

Introducing The Qur'an

Abd al-Wahhab al-Turairi



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Preface



I begin with a warm greeting to all my dear friends who have started to read this book, and I pray to God to grant them His blessings and guidance. I do not claim the role of a guide. Rather, we shall undertake this journey together along the road of life, benefiting by the light and guidance of the Qur'an.

The verses of the Qur'an are the true words of God given to mankind. They are His most authentic statements. None of God's other scriptures, which were revealed to earlier prophets, have been preserved as His Qur'anic word, which is His final word addressed to humans living on this planet earth. As such, the Qur'an is the source of proper guidance for mankind, as it says: 'Surely this Qur'an shows the way to that which is most upright'. (17: 9) Its guidance is certainly the right guidance, from whichever angle we look at it: our social life, civilization, politics, spiritual and physical aspects, as also from the point of view of life itself.

Every human being needs to read the Qur'an, God's Book given to mankind, in order to find out the correct and clear answers to the problematic questions about human existence: Where have I come from? Why? Which way should I follow? What is the ultimate end?



The verses of the Qur'an clearly state the facts, outline the task, define the way and state the final destination. Thus, the Qur'an removes our confusion and worry, stating the correct answers to our most urgent questions. We soon find out that our confusion and worry are replaced by certainty, tranquillity and reassurance. God says: 'He will guide the heart of anyone who believes in Him. God has full knowledge of all things'. (64: 11)

I will be quoting a small number of surahs (i.e. chapters) of the Qur'an and some of its verses. I will be adding a few points of commentary to explain their meanings. These are intended as an introduction to the Qur'an, or a sample of its address. Thus, they are intended to give a person who has not read the Qur'an a glimpse of its light, encouraging him and her to learn more of its guidance.

However, the surahs and verses I am presenting in this book are not sufficient. They should not be viewed as an adequate representation of the entire Qur'an. Rather, everyone should read the Qur'an in full. They will though be of help when one embarks on reading the Qur'an in full, as they give a clear picture of the major issues it addresses as also how it handles them.

I pray to God to guide everyone who is searching for the truth: 'God guides onto a straight way him who wills [to be guided]'. (24: 46)

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Introduction

How the Qur'an was revealed



The fact that successive human generations continue to populate the earth has neither come about by coincidence, nor without a purpose. Essentially, it is the manifestation of an act of divine wisdom. This, however, is an initial temporary existence, to be followed by a permanent one. God says: 'Did you think that We created you in mere idle play, and that to Us you would not have to return?' (23: 115) Another aspect of divine wisdom and grace is that He has not left mankind to search aimlessly for the purpose of their existence, the way they should follow or their final end. He chose from among His created beings messengers, whom He, in His infinite wisdom, chose to deliver His message to their fellow human beings. They were the ones most suited for this task.

God also equipped His messengers with scriptures and revelations to deliver to their people, telling them that they contained God's instructions which they should follow. They outlined for them how they should conduct their lives.

These scriptures were revealed to Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and other prophets. This was the address given by God to His messengers who, in turn, communicated His address to



their communities. This was an aspect of God's grace bestowed on His creation. He did not wish to leave mankind in a situation of loss and error. Moreover, the revelation of these scriptures was an aspect of the honour He granted to His creation. We need only think that God, in His majesty, addresses man, a small creation of His, raising him to a position of honour as he receives the divine word in the form of a text God revealed to His messengers.

Thus, man has been honoured by being addressed by God, and by the fact that He chose a number of human beings to be His messengers, delivering His words to the rest of mankind. Furthermore, man was favoured by a great act of mercy as God provided him with guidance, so that he does not blindly roam about. What God has given man is something that explains the purpose of creation, the duties assigned to people, the right way they should follow and the ultimate goal they should seek.

God's revelations set out the great guiding facts which people cannot arrive at through thinking and mental enquiry. Yet, these facts will be accepted by their uncorrupted nature which God has given them. This means that mankind were in great need of such guidance to be given them by their supreme Creator. It was a great blessing and an act of divine mercy and honour that God granted to human generations. The divine books God revealed became the guiding light throughout the many centuries of human history.

Just like Abraham was given his scrolls, and the Torah was given to Moses and the Injil, i.e. the original Gospel, to Jesus, Muhammad (peace be upon him) received the Qur'an. God spoke the word, and the Holy Spirit descended with it, imparting it to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as he delivered God's earlier revelations to other prophets. God has



willed that His final message be delivered to mankind by one of their number who was the best of them. The same process of choosing Abraham, Moses and Jesus to be His messengers to their own communities delivered the choice of Muhammad to be the last Prophet and Messenger of God.

This means that the Qur'an is the last of the divine sacred books, revealed to God's last Messenger, so that it remains God's lasting source of guidance for mankind. Its guidance remains available for mankind, generation after generation, until the end of this world and the end of human life.





Proofs of the Qur'an



Whenever God sent a prophet to his community, he gave him a sign that confirmed his prophethood. These were signs that no human being could devise on his own. God gave Moses his staff: he threw it on the ground and it turned into a moving snake. He hit the sea with it and it split to form a dry road for Moses' people. He hit a rock with it and twelve springs of water gushed forth. The signs God gave to Jesus included bringing dead people back to life, curing the blind and the leper.

These were tangible signs which were suitable to earlier communities. The message given to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), however, is for all time. Therefore, the proof of his message is everlasting, valid for every generation and all communities. His sign is the Qur'an God revealed to him from on high. It is the overpowering evidence of the truth. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: 'Every single prophet was given signs that prompted people to believe. What I am given is revelation bestowed on me by God. I hope to have the largest following on the Day of Judgement'.⁽¹⁾

(1) Related by al-Bukhari, 4,981; Muslim, 152.





The Qur'an is God's own word, revealed to His Messenger, who delivered it as it was spoken by God. Thus, people heard this Messenger saying something the like of which they had never heard earlier. What sort of comparison can we draw between God's word and its meanings on the one hand and human speech on the other? The superiority of God's word is the same as God's superiority over his own creation.

In its expression, the Qur'an stands apart from all speech. It is unlike poetry, oratory, and wise statements. Its style is unique, as it divides its expressions in an absolutely new way. The arrangement of its words and expressions was never used before or after it. Furthermore, it is distinguished by its word economy and broad meanings. It uses only a few words to express matters that people can only express in much longer sentences.

Its address is fascinating, using logical proof with clear emotion. Thus, it combines its emotional appeal with rational conviction. Hence, whoever listens to it recognizes its powerful effect. What is even more fascinating is that it appeals to all people, regardless of their different standards. Its address is appreciated by those who are highly intelligent and understood by simple and uneducated people. Everyone understands it as well as they can.

When we read a text several times, it becomes boring and tedious, except the Qur'an. The more frequently we read it, the greater is our admiration of it and the more eager to read it we are. Whenever we read a different text a second or third time, we discover its faults. Yet, this is not so with the Qur'an. The more we read it, the more we appreciate its merits.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered Qur'anic revelations to people, he said to them with absolute confidence:



‘This is the Book; there is no doubt about it’. (2: 2) He then drew their attentions to its superiority, challenging them to produce a single surah with the same pattern and meaning. He then told them that their efforts would be unsuccessful, even though they might seek all available help, no matter how often they might try. ‘If you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to Our servant, then produce one surah comparable to it and call upon all your witnesses, other than God, if what you say is true. But if you fail, as you will certainly do...’ (2: 23-24) ‘Say, “If all mankind and the jinn were to gather together for the purpose of producing the like of this Qur’an, they would not produce anything like it, even though they pooled their resources together [for the purpose].”’ (17: 88) This challenge is not addressed to the Arabs alone. It applies to all mankind, their different races and languages and to all the jinn, across all generations, putting all their efforts, individually and collectively, into the attempt.

The idolater Arabs, who were the Prophet’s contemporaries, were stunned by this challenge. They were masters of eloquence and fine speech. They were clearly amazed, realizing that the Qur’an was of a style no one could aspire to equal, let alone excel.

Ever since the time of the Qur’an’s revelation, stating this challenge, up to the present day, there has been no serious attempt to produce anything similar to it. Indeed, there never will be any such attempt.

The Qur’an retains its great effect. Most educated people who embrace Islam today say that they did so as a result of reading the Qur’an and being influenced by it, although most of them read it in translation. When we ask those who were profoundly influenced by the Qur’an, we realize that they were

not influenced by the same verse or passage or theme. Every one has a different way of interacting with the Qur'an, and was influenced by different verses, almost feeling that these verses were revealed specially to him. Every one has his or her own interaction with the Qur'an, finding in it what they were looking for, and the solution to the problems they faced.

Since the Qur'an has always influenced people of different minds and ways of thinking, with everyone finding in it what they have been looking for with regard to questions of faith and behaviour, as well as solutions to the major problems they were facing, then this fact points to its source. It must have come from the One who has created all these people, with their different psychologies, and who is aware of what influences them and how they react to different things. He is well aware of all the issues that trouble them and He gives them the right answers to all: 'How could it be that He who has created should not know all? He is above all comprehension, yet is all-aware'.
(67: 14)



The Truth of the Qur'an



The Qur'an was the first book the Arabs ever had. No written book was ever circulated among them before it. This means that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had no previous pattern or model to follow. In fact the Prophet was an unlettered person who gave an unlettered nation a book, when it had no knowledge of books.

Prophet Muhammad was an unlettered person who grew up in a community of unlettered people. He attended their occasions and followed their life pattern. He had no contact with scholars or scholarly works. He spent forty years in this environment without having ever composed a poem, delivered a speech, or come up with a wise statement of the sort people endowed with eloquence say. Yet, all of a sudden, he started to speak to people about something he had never mentioned earlier. Indeed, he had never previously spoken a word of it to anyone whomsoever. He told them about events of earlier generations, past divine messages, the core issues of past divine messages, and he informed them about the present life and the life to come. Could there be a logical explanation of such a transition from a past unlettered life to such a well-informed stage? From a logical point of view, there must be

a secret behind such a sudden development which is beyond even that person's self and information.

The Prophet's style in his normal conversation, public speeches and correspondence was well-known. It was totally different from the style of the Qur'an. There is absolutely no similarity between the two. The Qur'an stands apart in its method of expression and literary style.

There was no historical account of prophets like Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Job, Jesus and prophets before them in Arabian heritage. They had no detailed information about them. Their knowledge was limited to their own ancestors, namely prophets Abraham and Ishmael. Yet the Qur'an gives detailed accounts of those prophets. God says: 'These accounts of things that have passed We now reveal to you. Neither you nor your people knew them before this'. (11: 49) How could Muhammad (peace be upon him) have learnt of them? Likewise, Prophet Muhammad stated promises that have come true, even though there was nothing to indicate them at the time he made them.

These were verses which expressed things beyond Prophet Muhammad's mind, relating to things that happened in the past, or were happening at the time, or were to happen in the future. Yet, whenever he spoke of the past, historical evidence confirmed what he said, and when he spoke about the future, his discourse was duly confirmed. When he spoke about God, the angels and the realm beyond the reach of our faculties of perception, his statements were confirmed by prophets and scriptures.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) went through very hard times and situations. All his children, apart from Fātimah, predeceased him. He dearly loved his first wife, Khadījah, who

played an important role in his life, and who died during one of the most difficult periods in his life. Yet the Qur'an does not refer to any of these events. It does not mention the death of any of his children or his wife, despite the fact that every such event was particularly painful for him. Had the Qur'an been his own work, it would have given expression to the Prophet's personal feelings.

