.
Asd	12:82 - And ask thou in the town in which we were [at the time], and of the people of the caravan with whom we travelled hither. 40:79 - It is God who [at all times works wonders for you: thus, He] provides for you [all manner of] livestock, so that on some of them you may ride, and from some derive your food.
Hlm	12:82 - Ask in the town where we have been; ask the people of the caravan we travelled with. 40:79 - It is God who provides livestock for you, some for riding and some for your food.
HnM	12:82 - And ask <i>the people of</i> the town where we have been, and the caravan in which we returned. 40:79 - Allah, it is He Who has made cattle for you, that you may ride on some of them, and of some you eat.
Ysf	12:82 - Ask at the town where we have been and the caravan in which we returned, 40:79 - It is Allah Who made cattle for you, that ye may use some for riding and some for food.
Unl	12:82 - Inquire in the township where we were, and the caravan with whom we traveled hither. 40:79 - God is He Who has made the cattle (for your service), so that you use some of them for riding – and from them you obtain food. God is He Who has made the cattle (for your service), so that you use some of them for riding – and from them you obtain food.
Nsr	12:82 - So ask the town wherein we were, and the caravan with which we approached. 40:79 - God it is Who made cattle for you, that some of them you may ride and some of them you may eat.
Bdr	12:82 - And ask from <i>the people of</i> that city – <i>in Egypt</i> - where we were, and <i>people of</i> the caravan – <i>Canaanites</i> - with whom we have come back. 40:79 - It is Allah Who made the livestock for you, so that you may ride some of them and some of them you eat <i>as their meat</i> .

Q.12:82 - in this case, '*Was'alil qaryatal latee kunnaa feehaa*' there is absence or ellipsis of the word 'people.' The complete sentence can be formed as 'ask the people of that city', but the word 'people' is absent, and its absence does not affect or change the meaning of the Ayah/Statement. However, in English, it is better to retrieve the absent word to understand the complete meaning of the Ayah/Statement, and this is done only by Bdr and HnM; the other are quiet. Again, in Q.40:79 there is absence/ellipsis of the word 'meat' which has not been captured in seven of the eight translations.

Case Study – 4

Polysemy²⁷ is the coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase, i.e., a word or phrase with multiple meanings. The translations will encounter obvious difficulty in conveying the intended meaning of such words if the context is not known or is not considered.

Consider, four words '*Ummah*,' '*Jannah*,' '*Mountains*' and '*Mawla*' and their multiple polysemic meanings.

Ummah – Sample of three meanings/polysemy

Title of the Surah: *Yusuf*

Q.12:45

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَّا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ﴿١٥﴾

Wa qaalal lazee najaa minhumaa waddakara ba'da ummatin ana unabbi'ukum bi ta'weelihee fa-arsiloon.

Title of the Surah: *An-Nahl*

Q.16:120

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

Inna Ibraaheema kaana ummatan qaanital lillaahi Haneefanw wa lam yakuminal mushrikeen.

²⁷المفارقة *Almufaraqa*

Title of the Surah: *Az-Zukhruf*

Q. 43:22

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّهُتَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Bal qaalooo innaa wajadnaaaa aabaaa’anaa ‘alaaa ummatinw wa innaa ‘alaaa aasaarihim muhtadoon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 4

Q.12:45; 16:120; 43:22.

Arb	12:45 - after a time 16:120 – nation 43:22 - community
Asd	12:45 - after all that time 16:120 - a man who combined within himself all virtues 43:22 - agreed on what to believe
Hlm	12:45 - at last 16:120 - example 43:22 - tradition
HnM	12:45 – now at length 16:120 - nation 43:22 - Following a certain way
Ysf	12:45 - after (so long) a space of time 16:120 - model 43:22 - religion
Unl	12:45 - after all that time 16:120 - community 43:22 - a certain religion
Nsr	12:45 - after a while 16:120 – community 43:22 - creed
Bdr	12:45 - after quite a while 16:120 - community 43:22 – set of beliefs

‘*Ummah*’ can mean a period of time, as in Q.12:45. However, in some cases, this refers to the leader of the people who teaches or guides the believers to the right path in their religion and life, as in Q.16:120. In other instances, it refers to a religion that some people follow – Q.43:22. In this respect, majority of the eight translators did not succeed

in capturing the phenomenon of polysemy in the three sample Ayat²⁸/Statements, and hence the intended meaning of the Ayat.

Jannah - Sample of three meanings/polysemy

Title of the Surah: *An-Nisa* '

Q. 04:13

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾

Tilka hudoodul laah; wa mai yuti'il laaha wa Rasoolahoo yudkhillhu Jannaatin tajree min tahtihal anhaaru khaalideena feehaa; wa zaalikal fawzul 'azeem.

Title of the Surah: *Al-An'am*

Q. 06:99

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتٍ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

Transliteration: Wa Huwal lazeee anzala minas samaaa'i maaa'an fa akhrajnaa bihee nabaata kulli shai'in fa akhrajnaa minhu khadiran nukhriju minhu habbam mutaraakibanw wa minan nakhli min tal'ihaa qinwaanun daaniyatunw wa jannaatim min a'naabinw wazzaitoona warrummaana mushtabihanw wa ghaira mutashaabih; unzuuroo ilaa samariheee izaas asmara wa yan'ih; inna fee zaalikum la Aayaatil liqawminy yu'minoon.

Title of the Surah: *Qaaf*

Q. 50:09

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ ﴿٩﴾

Wa nazzalnaa minas samaaa'i maaa'am mubaarakan fa ambatnaa bihee jannaatinw wa habbal haseed.

28. 'Ayat' of the Sacred Text (plural of 'Ayah') refer to the basic 'units' of revelation of the Qur'an (or 'verse' as erroneously rendered in English following the Biblical style), or 'Revelation' in general, or even 'Divine Message'. Depending upon the context, 'Ayah' can also refer to 'natural phenomenon' (as Signs of Allah's Power and Providence), to 'miracles' and other extraordinary events (associated with Allah^(EA)'s Messengers^(P)). In the present context, it means 'unit of Divine Revelation'.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 4a

Q.04:13; 06:99; 50:09.

Arb	04:13 - gardens 06:99 – gardens 50:09 – gardens
Asd	04:13 - gardens 06:99 – gardens 50:09 - fields
Hlm	04:13 - Gardens 06:99 – greenery 50:09 - gardens
HnM	04:13 - gardens 06:99 - Gardens 50:09 – gardens
Ysf	04:13 - Gardens 06:99 – gardens 50:09 - gardens
Unl	04:13 - Gardens 06:99 – gardens 50:09 - gardens
Nsr	04:13 - Gardens 06:99 – gardens 50:09 - gardens
Bdr	04:13 - Paradise 06:99 – green foliage/ <i>greenery</i> 50:09 - <i>orchards and</i> gardens

‘*Jannah*’ can mean paradise, as in Q.04:13. However, in some cases, this refers to orchards as in Q.06:99. In other instances, it refers to farms/agriculture field/green foliage as in Q.50:09.

In this respect, majority of the translators have used ‘garden’ for all three intended meanings, with a subtle difference of using capital letter ‘G’ for Garden implying Paradise. Overall, they did not succeed in capturing the phenomenon of polysemy in the three sample Ayat/Statements, and hence the intended meaning of the Ayat; the one exception being Bdr.

‘*Mountains*’ also have more than one meaning or sense – Q.24:43 - He sends hail down from (such) mountains in the sky, pouring it on whoever He wishes and diverting it from whoever He wishes. And it is captured appropriately by all eight translators.

'Mawla' - coming from *Walla Yuwalli* - has multiple meanings like: to be close to, to be friends with, to have power over, patron, owner, master, guardian, protector, benefactor, ally, friend, etc. However, it occurs in three distinctive ways/forms in the Qur'an, viz., Q.02:286, Q.44:41 and Q.57:15.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Al-Baqarah*

Q. 02:286

..... أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا.....

Anta mawlaanaa.

Title of the Surah: *Ad-Dukhaan*

Q. 44:41

يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي مَوْلَى عَنْ مَوْلَى شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

Yawma laa yughnee mawlan 'am mawlan shai'anw wa laa hum yunsaroon.

Title of the Surah: *Al-Hadeed*

Q. 57:15

..... مَاوَاكُمُ النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٥﴾

ma'waakumun Naaru hiya mawlaakum wa bi'sal maseer

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 4b

Q. 02:286; 44:41; 57:15.

Arb	02:286 – Thou art our Protector. 44:41 - the day a master shall avail nothing a client. 57:15 – that is your master.
Asd	02:286 – Thou art our Lord Supreme. 44:41 - the Day when no friend shall be of the least avail to his friend. 57:15 – it is your refuge.

Hlm	02:286 – You are our Protector, 44:41- Day when no friend can take another's place. 57:15 – that is where you belong.
HnM	02:286 – You are our Maula (Patron, Supporter and Protector). 44:41 – the Day when a bear relative cannot avail near relative. 57:15 – That is your friend.
Ysf	02:286 – Thou art our Protector. 44:41 - The Day when no protector can avail his client 57:15 – that is the proper place to claim you
Unl	02:286 – You are our Guardian 44:41 - The Day when no guardian will be of any avail to one supported. 57:15 – that is your harbor suited to you
Nsr	02:286 – Thou art our Master. 44:41 - The Day when no friend will avail a friend in any way. 57:15 – it shall be your master.
Bdr	02:286 – You <i>alone</i> are our Guardian <i>and Protector</i> . 44:41 - a Time when a friend will not <i>be able</i> help his friend <i>in any way</i> . 57:15 – as it will be your only friend <i>to keep you company forever</i> .

