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Introduction

Introduction

The Holy Qurán is the most widely read book in the history of mankind, a source of immense inspiration, guidance and wisdom for millions of Muslims all over the world. It is the pivotal point of *imaan*, faith, and integral to the foundations of an Islamic society being the basis of its *shariah*, Islamic legal injunctions and law. As such one of the aims of Minhaj-ul-Qurán is to ensure a continuous link remains between the body of the Islamic community, the *ummah* and its heart, the Holy Qurán. It is a book not just to be read, but to be studied, understood and ultimately revered. This paper is an attempt to provide an introduction to the Holy Qurán so that Muslims and non-Muslims alike can have an insight into its complexity but also understand its necessity to the Islamic faith and its importance to the Holy Prophet's (saw) status. The research regarding this paper is based entirely on the books, lectures and notes of Shaykh-ul-Islam so all credit is due to him for his unending efforts. However since I have had the honor to compile this paper I take the ultimate responsibility of any mistakes that may occur in this compilation, I thus seek forgiveness from Almighty Allah for any errors that may occur.

Meaning of the Word Qurán

The Holy Qur'an is the literal word of Allah (swt), divinely revealed to Prophet Muhammad (saw) through the Angel Gibraeel (as). Before any attempt is made to describe the meanings of the word "Qur'an" the etymological base of the Arabic language needs a brief explanation first. The Arabic language is one of the richest languages in the world word containing many meanings and hidden depths, which have no comparison in the English language. In order to appreciate the true meaning and understanding of a particular word a threefold inquiry has to take place, looking into the:

1. etymological base of each word
2. its grammatical category
3. its contextual location

Etymological Aspect of Each Word

Most Arabic words have a root word consisting of 3 or 4 letters. These root words form the foundation of many nouns, verbs and adjectives. One root word can be responsible for a whole host of words. Any Arabic word that consists of the same 3 letters will have the same root word as its origins. In Arabic a root word is called "*Mada*" meaning subject matter. Every root word has its own individual meaning and the basic meanings travel into every noun or verb that is created. Once vowel sounds of the Arabic language are inserted into the root word they give a more precise and specific meaning.

Grammatical Category

Secondly every noun, verb or adjective also belongs to a specific grammatical or composite category, which have its own particular properties and meanings. These words carry on those characteristics and meanings in addition to the root word itself. Once the original meaning of the root word is combined with the prevailing grammatical and composite characteristics of that word this is then studied in light of the context of the original matter in discussion.

Contextual Location

Once the above two stages take place then the word in question is studied in light of the context, usage, contents and subject matter of its placement. This will finally lead to the exact and precise meaning of the word and give a true picture of what the writer is trying to convey. One has to remember that in the context of the Holy Qur'an, this is a divinely revealed book of God. As such every word can be taken to have been specially chosen for man to read and then understand as the Arabic language has an enormous breadth of vocabulary. Thus a detailed knowledge of Arabic grammar and linguistics as well as the language itself needs to be understood before any attempt can be made to provide a comprehensive "*tafseer*" or explanation of the Qur'anic verses.

Root Words of the Qur'an

The word Qur'an can be derived from four root words, each with their own individual meanings. The first root word is "*qara'a*" whose literal meaning is to collect or to compile. In this respect the Qur'an is a book which was collected and codified under the divine protection of Allah (swt). When Angel Gibraeel (a.s) used to bring the divine revelation of Allah (swt) to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) he had already been instructed by God to reveal the exact placement of each ayah (in the relevant Surah) as well as the arrangement of the Surah's and their names. Since this was the case it was impossible for others to interfere in the Qur'an in any manner or form. It will remain in its actual and original state until the Day of Judgement the Qur'an itself testifies to its divine protection:

"It is for us to collect and recite it" (75:17)

In the context of the Qur'an, the word *qara'a* is also taken as being the book which contains all knowledge of the universe. Every aspect of life as we know has been codified and collected within it^[1]. An answer to any question man wishes to have answered can be found in the verses of the Holy Qur'an:

"And we have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a guide, a mercy and glad tidings to Muslims". (16:89)

"A detailed exposition of every thing". (12:11)

"We have omitted nothing from the book". (6:)

The second root word is “*qar’ana*” meaning a union or conjunction. The root word does not specify what the union consists of, merely that a process of combination is indicated. In reference to the Qur’an this refers to the literal physical existence of the Qur’an and its properties. Imaam Fakr-al-Deen Razi quotes Imaam Sufyan Sorri as stating that the Holy Qur’an was given its own special name because letters are joined to make words, words are joined to make ayahs, ayahs are joined to make surahs and surahs are joined to make the Qur’an. This beautiful combination of literature has produced the most magnificent book in the world.

Another academic implication of the word “*qar’ana*” is that the Qur’an is combined with guidance, the two being inseparable. The Holy Qur’an refers to this combination:

“This is the book: it is guidance sure, without doubt”. (2:2)

“Here is a plain statement. To one, a guidance and instruction to those who fear Allah”. (3:138)

“For one who had certainly sent unto them a book, based on knowledge, which we explained in detail; a guidance and mercy to all those who believe”. (7:52)

“There are clear evidences to me, and a guidance and mercy to those of assured faith”. (45:20)

The third root word is “*qira’athun*” meaning to read or recite. In reference to the Qur’an this is one of its most important features. Although other books that claim to be divinely revealed are also read and recited, the Holy Qur’an has a specific characteristic, superiority and individuality compared to them. This is because it is the most widely read book in the world. Millions of Muslims all over the world recite it in their daily prayers 5 times a day. The Qur’an is read and recited daily in what is called ‘*tilawat*’ where Muslims read the Qur’an whenever they have some spare time to get the Blessings of Almighty Allah. During the month of Ramadhan the entire Qur’an is recited over a period of 30 days in the special ‘*tharawih* prayers [2]’, as well as being individually read by Muslims in their homes. Often, during this month of fasting, each member of the household will have completely read and finished the Qur’an at least once if not twice.

As well as being read and recited, the Qur’an acts as a practical guide in all affairs of Muslims, be they social, cultural, legal, economic or political. Unlike its biblical counterpart, the Qur’an does not merely contain stories of Prophets or an analogue of Islamic history. Rather it contains an array of topics to be of use in ones daily life. Codes of behavior and their limits are explained, mutual rights and responsibilities of men, women, children are laid down as well as international principles to be used to govern communities, countries and nations. The Qur’an acts as a practical guide of life to Muslims in the personal and official spheres of life. To make it more accessible to different nations and peoples of various countries, it has been translated in almost every language of the world.