When we read the Qur'an, we are surprised that it does not mention the Prophet's mother's name, nor the name of his dearly loved wife, nor any of his daughters, nor of his closest companions, such as Abu Bakr, his cousin 'Alī, or his uncle Hamzah. The names that are frequently mentioned in the Qur'an are those of earlier prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus and many others. The only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an is Mary, Jesus's mother. She is frequently mentioned by name and a mid-length surah is named after her.

These facts clearly show that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had no say with regard to what was revealed to him. He merely received God's revelations and delivered them as they were imparted to him.

The Qur'an is a divine Book revealed by God to His last Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him), just as God gave revelations to earlier prophets. Muhammad had no say in it. He merely received it and delivered it to people. God says: 'This Qur'an could not have been devised by anyone other than God. It is a confirmation of [revelations] that went before it, and a full explanation of God's Book, about which there is no doubt. It certainly comes from the Lord of all the worlds'. (10: 37)

To sum up: the Qur'an did not emanate from Muhammad, but was given to him. It was not something that flowed from his heart, but was rather bestowed on him from on high.



The Preservation of the Qur'an



God gives a clear and definitive promise that He will preserve the Qur'an intact. He says: 'It is We Ourselves who have bestowed this reminder from on high; and it is We who shall preserve it intact'. (15: 9) This verse was revealed when the Qur'an was not yet revealed in full, and long before it was compiled into a book. As such, the promise was revealed when what was written or memorized of the Qur'an could be lost or forgotten. Yet the Qur'anic promise was firm and absolute. The Qur'an was to be preserved by God who revealed it.

We reflect today, across the long centuries, on this promise to preserve the Qur'an and recognize the great miracle that testifies to the fact that the Qur'an is God's own Book. The conditions and circumstances that beset this Book over the centuries could not have kept it intact, with neither word nor sentence ever changing. This must have been due to the intervention of an external power which is not affected by any conditions, circumstances or factors. It undertakes the preservation of this Book, keeping it free of alteration and distortion.

Muslims have gone through stages when they were weak, overpowered by their enemies. Those enemies have tried in



every way to undermine Islam and Muslims. However, they were unable to change or alter any text of the Qur'an. Whilst they were very keen to do so, nonetheless they were unable to achieve it. Changing any part of the Qur'an was something beyond their power and their schemes. The Qur'an remained intact. This is a great miracle of the Qur'an demonstrating the fact that it is the word of God, the Mighty, the Wise.

During the Prophet's lifetime, the promise to preserve the Qur'an was a mere promise. Today, having gone through numerous great events and survived through fourteen centuries, it stands as a great miracle, testifying to the divine origin of this Book. This is a universally accepted truth disputed only by those who are both obstinate and ignorant. God tells the truth as He says: 'It is We Ourselves who have bestowed this reminder from on high; and it is We who shall preserve it intact'. (15: 9)

We have several hundred thousand manuscripts of the Qur'an, written and copied at widely different times in all parts of the Muslim world. Yet there is no difference between them, not even in a single word. There are millions of Muslims who know the Qur'an by heart and live in all parts of the world. Yet they all recite exactly the same text, with no difference whatsoever. Muslims today recite the Qur'an in their mosques in the same way as it was recited in the Prophet's Mosque when it was revealed to him.

If a mistake occurs in a single copy, there will be thousands of copies to correct it. If a reciter makes a mistake, there will be millions of memorizers who will correct him.

Compare this with the fact that there are thousands of manuscripts of the Holy Bible in libraries throughout the world, but we can hardly find two identical copies. The more manuscripts are found, the more differences are found in them.⁽¹⁾

(1) Bart Ehrman *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996) p.27.



A Brief Look at Some Qur'anic Surahs and Verses





Surah 1: The Opening



The first surah of the Qur'an is its greatest surah. The Prophet said to one of his companions: 'I shall teach you the greatest surah of the Qur'an: "Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds". It is the seven oft-repeated verses and the sublime Qur'an which I have been given'.⁽¹⁾ It is composed of seven verses. Short as it is, it sums up the fundamentals of the Qur'an. Hence, it is called 'the mother of the Book'. It outlines very briefly the main Islamic beliefs and establishes a close bond between people and God, fulfilling their mission in this world. It further includes a supplication to God for guidance, success and acceptance. Its text in translation is as follows:

In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful. (1) Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds, (2) The Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful, (3) Master of the Day of Judgement. (4) You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help. (5) Guide us on the straight path, (6) The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your favours, not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray. (7)

(1) Related by al-Bukhari, 5,006.



The surah starts by praising and thanking God. It is He who brought all the worlds, known or unknown to us, into existence. They are all His own creation, and He is the One who manages and looks after the universe. We praise Him for having created us and established us in the universe. He continues to bestow His favours on us, giving us our provisions and granting us our faculty of thinking and reasoning, free will and freedom of choice. He has pointed to us the true way of guidance and warned us against taking the way of error.

He then reminds us of His greatest attribute. His mercy is limitless as He is the Lord of Grace, and it is always available as He is the Ever-Merciful.

He then describes Himself as 'Master of the Day of Judgement', which is a reminder of the Hereafter. The Day of Judgement is the day of reckoning when people are held accountable for their deeds in life. People are then requited for their deeds: they are rewarded for whatever good they do and incur punishment for their evil deeds.

God, Mighty and Exalted, is the Master of the Day of Judgement. No one else claims any part or aspect of that day. All types of temporary ownership come to an end with the end of this present life. People will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement in the same way as they were born in this life: naked, bare-footed, having nothing. No one owns anything, because all dominion belongs to God alone: 'With whom does sovereignty rest today? With God, the One who holds absolute sway over all that exists'. (40: 16)

The surah then mentions the world's most important issue, namely, addressing all worship to God alone, seeking only His help. Our worship must be addressed to none other than God,



and we address our requests only to Him. All supplication is made to Him as He alone can grant it.

We follow this by praying to God to give us what we need most. It is the most important thing for us in life. We pray to Him to guide us along the straight path that takes us to Him. Only if we follow this straight path will we be included among those on whom God bestows His favours as He is pleased with them.

The central point in this surah is the appeal for God's guidance. It starts with praising and thanking Him for His Lordship. It follows this by highlighting some of His attributes, including His extensive mercy and total dominion. We then declare that we worship Him alone. All this praise and worship leads to requesting His guidance. Such guidance is a blessing granted by God.

The surah makes clear that divine guidance is a great favour God bestows on His servants. We pray to Him to include us among those to whom He grants such. Guidance is not achieved by personal intelligence. There are countless highly intelligent people who use their intelligence in perpetrating crimes. Nor is guidance achieved through knowledge. Many scholars and scientists have devoted their scholarly knowledge for evil action. Many are those highly intelligent people who excel in different aspects of life, but cannot give the right answers to the serious questions of existence. They may worship a statue they themselves make, or even a delusion they embrace. God says: 'They only know the outer surface of this world's life, whereas of the Hereafter they remain unaware'. (30: 7)

The surah makes clear that having guidance is achieved through keeping to the straight path. Whoever follows the straight path will have guidance going to God. He says:



‘Straight indeed is my Lord’s way’. (11: 56) A person is deprived of guidance when he is well aware of it but turns away from implementing it. He will have the knowledge but not the practice. As such, he incurs God’s wrath. Alternatively, a person may not try to know it, remaining unwilling to learn about it. He may do some good action, but it is based on neither proper knowledge nor on guidance. As such, he deserves to be included among those who have gone astray.

A Muslim needs to repeat this surah often as it includes such wealth of knowledge. Therefore, he repeats it at least seventeen times a day.⁽¹⁾ We also repeat it in our supplication for ourselves in the same way as we repeatedly wash our different organs. There are good reasons for this repetition. It is not enough for the cleansing of a human body to be washed once or twice with water. In the same way, it is not enough for the cleansing of the human soul to say one or two supplications. It needs to stand repeatedly before God and pray for His guidance. We are attacked by Satan’s numerous promptings every day.

This short surah thus portrays the only right relationship between people and their Lord: acknowledging His Lordship, praising Him, being ready to meet Him, declaring the determination to worship Him alone, praying to Him to make us as He likes us to be.



(1) This applies to a Muslim who limits himself to offering only the five obligatory prayers, as he is required to recite this surah in every *rak'ah*.



Surah 19: Maryam, or Mary



Surah 19 is the only Qur'anic surah named after a woman. No other woman is mentioned in the Qur'an by name. She is Mary, Prophet Jesus's mother. Prophet Muhammad's own mother is not mentioned in the Qur'an, nor are any of his wives or daughters mentioned by name. Only Mary is mentioned and her name is repeated in the Qur'an thirty-one times. A surah is devoted to her story, while another surah is called after her father 'Imrān. This surah mentions her mother's pregnancy and childbirth. God says:

God raised Adam and Noah, and the House of Abraham and the House of 'Imrān above all mankind. They were the offspring of one another. God hears all and knows all. 'Imrān's wife said: 'My Lord, I vow to you that which is in my womb, to be devoted to Your service. Accept it from me. You alone are the One who hears all and knows all'. When she had given birth she said: 'My Lord, I have given birth to a female'. – God well knew to what she would give birth. – 'The male is not like the female. I have named her Mary and I seek Your protection for her and her offspring against Satan, the accursed.' Her Lord graciously accepted her. He made her grow up a goodly child, and placed her





in the care of Zachariah. Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary he found her provided with food. He would say: 'Mary, where has this come to you from?' She would answer: 'It is from God. God gives sustenance to whom He wills, beyond all reckoning'. (3: 33-37)

This tells us much about the great honour bestowed on Mary, her saintly status, devotion and her unwavering belief. God tells us that angels used to speak to her: 'The angels said: "Mary, God has chosen you and made you pure, and raised you above all the women of the world"'. (3: 42) She was the pure virgin whom God had chosen to bear His great miracle of the birth of a messenger of God born without having a father. He was created by God's command.

Mary's case was one of great magnitude. Both she herself and her son were ordinary humans advocating the worship of God alone. Neither of them claimed any divine status, nor did they call on anyone to worship them. God says: 'The Christ, son of Mary, was but a messenger: other messengers have passed away before him. His mother was a saintly woman. They both ate food [like other human beings]. Behold how clear We make [Our] revelations to them and behold how perverted they are'. (5: 75)

Surah 19 also mentions some scenes from the Day of Judgement and the great difference between the believers and disbelievers on that day. It also makes a clear argument against those who deny the resurrection.

The surah denounces all forms of associating partners with God, attributing Godhead to other beings and worshipping them alongside God. One of these false claims is the one that says that God has a son. This is an abominable falsehood.