Mawla in Q.02:286 implies *Allah*; in Q.44:41 *close friend*; in Q.57:15 *the hellfire*. All translators have rendered Q.02:286 correctly; Q.44:41 has been rendered as '*friend*' by Asd, Hlm, Nsr and Bdr, whereas Arb translates it as '*master*', Ysf as '*protector*', and Unl as '*guardian*' where Arb, Ysf and Unl do not appear to reflect the essence of the Arabic term in its context. Q.57:15 is captured as '*friend*' by HnM, Bdr (adding *to keep you company*); Asd, Hlm, Ysf, Unl present a situation which is synonymous with the fate of those who deserve it. Nsr's translating it as '*master*' does not quite fit into the scenario.

Case Study – 5

Irony ²⁹ - the meaning of the ironic lexical words may include cynical, taunt and/or sarcastic expressions. Irony depends on context just as there are no words or expressions which are humorous *per se* but by reason of their semantic or syntactic use in a context and which will have to be defined 'extrinsically' by their contextual linkages and semantic relationships.

29.Sarcasm is regarded as a form of ironic speech commonly employed to convey seriousness within comedy and vice versa. Scholars agree that both - sarcasm and irony - share approximately same sets of meanings, such as undervaluing, mocking, boasting, etc. Although both terms seem near to each other, yet they are not exactly the same and must be considered separately. See 'A Contrastive Analysis of the Translation of Irony in Holy Qur'an: the Translations of Mualawi Sher Ali and Yusuf Ali. Ibrahim I.I. Najjar. PhD Thesis. University of Malaya, 2015.

Holy Qur'an: the Translations of Mualawi Sher Ali and Yusuf Ali Ibrahim I.I. Najjar. University of Malaya. American Research Journal of English and Literature

Irony depends on context since it springs from the relationship of a word expression or action with the whole text or situation. The Qur'an is quite rich in irony. In tempting Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Satan suggests to them that the fruit of the forbidden tree could transform them into angels, but that Allah would not like them to become angels, hence the prohibition to eat of the tree (Q.07:20). Ironically, the angels had already bowed before Adam and acknowledged his supremacy, so that man's attempt to become an angel would constitute a descent, and not an ascent.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Al-An'am*

Q. 06:10

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَأَ بِرُسُلِي مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

Wa laqadis tuhzi'a bi-Rusulim min qablika fahaaqa billazeena sakhiroo minhum maa kaanoo bihee yastahzi'oon.

Title of the Surah: *Hud*

Q.11:38

وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَكَلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ
قَالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

Wa yasna'ul fulka wa kullamaa marra 'alaihi mala'um min qawmihee sakhiroo minh; qaala in taskharoo minnaa fa innaa naskharu minkum kamaa taskharoon.

Title of the Surah: *Az-Zumar*

Q.39:56

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَا حَسْرَتَى عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّخِيرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

Transliteration: An taqoola nafsuny yaahasrataa 'alaa maa farrattu fee jambil laahi wa in kuntu laminas saakhireen.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 5

Q. 06:10; 11:38; 39:56.

Arb	06:10 - Messengers indeed were mocked at before thee; but those that scoffed at them were encompassed by that they mocked at. 11:38 - So he was making the Ark; and whenever a council of his people passed by him they scoffed at him, He said, 'If you scoff at us, we shall surely scoff at you, as you scoff and you shall know to whom will come a chastisement degrading him. 39:56 - Lest any soul should say, 'Alas for me, in that I neglected my duty to God, and was a scoffer.'
Asd	06:10 - And, indeed, [even] before thy time have apostles been derided - but those who scoffed at them were [in the end] overwhelmed by the very thing which they were wont to deride. 11:38 - And [so Noah] set himself to building the ark; and every time the great ones of his people passed by him, they scoffed at him. [Thereupon] he said: "If you are scoffing at us - behold, we are scoffing at you [and your ignorance], just as you are scoffing at us. 39:56 - Alas for having been indeed one of those who scoffed [at the truth]!"
Hlm	06:10 - Messengers have been mocked before you [Muhammad], and those who mocked them were engulfed by the very punishment they had mocked. 11:38 - So he began to build the Ark, and whenever leaders of his people passed by, they laughed at him. He said, 'You may scorn us now, but we will come to scorn you. 39:56 - Woe is me for having neglected what is due to God, and having been one of those who scoffed!
HnM	06:10 – And indeed (many) Messengers before you were mocked at, but their scoffers were surrounded by the very thing that they used to mock at. 11:38 – And as he was constructing the ship, whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him, they mocked at him. He said: If you mock at us, so do we mock at you likewise for your mocking. 39:56 – Lest a person should say: Alas, my grief that I was undutiful to Allah, and I was indeed among those who mocked (at the truth).
Ysf	06:10 - Mocked were (many) messengers before thee; but their scoffers were hemmed in by the thing that they mocked. 11:38 - Forthwith he (starts) constructing the Ark: Every time that the chiefs of his people passed by him, they threw ridicule on him. He said: "If ye ridicule us now, we (in our turn) can look down on you with ridicule likewise! 39:56 - Lest the soul should (then) say: 'Ah! Woe is me! In that I neglected (my duty) towards Allah, and was but among those who mocked!

Unl	06:10 - Messengers indeed were mocked before you (O Messenger), but what they used to mock overwhelmed those who scoffed (at the Messengers to humiliate them). 11:38 - And so Noah set to building the Ark. And every time the leading ones among his people passed by him, they mocked at him. He said: "Now you are mocking us, but (a day will come when) we mock you just as you mock us. 39:56 - Lest any soul should say, "Alas for me for that I have fallen short of my duty to God, and I was indeed among those who used to mock (at the truth)!"
Nsr	06:10 - Messengers have surely been mocked before thee. Then those who scoffed at them were beset by that which they used to mock. 11:38 - And he was building the Ark, and whenever notables among his people passed by him, they would scoff at him. He said, "If you scoff at us, surely we shall scoff at you, just as you scoff. 39:56 - lest any soul should say, Alas for me, for what I neglected of my duty to God! Indeed, I was among the scoffers.
Bdr	06:10 - And so it was that many Messengers had been mocked before you, O The Prophet. Then, they - who scoffed at them - were eventually overpowered by that which they used to mock. 11:38 - So as he was building the Ark, and whenever notables of his people passed by him, they would scoff at him. He would say to them: 'Though you scoff at us now, but a time is going to come when we will scoff at you just as you are scoffing at us' <i>now</i>. 39:56 - in case any person should say: 'I am doomed! I remained unaware of my duty to Allah - for certainly I was of those who mocked' the Divine Message and the Messenger.

The attempt has proved that the translation of irony is as elusive as the concept itself; it has also emphasized the difficult task of suggesting a perspective approach to translation based on the features of any number of texts. The analysis of three Qur'anic Ayat was then followed by a contrastive analysis. This was meant to point out the similarities and differences with a focus on the latter, which is the crux of any translation study.

'Mock' and 'scoff' are the two terms employed for Arabic '*istehza*' and '*tamaskhar*' – with a common root word '*ha,*' '*z,*' '*hamza*' – *istihza* is translated as 'ridicule' and *tamaskhur* is rendered as 'mock' to demean the value of religious teachings. Both are taken to mean (in dictionary): jeer, sneer, gibe, mock, mockery, ridicule.

Title of the Surah: *az-Zukhruf*

Q.43:22

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّهُتَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Bal qaalooo innaa wajadnaaa aabaaa'anaa 'alaaa ummatinw wa innaa 'alaaa aasaarihim muhtadoon.

Title of the Surah: *Aal-Imran*

Q.03:21

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيَّ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَيِّرْهُمْ
بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢١﴾

Innal lazeena yakfuroona bi Aayaatil laahi wa yaqtuloonan Nabiyyeena bighairi haqqinw wa yaqtuloonal lazeena ya'muroona bilqisti minannaasi fabashirhum bi'azaabin aleem.

Title of the Surah: *At-Tawbah*

Q.09:35

يَوْمَ يُجْزَىٰ عَلَىٰ نَارٍ جَهَنَّمَ فُتُكُوٰى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَأُخُودُهُمْ ۖ هَٰذَا مَا كُنَزْتُمْ لَأَنفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ
تَكْنِزُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Yawma yuhmaa 'alaihaa fee naari jahannama fatukwaa bihaa jibaahuhum wa junooobuhum wa zuhooruhum haazaa maa kanaztum li anfusikum fazooqoo maa kuntum taknizoon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 5a

Q. 02:175; 03:21; 09:45.

Arb	02:175 - How patiently they shall endure the Fire! 03:21 – give them the good tidings of a painful chastisement. 09:35 - therefore taste you now what you were treasuring.
Asd	02:175 - Yet how little do they seem to fear the fire! 03:21 – announce unto them a grievous chastisement. 09:35 - taste, then, [the evil of] your hoarded treasures
Hlm	02:175 - What can make them patient in the face of the Fire? 03:21 – give news of agonizing torment to those who..... 09:35 - now feel the pain of what you hoarded!
HnM	02:175 - So how bold they are (for evil deeds which will push them) to the Fire. 03:21 – announce to them a painful torment.. 09:35 - now taste of what you used to hoard.....
Ysf	02:175 - Ah! what boldness (they show) for the Fire! 03:21 – announce to them a grievous penalty. 09:35 - taste ye, then, the (treasures) ye buried!
Unl	02:175 - How they persevere in their striving to reach the Fire (and enduring it)! 03:21 – give them the glad tidings of a painful punishment. 09:35 - taste now what you were busy hoarding!
Nsr	02:175 - How will they endure the Fire! 03:21 – give them glad tidings of a painful punishment. 09:35 - so taste that which you hoarded.
Bdr	02:175 - So how steadfast they are <i>in their resolve</i> to reach the Fire! 03:21 – give them the good news of an agonizing punishment. 09:35 - So taste/ <i>experience now the value of</i> what you hoarded!