Furthermore, from the period of the Holy Prophet (saw) up until the present day some 1400 hundred years later, millions of Muslims have learnt the Qur'an off by heart[3]. It is unimaginable how many people must have learnt the Qur'an over the last 14 centuries, suffice to say no other book can claim to have these particular traits attached to it. And this trend and inclination will continue till the Day of Judgement.

The fourth and final root word of the word Qur'an is "*qira'in*" which is the plural of "*qarina*" which meaning evidence, argument or symbol. In the context of the Qur'an this is taken to mean how one verse interprets, elaborates and gives arguments and evidences for previous verses. In ayah 5 of surah Al-Fatiha[4] for example, man is told to ask Allah for the right path:

"Guide us Thou on the right path".

The following verse then answers this request and explains what the right path is:

"The path of those whom You have favored. Not those who have earned your anger or gone astray". (1:6-7)

So the Qur'an is self-evident and self-explanatory. If one verse gives a general meaning than the other gives a more specific definition. Similarly if one verse gives an absolute commandment then the other verse will give its exceptions and qualifications. The Holy Qur'an testifies to this fact:

"Oh mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof from your Lord for we have sent into you a light (that is manifest)". (4:174)

Moreover the Qur'an contains 100's of evidences of its own truthfulness being the best evidence of the truth of its claim. That is why a challenge was given to the non-believers that if all of mankind and jinn kind were to come together to create a similar or equal book to that of the Qur'an they would fail, this being an impossibility:

"Say. If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support." (17:88)

Fourteen hundred centuries have passed and no change or alteration has taken place in the Holy Qur'an. The text that is present today is exactly the same text that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (saw). This is so despite hundreds of attempts by non-Muslims to try and insert alterations and changes into the Qur'an. That is why Allah (swt) himself gives it divine protection:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the message; And We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)". (15:9)

Just as there have been no alterations made to the Qur'an, similarly there are no conflicts or contradictions in the text of the Holy Qur'an. If one reads the beautiful verses each one

compliments the next. The surahs and ayah's of the Qur'an work in consistent harmony with each other. The Holy Qur'an is truly a uniform piece of work. In contrast the Encyclopaedia of America for example states that there are about 30,000 errors in the text of the bible and in its various versions. Although the accuracy of this type of observation is open to debate, what is clear is that any book that claims to be divinely revealed would surely not even entertain one error let alone hundreds or thousands of errors. The very nature of God, His Omnipotence, All Knowing and Most Powerful nature presupposes that His divinely given book would be clean of all mistakes. Indeed the Holy Qur'an is a living testament to that fact.

Names of the Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an has been referred to by many different names in the holy text. The word Qur'an itself can be found in the scriptures:

"We do relate unto you the most beautiful stories, in that We reveal to thee this (portion of the) Qur'an: Before this thou too was among those who knew it not." (Yusuf, 12:3)

"Nay this is a glorious Qur'an (inscribed) in a tablet preserved". (Al-Buruj, 85:21-22)

However Allah Almighty refers to the Holy Qur'an using several other names:

al-nur the light (7:157)

al-hukm the judgment (13:37)

al-dhikr the reminder (15:9)

al-kitab the scripture (21:10)

al-furqan the criterion (25:1)

al-tanzil the revelation (26:192)

Further descriptive titles include *mubarak* (blessing)[5], *mussadiq* (confirmation of truth)[6], *mubin* (explanation)[7], *hakim* (wisdom)[8], *majid* (glorious)[9] and *karim* (honoured)[10]

Divine Revelation

Definition of "Wahi"

The Arabic word *wahi* comes from the root word *waha* and is used to describe divine revelation. It has a variety of different meanings in the Arabic language, being interpreted as "a quick or divine indication", "to give or convey a message" or "gentle speech". In Islamic terminology, *wahi* can be precisely defined as God's divine message conveyed to Allah's chosen persons (Prophets). This message can be conveyed openly or in a hidden and concealed manner, imparting wisdom and knowledge that is beyond the material and physical realities of man.

The renowned scholar, Hafiz ibn Hajr as-Qalani defines *wahi* as that knowledge regarding the Shariah that Allah conveys to His Prophets. Imaam Qastalani states that *wahi* is information given to the Prophets by Allah Almighty, in the form of a book, through Angels or through dreams. Descriptions of *wahi* are also given in the Holy Qur'an:

"So we sent this inspiration to the mother of Musa" (28:7)

"Remember thy Lord inspired the Angels (with the message): I am with you" (8:12)

"Nor does He say (ought) of his own desire. It is no less than inspiration sent to him". (53:3-4)

"This is part of the tidings of the unseen which we reveal unto thee (oh Prophet) by inspiration". (3:44)

Literacy of the Holy Prophet (saw)

The very first revelation of the Holy Qur'an took place on the 15th night of Ramadhan in the year 610 AD. At this time the Holy Prophet (saw) had reached the age of 40. For many years it had become his practice to visit a small cave in mount Hira, situated around 3 miles from the city of Makkah. The Holy Prophet (saw) would retreat to this cave in solitude and meditate there for many days. He would take supplies of food and water and engage in long prayers. As the years progressed these periods of solitude became more pronounced extending his stay from days into weeks. During the month of Ramadhan Holy Prophet (saw) would keep fasts and spend the entire month in this spiritual state of solitude.

It was during one of these periods, in the year A.D 610 that the first revelation of the Qur'an began. In a Hadith related by Ayesha[11] (r.a) the Angel Gibraeel (a.s) came to the Holy Prophet (saw) and said *ikra*, "Read!". He replied: "I am not a reader". The Angel then held him, pressed him hard and released him and again said *ikra*, "Read!". The Prophet replied: "I am not a reader". The angel held and pressed him hard for a third time and said:

"Read, in the name of your Lord who created. It is He who created man from clots of blood. Read! Your Lord is the most bounteous, Who has taught the use of the pen. He has taught man what he did not know". (Al-Alaq, 96:5)

These were the very first verses of the Qur'an recited to Prophet Muhammad (saw). In recent times, in interpreting this Hadith many scholars have called the Prophet (saw) illiterate. In translating the above Hadith they quote the Prophet (saw) as saying "I cannot read" or "I do not know how to read". However this translation does not support what took place at that time. It does not make sense to interpret the Holy Prophet's (saw) words of "*Ma ana bi qarain*" as 'I cannot read' since the angel did not give him a book to read or a parchment of paper to read from. If the Holy Prophet (saw) had been given something to read then it would make sense to translate the words as "I cannot read". However in this instance Angel Gibraeel (a.s) was only asking the Holy Prophet (saw) to repeat the

word 'Read' after him. In order to fulfill this request the question of literacy is irrelevant since even a child can say the word 'read' if asked. Thus the more accurate translation of the Holy Prophet's (saw) words is "I am not a reader" which is still a literal translation of "*ma an bi qarain*". So why did he refuse to follow the Angel immediately? What is clear is that Allah Almighty had already imbued the Holy Prophet (saw) with the concept of *Tauheed*, the oneness of God. He never worshipped idols but believed in the God of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s). As this was the case the Prophet (saw) refused to read until he knew what he was being asked to say. This was a new era in his Prophethood, and the Holy Prophet (saw) knew this. Since he already believed in Allah (swt) he wanted to ensure that whatever he was asked to recite, being divine revelation, it must come from Allah the Almighty and none else. As soon as Angel Gibraeel (a.s) recited the entire verse, asking him to read in the name of his Lord, only then did the Holy Prophet (saw) recite the same.