God, Mighty and Exalted, is supreme and has no need for a consort or a son. He says of Himself: 'He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a child when He has never had a consort? He has created everything and has full knowledge of all things'. (6: 101)

The concept stressed in this surah is that of God's mercy. It starts with the mercy shown by God to His servant, Zachariah. God's attribute of mercy is frequently repeated in this surah, with his attribute as 'the Lord of Grace', i.e. *al-Rahmān*, occurring sixteen times. This attribute of grace and mercy is mentioned even within the context of a threat, as Abraham says to his father: 'I dread lest a scourge will fall upon you from the Lord of Grace'. (19: 45) This frequent mention of God's mercy is meant to make clear that His mercy is bestowed upon people at all times. Here is the text of the surah with a few comments:

In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful

Kāf. Hā. Yā. 'Ayn. šād. (1) This is an account of the grace which your Lord bestowed on His servant Zachariah: (2) when he called out to his Lord in the secrecy of his heart, (3) he prayed: 'My Lord! Feeble have become my bones, and my head glistens with grey hair. But never, my Lord, has my prayer to You remained unanswered. (4)

Now, I fear [what] my kinsmen [will do] after I am gone, for my wife is barren. Bestow, then, upon me, out of Your grace, a successor (5) who will be my heir as well as an heir of the House of Jacob; and make him, my Lord, one with whom You are pleased'. (6)





‘Zachariah! We bring you the happy news of [the birth of] a son whose name shall be John. Never have We given this name to anyone before him.’ (7)

[Zachariah] said: ‘My Lord! How can I have a son when my wife is barren, and I am well advanced in years?’ (8)

He said: ‘Thus it is. Your Lord says, ‘This is easy for Me; even as I had earlier created you when you were nothing’. (9)

[Zachariah] said: ‘My Lord! Give me a sign’. He replied: ‘Your sign will be that for three full nights [and days] you will not speak to people’. (10)

He then came out to his people from the sanctuary and signified to them [by gesture] to extol God’s limitless glory by day and by night. (11)

[To his son We said]: ‘John! Hold fast to the Book with [all your] strength’. We granted him wisdom while he was still a youth, (12) as well as, by Our grace, compassion and purity; and he was [always] God-fearing, (13) and kind to his parents. Never was he haughty or rebellious. (14)

So peace was upon him on the day he was born, and on the day of his death, and will be on the day when he shall be raised to life again. (15)

Relate in the Book [the story of] Mary and how she withdrew from her family to a place in the east, (16) where she kept herself in seclusion from them. We, then, sent to her Our Spirit, who appeared to her in the shape of a well-made human being. (17)





She said: 'May the Lord of Grace protect me from you. [Do not come near me] if you fear God'. (18)

'I am but an emissary of your Lord', he said, '[and have come] to give you a son endowed with purity'. (19)

She said: 'How shall I have a child when no man has ever touched me and I have never been a loose woman?' (20)

He answered: 'Thus did your Lord speak: This is easy for Me. We will make him a sign for mankind and an act of grace from Us. It is a matter [We have] decreed'. (21)

So she conceived him, and retired to a far-off place. (22) And the throes of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree. [In her anguish] she cried: 'Would that I had died before this and passed into complete oblivion!' (23)

But [a voice] from below called out to her: 'Do not give in to grief. Your Lord has provided a brook running beneath you. (24) Shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards you, and it will drop you fresh ripe dates. (25) So eat and drink and be happy. Should you see any human being, just convey this to him: "I have vowed a fast to the Lord of Grace and will not speak today to any human being"'. (26)

At length, she went to her people carrying the child. They said: 'Mary, you have indeed done an amazing thing! (27) Sister of Aaron, your father was not a wicked man, nor was your mother a loose woman!' (28)





But she pointed to the child. They said: ‘How can we talk to a babe in the cradle?’ (29) Whereupon he said: ‘I am a servant of God. He has vouchsafed to me revelations and made me a prophet, (30) and made me blessed wherever I may be. He has enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live. (31) He has made me kind to my mother, not haughty or bereft of grace. (32) Peace was on me on the day when I was born, and [will be on me] on the day of my death and on the day when I shall be raised to life again’. (33)

Such was, in the words of truth, Jesus the son of Mary, about whose nature they still dispute. (34) It is not conceivable that God should beget a son. Limitless is He in His glory! When He wills a thing to be, He only says to it, ‘Be’, and it is. (35) God is my Lord and your Lord; so worship Him alone. That is a straight path. (36)

Yet are the sects at variance among themselves. Woe, then, to the unbelievers when a momentous day arrives. (37) How well they will hear and see on the Day they will appear before Us. Truly the wrongdoers are today in evident error. (38)

Hence, warn them of the Day of Distress, when everything will have been determined while they remain heedless, persisting in unbelief. (39) We alone shall remain after the earth and all who live on it have passed away. To Us they shall all return. (40)

Mention in the Book Abraham. He certainly was a man of truth and a prophet. (41) He said to his father: ‘My father! Why do you worship something that neither hears nor sees and can be of no avail whatever to you?’





(42) My father! There has come to me knowledge which you do not have. Follow me, and I shall guide you along a straight path. (43) My father! Do not worship Satan, for Satan has indeed rebelled against [God] the Lord of Grace. (44) My father! I dread lest a scourge will fall upon you from the Lord of Grace, and then you will become one of Satan's friends'. (45)

He answered: 'Are you renouncing my gods, Abraham? If you do not desist, I shall most certainly have you stoned. Now begone from me for good!' (46)

Abraham replied: 'Peace be on you. I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you; for He has always been very kind to me. (47) But I shall withdraw from you all and from whatever you invoke instead of God, and I shall pray to my Lord alone. Perhaps, by my prayer to my Lord I shall not be unblest.' (48)

When he had withdrawn from them and from all that they were worshipping instead of God, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, each of whom We made a prophet. (49) We bestowed on them of Our mercy and We granted them the high honour of [conveying] the truth. (50)

And mention in the Book Moses, who was a chosen one, a messenger of God and a prophet. (51) We called out to him from the right side of Mount Sinai and drew him near [to Us] in mystic communion. (52) We gave him, out of Our grace, his brother Aaron, to be a prophet. (53)

And mention in the Book Ishmael who was always true to his promise, and was a messenger of God, a



prophet. (54) He used to enjoin on his people prayer and charity, and his Lord was well pleased with him.

(55)

And mention in the Book Idrīs, who was a man of truth, a prophet. (56) We raised him to a lofty station.

(57)

These were some of the prophets upon whom God bestowed His blessings – of the seed of Adam, and of those whom We carried in the ark with Noah, and of the seed of Abraham and Israel, and of those whom We had guided and chosen. When the revelations of [God] the Lord of Grace were recited to them they fell down prostrating themselves [before Him] and weeping. (58)

The surah begins with an account of Prophet John's [i.e. *Yahyā*] birth, which was a miracle preceding the birth of Jesus and preparing for it. Indeed, John's birth was nothing short of a miracle. His father was very old while his mother was both old and barren. Who revived the old man's vitality, made the barren woman fertile and gave the couple the pleasure of having a son?

The surah follows this by giving an account of the birth of Jesus, son of Mary. It tells of the great miracle involving the birth of this prophet. There is nothing that is difficult for God. He gave a virgin woman a child, without having ever consorted with a man. God is the Creator of causes. As such, He is not bound by them. He created Jesus without having a father in the same way as He created Adam who, likewise, did not have a father. He says: 'The case of Jesus in the sight of God is the same as the case of Adam. He created him of dust and then said to him "Be", and he was'. (3: 59)



The surah opened with an account of Prophet Zachariah and his son John, and followed this with the story of Mary and her son, Jesus. It then mentions Abraham and how he urged his father to worship God alone, warning him against the worship of idols which are powerless. It highlights Abraham's gentle approach as he urged his father, speaking to him compassionately. As he warned his father against God's punishment, he referred to God as the Lord of Grace, saying: 'My father! I dread lest a scourge will fall upon you from the Lord of Grace'. (19: 45) Abraham thus tells his father that God bestows grace, and this is an essential attribute of His. Why, then, should his father turn away from seeking God's mercy, exposing himself instead to His punishment?

When his father persisted with his idolatry, Abraham politely took his leave and said to him: 'Peace be on you. I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you'. (19: 47) Here we see Abraham making his first address to his father, his closest relative.

God then mentions the merits of the noble prophets, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Idrīs, Adam and Noah. This confirms that Muhammad only advocated the same message as the earlier prophets. His message was not a new invention; it was merely the final episode of the divine message advocated by all God's noble messengers. God tells him: 'Say: "I am not the first of God's messengers. I do not know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow what is being revealed to me. I am only a plain warner"'. (46: 9) The surah then proceeds:

They were succeeded by generations who neglected their prayers and followed only their lusts; and these will, in time, meet with utter disillusion. (59) Excepted, however, shall be those who repent, believe and do





righteous deeds. These will enter the Garden and will not be wronged in any way: (60) the Gardens of Eden which [God] the Lord of Grace has promised to His servants, in the realm that lies beyond the reach of human perception. Indeed, His promise is certain of fulfilment. (61) There they will hear no idle talk, but only the voice of peace. And their sustenance shall be given them there morning and evening. (62)

Such is the Paradise which We shall give the righteous among Our servants to inherit. (63)

We descend only by the command of your Lord. To Him belongs all that is before us and all that is hidden from us and all that is in between. Never does your Lord forget anything. (64) He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. Worship Him alone, then, and remain steadfast in His worship. Do you know any whose name is worthy to be mentioned side by side with His? (65)

Having mentioned the fine and pure status of all prophets, the surah then mentions the case of some later communities which did wrong. They turned away from God's worship and indulged in their pleasures. It mentions their eventual destiny, contrasting it with what is prepared for those who desist from sinful action, turn to God in repentance and do good deeds. God then says:

'What!' says man, 'When I am once dead, shall I be raised up alive?' (66) Does not man remember that We earlier created him, when he was nothing? (67) By your Lord, We shall most certainly bring them forth together with the evil ones, and then We shall most certainly gather them, on their knees, around hell; (68)





and thereupon We shall drag out from every group those who had been most obstinate in their rebellion against the Lord of Grace. (69) For, indeed, We know best who most deserve to be burnt in the Fire of Hell. (70)

There is not one among you who shall not pass over it: this is, for your Lord, a decree that must be fulfilled. (71) But We shall save those who are God-fearing, and leave the wrongdoers there, on their knees. (72)

When Our revelations are recited to them in all their clarity, the unbelievers say to those who believe: 'Which of the two sides has a better position and a superior community?' (73) How many a generation have We destroyed before their time, who were superior in material riches and in splendour. (74)

Say: 'As for those who live in error, may the Lord of Grace lengthen their span of life!' But when they see the fulfilment of that of which they have been forewarned, be it suffering or the Last Hour, they will realize who is worst in position and weaker in forces. (75)

God advances in guidance those who seek His guidance. Good deeds of lasting merit are, in your Lord's sight, worthy of greater recompense, and yield far better returns. (76)

Have you ever considered [the case of] the one who denies Our signs and boasts: 'I shall surely be given wealth and children!' (77) Has he, perchance, attained to a realm which is beyond the reach of human perception? Or has he concluded a covenant with the Lord of Grace? (78) By no means! We shall record what





he says, and We shall long extend his suffering, (79) and We shall divest him of all that he is now speaking of, and he shall appear before Us all alone. (80)

They have taken to worshipping deities other than God, hoping that they will give them power and glory. (81) By no means! They will renounce their worship and turn against them. (82)

Have you not seen how We let loose satanic forces upon the unbelievers to repeatedly incite them to evil? (83) So, be not in haste: We only allow them a fixed number of days. (84) The Day [will surely come] when We shall gather the God-fearing before [God] the Lord of Grace, as honoured guests, (85) and drive those who are lost in sin to Hell as a thirsty herd. (86) None will have power to intercede for them except one who has received permission from [God] the Lord of Grace. (87)

God then mentions some of what disbelievers who deny the resurrection and the life to come say. Some consider it extremely unlikely that they will come back to life. God reminds such people that it was God who created them and brought them into this first life. He is certainly able to bring them back to life after death. Others express their disbelief in the resurrection differently. They say that if they are ever resurrected, they will have their children and property with them. They do not realize that everyone will stand alone, in the same way as they came into this life: naked and bare-footed.