Q.03:21 - In terms of translation, three translators have used literal translation to render the word as ‘announce to them’. However, the word ‘*fa-bashshirhum*’ (a command verb) starts with the conjunction letter ‘*fa*’ which is missed in all translations, except one by Bdr. Syntactically, the translations do not carry the same structure of the lexical word since the conjunction ‘*fa*’ is missed. However, it may be acceptable to delete the letter ‘*fa*’ to come up with a better translation and be unfaithful to rendering the Sacred Arabic Text.

The use of phrase ‘the glad tidings’ – by Nsr, Unl and Arb - to render the Arabic ironical word is a Biblical phrase which is considered an equivalent to the Arabic

ironical word '*bashshir*,' which Bdr renders as 'good news' – typically representing a taunt, a cynicism.

Looking at the other three translations, Asd, HnM and Ysf, the word employed 'announce' does not carry the meaning of the lexical word '*bashshir*.'

Q.09:35 -The translators have managed to transfer the intended meaning of the ironic word. However, in terms of translation, it is found that translators have used the verb 'taste' to translate the lexical word but with a clear difference to the structure of the Arabic word. They have used translation strategies that are omission and over translation. In the process of translation, the Arabic word is deleted. This omission does not distort the intended meaning of the lexical word. The conjunction 'then' is added in the translation. Semantically and although there is a deletion in the Arabic word, the meaning of the ironic word is maintained. On the syntactic level, the translations of the Arabic sentence including the ironic word carry the same structure. This is a good translation which keeps the meaning and the structure of the Ayah.

Case Study – 6

Sarcasm ³⁰ is characterized as one of the significant rhetorical devices used in literary and religious texts for criticism. A variety of modes has been suggested to account for sarcasm depending on various contexts in which this term occurs. Some such modes are associated with some rhetorical terms as metaphor, simile, metonymy, etc. For instance, in Q.111 - 'Perish be the hands of Abu Lahab and perish he' - is metonymy illustrating sarcastically the bad nature of Abu Lahab.

Sarcasm is regarded as a form of ironic speech commonly employed to convey seriousness within comedy and vice versa. Scholars agree that both sarcasm and irony share approximately sets of meanings such as undervaluing, mocking, boasting, etc. Although both terms seem near to each other, yet they are not exactly the same and must be considered separately.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *al-Anfaal*

Q.08:32

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ ارْتَبْنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

Transliteration: Wa iz qaalul laahumma in kaana haazaa huwal haqqa min 'indika fa amtir 'alainaa hijaratam minas samaaa'i awi'tinaa bi 'azaabin aleem.

30.سخرية. *Sukhria*

Title of the Surah: *al-Hijr*

Q. 15:06

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٦﴾

Wa qaaloo yaaa aiyuhal lazee nuzzila ‘alaihiz Zikru innaka lamajnoon.

Title of the Surah: *al-Furqaan*

Q.25:41

وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوًا أَهَذَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا ﴿٤١﴾

Wa iza ra awka iny yattakhizoonaka illaa huzuwan ahaazal lazee ba’asal laahu Rasoolaa.

Title of the Surah: *Az-Zukhruf*

Q.43:19

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَاثًا أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

Wa ja’alul malaaa’ikatal lazeena hum ‘ibaadur Rahmaani inaasaa; ‘a shahidoo khalqahum; satuktabu shahaadatuhum wa yus’aloon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 6

Q.08:32; 15:06; 25:41; 43:19.

Arb	08:32 - And when they said, ‘O God, if this be indeed the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones out of heaven, or bring us a painful chastisement.’ 15:06 - They say: ‘Thou, upon whom the Remembrance is sent down, thou art assuredly possessed!’ 25:41 - And when they see thee, they take thee in mockery only: ‘What, is this he whom God sent forth as a Messenger?’ 43:19 - And they have made the angels, who are themselves servants of the All-merciful, females. What, did they witness their creation? Their witness shall be written down, and they shall be questioned.
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Asd	08:32 - And, lo, they would say, “O God! If this be indeed the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones from the skies, or inflict [some other] grievous suffering on us. 15:06 - And yet, they [who deny the truth] say: “O thou unto whom this reminder has [allegedly] been bestowed from on high: verily, thou art mad! 25:41 - Hence, whenever they consider thee, [O Muhammad,] they but make thee a target of their mockery, [saying:] “Is this the one whom God has sent as an apostle? 43:19 - And [yet] they claim that the angels - who in themselves are but beings created by the Most Gracious - are females: [but] did they witness their creation?
Hlm	08:32 - They also said, ‘God, if this really is the truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful punishment.’ 15:06 - They say, ‘Receiver of this Qur’an! You are definitely mad. 25:41 - Whenever they see you [Prophet] they ridicule you: ‘Is this the one God has sent as a messenger? 43:19 - They consider the angels– God’s servants– to be female. Did they witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record and they will be questioned about it.
HnM	08:32 – And (remember) when they said: O Allah! If this (the Qur’an) is indeed the truth (revealed) from You, then rain down stones on us from the sky or bring on us a painful torment. 15:06 – And they say, O you (Muhammad) to whom the Dhikr (the Qur’an) has been sent down, Verily, you are a mad man. 25:41 – And when they see you (O Muhammad) they treat you only in mockery, saying: Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a Messenger? 43:19 - And they make the angels who themselves are the slaves of the Most Gracious (Allah) females? Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.
Ysf	08:32 - Remember how they said: “O Allah if this is indeed the Truth from Thee, rain down on us a shower of stones form the sky, or send us a grievous Penalty.” 15:06 - They say: “O thou to whom the Message is being revealed! truly thou art mad (or possessed)! 25:41 - When they see thee, they treat thee no otherwise than in mockery: “Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a messenger?” 43:19 - And they make into females angels who themselves serve Allah. Did they witness their creation? Their evidence will be recorded, and they will be called to account!

Unl	08:32 - And when they said (even this): “O God! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky or bring upon us another pain-ful punishment!” 15:06 - “Why do you not bring down the angels to us if you are truthful (in your claim) 25:41 - Whenever they see you (O Messenger), they take you for nothing but a mockery, (saying): “Is this the one whom God has sent as Messenger?” 43:19 - And yet they have judged the angels, who are themselves the servants of the All-Merciful, to be females (whom they judge to be of little value, and yet regard as His daughters). Did they witness their creation? This testimony of theirs will be recorded, and they will be called to account (for this falsehood in the Hereafter).
Nsr	08:32 - And [remember] when they said, “O God, if this be the truth from Thee, rain down stones upon us from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment.” 15:06 - And they say, “O you unto whom the Reminder has been sent down, truly you are possessed. 25:41 - And when they see thee they do naught but take thee in mockery: “Is this the one whom God sent as a messenger? 43:19 - And they have made the angels, who are servants of the Compassionate, females. Did they witness their creation? Their witnessing shall be recorded, and they will be questioned.
Bdr	08:32 - And <i>remember</i> when they would also say: ‘O Allah! If this Qur’an be indeed the Truth from You, then - rain down on us stones from the sky, or inflict upon us some other grievous punishment.’ 15:06 - And they say: ‘O you - <i>Muhammad</i> - upon whom this Reminder - <i>the Qur’an</i> – is being sent down <i>as you claim!</i> <i>We think</i> you are certainly possessed’ <i>and insane</i>. 25:41 - Hence, whenever they see you, O The Prophet, they take you in mockery, saying: ‘Is this the one whom Allah has assigned as a Messenger!?’ 43:19 - And <i>yet</i> they make the angels, those who are themselves creatures of The Infinitely Merciful, <i>as females: daughters of Allah</i>. Were they <i>there to</i> witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record, and they will be questioned <i>about it</i>.

The four Ayat contain an example of the type of cynical challenges and mockery made by those who denied the Prophet^(P) and their lack of conviction that the Qur'an

is a Divine Revelation. The mockery carried out by the disbelievers is a common trait of all times. It portrays the disbelievers' incredulity regarding Allah's choice of Muhammad^(P) as His Messenger.

Case Study – 7

Embed/Embedded ³¹ aims to convey the 'implied' meanings in the absence of which the translation may either be inappropriate or misunderstood.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah:

Q.02:43

وَأَقِمْوُا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

Transliteration: ‘Wa aqemus salaata wa aatuz zakaata warka’oo ma’ar raaki’een.

Title of the Surah:

Q.66:10

.....وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

Transliteration: wa qeelad khulan naara ma’ad daakhileen.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 7

Q.02:43; 66:10.

Arb	02:43 - bow with those that bow 66:10 - Enter, you two, the Fire with those who enter.
Asd	02:43 - bow down in prayer with all who thus bow down 66:10 - Enter the fire with all those [other sinners] who enter it!
Hlm	02:43 - bow your heads [in worship] with those who bow theirs 66:10 - Both of you enter the Fire with the others.
HnM	02:43 - bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allah) along with <i>Ar-Raki'un</i> . 66:10 – Enter the Fire along with those who enter.

31. تَضْمِين. *Tadmin*

Ysf	02:43 - bow down (your heads) with those who bow down (in worship) 66:10 - Enter ye the Fire along with (others) that enter!
Unl	02:43 - bow (in the Prayer, not by forming a different community or congregation, but) together with those who bow (the Muslims). 66:10 - Enter the Fire with all those who enter it!
Nsr	02:43 - bow with those who bow. 66:10 - Enter the Fire with those who enter.
Bdr	02:43 - bow down with those who bow down <i>in Salat and in submission to Allah</i> . 66:10 - Enter the Fire, both of you, with those who enter.