Other commentators also wrongly interrupt the adjective of "*Ummi*", that was ascribed to the Holy Prophet (saw) in the Qur'an, as meaning un-lettered. This is a wrong and misguided view. The exact meaning of "*Ummi*" means someone who has had no formal education, or been instructed or taught by a tutor or teacher. The word "*Ummi*" comes from the root word of "Umm" meaning mother, root or origin. The Arabs of that time used the word *ummi* to describe themselves since no formal system of education was available meaning most Arabs had no recourse to learn how to read and write. So a person who has not been educated through the traditional means of the time was labeled *Ummi* i.e. someone who remains in their original form, original purity and originality as at birth. However in the case of the Holy Prophet (saw), it is true that he did not have any formal education or tuition. Nevertheless he was not confined to the normal modes of learning. God had decided to make him the last and final Prophet to be sent to mankind. As such Allah (swt) became responsible for his education teaching him all things necessary. The Holy Qur'an states:

"It is He who has taught the Qur'an. He has created man. He has taught him the intelligent speech". (55:2-4)

All '*Mufasareen*', commentators on the Holy Qur'an, unanimously agree that this verse refers to the Holy Prophet (saw), in that Allah taught His Prophet the Qur'an and intelligent speech. As we have seen earlier, one of the many meanings of the Qur'an is that it is the book encompassing all knowledge of the universe. So the Holy Prophet (saw) was not an ignorant or illiterate man but had been divinely educated by God Himself. Allah (swt) had bestowed him with intuitional guidance which is apparent from his personality. The Holy Prophet (saw) never worshipped idols nor did he indulge in gambling or drinking. He had a famous reputation for being truthful and honest and had no hint of any immoral practice in his daily life. All these traits were present in his personality before he received the call to Prophethood. This is even more amazing when one studies his life in the background of the pagan Arab society. The majority of the individuals did not distinguish between virtue and vice but were left to their own devices. Traits such as honesty, truthfulness and spirituality are created through the

prevailing conditions of the time and were virtually non-existent in pre-Islamic Arabia. Since there was no recourse to alternative education or training the pagan Arabs had so indulged in many uncivil practices. However the Holy Prophet (saw) had already been guided by Allah (swt) Himself and so was not left to be conditioned by the Arab culture and society.

Manner and Forms of Revelation

The Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Holy Prophet (saw) in a variety of different ways.

1. In the form of dreams:

Prophet Muhammad (saw) would sometimes receive divine revelations of the Holy Qur'an in the form of dreams. Ayesha (ra) narrates that the beginning of *Wahi* began in the form of true dreams. Whenever the Holy Prophet (saw) would see a dream its true meaning and significance it would become clear by the morning (Bukhari).

2. Revelation revealed directly into the heart :

The Holy Prophet (saw) also used to receive revelation directly into the heart. Imaam Hakim narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) stated: "Angel Gibraeel conveyed a message into my heart. That no man can die until his '*rizk*' or resources have been completed. So Man should fear God and try all means to achieve his resources. If there is a delay in receiving your due then do not go astray to achieve it for whatever you will receive will be through Allah and what he has already ordained"[12].

3. Revelation disclosed upon the sound of a bell:

Another method of revelation was at the sound of a bell. The Holy Prophet (saw) would hear the ringing of a bell or a musical sweet sound, which would be immediately followed by divine revelation. According to Hadrat Ayesha (r.a) once the divine revelation began, Angel Gibraeel (a.s) would come at various times with different ayahs of the Qur'an. According to her, the Holy Prophet (saw) himself stated that: "Sometimes *wahi* comes to me after a bell rings and that is a heavy time for me". (Bukhari)

This method of revelation appears to be the most difficult type for the Holy Prophet (saw) to bear. If he (saw) was mounted on a camel and received revelation after the ringing of a bell, the camel would be unable to bear its weight and be forced to come down upon its knees[13]. On another occasion it is narrated by Hadrat Zaid bin Thabit (r.a) that the Holy Prophet's (saw) thigh was resting on his thigh at the time of receiving *wahi*. The force of the revelation was so strong that it felt as if his own thigh was breaking[14]. Hadrat Ayesha (r.a) also reports that during these occasions the Holy Prophet's (saw) brow would sweat or that his face would become very red[15].

4. Revelation Brought by an Angel in the Form of a Man:

One of the most common ways of receiving revelation was through Angel Gibraeel (as). The Holy Qur'an states:

Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gibraeel – for he brings down the (revelation) to thy heart by Allah's will, a confirmation of what went before, and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe, - Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and apostles, to Gibraeel and Michale, - Lo! Allah is an enemy to those who reject faith" (Al-Bakarah: 2:97-98)

Angel Gibraeel (a.s) would sometimes come to the Holy Prophet (saw) in the form of a man[16]. Hadrat Ummi Salma (r.a) reports that: "once I saw Dhaya Qalbi in front of the Prophet (saw) talking to him. The Prophet (saw) then asked me: "Do you know who this man is?" I replied: "That was Dhaya Qalbi" By God I thought it was him but the Prophet of God (saw) later announced in his Kutbah it was the Angle Gibraeel"[17].

5. Revelation Through an Angel in his True Form:

Angel Gibraeel also came to the Holy Prophet (saw) in his actual angelic form. Hadrat Abdullah ibn Masood (r.a) narrates that Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: "When I saw Angel Gibraeel he had 600 wings"[18].

6. Revelation Directly from God:

God has directly communicated with some of His Prophets as with Prophet Musa (a.s) on Mount Toor. The Holy Prophet (saw) spoke directly with Allah (swt) during his ascent into the heavens, the Miraj. There, Allah (swt) gave divine revelation to his Holy Prophet (saw) concerning the obligatory prayers.