God then mentions the destiny of those disbelievers, giving some images of what they will suffer and what He has prepared for them. He also mentions some of what He has prepared for the God-fearing believers. It is a choice between two types of





recompense: either everlasting happiness or extremely painful suffering. The surah then adds:

They say: ‘The Lord of Grace has taken to Himself a son!’ (88) Indeed you have said a most monstrous falsehood, (89) at which the heavens might be rent into fragments, and the earth be split asunder, and the mountains fall down in ruins! (90) That people should ascribe a son to the Lord of Grace, (91) although it is inconceivable that the Lord of Grace should take to Himself a son. (92)

Not one of all [the beings] that are in the heavens or on earth but shall appear before the Lord of Grace as a servant. (93) Indeed, He has full cognizance of them. He has kept a strict count of their numbers, (94) and, on the Day of Resurrection, every one of them will appear before Him all alone. (95)

As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, God will certainly bestow love on them. (96) And so have We made [the Qur’an] easy to understand, in your own tongue, so that you may give good tidings to the God-fearing and give warning to those who are given to futile contention. (97) How many a generation have We destroyed before their time! Can you find a single one of them now, or hear so much as a whisper of them? (98)

The surah concludes by reiterating its absolute rejection of any claim of God having a son. This is a negative aspect that cannot apply to God. It is rejected by the entire universe. The verses used here are of a strong thunderous rhythm, denouncing those who make this claim in clear terms: ‘They say: “The Lord of Grace has taken to Himself a son!” Indeed you have



said a most monstrous falsehood, at which the heavens might be rent into fragments, and the earth be split asunder, and the mountains fall down in ruins! That people should ascribe a son to the Lord of Grace'. (19: 88-91)

This claim is outrageous. It cannot apply to God, Mighty and Exalted. Everything in the heavens and earth, in the entire universe, is created by God. They all move and act by His will. He has neither a partner nor a son. He says: 'He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a child when He has never had a consort? He has created everything and has full knowledge of all things'. (6: 101) 'Never did God take to Himself any offspring, nor has there ever been any deity alongside Him. Had there been any, each deity would surely have taken away his own creation, and they would surely have tried to establish superiority over one another. Limitless in His glory is God, far above all that which they attribute to Him'. (23: 91)

We note that God's name *al-Rahmān*, which means the 'Lord of Grace', is mentioned sixteen times in this surah. The surah begins by mentioning God's mercy extended to His servant Zachariah, and it ends by mentioning His mercy extended to all believers. Thus, it reminds people that God's mercy is granted at all times. Indeed, had it not been so, people's lives would be far from tolerable. Man feels God's mercy with every breath, bite of food and sip of drink. He feels it in his physical health, alertness and the flow of blessings God gives him. It is as God says: 'Whatever blessing you have comes from God'. (16: 53)

The surah extends to us a feeling of reassurance as it repeats God's name, the Lord of Grace, so that we feel the flow of His mercy throughout our lives in this world. We hope to receive His greatest mercy when we return to Him, hoping to be admitted into Heaven.





Surah 50: Qaf



This surah speaks about life after the present life, death and what comes after it. It is a discourse about our journey from the realm of the life we are experiencing to the realm beyond.

The surah begins with a reference to people who deny resurrection, and follows this by giving clear evidence of returning to life after death. It also states the fate of earlier communities who denied resurrection.

A scene of man's creation follows, stating that all his actions, speech and thoughts are monitored. It then describes the moment of departure from this life, showing that death is often ignored by man, so that it comes all of a sudden. It further describes scenes of the reckoning and requital in the life to come.

The surah reiterates once more the fate of the disbelievers of olden times. It concludes with a reminder that all people should prepare for the Last Day, when they are brought out of their graves and gathered for the reckoning of their deeds and the determining of their fates.

The entire surah is devoted to the discussion of resurrection and the life to come. It states and reiterates, giving details and





reminders. It fills the reader and listener with awe, as it uses a strong rhythm that holds the listener's attention. It imparts a feeling of fear, alerts us to this very serious matter which we tend to overlook, making it clear that it is inevitable and that we will most certainly experience it.

In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful

Qāf. By the glorious Qur'an. (1) But the unbelievers deem it strange that a warner from among themselves should have come to them and they say: 'This is indeed most strange! (2) When we have died and become dust...? Such a return [to life] is too far-fetched'. (3) We know very well what the earth takes away from them. We have an unfailing, comprehensive record. (4) Yet they deny the truth when it comes to them; and so they are in a state of confusion. (5)

Do they not look at the sky above them: how We have built it and adorned it, leaving no flaws in it. (6) We spread out the earth and set upon it firm mountains, and caused every kind of delectable plants to grow on it, (7) so that it serves as a lesson and a reminder to everyone who wishes to turn to God. (8) We send down from the skies water rich in blessings, and We produce with it gardens and fields of grain, (9) and tall palm trees laden with clusters of dates, (10) providing sustenance suitable for people. Thus We bring dead land to life. So will [people] come forth from the dead. (11)

Long before these unbelievers Noah's people also disbelieved, as did the people of al-Rass, Thamud, (12) [Ad, Pharaoh, Lot's brethren, (13) the dwellers of the wooded dales and the people of Tubba]: They





all disbelieved God's messengers, and therefore My warnings came true. (14) Were We worn out by the first creation? Yet they are still in doubt about a renewed creation. (15)

At the outset, the surah enters into a dialogue with those who deny resurrection. They cannot imagine that they will be brought back to life after having become part of the earth's dust. The surah confronts them with great scenes that show them how life is brought into what seems to be dead.

The first of these proofs seeks to open their eyes to contemplate the great universe. They see the skies and recognize its extensive dimensions and countless stars. They see the earth and its expanse, the firmness of its mountains and the splendour of its trees. The One who has created all this great universe will not find it difficult to bring man, a small little being, back to life after he has been dead: 'He alone is the Supreme Creator, the All-Knowing'. (36: 81) God states the same meaning in a different verse, as He says: 'The creation of the heavens and the earth is indeed greater than the creation of man; yet most people do not understand'. (40: 57)

The second proof is what man often sees when rain falls on barren land and it quickens and brings up its plants, trees and fruits. It used to be lifeless, but with rain it becomes full of life. This is an ever-renewed scene, which people always follow. It demonstrates how life is brought back after death. The same applies to the resurrection of people after they have been dead. God mentions this in a different surah, as He says: 'Another of His signs is this: you see the earth lying desolate, but when We send down rain water upon it, it stirs and swells [with life]. He who brings it to life will surely give life to the dead. He has power over all things'. (41: 39)





The third proof is that man is initially created by God. The One who created man the first time is certainly able to re-create him, bringing him back to life after he has been dead. This is emphasized in several verses in the Qur'an, including: 'He comes up with arguments against Us, forgetting how he himself was created. He asks: "Who could give life to bones that have crumbled to dust?" Say: "He who brought them into being in the first instance will give them life again. He has full knowledge of every act of creation". (46: 78-79) 'It is He who creates [life] in the first instance, and then brings it forth anew; and most easy is this for Him. His is the most sublime attribute in the heavens and the earth. He is the Almighty, the Wise.' (30: 27)

Bringing man back to life after he has been dead is easier than his first creation out of nothing. This is said in order to make it easier to understand. In fact, all these actions are similarly easy for God. Nothing in the universe is beyond His ability. 'When He intends something to be, He only says to it, "Be", and it is'. (36: 82)

All these show that resurrection after death is a fact and that all mankind will go back to God in the life to come. God then says:

It is We who have created man, and We know what his soul whispers to him. We are closer to him than his jugular vein; (16) with two receptors set to record, one on his right and one on his left, (17) every word he utters [is noted down by] an ever-present watcher. (18)

The stupor of death brings with it the full truth: 'This is what you tried to escape'. (19) The Trumpet will be blown: 'This is the Day [you were] warned of'.





(20) Every soul will come attended by one who will drive it on and another to bear witness. (21)

‘Of this you have been unmindful, but We have lifted your veil and sharp is your sight today.’ (22)

And his companion will say: ‘Here is what I have recorded’. (23) ‘Cast into hell every hardened unbeliever, (24) everyone who hindered good, was a sinful aggressor, fomentor of doubt, (25) who set up another deity alongside God. Cast him into severe suffering.’ (26)

His companion will say: ‘Our Lord! I did not make him transgress. He had already gone far astray’. (27)

God will say: ‘Do not argue in My presence, for I had forewarned you. (28) My word will not be altered; but never do I do the least wrong to My creatures’. (29) On that Day We will ask hell, ‘Are you full?’ and it will reply, ‘Are there no more?’ (30)

And paradise will be brought close to the righteous and will no longer be distant: (31) ‘This is what you have been promised; this is for everyone who used to turn to God and to keep Him in mind, (32) who used to stand in awe of the Lord of Grace although He is beyond the reach of human perception, and who comes before Him with a heart full of devotion. (33) Enter paradise in peace; this is the Day when everlasting life begins’. (34) There they shall have all that they desire, and We have even more for them. (35)

How many a generation, far greater in power, have We destroyed before these [unbelievers]? They wandered through the lands seeking a place of refuge.





(36) In this there is a reminder for everyone who has an alert heart, or one who attentively listens and sees. (37)

This is the scene of life in all its stages, beginning with the first emergence in this world. This is the stage of action, under God's watchful eye and His total knowledge. He knows every secret and what is even further hidden. He knows what people harbour in their chests and what they do in public. This means that He is aware of every detail of every person. He sees their every movement and knows their every thought. All these are kept in a record. 'It is He who knows all that lies beyond the reach of human perception. Not an atom's weight in the heavens or the earth escapes Him; nor is there anything smaller or larger but is recorded in a clear book.' (34: 3)

This short life comes to an end. Man suddenly faces the stupor of death which he has long overlooked. It heralds an absence from the present life and standing at the threshold of the next life.

The surah moves on to portray the great awesome scene of resurrection, gathering, reckoning and dispute. Here we have two pictures involving man: the angel who recorded all his actions. He now presents his record and says: 'This is what I have recorded'. (50: 23) On the other side stands Satan who used to lead him astray, depicting evil deeds as attractive and pleasant. He now disowns man and says: 'Our Lord! I did not make him transgress. He had already gone far astray'. (50: 27) However, this dispute is soon ended, and people are assigned their respective abodes. The guilty suffer on their way to Hell while the good believers are shown their heavenly abode close to them. They qualified for this generous reward through being God-fearing in their first life, their certainty of the life to come, and their turning with their hearts towards God. Heaven, which





they believed in, is now in front of them. They are welcomed as they enter it. They are told: 'Enter paradise in peace; this is the Day when everlasting life begins. There they shall have all that they desire, and We have even more for them'. (50: 34-35)

Belief in coming back to life after death and meeting God in the Hereafter is not an abstract thought. It is an active certainty that directs man's life and determines what he does or abstains from. The gulf is huge between the broad life of faith, which is a good life with an alert conscience, and the sort of life presented by our contemporary civilization. This is a civilization that rarely remembers God, prepares for meeting Him or feels that He is present with us and watching us.