Q.02:43 - It goes without saying that Muslims bow down in prayers. However, the use of 'ma'raki'een' has a deeper underlying meaning and an implied goal and purpose. 'Warka'ou' is an imperative with those who bow down in 'congregational prayers.' Thus, investigating the axiomatic structures would provide more informative wording of the meaning of the Ayah. Arb and Nsr employ almost similar words in translation but fail to capture and convey the embedded meaning of the Ayah; the rest do so to a considerable extent.

Case Study – 8

Digression ³² is a stylistic trait of the Arabic Qur'an that entails shifts from one discourse style to another style. It comprises six categories: the shift from first to third person pronoun; the shift from second to third person pronoun; the shift from third to first person pronoun; the shift from third to second person pronoun; and the shift from first to second person pronoun; and shift from second- first person pronoun.

The tenses used, the passing from one tense to another, the nouns being definite or indefinite, the kinds of clauses (noun or verb – a clause beginning with a verb is a verb clause), and the addressee being in the second or the third person (the person in absence) – all of these make important contributions to the meaning. For example, from Q.02:30 onward, Allah^(EA) addresses Adam directly, but later in Q.02:37, the Ayah talks about his approaching the forbidden tree, He^(EA) addresses him in the third person.

The aim is, *inter alia*, to honor, criticize, or attract interlocutors which create a swift transition and change in person or addressee during the discourse. And in the process it does create linguistic, stylistic, and cultural problems in translations primarily due to the divergences between the Arabic and English.

Q.02 Surah al-Baqarah demonstrates the highest number of reference shifting - occurrences - compared to other Surahs. The highest frequency occurs in the shift

32. استطراد *Aistitrad*

from first to third that constitutes 16 Ayat, approximately 38.1% of 42 reference Ayat/shift.³³

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Yunus*

Q.10:22

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسِيرُكُمُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِم بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِنْ أَجَبْنَاهُمْ مِنْ هَٰذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Transliteration: Huwal lazee yusayyirukum fil barri walbahri hattaa izaa kuntum fil fulki wa jaraina bihim bi reehin tayyibatinw wa farihoo bihaa jaaa'at haa reehun 'aasifunw wa jaaa'ahumul mawju min kulli makaaninw wa zannooo 'annahum 'uheeta bihim da'a wullaaha mukhliseena lahud deena la'in anjaitanaa min haazihee la nakoonanna minash shaakireen.

Title of the Surah: *An-Nahl*

Q.16:51

وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

Transliteration: Wa qaalal laahu laa tatta khizooo ilaahainis naini innamaa Huwa Ilaahunw Waahid; fa iyyaaya farhaboon.

Title of the Surah: *Maryam*

Q.19:88-89

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا ﴿٨٨﴾ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا ﴿٨٩﴾

Transliteration: Wa qaalut takhazar Rahmaanuw waladaa. Laqad ji'tum shai'an iddaa.

33. See A Comparative Analysis of The Arabic and English Verb Systems Using the Qur'an Arabic Corpus. A corpus-based study by Jawharah Saeed Alasmari. Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The University of Leeds. School of Languages, May, 2020.

Title of the Surah: *Yaa Seen*

Q.36:22

وَمَا لِي لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

Wa maa liya laaa a’budul lazee fataranee wa ilaihi turja’oon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 8

Q.10:22; 16:51; 19:88-89; 36:22.

Arb	10:22 - It is He who conveys you on the land and the sea; and when you are in the ship -- and the ships run with them with a fair breeze, and they rejoice in it, there comes upon them a strong wind, and waves come on them from every side, and they think they are encompassed; they call upon God, making their religion His sincerely: ‘If Thou deliverest us from these, surely we shall be among the thankful.’ 16:51 - God says: ‘Take not to you two gods. He is only One God; so have awe of Me.’ 19:88-89 - And they say, ‘The All-Merciful has taken unto Himself a son.’ You have indeed advanced something hideous! The heavens are wellnigh rent of it and the earth split asunder, and the mountains wellnigh fall down crashing for that they have attributed to the All-Merciful a son; and it behoves not the All-Merciful to take a son. 36:22 - And why should I not serve Him who originated me, and unto whom you shall be returned?
Asd	10:22 - He it is who enables you to travel on land and sea. And [behold what happens] when you go to sea in ships: [they go to sea in ships,] and they sail on in them in a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat until there comes upon them a tempest, and waves surge towards them from all sides, so that they believe themselves to be encompassed [by death; and then] they call unto God, [at that moment] sincere in their faith in Him alone, “If Thou wilt but save us from this, we shall most certainly be among the grateful!” 16:51 - And God has said: “Do not take to worshipping two [or more] deities. He is the One and Only God: hence, of Me, of Me alone stand in awe! 19:88-89 - As it is, some assert, “The Most Gracious has taken unto Himself a son! Indeed, [by this assertion] you have brought forth something monstrous, 36:22 - “[As for me,] why should I not worship Him who has brought me into being, and to whom you all will be brought back?

Hlm	10:22 - It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are sailing on ships and rejoicing in the favouring wind, a storm arrives: waves come at those on board from all sides and they feel there is no escape. Then they pray to God, professing sincere devotion to Him, 'If You save us from this we shall be truly thankful.' 16:51 - God said, 'Do not take two gods'— for He is the One God—'I alone am the One that you should hold in awe.' 19:88-89 - The disbelievers say, 'The Lord of Mercy has offspring.' How terrible is this thing you assert: 36:22 - Why should I not worship the One who created me? It is to Him that you will be returned.
HnM	10:22 – He it is Who enables you to travel through land and sea, till when you are in the ships, and they sail with themwith a favourable wind, and they are glad therein, then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think that they are encircled therein. Then they invoke Allah, making their Faith pure for Him Alone, (saying): If You (Allah) deliver us from thi, we shall truly be of the grateful. 16:51 – And Allah said (O mankind): Take not <i>Ilahain</i> (two gods in worship). Verily, He (Allah) is (the) only One <i>Ilah</i> (God). Then fear Me (Allah) much (and Me Alone), i.e. be away from all kinds of sins and evil deeds that Allah has forbidden and do all that Allah has ordained and worship none but Allah). 19:88-89 – And they say: 'The Most Gracious (Allah) has begotten a son (or offspring or children) [as the Jews say: Uzair (Ezra) is the son of Allah, and the Christians say that He has begotten a son [Isa(Jesus)] and the pagan Arabs say that He has begotten daughters (angels and others)]. Indeed, you have brought forth (said) a terrible evil thing. 36:22 – And why should I not worship Him (Allah Alone) Who has created me and to Whom you shall be returned.

Unl	10:22 - He it is Who conveys you on the land and the sea. And when you are in the ship, and the ships run with their voyagers with a fair breeze, and they rejoice in it, there comes upon them a tempest, and waves surge towards them from all sides, so that they are sure that they are encompassed (by death with no way out), they call upon God, sincerely believing in Him alone (as the only Deity, Lord, and Sovereign): "If You save us from this, we will most certainly be among the thankful." 16:51 - God has said: "Do not take two (or more) deities: He is but One God. So be in awe of Me and Me alone, (and be saved from other fears bringing disgrace upon you)." 19:88-89 - As it is, some say: "The All-Merciful has taken to Himself a child." Assuredly you have (in such an assertion) brought forth something monstrous – 36:22 - And what reason do I have that I should not worship Him Who originated me with a nature particular to me, and to Whom you all (as well as I) are being brought back (to give an account of our lives)?
Nsr	10:22 - He it is Who carries you over land and sea, even when you are sailing in ships, till, when they sail with them upon a favorable wind, and rejoice therein, there comes upon them a violent gale, and the waves come at them from every side, and they think they shall be encompassed by them. They call upon God, devoting religion entirely to Him: "If Thou savest us from this, we shall surely be among the thankful!" 16:51 - And God says, "Do not take up two gods. Truly He is only one God. So be in awe of Me." 19:88-89 - And they say, "The Compassionate has taken a child." You have indeed asserted a terrible thing. 36:22 - Why should I not worship Him who originated me, and unto Whom you will be returned?

Ysf	10:22 - He it is Who enableth you to traverse through land and sea; so that ye even board ships;- they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat; He it is Who enableth you to traverse through land and sea; so that ye even board ships;- they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat; 16:51 - Allah has said: "Take not (for worship) two gods: for He is just One Allah. then fear Me (and Me alone)." 19:88-89 - They say: "((Allah)) Most Gracious has begotten a son!" Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous! 36:22 - "It would not be reasonable in me if I did not serve Him Who created me, and to Whom ye shall (all) be brought back.
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Bdr	10:22 - It is He Who enables you to travel over the land and the sea, until, when you are <i>sailing</i> on the ships, and they sail upon a <i>gentle and</i> favorable wind, and you rejoice over it. However, when a violent gale comes upon them, and waves surge towards them from every side, and they are sure that they are encircled <i>by death with no way out – they start calling upon Allah, professing submission to Him sincerely: ‘If You salvage us from this ordeal now, we will definitely be among the grateful/faithful.’</i> 16:51 - And Allah commands: ‘Do not take two <i>or more</i> entities <i>in worship</i>. In reality, He is <i>the One and Only</i> Allah. So be awed of no one but Me!’ 19:88-89 - And, moreover, they allege: ‘The Infinitely Merciful has taken to Himself a son.’ Indeed, by this monstrous allegation you have uttered a hideous thing of blasphemy. 36:22 - <i>And as far as I am concerned</i> why should I not submit to Him <i>in worship</i> Who created me? And, you will <i>all</i> be returned to Him’ <i>to give an account of your lives.</i>
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Case Study – 9

Parable ³⁴ is another name for an allegory - these are typically brief and symmetrical where details are left out. Most of the parables of the Qur'an have been presented by comparing certain ideas or principles to some more familiar things (objects, events, etc.) known to the people. They have been used to establish a pattern of reasoning by using carefully selected or crafted parables that the reader can understand easily. The parables of the Qur'an provide a path for understanding the meaning of some important points and illustrate some others as pictures.