It is interesting to note how the differing methods of communication reach their climatic end with 'Kalam Elahi', Allah directly speaking to His beloved. Initially Allah (swt) beckons His Prophet (saw) gently through dreams. Then revelation is communicated directly into his heart. Thereafter the Angel Gibraeel (a.s) comes with revelation in the form of a man. As the Holy Prophet (saw) draws closer and closer to Allah (swt) Angel Gibraeel (a.s) is shown in his full glory to him. Finally Allah (swt) calls His beloved Prophet (saw) to the heavens and talks to him directly in the finale of the Miraj-un-Nabi.

Process of Divine Revelation

The Beginning of Revelation

According to its own testification the Holy Qur'an was revealed in the month of Ramadhan on the night of power. "Ramadhan is the (month) in which we sent down the Qur'an,.."(Al Baqara 2:185)

"We have indeed revealed this (message) in the night of Power" (Al-Qadr 97:1).

At first glance these verses appear to be at odds with Islamic history suggesting the Holy Qur'an was revealed in one go on the night of *laila al qadr*, the night of power, rather than

in stages. However this point is clarified by Hadrat Abdullah ibn Abbas[19] who states that the Qur'an was revealed in one go from *lauh al-mahfuz*, 'the tablet of destiny' to the lower heaven, *bait al izzat*, 'house of honour' on the night of *Qadri* (power). It was from this lower heaven that the Qur'an was revealed in stages onto the earth, the first revelation having taken place on the night of power. The Holy Prophet (saw) then quoted an ayah

OF QUR'AN TO SUPPORT THIS VIEW:

“(It is) a Qur'an which we have divided (into Parts from time to time), in order that thou mightiest recite it to men. At intervals we have revealed it by stages”

(Al-Sail 17:106).

Imaam Faqir-uddin-Razi, Imaam Hafiz ibn Qaseer and Imaam Qurtubi state that those parts of the Qur'an which were to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (saw) in one year would first be revealed in the heavens on the Night Of Qadr in advance. Sheikh Sarwardi however is of the opinion that once the Holy Qur'an was revealed in one go in the heavens it was then given in the custody of Angle Gibraeel (a.s) who would reveal it in stages to the Holy Prophet (saw) when required. However the majority of scholars, including Imaam Shaitibi and Imaam ibn Hajr as-Qalani[20] conclude that the Holy Qur'an was first revealed in its entirety in the heavens[21] and then revealed in stages to Prophet Muhammad (saw) in the methods already outlined above.

RECORDING OF REVELATION:

The first method of recording the verses of the holy Qur'an was through memorization. Upon receipt of wahi the Holy Prophet (saw) would immediately commit all passages revealed to him to his memory, which is known as *hifz*: “...an apostle from God, rehearsing scriptures, kept pure and holy...(98:2) Thereafter he would recite the same to his Companions. Hadrat ibn Mas'ud was the first to recite the Qur'an publicly in Makkah. The Arabs of this time were generally an illiterate nation but were great fans of poetry and tales. Being a predominantly oral culture the Arabs would memorize poems and tales in order to communicate it to others. They had a heightened sense of memory in comparison to other nations. Therefore once the Muslims were taught a passage of the Qur'an they immediately confined it to memory quite easily and this practice was encouraged by the Prophet (saw). Hadrat Uthman bin Affan narrates the Prophet (saw) as saying the most superior amongst the Companions were those who learn the Qur'an and then taught it to others.[24] The same passages were also regularly recited in the five daily prayers, so remembrance of the verses was a daily occurrence. It was also a practice of the Holy Prophet (saw) to listen to Qur'anic recitation from the Companions. Hadrat Ibn Masud (rad) in particular narrates how the Prophet (saw) once shed tears after listening to his recitation of Surah Nisa[25].

During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (saw) scribes also carefully wrote the passages of the Qur'an on a variety of different writing materials. These varied from pieces of

parchment to leather[26] and leaves. However once any passage was recorded the Holy Prophet (saw) would personally check the written records and insure that all the words were correct and in the correct order.

Whenever an ayah was revealed, he (saw) informed the Companions of the name of the relevant Surah and where it was to be placed in the Qur'an. Hadrat ibn Abbas[27] reports that Hadrat Othman bin Affan stated that when the Holy Prophet (saw) received revelation he would call a companion to write it down and then tell them where to place the ayah in the Qur'anic order. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal [28] reports the narration of Hadrat Othman bin abi-ul-Aas (rad) as stating: "I was once sitting with the Holy Prophet (saw) when he received revelation. Then he lowered his eyes and the Holy Prophet (saw) stated that 'Angel Gibraeel has come to me and ordered that I should place this ayah[29] with this Surah. Imaam Malik[30] details how the inhabitants of Yemen were sent collected written sheets of the Qur'an (*mushaf*) by some Muslims with orders given to keep it clean and safe, confirming the writing down of the Qur'an in some form during the Holy Prophet's (saw) lifetime. The Qur'an also describes itself as a *kitab*, a book well guarded[31] indicating an organized compilation in some shape.

Since the Holy Prophet (saw) instructed the Companions where to place each ayah, they themselves never interfered in the divine order. Hadrat ibn Zubair (rad) narrates that he asked Hadrat Othman (rad) why he placed one ayah in the Qur'an when another had revoked it. Hadrat Othman (rad) replied that he did not have the authority to change the order, which had been divinely revealed[32].

One has to remember that the Qur'an is not just a book of prayers but a practical guide to life. It instructs man in every sphere, be it on the modes of marriage, the penal system, business codes and ethics as well as the personal sphere of human relationships. As such the holy Qur'an is often termed the "living Qur'an" due to its continual usage in daily life. So every passage that was revealed to the Holy Prophet (saw) was continually quoted and read, either in the daily prayers or in the daily affairs of life. In this way it was impossible for any mistakes or errors to occur in any of the words or passages as the words of the Qur'an were always in use. It was indeed a living book. Allah (swt) is also the ultimate guarantor and protector of the Qur'an ensuring it to be free from any error and interference:

"We have without doubt sent down the message and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)". (Al-Hijr, 15:9)

REVELATION PERIOD AND DIVISION OF QUR'ANIC SURAHS:

As stated earlier the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an took place on the 16th Ramadhan, A.D 610. The period of revelation spanned 22 years, 2 months and 22 days. There is a traditional division of the surahs between those that were revealed in the city of Makkah, (Makki surahs) and those that were revealed in the city of Madinah (Madani surahs). The following table highlights the split in the revelation period between these two cities:

<i>PERIOD</i>	<i>YEARS</i>	<i>MONTHS</i>
REVELATION PERIOD	22	2
MAKKI PERIOD	12	5
MADANI PERIOD	9	9

Out of the 114 surahs revealed, the majority of them were revealed in the city of Makkah. A 'Makki' Surah is classified as such if its beginning was revealed in Makkah even if parts of it were later revealed during the Madani phase. Imaam Zarkashi[33] is of the opinion that 85 surahs were revealed in Makkah. Other commentators believe 86 were revealed whilst others give a slightly higher number. Difference of opinion lies regarding whether Surah 1, Al-Fatiha and Surah 83, Al-Mutaffin were revealed in Makkah or Madinah. The Makki Surah's were revealed over a period approximately lasting 12-13 years, from the first call of Islam up until the *Hijrah*, migration to the city of Madinah. Most of the Makki Surah's are shorter in length and deal with concepts regarding Tauheed, oneness of God; good morals and conduct and life in the Hereafter – heaven and hell. The Makki ayah's also contain passages regarding the Christian and Jewish scriptures, detailing which Prophets have been sent by Allah (swt) in the past.

A 'Madani' Surah is characterized as those Surah's which have their beginning passages revealed in Madinah. According to Imaam Zarkashi[34] 29 Surah's were revealed in Madinah. Other commentators give a figure of 28 whilst others have given a slightly higher figure. The Madani Surah's were revealed over a period of nine to ten years beginning from the Hijrah[35], to the eventual demise of the Prophet (saw). These Surahs are often longer than their Makki counterparts. When the Holy Prophet (saw) arrived in the city of Madinah he set up the first Islamic state in the history of Islam. As such the Qur'anic Surah's in this period of time deal with the practical aspects of living. Much of the injunctions of Shariah law were revealed in Madinah including laws relating to marriage, divorce, laws of probate and criminal sanctions. They dealt with the new burgeoning community of the indigenous *Ansars*[36] and newly arrived *Muhajiroon*[37] as well as mankind in general.

Over the 22 year period a total of 114 Surahs were revealed. These are roughly arranged according to length with the longest surahs being placed at the beginning of the Qur'an and the shorter ones at the end. The main exception to this rule is with regard to the opening chapter of the Qur'an, Surah Al-Fatiha having only 8 ayahs. The surahs are not however placed in chronological order since early Makki Surahs are placed near the end of the Holy Qur'an and the later Madani Surahs being placed in the beginning of the Qur'an. This order was divinely given by Allah through Angel Gibraeel (a.s) to the Holy Prophet (saw).[38]

For liturgical purposes the Qur'an has been further divided into thirty parts, each part being called a *Juz*, for easy use of reference. During the Holy month of Ramadhan one part is read daily with the intention of completing all 30 parts in the month. The Surah's

(chapters) are sub-divided into sections known as Rukuhs and each section is divided into verses known as Ayahs.

The final revelation took place on the 9th day of Dhul Hajj, in the 10th year of Hijrah. This was the 63rd year of the Holy Prophet's (saw) life. The final verse to be revealed was :

“This day we have perfected for you your religion. And have completed My bounties for you, And have approved Islam as the religion for you”. (5:3)

In this year, during the month of Ramadhan, Angel Gibraeel (a.s) came twice to the Holy Prophet (saw) and they recited the entire text together twice. Since that year no Qur'anic verse has been added or deleted from the original text. It is and will remain in its pristine condition until the Day of Judgement .

COMPILATION OF DIVINE REVELATION:

The compilation of the Holy Qur'an took place in three stages:

1. During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (saw)
2. During the caliphate of Sayyidina Abu Bakr (rad)
3. During the caliphate of Sayyidina Othman bin Affan

IN THE LIFETIME OF THE HOLY PROPHET (SAW):

There is ample evidence showing that the entire Qur'an was written down in the Prophets (saw) lifetime. As stated earlier when he (saw) received revelation he would instruct scribes to record the revelation on parchments of paper or pieces of leather. He would also indicate in which Surah each ayah was to be placed[39]. The Companions never interfered in the arrangement of the ayahs and Surahs which are the same in copies of Qur'ans available today. Hadrat Zaid bin Thabbit was one of the most prominent of the scribes and has reported that he, along with other companions would compile the Qur'an in the presence of the Holy Prophet (saw)[40]. During this time the names of the Surahs were also known. Angle Gibraeel (a.s) would also come to the Holy Prophet (saw) every Ramadan to listen to him reciting the Qur'an, and listened to him twice in the year of his demise[41].

IN THE TIME OF SAYYIDINA ABU BAKR (RAD):

A detailed account of this is contained in an account given by Zaid bin Thabbit in Sahih Bukhari. After the demise of the Holy Prophet (saw) an imposter called Muslimah announced falsely his own Prophethood. Sayyidina Abu Bakr (rad) sent a Muslim expedition against him and a harsh battle took place in 632 A.D (11 A.H) at the place of Yamamah[42] during which hundreds of *hafiz* were martyred. Sayyidina Umar bin Kattab (rad) became concerned at the heavy loss of casualties, fearing that a large part of the Qur'an could be lost if the rate of martyrdom increased. He expressed these fears to the Caliph Sayyidina Abu Bakr (rad) and asked him to compile the Qur'an into a permanent book form. Sayyidina Abu Bakr (rad) was at first shocked at the request and said he could not do something that the Holy Prophet (saw) had never done in his own

lifetime. However Sayyidina Umar (rad) continued to persuade him until Sayyidina Abu Bakr (rad) said his heart was opened by Allah (swt) and he agreed to the suggestion.

Sayyidina Abu Bakr (rad) called upon Hadrat Zaid bin Thabbit (rad) to collect and compile the Qur'an into one volume. Hadrat Zain bin Thabbit was also astonished at this request and declared it would have been easier for him to shift a mountain than to do such a task. He too questioned how they could do something that the Holy Prophet (saw) had never done. Sayyidina Abu Bakr (rad) replied this was a good thing and began to persuade him until Allah (swt) opened the heart of Hadrat Zaid bin Thabbit (rad) who agreed to do this too.

Hadrat Zaid bin Thabbit (rad) set about completing the task. He collected all the written parts of the Qur'an from date leaves, parchment and pieces of leather and also listened to many of the *hafiz* who recited verses from their memories. After having carefully compared and cross checked each ayah, he compiled the written Qur'an into one single volume. Sayyidina Abu Bakr became its official custodian, passing on to Sayyidina Umar bin Kattab (rad) during his caliphate. After his demise the Qur'anic volume was passed into the custody of his daughter Hadrat Hafsa (rad).