According to atheists who claim that life is matter, death means the end of life and the beginning of non-existence. However, they will have a great shock for which they are unprepared, as they will face resurrection: 'Of this you have been unmindful, but We have lifted your veil and sharp is your sight today'. (50: 22)

The surah again reminds those who are focused on this present life that the aspects of power which they hold on to in this life are only transitory. They will be useless when facing God's power and His punishment. In the long history of mankind, there were communities which were even more powerful and greater in number. Neither their power nor their numbers were of any use to them. They were removed from this life as if they had never been in it. God then says:

We have indeed created the heavens and the earth and all that is in between in six eons. No weariness could ever touch Us. (38) Bear, then, with patience whatever they may say, and extol your Lord's limitless glory before the rising of the sun and before its setting;





(39) and in the night, too, extol His glory, and at the end of every prayer. (40) And listen out for the Day when the caller will call from a nearby place, (41) the Day when they will in truth hear the Mighty Blast; that is the Day when they will come out [of their graves]. (42)

It is We who grant life and deal death; and to Us all shall return. (43) On the Day when the earth will be rent asunder all around them, letting them rush out. That gathering will be easy for Us. (44) We are fully aware of what they say. You are not one to use coercion with them. Therefore, remind, with the Qur'an, those who fear My warning. (45)

Thus, the surah concludes in the same way as it began: it speaks of the universe and its creation. It mentions that God created the heavens, earth and all the stars and galaxies in the universe in six days or periods of time, without experiencing any tiredness or weariness. This refutes the claim that God created the universe in six days and rested on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath. Such a claim could not have been made by any messenger of God, because God's messengers are the ones who know God best.

Such a claim betrays ignorance and ill-thinking of God. God has absolute power, and He is able to do everything. Whenever He wills something, He only needs to say to it, 'Be', and it will exist. Had God taken a rest, as these people allege, who was attending to the universe and conducting its affairs while He was resting? The fact is that attributing the situations of tiredness and rest to God is utter stupidity, alleged by some ignorant people who attributed it to the scriptures. The Qur'an makes clear that such nonsense does not apply



to God. It rather confirms all the glory and superiority due to God. Hence, the surah commands us to tolerate with patience what such ignorant people allege and to glorify and worship God as He requires. We should remain prepared to meet Him after the end of this present life.

The surah concludes by reminding us of the mission of God's prophets and the message they deliver to mankind. They work hard to keep the human mind alert. They seek to convince man through proper argument and reasoning, emphasizing man's freedom of choice. They remind us that no one is coerced to believe. The surah says that Prophet Muhammad never used coercion with anyone, nor did he ever force anyone to accept Islam. This is confirmed in many verses of the Qur'an, such as: 'Therefore, exhort them; your task is only to exhort'. (88: 21-22) 'The messenger is not bound to do more than clearly deliver his message'. (24: 54)





Surah 112: Purity of Faith



This is a very short surah which is devoted to speaking about God, His oneness, uniqueness and glory. The Prophet highlights the importance of this surah and says that it is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'an.⁽¹⁾

One of the Prophet's companions used to recite it in every prayer. Some of his companions told the Prophet of this person's action. He said to them: 'Ask him why he does it?' He answered: 'Because it describes God and I love to recite it'. The Prophet told his companions to tell that person that God loves him.⁽²⁾

The surah states the fundamental elements behind the clear concept true believers have about God, Mighty and Exalted, and His great attributes. The surah says:

In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful

Say: He is God, the One and only God (1) the Eternal, the Absolute. (2) He begets none, nor is He begotten, (3) and there is nothing that could be compared to Him. (4)

(1) Related by al-Bukhari, 5,013; Muslim, 811.

(2) Related by Muslim, 810.





At the outset, the surah emphatically states God's oneness. He is the only Lord, the One and true God. No one else may be thought of as a deity. All such thoughts and claims are false. He is the One and only God: there is neither a second nor a third. Everyone else is a creation of His and subject to His will. God says: 'Had there been in heaven or on earth any deities other than God, both would surely have fallen into ruin! But limitless in His glory is God, Lord of the Throne, and exalted is He above all that they attribute to Him'. (21: 22) 'God has said: "Do not take for worship two deities, for He is but one God. Hence, of Me alone stand in awe"'. (16: 51)

This is the central issue advocated by all God's messengers. They strongly emphasized it, as every messenger said to his people: 'Worship God alone: you have no deity other than Him'. (7: 59)

Attributing partners to God was the greatest folly people claimed. They set up equals to God, and they transferred what rightfully belongs to God to other beings. Hence, it is described in the Qur'an as a great wrong. This is how Luqmān's admonition to his son is reported in the Qur'an: 'My dear son! Do not associate any partners with God; for, to associate partners with Him is indeed a great wrong'. (31: 13)

God is also the Absolute. He is the Eternal Master to whom all beings in the universe turn. Worship must be addressed to Him alone. He is the One to whom all appeals for help are made. To Him belongs all sovereignty in the universe. What else can anyone have or own? 'Limitless in His glory is He in whose hand rests the mighty dominion over all things, and to Him you all will be brought back'. (36: 83)

Limitless is God in His glory, He is the true Master of all. Everything else belongs to Him, for He is the Creator and





manager of all that exists. When we need anything, we appeal to Him for it. When we supplicate, we address our supplication to Him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) informed us that God says: 'My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to rise up in one place and make a request of Me, and were I to give everyone what they requested, that would not decrease what I have, any more than a needle decreases the sea if put into it'.⁽¹⁾ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God's hand is full. No flowing expenditure throughout the night and day decreases it. Have you considered what He has spent ever since He created the heavens and earth? It has not decreased what He has'.⁽²⁾

'He begets none, nor is He begotten.' He does not beget anyone because this is a process required by the need to extend one's existence, making it successive. God is the Creator of all and the One who brings everything into existence. To attribute a child to Him is to say that He is imperfect, which is totally wrong. Moreover, begetting a child implies the presence of a spouse and this implies equality. This is also impossible. Since these requirements cannot apply to God, He states that He begets none. To make such a claim is an outrageous utterance that is contrary to God and His greatness. It is rejected by everyone who has proper knowledge of God and His glory. God describes Himself in the following terms: 'He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a child when He has never had a consort? He has created everything and has full knowledge of all things'. (6: 101)

(1) Related by Muslim, 2,577.

(2) Related by al-Bukhari, 7,411; Muslim, 993.



‘Nor is He begotten.’ To be begotten means to be non-existent and then to come into existence. This is not applicable to God whose attribute is absolute perfection. He is the First before everything and the Last after everything; He encompasses everything.

The last verse in the surah says: ‘And there is nothing that could be compared to Him’. There is no other or similar deity. No other being is His equal in any of His attributes of absolute perfection. His fine attributes belong to Him alone. He cannot be compared to any of His creation. Our imagination cannot comprehend or imagine His greatness, because imagination is limited to what it can perceive. God’s majesty is absolute. He describes Himself as follows: ‘No power of vision can encompass Him, whereas He encompasses all vision; He is above all comprehension, yet is all-aware’. (6: 103) ‘Nothing bears even the slightest comparability to Him. He alone hears all and sees all.’ (42: 11)

All that the surah mentions about God merely reaffirms its first verse which states God’s oneness. He is the One who has no partner. It firmly negates the existence of any deity other than God.

The perfect system that runs through the entire universe does not tolerate the existence of any deity beside God. It is a whole, consistent system which is subject to the same will and the same power. The One who causes the blood to circulate through the veins of every living being is He who sets the planets and stars in the distant galaxies in their respective orbits. This entire system runs with absolute perfection, testifying to God’s



absolute power and oneness. He says: 'Never did God take to Himself any offspring, nor has there ever been any deity alongside Him. Had there been any, each deity would surely have taken away his own creation, and they would surely have tried to establish superiority over one another. Limitless in His glory is God, far above all that which they attribute to Him'.
(23: 91)





Total Guidance through Qur'anic Verses



The Qur'an is full of directives, correcting concepts, warning against deviant and erroneous practices. In this booklet, we have chosen some of these directives which the Qur'an emphasizes. They serve as examples of the guidance the Qur'an provides. It is hoped that readers will be motivated to learn more of the Qur'an so as to benefit from it directly. We should always remember that the Qur'an sets life on the right course for the benefit of all mankind.

Knowing God

It is not possible for human beings to know God fully. Their eyes cannot behold Him. Similarly, their minds cannot picture Him or have a true understanding of Him. Their only means to learn about God is to understand what He has told them about Himself. God has given us a clear account of Himself in the Qur'an, stating His good names and fine attributes which point to His majesty, superiority, mercy and bounty. Here are some examples:

All praise is due to God, who has created the heavens and the earth, and brought into being darkness and light; yet those who disbelieve regard other beings as equal to their Lord. (1) It is He who has created you





out of clay, and then has decreed a term [for you], and there is another term known only to Him. Yet you are still in doubt. (2) He alone is God in the heavens and on earth. He has full knowledge of all that you keep secret and all that you do openly. He knows what you earn. (6: 1-3)

Everything in the heavens and earth extols God's limitless glory. He is the Almighty, the Wise. (1) His is the dominion over the heavens and the earth. He grants life and causes death; and He has power over all things. (2) He is the First and the Last, the Outer and the Inner. He has full knowledge of all things. (3) It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days and established Himself on the throne. He knows all that goes into the earth and all that comes out of it; all that descends from the skies and all that ascends to them. He is with you wherever you may be; and God sees all that you do. (4) His is the dominion over the heavens and the earth. Everything goes back to God. (5) He causes the night to pass into the day, and the day to pass into the night; and He has full knowledge of what is in people's hearts. (57: 1-6)

God: there is no deity but Him, the Ever-Living, the Eternal Master of all. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him, except by His permission? He knows all that lies open before them and all that lies hidden from them; whereas they cannot attain to anything of His knowledge save as He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both





does not weary Him. He is the Most High, the Most Great. (2: 255)

He is God: there is no deity other than Him. It is He who knows all that is beyond the reach of anyone's perception, as well as all that which can be witnessed. He is the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful. (22) He is God: there is no deity other than Him, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Source of Peace, the Giver of Faith, the Guardian over all, the Almighty, the Compeller, to whom all greatness belongs. Exalted is God in His limitless glory above anything they associate as partner with Him. (23) He is God: the Creator, the Maker who gives shape and form to all. His are the most gracious names. Everything in the heavens and earth extols His limitless glory. He alone is the Almighty, the Wise. (59: 22-24)

God's great status in the universe

To give people a good idea of His status, God tells us how great the world around us is. We know God's creation, both that which lives around us and that which we need for our survival. He links these with His will, design and the benefits we have through creating these and making them of such great benefit to us. All this highlights to us God's great power as He creates, designs and gives His creation their qualities and uses. He tells us to reflect on the greatness of the universe, the beauty of its design, the wisdom in assigning qualities and quantities which could only be the work of God with His absolute might, total knowledge, infinite wisdom and abounding grace.