In specific terms, the Qur'an discusses such topics that depict Allah^(EA) as the Light of the Heavens and the Earth (Q.24:35); the persistence of the truth and the transience of the falsehood (Q.31:17); the Messenger^(P) of Allah^(EA) and his Companions (Q.48:29); the abundance of good and scarcity of evil (Q.14:24); the hypocrites (Q.02:17, 59:15); the responsibility that comes with knowledge (Q.62:5, 07:175); the peoples who have slandered their messengers (Q.16:112); the weight of the message of the Arabic Qur'an (Q.59:21); belief versus disbelief (Q.06:122, 7:58, 11:24, 16:75, 28:61); the hardening of the hearts (Q.02:74); the attitude of disbelievers against the Message (Q.02:171); the situation of those who have forgotten Allah^(EA) and have refrained from spending in His Causes (Q.68:17-33); and the resurrection and life after death (Q.02:259, 35:9).

34.Abdur-Rahman Ibn Naasir Aal-Sa'dee, Parables of the Qur'an, Salafi Publications, Birmingham, UK, 2005.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *al-Hajj*.

Q. 22:73

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاستَمِعُوا لَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ ﴿٧٣﴾

Yaaa ayyuhan naasu duriba masalun fastami'oo lah; innal lazeena tad'oona min doonil laahi lai yakhluqoo zubaabanw wa lawijutama'oo lahoo wa iny yaslub humuz zubaabu shai'an laa yastanqizooHu minh; da'ufat taalibu wal matloob.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 9

Q. 22:73

Arb	O men, a similitude is struck; so give you ear to it. Surely those upon whom you call, apart from God, shall never create a fly, though they banded together to do it; and if a fly should rob them of aught, they would never rescue it from him. Feeble indeed alike are the seeker and the sought!
Asd	O Men! A parable is set forth [herewith]; hearken, then, to it! Behold, those beings whom you invoke instead of God cannot create [as much as] a fly, even were they to join all their forces to that end! And if a fly robs them of anything, they cannot [even] rescue it from him! Weak indeed is the seeker, and [weak] the sought!
Hlm	People, here is an illustration, so listen carefully: those you call on beside God could not, even if they combined all their forces, create a fly, and if a fly took something away from them, they would not be able to retrieve it. How feeble are the petitioners and how feeble are those they petition!
HnM	O mankind! A similitude has been coined, so listen to it (carefully): Verily those on whom you call besides Allah, cannot create (even) a fly, even though they combine together for the purpose. And if the fly snatches away a thing from them, they will have no power to release it from the fly. So weak are (both) the seeker and the sought.
Ysf	O men! Here is a parable set forth! listen to it! Those on whom, besides Allah, ye call, cannot create (even) a fly, if they all met together for the purpose! and if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they would have no power to release it from the fly. Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!

Unl	O humankind! A parable is struck, so pay heed to it: Those whom, apart from God, you deify and invoke will never be able to create even a fly, even if all of them were to come together to do so. And if a fly snatches away anything from them, they cannot recover that from it. Powerless indeed is the seeker, and (so is) the sought!
Nsr	O mankind! A parable is set forth, so hearken unto it! Truly those upon whom you call apart from God will never create a fly, even if they gathered together to do so. And if the fly should rob them of aught, they could not rescue it from it. Feeble are the seeker and the sought!
Bdr	O The People! Here is an illustration for you, so listen to it <i>attentively</i> ! Surely those entities you call upon apart from Allah, will never <i>be able to</i> create <i>as much as</i> a housefly, even if they joined together <i>their forces</i> to do so. And <i>more so</i> if a housefly were to take away something from them, they would never <i>be able to</i> get it back from it! Weak and <i>powerless</i> are the seeker and the sought <i>alike</i> .

‘*Mathal*’ of the Sacred Arabic Text has been translated as ‘parable’ by 4 translators, ‘illustration’ by 2, ‘similitude’ by 2. Allah^(EA) challenges those who worship other objects or beings beside One Allah^(EA) to bring proof that these are worthy of worship, and asks what those objects have created that can be understood as a sign of their status to be worshipped. The *mathal* of a house fly has been appropriately paraphrased to show that even if it snatched away something from them they could neither prevent it nor retrieve it - this shows how weak they are and how powerless are the entities they worship.

Title of the Surah: *Ibrahim*

Q.14:24-27

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾
تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۚ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾
وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ ۖ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٢٧﴾

Transliteration: 24. Alam tara kaifa darabal laahu masalan kalimatan taiyibatan kashajaratin taiyibatin asluhaa saabitunw wa far'uhaa fis samaaa.' 25 - Tu'tee ukulaha kulla heenim bi izni Rabbihaa; wa yadribul laahul amsaala linnaasi la'allahum yatazak karoon. 26 -Wa masalu kalimatin khabeesatin kashajaratin khabee satiniij tussat min fawqil ardi maa lahaa min qaraar. 27 - Yusabbitul laahul lazeena aamanoo bilqawlis saabiti fil hayaatid dunyaa wa fil Aakhirati wa yudillul laahuz zaalimeen; wa yaf'alul laahu maa yashaaa.'

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 9a

Q.14:24; 14:25; 14:26; 14:27.

Arb	14:24 - Hast thou not seen how God has struck a similitude? A good word is as a good tree - its roots are firm, and its branches are in heaven; 14:25 - it gives its produce every season by the leave of its Lord. So God strikes similitudes for men; haply they will remember. 14:26 - And the likeness of a corrupt word is as a corrupt tree -- uprooted from the earth, having no stablishment. 14:27 - God confirms those who believe with the firm word, in the present life and in the world to come; and God leads astray the evildoers; and God does what He will.
Asd	14:24 – Art thou not aware how God sets forth the parable of a good word? [It is] like a good tree, firmly rooted, [reaching out] with its branches towards the sky, 14:25 - yielding its fruit at all times by its Sustainer's leave. And [thus it is that] God propounds parables unto men, so that they might bethink themselves [of the truth]. 14:26 - And the parable of a corrupt word is that of a corrupt tree, torn up [from its roots] onto the face of the earth, wholly unable to endure. 14:27 - [Thus,] God grants firmness unto those who have attained to faith through the word that is unshakably true in the life of this world as well as in the life to come; but the wrongdoers He lets go astray: for God does whatever He wills.
Hlm	14:24 - [Prophet], do you not see how God makes comparisons? A good word is like a good tree whose root is firm and whose branches are high in the sky, 14:25 - yielding constant fruit by its Lord's leave– God makes such comparisons for people so that they may reflect– 14:26 - but an evil word is like a rotten tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, with no power to endure. 14:27 - God will give firmness to those who believe in the firmly rooted word, a both in this world and the Hereafter, but the evildoers He leaves to stray: God does whatever He will

HnM	14:24 – See you not how Allah sets a parable? A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky (i.e., very high). 14:25 – Giving its fruit at all times, by the Leave of its Lord, and Allah sets forth parables for mankind in order that they remember. 14:26 – And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree uprooted from the surface of earth, having no stability. 14:27 – Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. they will keep up on worshipping Allah Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter. And Allah will cause to go astray those who are Zalimin (polytheists and wrongdoers), and Allah does what He Wills.
Ysf	14:24 - Seest thou not how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition. 14:25 - It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition. 14:26 - And the parable of an evil Word is that of an evil tree: It is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability. 14:27 - Allah will establish in strength those who believe, with the word that stands firm, in this world and in the Hereafter; but Allah will leave, to stray, those who do wrong: Allah doeth what He willeth.
Unl	14:24 - Do you not see how God strikes a parable of a good word: (a good word is) like a good tree – its roots holding firm (in the ground) and its branches in heaven, 14:25 - It yields its fruit in every season due by its Lord's leave. So God strikes parables for human beings, in order that they may reflect on them and infer the necessary lessons. 14:26 - And the parable of a corrupt word is that of a corrupt tree uprooted from upon the earth, having no constancy. 14:27 - God keeps firm those who believe by the true, firm word in the life of this world and in the Hereafter; and God leads the wrongdoers astray. And God does whatever He wills.

Nsr	14:24 - Hast thou not considered how God sets forth a parable? A good word is as a good tree: its roots firm and its branches in the sky. 14:25 - It brings forth fruit in every season, by the Leave of its Lord. God sets forth parables for mankind that haply they may remember. 14:26 - And the parable of a bad word is a bad tree: uprooted from the face of the earth; it has no stability. ‘ 14:27 - God makes firm those who believe with firm speech in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. And God leads the wrongdoers astray; God does whatsoever He wills.
Bdr	14:24 - Have you not considered how Allah illustrates the example of good word? <i>It is</i> like a good tree, its root holding firm <i>in the ground</i> and its branches <i>reaching out</i> to the sky. 14:25 - Yielding its fruits every season, <i>time after time</i>, by the Will of its Rabb - <i>The Lord</i>. In this way Allah sets out examples for a people so that they may reflect. 14:26 - And <i>on the other hand</i> the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the <i>ground</i> soil, having no stability. 14:27 - Allah will <i>support and</i> uphold those who believe through the good word - both in the life of this world and in the Hereafter; but Allah will let the unjust go astray. And Allah does whatever He Wills.
Arb	14:24 - Hast thou not seen how God has struck a similitude? A good word is as a good tree - its roots are firm, and its branches are in heaven; 14:25 - it gives its produce every season by the leave of its Lord. So God strikes similitudes for men; haply they will remember. 14:26 - And the likeness of a corrupt word is as a corrupt tree -- uprooted from the earth, having no stablishment. 14:27 - God confirms those who believe with the firm word, in the present life and in the world to come; and God leads astray the evildoers; and God does what He will.
Asd	14:24 – Art thou not aware how God sets forth the parable of a good word? [It is] like a good tree, firmly rooted, [reaching out] with its branches towards the sky, 14:25 - yielding its fruit at all times by its Sustainer’s leave. And [thus it is that] God propounds parables unto men, so that they might bethink themselves [of the truth]. 14:26 - And the parable of a corrupt word is that of a corrupt tree, torn up [from its roots] onto the face of the earth, wholly unable to endure. 14:27 - [Thus,] God grants firmness unto those who have attained to faith through the word that is unshakably true in the life of this world as well as in the life to come; but the wrongdoers He lets go astray: for God does whatever He wills.