QUESTION NO:02

Prophet Muhammad's (SAWS[1]) plan for spreading Islam among Quraysh tribe consisted of phases. The first phase was choosing people of distinguished characters; people who excelled in practical life. He delved deep into society and came up with almost 100-150 believers. In the next phase, he managed to secure the protection of Bani-Hashem tribe when his Uncle Abu-Taleb agreed to protect him. In the third phase Muhammad (SAWS) proceeded with da'wa (missionary activity) publicly by announcing it from the top of Mt. Al-Safa before the whole of Quraysh. He moved on smoothly from one phase to another. His companions never questioned his plans. Our Prophet (SAWS) always took the initiative and waited for Quraysh's reaction. He was aware that Quraysh would strongly challenge him. He planned everything without waiting for supernatural miracles. Jibril (Gabriel) only provided Muhammad (SAWS) with methodology and support. Great miracles were still to come such as Al-Israa and Al-Mi'raj[2] and many others. Major changes are initiated by people and not by miracles. One must work hard and then one will be supported by great miracles.

Quraysh tried different approaches to stop the prophet (SAWS). First, they tried to distort the prophet's da'wa (SAWS) in the eyes of people. Next came ridicule and humiliation, to break his spirit, followed by moral and physical harm; They started hurting him, his family and his companions. They were many attempts to kill the companions; some of these attempts were successful. All of these hardships were endured for the sake of Islam.

In an attempt to distort the da'wa Quraysh accused Muhammad (SAWS) of being a poet, a priest, a liar, a mad man, and a spy so that those listening to him would get confused and leave him. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, "And the ones who have disbelieved have said, "Decidedly this is nothing except a falsehood he has fabricated, and other people have helped him to it." ...' (25:4).

Quraysh even sent Al-Nader Ibn-Al-Harith to Persia to listen to the stories of the Persian kings. When he came back, they told him to interrupt Muhammad (SAWS) and tell people the stories he had learnt, thus Muhammad (SAWS) was not able to neither talk to the people nor recite the Qur'an. His uncle Abu-Lahab did the same; he followed

Muhammad (SAWS) telling people to stay away from him. Such hardships are common in life and we must be patient just like our master (SAWS). The Prophet did not argue with the disbelievers or fight them but he became more persistent. The Qur'an was giving him the support he needed. "O you enwrapped (in your raiment). Rise up ..." (73:1-2). Several Surah(s)[3] in the Qur'an start with "Rise up". Khadijah (RA), the prophet's (SAWS) wife, used to ask him to take some rest as he prayed all night and called people to Islam during the day.

Abdullah Ibn-Masood, a companion who was frail, decided to confront Quraysh and force them to listen to the Qur'an. He would go to the K'aba and to recite ayahs from Surat Ar-Rahman as loud as he could. The disbelievers used to gather and beat him up, yet he did not stop, until the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) advised him to do so. The lesson we learn here is that one should never shy away from the truth.

One day ten men from Quraysh gathered around the prophet (SAWS) and assaulted him. Abu-Bakr, who was described as "the bravest of all men", by Ali (RA), defended the Prophet (SAWS). Consequently, the disbelievers let go of the Prophet (SAWS) and started beating Abu-Bakr and hitting him on the face until he fainted. They only left him when they thought he was dead. After he was carried to his house, he woke up at night asking about the Messenger of Allah (SAWS). Exhausted as he was, he asked his mother and Fatima bintul-Khattab to take him to the Prophet (SAWS), so that he could see for himself that the prophet was safe. Such was his love for the Prophet (SAWS).

Many companions underwent severe torture. For instance, Belal was left by the disbelievers in the heat of Makkah's desert wearing iron shields, and with heavy stones on his body. The youth, Al-Zobeir Ibnul-Awam (16 years old) was tortured by his uncle who used to wrap him up with a piece of cloth and hang him and light a fire underneath him, so that the hot smoke would suffocate him. This caused Al-Zobeir a serious lung disease.

Another example is given by Saad Ibn-Abu-Waqas, who used to be quite dutiful to his mother. Nonetheless, when he embraced Islam, his mother threatened him to stop eating and drinking if he did not abandon his belief. In effect, she starved herself and became very ill after three days. However, he firmly told her that he would never leave his belief. Ayahs were revealed to the Prophet (SAWS), telling Saad to be more merciful, "And We have enjoined upon man the fair (companionship) to his parents; and in case they strive with you to make you associate with Me that whereof you have no knowledge, then do not obey them" (29:8).

Whole families also suffered. This is illustrated in the story of the family of Yasser. The wife, Somaya Bintul-Khayat, a slim, weak, 60 years-old woman, was tortured by Abu-Jahl, until she died. She became the first Muslim martyr. Let us note that the first person to support the messenger of Allah was a woman and the first martyr was also a woman. Reflecting on this issue, I think the message is about asking men to work as hard and strive for the cause of Islam like women did in the times of the prophet (SAWS). Two days later, Somaya's husband, Yasser died, leaving behind the young, Ammar Ibn-Yasser, who suffered greatly as well. Ten years later, when Abu-Jahl was killed in the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (SAWS) summoned Ammar to tell him that Allah avenged his mother.

The lesson to be learnt here is not about undergoing hardships but rather that we are responsible for carrying the message as relentlessly as the companions of the prophet (SAWS) did. Let us learn from pigeons who value the message they are trained to carry. Despite rain or heat, they fly very high to avoid hunters and they do not stop for food, in order to deliver their message safely. Why don't we follow the example of pigeons!

HAMZA AND OMAR EMBRACE ISLAM:

1. HAMZA:

Hamza was a man who sought his own pleasures and never cared about the issues of Makkah. One day after a hunting trip, a Muslim woman (again, a woman) met him and asked how he could go hunting while his nephew was assaulted by Abu-Jahl. Hamza was enraged. He headed to the Ka'ba with his bow. He asked Abu-Jahl, "How dare you abuse him while I embraced his religion?" and he hit him on the head. Now, Hamza was unintentionally involved. This indeed is a manifestation of one of Allah's names, "The Guide". The next day Hamza went to his nephew after a sleepless night. The Prophet (SAWS) proposed Islam and Hamza accepted. He encouraged the prophet (SAWS) to proceed with his message because Hamza promised to defend him and be by his side. This is indeed the type of Muslims we are in need of.

2. OMAR:

Unlike Hamza, Omar's Islam was gradual. He used to be an extremely tough person. He used to follow the prophet (SAWS) wherever he went and prevent him from talking to people and spreading the message of Islam. Omar tells the story of his Islam. He says that the first time Islam found a way to his heart was after hitting his female slave. Strong as he was, he would beat her up until he got tired, yet she remained resilient. Once again, a Muslim woman demonstrated her strength and capability of standing up for her faith.