When we look at ourselves and the world around us, we realize that the Creator is mighty, wise, all-knowing, absolutely perfect and deserving unlimited praise. Countless Qur'anic



verses point to this and alert us to the fact that the universe points to its Creator and guides us to believe in Him. God says:

In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the vessels that sail through the sea with what is useful for mankind; in the water God sends down from the sky giving life to the earth after it had been lifeless, causing all manner of living creatures to multiply on it; in the movement of the winds, and the clouds that run their courses between sky and earth: in all this there are signs for people who use their reason. (2: 163-164)

It is God who has created the heavens and the earth, and who sends down water from the sky with which He brings forth fruits for your sustenance. He has placed under your service ships which by His leave sail through the sea, and He has made the rivers subservient to [His law] for your benefit. (32) And for your benefit He has made the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses, subservient to [His law]; and has made the night and the day subservient to [His law]. (33) And He gives you of everything you ask of Him. Should you try to count God's blessings, you will never be able to compute them. Yet man is persistent in wrongdoing, stubbornly ungrateful. (14: 32-34)

Yet if you ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they are sure to answer, 'The Almighty, the All-Knowing created them'. (9) It is He who has smoothed out the earth for you and has traced on it paths for you so that you can find your way. (10) And He it is who sends down water from the sky in due measure. With it We raise dead land to life; and thus



you will be raised from the dead. (11) And He it is who created all living things in pairs, and provided for you the ships and animals on which you ride, (12) so that when you are seated on their backs you remember your Lord's blessings and say: 'Limitless in His glory is He who has made all this subservient to our use. We could not have done it by ourselves. (13) To our Lord we shall most certainly return. (43: 9-14)

The unity demonstrated in the universe: its system, organization, completeness and accurate measures confirm absolutely that the Creator is One who is Mighty and Exalted. The One who created man also created animals; and the Creator of the earth also created the sun and the moon. It is He who made His creation mutually complementary. Nothing in the entire universe may be claimed to have been created by anyone other than God. He is the Creator of all.

When we contemplate the universe and God's sovereignty, we see God's blessings that are all around us, and those which He has granted us. Hence, the Qur'an mentions these stating a close relationship between them and addressing all worship to God alone. He says: 'It is God who has made the earth a resting place for you and the sky a canopy. He has moulded you into a comely shape and provided you with wholesome things. Such is God, your Lord. So glory be to God, the Lord of all the worlds. He is the Ever-Living. There is no deity other than Him. So call on Him, sincere in your faith in Him. All praise is due to God, the Lord of all the worlds'. (40: 64-65)

Belief in God's oneness

The greatest and most clearly proven truth is God's oneness and that He alone is the Creator and Master of the universe. As such, He alone deserves to be worshipped. God's oneness as



well as the universe's need for God and dependence on Him are ever present and everlasting truths. Qur'anic verses state these truths, providing the necessary evidence proving them. They also refute counter arguments.

Clearly apparent as these truths are, people often overlook them, associating partners with God and addressing worship to statues, idols, stars and other multiple deities in the cultures and traditions of different nations. Yet God sent His messengers in succession to correct such erroneous deviation and to guide mankind to the worship of God who alone deserves to be worshipped.

The greatest stupidity ever experienced by mankind is addressing worship to beings other than God, making some created beings His partners in what belongs to Him alone. Worship may never be addressed to anyone else. It suits none but Him. How is it possible that what is created can be raised to the level of the Creator? How can what is made be equal to its Maker?

God has given man the greatest honour when He required man to worship none but Him. He may not address his worship to anyone other than his supreme Lord. This liberates man from servitude to any master other than God. Likewise, one of the greatest acts of injustice is to give what rightfully belongs to God alone to other beings that neither deserve nor are suited to it. This makes a weak created being a partner with his great Creator. God says: 'Associating partners with God is indeed a great wrong'. (31: 31) Important as this major issue and people's frequent negligence of it are, the Qur'an devotes to it a large number of verses that use varied evidence. Here are some examples:



Do they associate with Him those that can create nothing, while they themselves have been created, (191) and neither can they give them any support nor can they even help themselves. (192) If you call them to guidance they will not follow you. It is all the same whether you call them or keep silent. (193) Those whom you invoke beside God are God's servants, just like you. Invoke them, then, and let them answer you, if what you claim is true. (194) Have they, perchance, feet on which they could walk, or hands with which to grasp things, or eyes with which to see, or ears with which to hear? Say: 'Appeal to those you claim to be partners with God, and scheme against me, and give me no respite. (195) My guardian is God who has bestowed this Book from on high. It is He who is the guardian of the righteous. (196) 'Those whom you invoke beside Him cannot give you any support, nor can they even help themselves. (197) If you pray to them for guidance, they will not hear you. You may see them looking at you but they do not see.' (198) Make due allowance for man's nature, and enjoin the doing of what is right; and turn away from those who choose to remain ignorant. (7: 191-199)

Say: 'Have you thought of those whom you invoke besides God? Show me what part of the earth they have created, or which share of the heavens they own. Bring me a book revealed before this, or some other vestige of knowledge, if what you claim is true'. (4) Who is in greater error than one who invokes, instead of God, such as will not respond to him till the Day of Resurrection, and are not even conscious of being invoked? (5) When all mankind are gathered [for





judgement], these will be enemies to them and will disown their worship. (46: 4-6)

God Himself bears witness, and so do the angels and men of knowledge, that there is no deity other than Him, the executor of Justice. There is no deity save Him, the Almighty, the Wise. (3: 18)

For a certainty, God does not forgive that partners are associated with Him. He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. He who associates partners with God contrives an awesome sin indeed. (48)

Luqumān said to his son, admonishing him: 'My dear son! Do not associate any partners with God; for, to associate partners with Him is indeed a great wrong'. (31: 13)

It has been revealed to you, and to those before you, that if you ever associate partners with God, all your works shall certainly come to nothing, and you shall certainly be among the lost. (39: 65)

God's forgiveness of sins

Every human being is liable to make mistakes and commit errors. In moments of weakness or strong desire, a person may slip into some sinful action. God commands all those who err or commit a sin to hasten and appeal to Him for forgiveness. He promises to forgive them their sins when they pray for forgiveness, and to wipe away their bad deeds if they turn to Him in repentance. Among His good names are the Much-Forgiving, the One who accepts repentance. He confirms this in many Qur'anic verses, such as:





Say: '[Thus speaks God]: You servants of Mine who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of God's mercy: God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (39: 53)

When those who believe in God's revelations come to you, say: 'Peace be upon you. Your Lord has committed Himself to bestow grace and mercy: if any of you does a bad deed out of ignorance, and then repents and mends his ways, He will be much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (6: 54)

It is He who accepts the repentance of His servants and who pardons bad deeds. He knows everything you do. (42: 25)

As an aspect of God's grace, He has left the chance to repent of one's sins open throughout one's life. Whenever a person genuinely repents his sin and promises not to repeat it, God will accept his repentance, unless he does this when he is in the throes of death, when repentance becomes useless. God says:

God will indeed accept the repentance of only those who do evil out of ignorance, and then repent shortly afterwards. It is they to whom God turns in His mercy. God is all-knowing, wise. (17) Repentance shall not be accepted from those who indulge in their evil deeds and, when death comes to any of them, he says: 'I now repent'; nor from those who die as unbelievers. For those We have prepared painful suffering. (4: 17-18)

Seeking God's forgiveness is a matter of a direct relationship between us and God. There is no intermediary. We need not make a confession to anyone other than God. We may not seek forgiveness from anyone other than Him. It is to Him





alone that an appeal for forgiveness should be addressed. Whenever a sinner turns to God regretting his sin, God accepts his repentance and forgives his sin. Describing His repentant servants, He says: 'Those who, when they commit a gross indecency or wrong themselves, remember God and pray for the forgiveness of their sins – for who but God can forgive sins? – and do not knowingly persist in doing the wrong they may have done'. (3: 135)

God answers people's supplications

God commands His servants to pray to Him and put their requests and what they need or wish to Him alone. He promises to answer their supplications. However, answering supplications does not necessarily mean to fulfil what a servant of God appeals for. God knows everything and His wisdom is infinite. Therefore, He may delay answering a person's supplication for a reason He knows, but which is unknown to the supplicant who has limited knowledge and understanding. God may even give His servant something better than what He requests of Him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When a Muslim says a prayer that involves neither sin nor a severance of family relations, God will give him one of three things: He either gives him directly what he prayed for, or He may store it for him to give it as a reward in the Hereafter, or He may avert some equal evil from him'. The Prophet's companions said: 'Then we will pray much'. The Prophet said: 'God gives even more'.⁽¹⁾ God includes His order that His servants should pray to Him in several verses some of which are as follows:

(1) Related by Ahmad, 11,133.





If My servants ask you about Me, well, I am near; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls to Me. Let them then respond to Me, and believe in Me, so that they may follow the right way. (2: 186)

Your Lord says: 'Call on Me, and I shall answer you. Those who are too proud to worship Me shall enter hell humiliated'. (40: 60)

Who is it that responds to the one in distress when he calls out to Him, and who removes the ill, and makes you inherit the earth? Could there be any deity alongside God? Little do they reflect! (27: 62)

To worship God

Worship is obedience of God in fulfilling whatever He has made obligatory on us, doing it in full submission to God, expressing our love of God and glorifying Him. God makes it clear that He has brought His creation into existence so that they may worship Him. He says: 'I have not created the jinn and mankind to any end other than that they may worship Me. (56) No sustenance do I require of them, nor do I require that they should feed Me. (57) God is indeed the Provider of all sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Ever-Mighty'. (51: 56-58)

Everything and every creature in the universe glorifies God and worships Him. The heavens and the earth, and all what they contain, are subservient to God and glorify Him, extolling His praises. He says: 'The seven heavens extol His limitless glory, as does the earth, and all who dwell in them. Indeed every single thing extols His glory and praise, but you cannot understand their praises. He is indeed clement, much-forgiving'. (17: 44)





These celestial bodies glorify God by being subservient to His will, while the worship of human beings and the jinn are by their own will because God has given them freedom of choice. Therefore, when they offer their worship, they do it by will. Hence, God grants those who obey Him very generous reward and warns the disobedient that they incur His punishment.

God's command that mankind should worship Him is frequently expressed in the Qur'an, as in: 'Mankind, worship your Lord who has created you and those who lived before you, so that you may become God-fearing'. (2: 21) 'You should worship Me alone. This is the straight path'. (36: 61)

God's messengers repeatedly urged their people to worship God, Mighty and Exalted. Every prophet said to his community: 'Worship God alone. You have no deity other than Him'. (7: 59) Jesus said to his people: 'Children of Israel, worship God who is my Lord and your Lord'. (5: 72)

God's worship includes offering the obligatory and recommended prayers, supplication, helping the poor, kindness to people, dutifulness to parents, etc. It also includes steering away from whatever is forbidden. The worst of these sins are offering worship to anyone other than God, killing innocent people, taking unlawfully other people's property, adultery, undutifulness to parents, etc.