Hlm	14:24 - [Prophet], do you not see how God makes comparisons? A good word is like a good tree whose root is firm and whose branches are high in the sky, 14:25 - yielding constant fruit by its Lord's leave– God makes such comparisons for people so that they may reflect– 14:26 - but an evil word is like a rotten tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, with no power to endure. 14:27 - God will give firmness to those who believe in the firmly rooted word, a both in this world and the Hereafter, but the evildoers He leaves to stray: God does whatever He will
HnM	14:24 – See you not how Allah sets a parable? A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky (i.e., very high). 14:25 – Giving its fruit at all times, by the Leave of its Lord, and Allah sets forth parables for mankind in order that they remember. 14:26 – And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree uprooted from the surface of earth, having no stability. 14:27 – Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. they will keep up on worshipping Allah Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter. And Allah will cause to go astray those who are Zalimin (polytheists and wrongdoers), and Allah does what He Wills.
Ysf	14:24 - Seest thou not how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition. 14:25 - It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition. 14:26 - And the parable of an evil Word is that of an evil tree: It is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability. 14:27 - Allah will establish in strength those who believe, with the word that stands firm, in this world and in the Hereafter; but Allah will leave, to stray, those who do wrong: Allah doeth what He willeth.
Unl	14:24 - Do you not see how God strikes a parable of a good word: (a good word is) like a good tree – its roots holding firm (in the ground) and its branches in heaven, 14:25 - It yields its fruit in every season due by its Lord's leave. So God strikes parables for human beings, in order that they may reflect on them and infer the necessary lessons. 14:26 - And the parable of a corrupt word is that of a corrupt tree uprooted from upon the earth, having no constancy. 14:27 - God keeps firm those who believe by the true, firm word in the life of this world and in the Hereafter; and God leads the wrongdoers astray. And God does whatever He wills.

Nsr	14:24 - Hast thou not considered how God sets forth a parable? A good word is as a good tree: its roots firm and its branches in the sky. 14:25 - It brings forth fruit in every season, by the Leave of its Lord. God sets forth parables for mankind that haply they may remember. 14:26 - And the parable of a bad word is a bad tree: uprooted from the face of the earth; it has no stability. ‘ 14:27 - God makes firm those who believe with firm speech in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. And God leads the wrongdoers astray; God does whatsoever He wills.
Bdr	14:24 - Have you not considered how Allah illustrates the example of good word? <i>It is</i> like a good tree, its root holding firm <i>in the ground</i> and its branches <i>reaching out</i> to the sky. 14:25 - Yielding its fruits every season, <i>time after time</i>, by the Will of its Rabb - <i>The Lord</i>. In this way Allah sets out examples for a people so that they may reflect. 14:26 - And <i>on the other hand</i> the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the <i>ground</i> soil, having no stability. 14:27 - Allah will <i>support and</i> uphold those who believe through the good word - both in the life of this world and in the Hereafter; but Allah will let the unjust go astray. And Allah does whatever He Wills.

The Qur'an uses this parable to illustrate the stability and permanence of a 'good word' as opposed to the instability of an 'evil word'. While the 'good word' refers to the word and concepts of truth, the 'evil word' refers to their opposite. The 'good word' is so highly fruitful and productive that were individuals or groups of people to base their lives on it, they will continually benefit from the good results ensuing from it. The 'evil word' is obviously just the opposite of the 'good word.' It embraces every variety of falsehood - false doctrines, atheism, deism, polytheism, idolatry - every worldview other than the one taught by the Prophets.

This parable affirms the fact that besides being logical and natural, truth is a positive, beneficial and constructive concept, while falsehood is harmful and destructive to society. The truth based on *Tawheed*/Unshared Unity of Allah^(EA) leads to stability in human values; the falsehood being rootless only leads to misery and frustration.

A part of Q.14:27 reads: '*wa yudillul laahuz zaalimeen*' has been understood and rendered in two different ways.

- i. One done by Asd: 'the wrongdoers He lets go astray,' and Bdr: 'Allah will let the unjust go astray.'
- ii. And the other done by Hlm – 'the evildoers He leaves to stray'; HnM – 'And Allah will cause to go astray those who are Zalimeen;' Ysf – 'but Allah will leave, to stray, those who do wrong;' Unl – 'and God leads the wrongdoers astray;' Nsr – 'And God leads the wrongdoers astray.'

In fact, both may be considered correct.³⁵

Title of the Surah: *An-Nur*

Q.24:35

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ۚ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجْجَةٍ ۚ الزُّجْجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا
كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ
وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ۚ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ ۚ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

Transliteration: Allaahu noorus³⁶ samaawaati wal ard; masalu noorihee kamishkaatin

35.All Qur'anic references to Allah's 'letting a person go astray' may be understood against the background of Q.02:26-27 – '... He causes many to go astray from the truth on account of their disbelieving bond with Allah, and many He guides on account of their believing in it. However, He does not let anyone be confused by them, except the defiantly disobedient' - that is to say, a person's 'going astray' is a consequence of his own attitudes and inclinations and not a result of an arbitrary 'predestination' in the popular sense of this word. Furthermore, considering the aspect of 'free choice' on the part of a person, and that 'Allah does not cause anyone to go astray except one who, as He knows, will never attain to faith; and He does not guide anyone aright except one who, as He knows, will attain to faith. Hence, the expression 'causing to go astray' denotes Allah's leaving one alone (*takhlīyah*) and depriving him of all favor, whereas the expression 'guidance' denotes His grant of fulfilment (*tawfiq*) and favour.... Thus, He does not forsake anyone except those who deserve to be forsaken, and does not bestow His Favor upon anyone except those who deserve to be favored.' Commenting on the identical phrase occurring in Q.16:93, Zamakhshari states: "[God] forsakes him who, as He knows, will [consciously] choose to deny the truth and will persevere in this [denial]; and ... He bestows His favor upon him who, as He knows, will choose faith: which means that He makes the issue dependent on [man's] free choice (*al-ikhtiyar*), and thus on his deserving either [God's] favor or the withdrawal of [His] aid ... and does not make it dependent on compulsion [i.e., predestination], which would rule out [man's] deserving anything of the above.'

36.The term '*noor/nur*' has been used in different contexts and perspectives throughout The Qur'an. A few examples: (i) 'Nur' as a reference to the Religion of Islam: 'They [the disbelievers] want to extinguish Allah's light (*nura allahi*) with their mouths, but Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the disbelievers be averse' (Q.09.32). (ii) Nur as a reference to faith: 'Allah is the Protector of those who believe. He leads them out from darkness into light (*nur*). But as for those who disbelieve, their protectors are entities of falsehood; they lead them out from light (*nuri*) into darkness' (Q.02.257). (iii) Nur as a reference to Allah's commandments and moral laws in the Torah and Gospels: 'Indeed We did send down the Torah, therein was guidance and light (*nurun*) by which the Prophets judged' (Q.05.44); 'And in their footsteps, We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him, and We gave them the Injil in which was guidance and light (*nurun*)' (Q.05.46). (iv) Nur as a reference to the light of day: 'Praise be to Allah who created the celestial realm and the terrestrial world, and originated the darkness and the light (*al-nur*); yet those who disbelieve hold others as equals with their Rabb' (Q.06.01). (v) Nur as a reference to justice: 'And the earth will shine with the light of its Rabb (*bi-nuri rabaha*), and the Book shall be placed open, and the Prophets and the witnesses shall be brought forward, and it shall be judged between them with truth, and they shall not be wronged' (Q.39.69). (vi) Nur as a reference to the guiding light that Allah gives the faithful on the Time of Resurrection: 'At that Time when the hypocrites, men and women, will say to those who have believed: "Wait for us, so that we may borrow your light (*nurikum*)!" It shall be said to them: "Turn back behind you, and seek for a light (*nuran*)"' (Q.57.13). The expression 'turn back behind' here refers to the previous life on earth, with the meaning that the hypocrites should have sought a light while they lived on earth. (vii) Nur as a reference to the commandments and injunctions of the Qur'an: 'Therefore believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the light (*al-nuri*) which We have sent down. And Allah is All-aware of your

feehaa misbaah; almisbaahu fee zujaajatin azzujaajatu ka annahaa kawkabun durriyyuny yooqadu min shajaratim mubaarakatin zaitoonatil laa shariqiyyatinw wa laa gharbiyyatiny yakaadu zaituhaa yudeee'u wa law lam tamsashu naar; noorun 'alaa noor; yahdil laahu linoorihee mai yashaaa'; wa yadribul laahul amsaala linnaas; wallaahu bikulli shai'in Aleem.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 9b