On another occasion, Omar went to meet his drinking friends but did not find the wine seller, so he decided to go to the Ka'ba. When he arrived there, he found the prophet (SAWS) praying. He decided to listen quietly and see what he was saying. The Prophet (SAWS) was reading Surat Al-Haqqah. After listening for a while, he thought that Mohammad was surely a magician, then he heard the prophet (SAWS) reciting what can be translated as, "And in no way is it the saying of a poet- little do you believe" (69:41); Then, he thought the prophet was a soothsayer; at that point, the prophet (SAWS) recited what can be translated as, "Nor the saying of a soothsayer- little are you mindful of!" (69:42). He reflected on what this was all about, only to hear the prophet (SAWS) reciting what can be translated as, "A successive sending down from The Lord of the worlds" (69:43). He said, "I felt a tremor in my body and Islam found further way to my heart".

The final stage in the Omar's Islam, was when he decided to kill the prophet (SAWS) because he was feeling so confused. On his way, he met a Muslim man who asked him where he was heading. Omar told him about his intention. The companion was worried about the prophet (SAWS), so he told him to check on his own sister, Fatima, first since she embraced Islam too. Omar, burning with anger, went to his sister's house, where he found her reciting Surat Ta-Ha, together with her husband and Khabath. After hitting his sister and her husband, Omar looked at his bleeding sister's face and asked to read the Qur'an. He recited some ayahs and then, asked for Muhammad (SAWS). Khabath told Omar that he was at Al-Arqam's house. Omar immediately went to Al-Arqam's house and declared that he embraced Islam, in a new victory for the Muslims.

On his first day as a Muslim, Omar had a number of great achievements. One minute after declaring himself a Muslim, Omar asked the Prophet (SAWS) to go out and declare openly that there is not God but Allah. The Muslims went to the Ka'ba in two queues, one led by Hamza and the other by Omar, in a scene that was totally unprecedented to the inhabitants of Makkah. I ask businessmen, politicians and media people; "what did you do for Islam and for your country?"

Moreover, Omar wanted all Quraysh to know that he became a Muslim. He went to Abu-Jahl and to Abu-Sufyan and declared his Islam. However, this was not enough for him,

he wanted everyone to know. He went to a man called Jamil Ibnul-Moamar, who was well known to spread rumors in Makkah. As soon as Omar told him about his Islam, he started running in the streets and announcing the news.

On the same day, Omar knew that Quraysh decided to gather at Ka'ba to discuss this issue. Omar went to them and was engaged in a brutal fight. When Omar eventually, arrived home, he summoned his children and ordered them, to embrace Islam, only to find that his youngest son Abdullah Ibn-Omar had embraced Islam a year ago. Omar said to his son, 'you were going to let your father go to Hell!'. For years later, Omar would jokingly repeat this sentence to his son Abdullah.

QUESTION NO:03

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 62

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ شُكُورًا

62. "And He it is Who has made the night and the day to succeed each other for him who desires to reflect or desires to be thankful."

This noble verse still continues to introduce the Lord of the universe and states another part of the system of the existence.

It says:

"And He it is Who has made the night and the day to succeed each other for him who desires to reflect or desires to be thankful."

It is the regular system that rules the day and the night which alternatively substitute each other. This system is in work for millions of year. It is the system that if does not exist the life of man will be destroyed by intensity of heat and light or darkness, and this is an attractive reason for those who want to know Allah.

We know that the system of day and night is generated from the movement of the earth around itself. Its gradual and regular changes, that is continually the duration of one of them increases and the other one decreases, is because of its axle slope in regard to its orbit, which, during a year, causes the four seasons.

If the earth rotated faster or slower than its usual speed, in one case the nights would get so longer that all things would be frozen, and in other case the days would be so long that the sun would burn everything. Moreover, the centrifugal force could be so intense that the earthly creatures would be thrown out into the space.

In brief, on one hand, the study of this system awakes the theology nature in man. (Perhaps the application of the phrase 'desires to reflect' refers to this fact), and on the other hand, it awakes the thanking spirit in man and the phrase 'desires to be thankful' may refer to this matter.

It is worth-mentioning that in a narration whether belongs to the Prophet (S) or Infallible Imams (as) we read:

"Coming day and night in succession is for the matter that if man does dereliction of his duties in one of them, he recompenses it in another one."

This meaning may be the second commentary for the verse and, since the verses of the Qur'an has got levels of meaning, it is not inconsistent with the first commentary either.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition says:

"Any worship and obedience that you missed to do in the night make up for it in the day, for Allah, the Mighty and the Blessed, says:

'Man must compensate the undone duties of night in day and compensate those of day in night.'⁴

The same thing is narrated by Fakhr-i-Razi from the Prophet (S).

Conclusion:

To learn lessons from 'the system ruling the universe' depends on our will. How a lot are persons who spend their life for a phenomenon, but since they do not will to learn lesson, they do not profit by the example!

These persons are like one who sells mirror, the one who always looks at mirror, but does not straighten his garments, while a passenger may straight his collar by just one careful glance at mirror.

Therefore, a mere glance is not enough, but the will for reformation also is necessary. With this matter mentioned, it gets clear why some scientists do not know Allah, while they have spent their life for researching the nature, for they do not do anything for knowing Allah, as a carpenter makes many ladders, but he does not will to climb one of them.

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 63-64

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا

63. "And the servants of the Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth humbly; and when the ignorant address them, they answer; 'Peace'.

64. "And those who spend the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing."

The behaviour of each person shows his personality and character. The supreme reward and medal for man is the medal of servitude of Allah:

(The servants of the Beneficent (Allah)).

For being related to infinity makes man exalted.

Form this holy verse on, an interesting and comprehensive discussion about the attributes of Allah's special slaves is brought up under the title of

'The servants of the Beneficent (Allah)'.

It, in fact, completes the former verses in which there has been mentioned that the obstinate polytheists said out of conceit and ridicule when the name of Allah, the Beneficent, has been mentioned:

"...what is the Beneficent?"

We saw that the holy Qur'an introduced Allah, the Beneficent, to them in two verses. Now it is time for introducing the Beneficent Allah to the special servants. When His servants are so dignified and lofty, the magnificence of Allah, the Beneficent, will be understood better.

In these two verses and the next verses, more than 10 attributes of theirs are mentioned, some of which are related to the creedal aspects, some are moral, some are social, some are personal, and some are collective. On the whole they are of the supreme humane values.

It first says:

"And the servants of the Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth humbly..."