The true faith

We do not choose our faith. It is God who has chosen it and approved of it. Hence, He sent His messengers to preach the true faith. All God's messengers advocated its central principle, which is God's oneness. They all confirmed that worship must be addressed to God alone, and that no aspect of worship may be offered to anyone other than God, Mighty





and Exalted. He says: 'Indeed, We have raised a messenger in every community, who said to them: "Worship God and shun the Evil One"'. (16: 36)

The codes of law given to God's messengers differed as life developed. Every new code of law abrogated its predecessor, until mankind attained maturity and acquired a proper standard of knowledge. Then God sent the last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), delivering God's final message, which is the message of Islam. God made it the faith that is suitable for mankind until the end of human life. The code of law, i.e. the Shariah, given to Prophet Muhammad abrogated all past codes of law. As such, God does not accept any faith, from any person, other than Islam, as He says: 'He who seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he will be among the lost'. (3: 85)

Islam is the religion God has approved for mankind. He has made it complete, perfecting His blessing for them, as He says: 'This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you'. (5: 3) He also says: 'The only true faith acceptable to God is Islam [i.e. man's self-surrender to God]'. (3: 19)

It is not open for anyone to choose any religion other than Islam to seek God's pleasure. Every road other than the road of Islam will not lead to God, as He says: 'Know that this is the way leading to Me, a straight path. Follow it, then, and do not follow other ways, for they cause you to deviate from His way'. (6: 153)

Islam, then, is the right way while all other ways will only lead people astray and leave them in confusion. They are



described by God as false fabrication, as He says: 'Who could be more wicked than one who invents a falsehood about God, when he is only being called upon to submit to Him [i.e. to embrace Islam]? God does not bestow His guidance upon the wrongdoers'. (61: 7)

God has placed many right signs in Islam, indicating that it is certainly true. Everyone who learns about Islam will soon realize that their minds understand it, and their nature approve of it. They will recognize that it is God's message to mankind. The problem with those who do not follow Islam is not one of lack of conviction of its truth; their problem is that they have not been rightly and fully informed about it. Had they learnt and understood it, they would have been convinced of its truth.

The prophets

Prophets are mentioned in the Qur'an with praise. They are celebrated as the perfect model to emulate. Honoured prophets are frequently mentioned in the Qur'an. Noah is mentioned forty-three times, Abraham sixty-three times, Moses one hundred and thirty-one times, Jesus twenty-five times, while Muhammad is mentioned four times. Other prophets are also mentioned, such as Zachariah, Yahyā [i.e. John], Aaron, David, Solomon and several others.

The Qur'an makes it absolutely clear that it is obligatory to believe in all prophets, drawing no distinction between them. They are all God's messengers whom He has chosen and given them His message. He says:

Say [all of you], 'We believe in God and in what has been revealed to us, and in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus, and in what



all prophets have been given by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to God we have surrendered ourselves'. (136) If they come to believe in the way you believe, they will be rightly guided; but if they turn away, they will be in schism, but God will protect you from them; He hears all and knows all. (2: 136-137)

We have sent revelations to you just as We did send revelations to Noah and the prophets after him; as We sent revelations to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron and Solomon, and as We vouchsafed to David a Book of divine wisdom, (163); and as [We inspired other] messengers whom We have mentioned to you previously, as well as other messengers whom We have not mentioned to you. And God has spoken His word directly to Moses. (164) [These] were messengers sent to bring good news and to give warning, so that people may have no argument against God once these messengers [had come]. God is almighty, wise. (165) However it be, God [Himself] bears witness to the truth of what He has bestowed from on high to you: with His knowledge He bestowed it from on high; and the angels also bear witness to that; although God is sufficient as a witness. (4: 163-166)

Indeed, We have raised a messenger in every community, [who said to them]: 'Worship God and shun the Evil One'. Among them were some whom God graced with His guidance, while others were inevitably doomed by their error. Go, then, about the earth and





observe what was the end of those who denied the truth. (16: 36)

Knowing Prophet Muhammad

Several verses of the Qur'an speak about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasizing that he was a human being, a servant of God whom He had chosen to be His last Messenger. These verses also make it clear that the message given to him is intended for all people across all generations and places. The Qur'an also mentions some of his noble characteristics and superior moral values. God says:

Say: 'I am but a human being like yourselves. It has been revealed to me that your God is the One and only God. Hence, whoever expects to meet his Lord [on Judgement Day], let him do what is right, and in the worship due to his Lord admit no one as partner'. (18: 110)

Indeed there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves: one who grieves much that you should suffer; one who is full of concern for you; and who is tender and full of compassion towards the believers. (9: 128)

We have sent you as a [manifestation of Our] grace towards all the worlds. (21: 107)

Most certainly, yours is a sublime character. (68: 4)

Indeed, God bestowed a favour on the believers when He sent them a messenger from among themselves, to recite to them His revelations, and to purify them, and teach them the Book and wisdom, whereas before that they were surely in plain error. (164)



Prophet! We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news and a warner; one who calls people to God by His leave and a light-giving beacon. (33: 45-46)

Qur'anic verses clearly state that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a human being. He was not an angel, nor someone to be worshipped. He was a servant of God and His Messenger, as God says:

Say, 'Limitless in His glory is my Lord. Surely I am only a man and a Messenger'. (17: 93)

Say: 'I do not say to you that God's treasures are with me; nor do I know what is beyond the reach of human perception; nor do I say to you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me'. Say: 'Can the blind and the seeing be deemed equal? Will you not reflect?' (6: 50)

The Prophet clearly stated that the line of prophethood and God's messengers had come to its end as he was the final Messenger. He made clear that there was no possibility that any new prophet would be sent after him. No new code of law would be vouchsafed. This was an exceptional case in the history of prophethood. It is clearly stated in the Qur'an: 'Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but is God's Messenger and the seal of all prophets. God has indeed full knowledge of everything'. (33: 40) The Prophet said: 'There will be no other prophet after me'.⁽¹⁾

Neither Prophet Moses nor Prophet Jesus denied that a future prophet would come after them. On the contrary, they confirmed that another prophet would be sent. Moses spoke

(1) Related by al-Bukhari, 3,455; Muslim, 1,842.

of Jesus being given a message after him, and Jesus foretold of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon all of them).

Muhammad was the only one among all prophets who did not mention that another prophet would follow him. On the contrary, he confirmed in his own words and in a Qur'anic statement that he was the final prophet, and that no other prophet would come after him. His assertion has come true. Despite the passage of many centuries, no new prophet has declared himself as such. In the history of prophethood, no such long period has ever lapsed without God sending a new prophet.

The Qur'an highlights the role of reason

Countless Qur'anic verses address the human mind and urge people to allow it to function fully. God says: 'In this there are clear signs indeed for people who use their reason'. (30: 24) 'Will you not, then, use your reason.' (23: 80) 'In this there are clear signs indeed for people who think.' (13: 3) The Qur'an considers it shameful that people should blindly follow their ancestors without questioning or using their reason. God says: 'When it is said to them, "Follow what God has revealed", they say, "No; but we will follow only what we found our forefathers believing in". Why, even if their forefathers did not use reason at all, and followed no guidance'. (2: 170)

The Qur'an takes issue with those who disuse their minds, making no attempt to think and reflect. They just behave as if they have no mental faculties, since they do not use their minds to consider their most important need, which is the faith they should follow. God says: 'They have hearts they cannot understand with'. (7: 179)

The Qur'an explains that God has given man the rational ability to distinguish truth from falsehood. He has also given him freedom of choice, holding him responsible for the consequences of his choices. God says: 'We have created man from a drop of mingled fluid, so that We might try him. Therefore, we have endowed him with hearing and sight. We have shown him the way, [giving him the choice] to be thankful or ungrateful'. (76: 2-3) 'Say: "The truth has now come from your Lord. Let him who wills, believe in it, and let him who wills, reject it"'. (18: 29) 'There shall be no compulsion in religion. The right way is henceforth distinct from error.' (2: 256)

No issue of faith discussed in the Qur'an will cause any difficulty or strain for the human mind. On the contrary, whatever the Qur'an states will be found consistent with proper reasoning and rational concepts. It is in perfect agreement with sound human nature.

The most important issue that everyone should address, using their minds with serious contemplation, is that which raises the most important questions about man's position: Where have I come from? What is my real mission in life? Where do I go from here? Man will not find reassuring and convincing answers except in divine revelations. The true revelation which humanity has is the Qur'an and it gives answers to all these critical questions. Whoever looks seriously at this issue and exerts his effort to arrive at the truth, seeking God's guidance, will receive God's help and be guided to the truth.

On the other hand, a person who lightly dismisses this question, giving little serious thought to it, turning away from God's message without thinking carefully about it commits a



crime against himself. He puts himself in a state of confusion and exposes himself to a loser's destiny. God says: 'He who turns away from My message shall have a straitened life and we shall raise him blind on the Day of Resurrection'. (20: 124) 'Who does a greater wrong than one who is reminded [of the truth] by his Lord's revelations but he, nevertheless, turns away from them? We shall certainly inflict Our retribution on the ones who are guilty.' (32: 22)

The brotherhood of mankind

When God addresses mankind, He does not direct his address to any race or community. He rather gives His address by attributing all mankind to their first father, saying: 'Children of Adam'. Thus, He brings all their races, colours and nations together, uniting them all in one community, removing all marks of racial distinction between them. Qur'anic verses state that the essence of relations between all people on earth is that of getting to know one another through cooperation. God says: 'Children of Adam! We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Truly, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most genuinely God-fearing. God is all-knowing, all-aware'. (49: 13)

Qur'anic verses clearly state that God has honoured mankind generally, from the time of Adam, our first ancestor. There is not any especially honoured race, or one which is of lesser status and less honour. God says: 'We have indeed honoured the Children of Adam, and borne them over land and sea, and provided for them sustenance out of the good things of life, and favoured them far above many of Our creatures'. (17: 70)

The Qur'an states that human relations with the world at large should be built on extending kindness, friendly treatment,



justice, and fairness in the case of disagreement. God says: 'God does not forbid you to deal kindly and with full equity with those who do not fight you on account of your faith, nor drive you out of your homes. God loves those who behave equitably'. (60: 8)

The Qur'an stresses the need to be kind to those who are in a situation of weakness and need, even though they may be enemy soldiers who have been taken captive. A captive is in a situation of weakness and, as such, he deserves to be kindly treated. Referring to the qualities of His servants to be honoured in Heaven, God says: 'They give food – though they need it themselves – to the needy, the orphan and the captive'. (76: 8) The common condition of all these three categories is that of weakness, and whereby they need help.

Relationships with parents

God reminds us of the care our parents take of us when we are young and weak, and the sustained effort they exert in our upbringing. He makes clear that dutifulness and good company are owed to them by right, even though they continue to adhere to a different faith: 'We have enjoined upon man goodness to his parents: his mother bore him going from weakness to weakness, and his weaning takes place within two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents. With Me is the end of all journeys. (14) Yet should they endeavour to make you associate as partner with Me something of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them, but [even then] bear them company in this world's life with kindness, and follow the path of those who turn towards Me. In the end, it is to Me that you shall all return, when I shall inform you about all that you were doing [in life].' (31: 14-15)



In the Qur'an, God stresses the importance of being dutiful to one's parents, and treating them with respect and kindly companionship. He attaches their right to His own right to stress once more their status and their claims. He says: 'Your Lord has ordained that you shall worship none but Him, and that you must be kind to your parents. Should one of them, or both, attain to old age in your care, never say 'Ugh' to them or chide them, but always speak gently and kindly to them, (23) and spread over them humbly the wings of your tenderness, and say, "My Lord, bestow on them Your grace, even as they reared and nurtured me when I was a child". Your Lord knows best what is in your hearts. If you are righteous, He is certainly most-forgiving to those who turn repeatedly to Him, seeking His mercy'. (17: 23-24)

Moral values

Qur'anic verses stress the importance of moral values and good manners. They urge believers to hold on to these, as they are part of worship, in addition to the fact that they are needed in maintaining good relations with people. Stating the truth is an act of worship, as is kindness to people. The same may be said about being true to one's promises and commitments. All these are generously rewarded by God. He says:

Believers, have fear of God and be among those who are truthful. (9: 119)

It is only those who do not believe in God's revelations that invent falsehood. It is they indeed who are liars. (16: 105)