Q.24:35

Arb	God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil well-nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light; (God guides to His Light whom He will.)
Asd	God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is, as it were, that of a niche containing a lamp; the lamp is [enclosed] in glass, the glass [shining] like a radiant star: [a lamp] lit from a blessed tree - an olive-tree that is neither of the east nor of the west - the oil whereof [is so bright that it] would well-nigh give light [of itself] even though fire had not touched it: light upon light! God guides unto His light him that wills [to be guided]; and [to this end] God propounds parables unto men, since God [alone] has full knowledge of all things.
Hlm	God is the Light of the heavens and earth. His Light is like this: there is a niche, and in it a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, a glass like a glittering star, fueled from a blessed olive tree from neither east nor west, whose oil almost gives light even when no fire touches it– light upon light– God guides whoever He will to his Light; God draws such comparisons for people; God has full knowledge of everything.
HnM	Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as (if there were) a niche and within it a Lamp, and the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an Olive, neither of the east (i.e. neither it gets sun-rays only in the morning) nor of the West (i.e. nor it gets sun-rays only in the afternoon but it is exposed to the sun all day long),, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself), though fire touched it: Light upon Light! Allah guides to His Light whom He wills. And Allah sets forth Parables for mankind: and Allah is All-Knower of everything.

deeds' (Q.64.8). (viii) Nur as a reference to the light of the moon: 'Do you not see how Allah has created the seven heavens one above the other, and how He has made the moon a light (*nuran*) therein and made the sun a lamp?' (Q.71.15–16); 'It is he who has made the sun radiance (*diya'an*) and the moon a light (*nuran*)' (Q.10.5); etc.

Ysf	Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: Lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the east nor of the West, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light: Allah doth set forth Parables for mankind: and Allah doth know all things
Unl	God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His Light is like a niche wherein is a lamp; the lamp is in a crystal, and the crystal, shining as if a pearl-like radiant star, lit from the oil of a blessed olive tree that is neither of the east nor of the west. The oil would almost give light of itself though no fire touches it. Light upon light! God guides to His Light whom He wills. God strikes parables for people. God has full knowledge of all things.
Nsr	God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche, wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as a shining star kindled from a blessed olive tree, neither of the East nor of the West. Its oil would well-nigh shine forth, even if no fire had touched it. Light upon light. God guides unto His Light whomsoever He will, and God sets forth parables for mankind, and God is Knower of all things.
Bdr	<i>The example of belief in Allah is like the example of the Light of the celestial realm and the terrestrial world. The example of His Light is as if there were a niche in which is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. And the glass is shining like a radiant star - whose flame is kindled from the oil of a blessed tree – an olive tree from neither of the East nor of the West. Its oil is glowing by itself even when untouched by fire. Thus, it is Light upon light! Allah guides towards His Light of enlightenment whoever He wants. And this is how Allah emphasizes these examples and comparisons for guidance of people, for Allah alone is All-Knowledgeable about everything</i>

It presents another example of the inspiring beauty of the Qur'anic parable. This is a very rich and profound parable that has been explained by Allah^(EA) more extensively than any other parable in the Qur'an.

It starts with explaining that Allah^(EA) is the light of the entire universe - light is something that makes itself and the others around it become visible, and that darkness would prevail if disconnected from light. As such, Allah^(EA) has used the term 'light' in

this sense. However, it should not be taken literally as it is different from the physical light and its material.³⁷

This parable has been rendered and explained by all eight translators in inspiring ways. While all translators have rendered the opening statement as 'Allah/God is the light of the heavens and the earth,' Bdr has added words in italics to make it more meaningful saying: *The example of belief in Allah is like the example of the Light of the celestial realm and the terrestrial world.*

Asd explains: the parable of 'the light of God' is not meant to express His reality but only to allude to the illumination which He, who is the Ultimate Truth, bestows upon the mind and the feelings of all who are willing to be guided. Unl explains: it is God Who has created light and illuminates everything in the universe. Ysf states that parable of Light contains layer upon layer of transcendental truth about spiritual mysteries.

Anna haa kawkabun durriyyuny is rendered as 'radiant star' by Asd, Bdr, Unl; and as shining star by Nsr, brilliant star by Ysf, HnM, glittering star by Hlm, Arb. Four synonyms are employed where each represents intensity of the adjective. Consider the dictionary meanings: 'radiant' implies beams of light, vividly bright and shining; 'shining' means emitting or reflecting light and often splendid in appearance; 'brilliant' implies intense often sparkling brightness; and 'glittering' means shining with many bright points

37. Another example in Q.02:17-20 uses a natural phenomenon to paint a picture of hypocritical behaviour. It uses some scenarios of darkness, fire, rain, lightning, and thunder to paint vivid pictures of a complex portrait of the hypocritical personality. The parables also describe the rewards and punishments of the hereafter in human terms to which people in general can relate to, understand, and visualize. In many places, the Hell and Paradise are described by using our worldly terminology and concepts while their real nature is beyond our imagination and perception. People with a proper attitude find these examples, scenarios, and imagery very useful, and they concentrate on the point being made. Consequently, they get a very clear understanding of the subject matter and appreciate the value of the truth clarified by these means. On the other hand, those whose concern is not finding the truth but looking for points to criticize the Qur'an pick an issue with the words and objects used for examples and scenarios, instead of the message conveyed by the example. They come up with objections such as why does the Qur'an refer to insignificant and unsophisticated objects? What does God, the exalted, have to do with such mundane things? Why is there mention of spouses or such and such in Paradise? How can hell be this way or that way? And, so on. This behavior of some people towards the parables of the Qur'an is explained in the following Ayat: "We have explained in detail in this Qur'an, for the benefit of mankind, every kind of similitude: but man is, in most things, contentious. " (Q.18:54) "And We have explained to man, in this Qur'an, every kind of similitude: yet the greater number of men refuse - (Q.17:89). Allah uses spider, fly, ant and so many other not-so-sacred things for making points. For example, Q. 02:26-27, the example of a mosquito is used to elucidate the psychology of the people who deprive themselves of the guidance of the Qur'an after recognizing its truth. These examples paint vivid pictures of their mental state. Asd explains that the use of the term 'parable' (*mathal*) immediately or shortly after a description of men's condition - whether good or bad - in the hereafter is meant to remind us that all such descriptions relate to something that is "beyond the reach of a created being's perception" (*al-ghayb*), and cannot, therefore, be conveyed to man otherwise than by means of allegories or parables expressed in terms of human experience and therefore accessible, in a general sense, to human imagination. Parables can be negative, too, asserting that two things are unlike in one or more respects. For example, the Qur'an negates the similarity of anything else to Allah in the following words: "there is nothing whatever like unto Him ..." (Q.42:11). The parable of a good word versus an evil word that is narrated in Q.14:24-27, the parable of the spider's web that has been narrated in Q.29:41-44. In Q.02 alone there are 15 Ayat that may be considered metaphorical: 07, 16, 25, 27, 41, 43, 49, 61, 74, 93, 112, 115, 125, 143, 144, 261 and 264. In addition, there are also others in Q.03:26, Q.08:17, Q.12:09 n 84; Q.22:46.

of light. So, in essence, all four adjectives are appropriately translated for the Arabic synonym.

Ka-mishkaa-tin rendered as 'niche'³⁸ is a common expression adopted by all. Consider: Arb: the likeness of His Light is as a niche; Asd: The parable of His light is, as it were, that of a niche; Hlm: His Light is like this: there is a niche; Ysf and HnM: The Parable of His Light is as (if there were) a niche; Nsr: The parable of His Light is a niche; Bdr: The example of His Light is as *if there were* a niche.

Asd, Bdr, Ysf, Unal and HnM discuss these concepts and others in their learned explanatory notes. Hlm, Arb have further explained the meaning of this statement in their commentary differently. Ysf has explained: Allah as the true light and all the other physical lights as the reflection of that true light. Asd has explained that what is meant by this statement is Allah alone is the main cause for the existence of all that exists.

Al-Ghazzali teaches that 'symbols are not mere parables/metaphors. Rather, there is a real and transcendent nexus between symbol and symbolized, type and antitype, outer and inner.' The beautiful Qur'anic expressions of light, niche, glass, oil, tree, East, and West - all contain psychological and religious-metaphysical meaning.

Case Study – 10

Euphemism³⁹ is a purposeful act of softening existing terms or expressions with neutral, courteous, polite, socially 'clean' or religiously sensitive expressions – like abortion instead of premature birth, fee for fine, Intellectually challenged for being mentally retarded, gender reassignment for sex change, etc. Euphemism is an evident phenomenon in the Qur'an but the process of translating it into English is generally problematic for reasons of language and cultural diversity. The Arabic Qur'an shows a high level of politeness and refinement through the use of various euphemized expressions.

38.Dictionary meaning: a position that is very suitable.

39.كناية *kinayatun*. Literature provides a large number of studies investigating the concept of euphemism. However, studies conducted on the translation of euphemistic expressions in the Holy Quran are few. See (i) Ahmad Sobhy Salem Abd-Ellatif Rakhia, Banha University, Faculty of Arts Dept. of English Language and Literature, Egypt, thesis on 'Using Euphemism in the Holy Quran "Analytical Approach."(ii) Euphemism in Arabic & English Translation: Quranic Texts as a Case Study by Al-Ma'mon College Journal (2010). (iii) The Translability of Euphemism in The Holy Qur'an by Mohammad Qasem Al-Hamad. European Scientific Journal, January 2013 edition vol.9, No.2 ISSN: 1857 – 7881).

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *al-Baqarah*

Q.02:222

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَجِيزِ ۖ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَىٰ فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَجِيزِ ۖ
وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَظْهَرَنَّ ۖ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرَنَّ فَأَتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ ۚ.....