Believers! No men shall deride other men: it may well be that those [whom they deride] are better than themselves. And no women [shall deride other] women:





it may well be that those [whom they deride] are better than themselves. And neither shall you defame yourselves, nor insult one another by [opprobrious] epithets. Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness [to be used of one] after he has believed. Those who do not repent are indeed wrongdoers. (11) Believers! Avoid suspicion as much as possible, for, some such suspicion is a sin. And do not spy on one another, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you would loathe it. And remain God-fearing. God is certainly the One who accepts repentance, and He is ever-merciful. (49: 11-12)

God enjoins justice, kindness [to all], and generosity to one's kindred; and He forbids all that is shameful, all reprehensible conduct and aggression. He admonishes you so that you may take heed. (16: 90)

God commands you to deliver whatever you have been entrusted with to their rightful owners, and whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice. Most excellent is what God exhorts you to do. God hears all and sees all. (4: 58)

Women in the Qur'an

Women are mentioned in the Qur'an and they are given their status, ever since the creation of the first woman, Eve, the mother of all mankind. God mentions His creation of Adam and the creation of his wife together, so that the first human family is started. God says: 'Children of Adam! We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another'. (49: 13)





When God addresses His servants in the Qur'an, His address is general, applicable to both men and women. He says: 'Their Lord answers them: "I will not suffer the work of any worker among you, male or female, to be lost. Each of you is the issue of the other"'. (3: 195)

But anyone, be it man or woman, who does good deeds and is a believer, shall enter paradise and shall not suffer the least injustice. (4: 124)

Whoever does righteous deeds, whether man or woman, and is a believer, We shall most certainly give a good life. And We shall indeed reward these according to the best that they ever did. (16: 97)

For all men and women who have submitted themselves to God, all believing men and believing women, all truly devout men and truly devout women, all men and women who are true to their word, all men and women who are patient in adversity, all men and women who humble themselves before God, all men and women who give in charity, all men and women who fast, all men and women who are mindful of their chastity, and all men and women who always remember God – for them all God has prepared forgiveness of sins and a mighty reward. (33: 35)

To give a role model for believers, men and women, God cites two great female believers, stating that they are the role models for all believers. He says:

God has also given examples of believers: Pharaoh's wife, who said: 'My Lord! Build me a mansion in heaven near You, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings, and save me from the wrongdoing folk'. (11)





And Mary, the daughter of [Imran, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed of Our spirit into her. She accepted the truth of her Lord's words and His revealed Books. She was truly devout. (66: 11-12)

Mary is given special status in the Qur'an as is her mother. Mary is stated in the same context as are God's noble messengers. God says: 'And remember her who guarded her chastity, whereupon We breathed into her of Our spirit and caused her, together with her son, to become a sign for all mankind'. (21: 91) Mary's mother is also praised in the Qur'an. God says: 'Imrān's wife said: 'My Lord, I vow to you that which is in my womb, to be devoted to Your service. Accept it from me. You alone are the One who hears all and knows all'. When she had given birth she said: 'My Lord, I have given birth to a female'. – God well knew to what she would give birth. – 'The male is not like the female. I have named her Mary and I seek Your protection for her and her offspring against Satan, the accursed'. (3: 35-36) Mary's special status is further highlighted in the Qur'an as it mentions that God chose her and the angels praised her: 'The angels said: "Mary, God has chosen you and made you pure, and raised you above all the women of the world. (42) Mary, remain truly devout to your Lord, prostrate yourself (to Him) and bow down with those who bow down in worship"'. (3: 42-43) God has made Mary a sign for all mankind, because she was the most pure, chaste and pious woman.





Qur'anic Rules



Many Qur'anic verses state rules that apply to life and establish a system of relations between people. These rules use a few words to express extensive meanings. Here are a few of these rules:

Speak kindly to all people

This rule applies to all speech and whatever people may say to each other. They should choose good words, steering away from whatever is vulgar or hurtful, even when speaking to people who follow different religions. God says: 'Do not argue with the people of earlier revelations in other than the most kindly manner'. (29: 46) The same idea is expressed in another verse: 'Tell My servants that they should always say that which is best'. (17: 53) A Muslim should not say a word when he can use a better one. He should always say the best.

Do not forget to act benevolently towards one another

This rule urging benevolent action occurs in Verse 2:237 which speaks about divorce. The verse concludes with giving this rule, reminding Muslims to always remember to act benevolently. If benevolent action is urged at the time of the break-up of the marital relationship, it should be more





diligently observed in easier times when relations are good and steady. We must always remember this and stick to it.

No one shall be made to bear the burden of another

This is a clear truth which is mentioned several times in the Qur'an. It emphasizes the principle of individual responsibility, making it clear that every person is responsible for their own deeds. Those who follow guidance stand to gain, and those who go astray carry their burden. No one shall be made to account for the deeds of another. No one shall have a reward which is due to someone else. God says: 'No soul shall bear the burden of another; and man will only have what he strives for'. (53: 38-39) Everyone will be entitled to the reward of his own good deeds.

The feeling that everyone will account for their own deeds is reassuring. No one needs to worry about being held responsible for someone else's errors, or the sins committed by an earlier person.

Seek by means of what God has granted you the good of the life to come, without forgetting your rightful share in this world

This was advice given to Qārūn [i.e. Korah] when God granted him great treasures. He was extremely delighted but he was unjust to his people, behaving arrogantly. Their advice was comprehensive, directing him to the proper way of dealing with riches. They told him that he should use his wealth in ways that enhanced his position in the life to come, where his permanent destiny would be. That he should devote some of his wealth for this purpose, without neglecting to enjoy the good life of this world. This is, in effect, the proper advice to establish right balance, enabling a person to go through this



life preparing for the life to come, without depriving himself of enjoying the good things in this present life.

The noblest of you in God's sight is the most God-fearing

This is a sentence which occurs in a Qur'anic verse, complementing and clarifying its meanings. It says: 'Children of Adam! We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Truly, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most genuinely God-fearing. God is all-knowing, all-aware'. (49: 13)

This verse mentions the major principles that apply to all people. It mentions that God is the Lord of all mankind. He created them all from the same origin, starting with their first parents, Adam and Eve. Their variety as different tribes, communities, countries and colours should not lead to differences and conflict. On the contrary, it should lead to getting to know one another and cooperating with one another.

In order to achieve justice in human dealings, this verse discards all the worldly considerations that divide people, bringing about conflict between them and leading them to fight each other. These considerations include allegiance to trivial matters such as race, colour or community, and also using one's position or wealth to claim authority over others. All such considerations are discarded. Instead, sublime moral values are stressed. These are summed up in the value of *taqwā*, which means being Godfearing and seeking His pleasure. This is the major value acceptable to God. It raises people above narrow ties so that they consider only their human bond that applies to all mankind.



Speak of your Lord's favours

This short verse states an order to speak about God's favours. It does not mention to whom one should speak about them. However, the first one to whom such an address about the favours one enjoys is made to oneself. Everyone should remember God's favours which they enjoy in this life. When any of these are withdrawn, we will not enjoy life.

Many are the favours that we are so used to that we do not feel. Let us think of the blessing of our reason which distinguishes us from animals, the good health we enjoy, the tasty bite of food we eat, the pleasant drink, the roof over our heads which gives us a feeling of security, the blessing of safety from approaching dangers, etc. We can mention many more favours, but we can hardly ever remember all of them. God says: 'Should you try to count God's blessings, you will never be able to compute them'. (16: 18) 'Whatever blessing you have comes from God.' (16: 53) When man thinks of the endless favours God gives him he will feel that they are plentiful and that he enjoys real richness. His feeling of depression will disappear. He then feels extremely grateful to God and thanks and loves Him. He extols His praises and puts his requests to Him alone.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say the supplication mentioning God's favours before he went to sleep. He used to say: 'All praise be to God who has fed us, given us our drink, given us enough and provided us with shelter. Many are the ones who have none to give them enough or provide them with shelter'.⁽¹⁾

(1) Related by Muslim, 2,715.



The Prophet mentions usual, daily favours. The fact that we are so used to them weakens our consciousness of them. However, when we mention them to ourselves, we are more able to appreciate them and thank God for them.





Epilogue



What I have included in this book is but a small number of the surahs of the Qur'an and a few of its verses. These provide glimpses of the great shining light of the Qur'an, and serve to inform us about this great Book.

Take any great book. You may read it once or twice, but when you attempt a third reading, you may get bored. However, this does not apply to the Qur'an, the greatest Book which you may read and recite a thousand times but will never tire of. Every time you read it, you will find in it something that surprises you as it will reveal to you some of its secrets that make you enjoy your reading even more.

It will open for you windows through which you see yourself and the universe around you. It will give a microscopic view of the smallest things, and a telescopic view of the farthest and greatest. It will take you to yourself, giving you something that cannot be described. This something will penetrate into your soul, and you will experience feelings of humility and awe that send a tear into your eye. You are like a tool, and this Book is the only one to explain your details, and identify the flaws in you, mending every disfunction. It is the map, the compass, the way ahead.



Every book reveals all its marvels, except this Book. From the first line in the first page to the last word in the final page, we have a solid and firm structure. It is free from error. Its chemistry is so marvellous that you will never discover the secret of the reaction it produces in you.

Take any other book and read it a few times. You will discover its flaws and mistakes. The only exception is the Qur'an. Every time you read it, you discover more of its marvellous perfection.



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Recommended Books



Here is a list of relevant books which readers may find useful and informative. A link is provided to make them readily available.

A Day in the Life of Muhammad

This is a study in the Prophet's daily programme, covering his activities from one morning to the next.

The Prophet's Life

This is an introduction of the Prophet's life in all its broad aspects, and how he dealt in his various roles as a husband, father and friend. How he dealt with his companions and his enemies. It also gives a full view of how he treated those who disagreed with him. The book shows us the Prophet's conduct at home, in the mosque with his companions, in the street, and in many other different situations. It shows us how a Muslim should conduct his life and his relationships with God, family and community. How he deals with his errors and his hobbies, as well as his attitude to other life affairs.



The Life Beyond

This book describes the life to come, starting with what happens after a person's death, relying on what God has told us about it.

To New Muslims

This book describes life when a person embraces Islam and how his new faith will affect his life. It discusses a new Muslim's relationships with God, his family and community, and how he deals with his past practices which are unacceptable to Islam, and with his hobbies, etc.

On Pilgrimage.. in the Prophet's Company

This book is a step by step study of the Prophet's pilgrimage. The reader is meant to imagine every part of the hajj, as if he is accompanying the Prophet (peace be upon him) on this blessed journey.



Download Books

Introducing The Qur'an

This short book gives a thorough introduction to the Qur'an. The author gives a brief idea of the revelation of the Qur'an, pointing out the main facts proving that it is God's book. He further explains that it is the only divine book that has been preserved as it was first revealed.

The author selects four surahs as a sample of what the Qur'an advocates. Surah 1 sums up the essential Islamic beliefs. Surah 19, relates the story of the virgin birth of Prophet Jesus, and refers to other prophets. Surah 50 gives the Islamic perspective of the present life and the hereafter, while Surah 112, which is very brief, focuses on God's oneness.

The book also highlights some of the Islamic beliefs as expressed in chosen Qur'anic verses, as well as a small number of Qur'anic rules. Thus, it gives a thorough introduction to the Qur'an and an insight into Islamic beliefs. As such, it will be found very useful by whoever wants to have a clear idea about Islam, as well as by newcomers to Islam and Muslims who never had an opportunity to study their faith.