Wa yas'aloona 'anil maheedi qul huwa azan fa'tazilun nisaaa'a fil maheedi wa laa taqraboo hunna hattaa yathurna fa-izaa tatah-harna faatoohunna min haisu amarakumul laah.

Title of the Surah: *an-Nisa*

Q.04:43

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا ۚ
وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَايِطِ أَوْ لَمْ تَمْسُكُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا
فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ ۚ.....

Yaaa aiyuhal lazeena aamanoo laa taqrabus Salaata wa antum sukaaraa hatta ta'lamoo ma taqooloon wa laa junuban illaa 'aabiree sabeelin hatta taghtasiloo; wa in kuntum mardaaa aw 'alaa safarin aw jaaa'a ahadum minkum minal ghaaa'iti aw laamastumun nisaaa'a falam tajidoo maaa'an fatayam mamoo sa'eedan taiyiban famsahoo biwujoohikum wa aideekum.

Title of the Surah: *al-A'raf*

Q.07:26

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا ۚ وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

Ya banee adama qad anzalnaAAalaykum libasan yuwaree saw-atikumwareeshan walibasuu attaqwa thalikakhayrun thalika min ayati AllahilaAAallahum yaththakkaroon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 10

Q.02:222, 04:43; 07:26.

Arb	02:222 - and do not approach them till they are clean. 04:43 - Or if any of you comes from the privy or you have touched women. 07:26 - a garment to cover your shameful parts.
Asd	02:222 - and do not draw near unto them until they are cleansed. 04:43 - Or have just satisfied a want of nature, or have cohabited with a woman. 07:26 - garments to cover your nakedness.
Hlm	02:222 – Do not approach them until they are cleansed. 04:43 - Or have relieved yourselves, or had intercourse. 07:26 - garments to cover your nakedness.
HnM	02:222 - And do not go unto them till they are purified. 04:43 - Or one of you comes after answering call of the nature, or have been in contact with women. 07:26 - Raiment to cover yourselves.
Ysf	02:222 - and do not approach them until they are clean. 04:43 - Or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women. 07:26 - Raiment to cover your shame.
Unl	02:222 - and do not approach them until they are cleansed. 04:43 - Or if any of you has just satisfied a call of nature, or you have had contact with women. 07:26 - a garment to cover your private parts.
Nsr	02:222 - and do not approach them until they are purified. 04:43 - one of you has come from satisfying a call of nature, or you have touched women. 07:26 - raiment to cover your nakedness.
Bdr	02:222 - And do not get near them <i>for cohabitation</i> until they have cleansed <i>themselves by way of taking ritual bath</i> . 04:43 - Or relieved yourself from the toilet, or cohabited with spouses. 07:26 - <i>a garment</i> - it covers your privacy.

Q.02:222 is, indeed, a rich example of euphemism. In their two occurrences, references to sex were replaced by two different metaphors, by which a high level of euphemism was achieved. The second occurrence is an imperative derived from the root which generally means ‘came’. However, the use of the very general imperative would fail to deliver the intended meaning that is a permission of cohabitation, and a claim that euphemism has

been given far more weight than meaning would be valid, if not accompanied by the earlier antecedent. The former is a prohibition of cohabitation at the time of menstruation.

Q. 04:43 – ‘*lamastum*’ and ‘*nisa*’ has been literally translated as ‘you have touched woman’ or ‘have been in contact with women,’ and culturally blunt and socially offensive expression of ‘had intercourse’ by Hlm (that is like introducing the wording of Biblical narratives), against Asd’s and Bdr’s ‘cohabited with a woman,’ and ‘cohabited with spouses.’ The Ayah is talking about husband-wife situation, not a man and any woman situation – so Bdr’s wording is closer to the intention of the Sacred Arabic Text. The cultural aspect appears to have been compromised by almost everyone. ‘*alghaa’i*’ has also been captured as ‘call of the nature’ or ‘from the privy’ by Arb; Bdr renders it as ‘relieved *yourself* from the toilet.’

Q. 07:26 – Asd, Hlm and Nsr use the Biblical term ‘to cover your nakedness,’ others term it as ‘cover your shame’ and ‘cover your privacy’ – where all are suitable paraphrasing. In fact, the process of transmitting euphemized expressions and cultural elements through translation is a complicated task.

Conclusions

The Arabic Qur'an is different from any other Arabic text - it is divine, sacred, and sensitive. Although translations are helpful, yet they are unable to reach the real meaning of the Qur'an simply because translating the Divine Words into human words creates loss in their divine value and consequently the message loses its real meaning too.

Each one of the selected eight translators has done a remarkable job in performing the very difficult task of translating the meaning of the Arabic Qur'an as examined in a sample of 40 Surah and 50 Ayat - and in offering a great service to the English readers. They have all strived and competed in accuracy and clarity as the main values of their translations. Each of the eight leading translations has its own strengths and merits. The differences have been mainly due to their particular approaches and backgrounds.



About

Badr Hashemi (BH) was born and raised in a religious family environment which inherited a legacy of the centuries' old tradition of dispensing values, virtues and education. He completed the elementary learning and partly memorized the Qur'an while under ten and continued with learning the Arabic language, grammar and exegesis of the Qur'an and Hadith in parallel with formal western education in social sciences and development studies.

BH attended sandwich courses at Al-Azhar in the Qur'anic Arabic and lectures in interpretation of the Qur'an and Fiqh by Shykh Ali Al-Tantawi (Faqih) in Cairo, and Shykh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (Faqih) in Qatar. He had periodic learning sessions with Professor Arther J. Arberry (Roman Catholic, translator of the Qur'an and Ahadith, etc.) during the mid-sixties while BH was a student at the University of Cambridge (UK), and, later in the late-eighties, with Muhammad Asad (Jewish convert to Islam, translator of the Qur'an and Ahadith, etc.) in Gibraltar.

BH is a Professional Economist and a Fellow of the World Bank Institute of Development Economics in Washington DC, and the United Nations Asian Development Institute. Worked as a civil servant in Pakistan and was part of the international civil service with the United Nations. He has been a keynote speaker at international seminars/conferences in Europe, the Middle East-North Africa, and the Far East; widely travelled with long periods of stay in the Arab Middle East and North Africa.

Well versed in Arabic and English and well read in the Torah, the Psalms, the Bible, Islamic history and culture, ancient civilizations and comparative religions, BH has held interactive discussions with Jewish Rabbis and Christian Priests in North America and Western Europe. He has visited various sites and places of history enumerated in the Torah, the Bible and the Qur'an – scattered from the Nile delta through the Levant to Babylon.

BH initiated work on 'English Paraphrasing of The Qur'an' in 1999. Then followed the monumental research project of 4-volume Tafseer with parallal citations from the Biblical literature. In addition, his other works comprise: 'The Divine 99', 'Journeying Through The Qur'an', 'Introducing the Qur'an', 'Living with the Prophet Muhammad', 'Essence of Islam', 'Allah Speaks to you in the Qur'an', 'An Anthology of the Highlights of the Qur'an', with ISBN 978-1-4951-1945-3, 978-1-4951-2588-1, 978-1-4675-9891-0, 978-1-5323-2227-3, 978-1-5323-2228-1, 978-1-5323-5986-6, 979-8-218-97245-5, 978-1-7923-8701-2, 978-1-4675-9891-0, USLCCN 2022362541, USLCCN 2022362540. The Books have been published by International Islamic University, National Book Foundation, Holy Qur'an Research Foundation, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Bahauddin Zakaria University.

He is also exploring the principal thematic issues in the Hadith literature that form the common heritage between the Shiite and the Sunni schools of thought in Islam. BH lives in USA-UK and can be reached via email at hashemibadr@gmail.com, and visited on www.quranhighlights.com, [Treasuresofthefaitfofislam](https://www.facebook.com/Treasuresofthefaitfofislam).Facebook



The Highlight

Studying the Qur'an is a fascinating experience that overwhelms and gives great joy. The constant human nature and life cycles do not change over time, unlike the translations and explanations that continue to highlight the inadequacy of human translations of an infinite ocean of the Divine. Regardless, scholarly efforts continue to aid in the understanding of that knowledge.

This collection created by Dr. Badr Hashemi is a combination of his publications and talks on a wide range of theological issues of contemporary interest. His body of work is a goldmine for the future generation of scholars and will prove to be an asset to curricula and libraries around the world, and perfectly supplements the translation and tafseer of the Qur'an that he has dedicated a significant part of his life to write.

Dr. Hashemi's work in aiding and abetting the understanding of the Qur'an is an accomplishment that very few have ever achieved in their lifetimes, and his work is actively revolutionizing the way students interpret and learn the Qur'an. It cannot be denied that a difference of opinions always comes with khayr, and implies the existence of a society that is alive and well, thinking for itself.

In troubling times such as the one we are living in now, there is a need for urgency, and desperation born of the need to leave the world a better place than the one we inherited. The need for being a person of action and keeping faith is more important now than it was ever before. With the rapidly changing world-stage, and accelerating tensions in the nations of the world that have a trickle-down effect in our personal and professional lives, we need unifying elements that enable us to remember that the plans that Allah, the Almighty has for us are bigger than the ones we have for ourselves. Our willingness to develop our characteristics to become the best versions of ourselves will take us a long way, and Dr. Hashemi has proved through his body of work, that we are only as limited as our mindsets convince us.

As masterful and eye-opening as this work is, I pray that Allah, the Almighty may accept Dr. Hashemi's outstanding efforts to provide a well-rounded view of the religion of Islam from the origin to the source of its advent, and may He give us the intellect to understand this work and put the knowledge Dr. Hashemi shares with us to good use.

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