In fact the first attribute introduced for 'The servants of the Beneficent (Allah)' is denial and negation of conceit, pride and self-admiration, which is seen in all deeds of man, even in his way of walking, for moral habits will appear in man's deeds, speech, and gestures,

so that by studying the way of walking of a person we can find out many things about his morality.

Yes, they are humble and the key of faith is humbleness, while the key of unfaithfulness is conceit and pride. We have seen many times in everyday life and we have also read frequently in the holy Qur'an that the conceited arrogant have not been willing even to listen to the words of the divine leaders, and they have ridiculed the truths.

They do not see further than the end of their own nose. Is it possible to acquire faith with such mood of conceitedness?

Yes, these faithful persons are the servants of Allah, the Beneficent. The first sign of servitude is that humbleness, which penetrates all particles of their entity and even it can be detected in their way of walking.

Since the spirit of faith is humbleness, we see that one of the main commandments given to the Prophet (S) by Allah is:

*"And do not walk around exultantly on the earth; certainly you will never rend the earth, nor attain the mountains in height."*⁵

Verily if man knows himself and the universe minimally, he knows how small he is comparing with this great universe! Even if his neck gets as long as mountains, the highest mountains are less than the peel swells of sour orange in regard to the hugeness of the earth which is itself just a tiny particle in these great galaxies.

After all, is not pride and conceit the reason of absolute ignorance and lack of knowledge?

It is narrated that one day the Prophet (S) was passing through a lane where he saw some of people had gathered in a place. He asked them its reason. They said that a mad person was doing some mocking actions and people were therefore attracted by him.

The Prophet (S) called them and told them:

"Do you want to introduce you the real mad man?"

All people were silent and were listening to him carefully.

He said:

*"A person who walks conceitedly, and he continually looks around himself. He moves his sides along with his shoulder, (he sees no one but himself and thinks about no one save himself). A person whom people expect no goodness and a person from whose mischief people are not safe. This is the real mad man. The person whom you saw is a patient."*⁶

The second attribute of theirs is patience and forbearance, as the holy Qur'an says in this verse:

"...and when the ignorant address them, they answer: 'Peace';"

This 'peace' is the sign of heedlessness which is along with nobility and greatness, and it is not because of weakness.

It is the 'peace' that is the reason of lack of retaliation against the ignorant. It is to say farewell to their senseless words. This 'peace' is not a greeting which is the sign of kindness and friendship. It is the 'peace' that is the sign of patient and greatness.

Yes, one of the great spiritual phenomena of theirs is patience and forbearance, without which no man can pave the fluctuating path of Allah's servitude and bondage, especially in the societies in which there are a lot of corrupted, ignorant and wicked persons.

In the second verse, the third attribute of theirs, that is the sincere worshipping of Allah, is mentioned.

It says:

"And those who spend the night prostrating themselves before their Lord, and standing,"

In the darkness of night, when the eyes of the ignorant are sleeping and there is no place for hypocrisy and feigning, a believer deprives himself of pleasant sleep and does what is more pleasant, that is the remembrance of Allah and prostrating and standing before Him, the Magnificent.

He spends some part of night supplicating Him and illuminates his heart and soul with His name and remembrance.

Though the Qur'anic phrase /yabitūna/ ('who spend the night') indicates that they spend the night prostrating and standing before Him, it is clear that its purpose is considerable part of the night or if its purpose is all the night, sometimes it is so.

Meanwhile, coming the word 'prostrating' before the word 'standing' is because of its importance, though in prayer (salat) prostrating is practically after standing.

Some Traditions On Humbleness and Night Prayer

1. The Prophet (S) said:

"Why do not I see the sweetness of worshipping in you?"

One said:

"What is the sweetness of worshipping?"

He said:

"Humility."⁷

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

"Be humble and modest, for it is one of the greatest worships."⁸

3. The Prophet (S) said:

"Verily Allah revealed to me to be humble so that no one boasts anyone and no one oppresses anyone."⁹

4. The Prophet (S) said:

"Humbleness and modesty increases the rank and dignity of one who is humble, then be humble so that Allah exalts you."¹⁰

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

"No dignity and greatness is like humbleness, and no nobility is like knowledge and knowing."¹¹

6. Imam Ali (as) once said:

"The fruit of knowledge is humility."¹²

7. The Prophet (S) said:

"Performing two rak'ats of prayer in the midnight is better than the world and what is in it. Verily, if it were not difficult for my nation, I would make this prayer compulsory for them."¹³

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The dignity of a believer depends on his night prayer, and his greatness and glory depends on avoiding bothering people."¹⁴

9. The Prophet (S) said:

"When man gets out of his pleasant bed and while his eyes are drowsy he tries to make his Lord pleased and happy by his night prayer, Allah takes pride in him and says:

"Do not you see My servant who gets out of his pleasant bed for a prayer that I did not make it a must on him? Be witness that I forgive him."¹⁵

10. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who does not perform night prayer is not of our Shiites."^{16 17}

11. Imam Rida (as) said:

“Do perform night prayer. There is no servant who gets up at the end of night and performs 8 rak’ats night prayer, 2 rak’ats even prayer, one rak’at odd prayer and asks pardon of Allah 70 times in personal prayer (qunūt), unless Allah protects him from the chastisement of grave and the chastisement of Fire, and prolongs his life and gives him his provisions generously.”

Then Imam continues:

“Verily the homes in which night prayer is performed its light illuminates before the inhabitants of the heaven as stars glow for the people of the earth.”18

12. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Night prayer makes man’s face beautiful and fine, makes him morally good and agreeable and makes him smell pleasantly. It increases sustenance, causes the debt to be paid, takes sorrow away and makes man’s vision strong.”19

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 65-66

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا

إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا

65. *“And those who say: ‘O’ our Lord! Avert from us the torment of Hell, verily the torment of it is a lasting affliction;”*

66. *“Verily it is an evil abode and (an evil) station.”*

There are two ways for getting released from the Fire; worshipping and doing good deeds.

When Imam Ali (as) dedicated some properties to Allah, he wrote in act for the establishment:

“I dedicated this for saving myself from the Fire as well as getting the Fire away from me.”20

In this noble verse, the fourth attribute of *‘the servants of the Beneficent’*, which is the fear of divine chastisement, is mentioned.

It says:

“And those who say: ‘O’ our Lord! Avert from us the torment of Hell, verily the torment of it is a lasting affliction;”

The Arabic word /qaram/ originally means: intense disaster and sorrow which always afflicts man. If creditor in Arabic is called /qarim/, it is because he is always following man for getting his money. The love and motivation that makes man do a job is also called /qaram/. This word has been applied to the Hell since the chastisement of the Hell is very grievous, lasting, and permanent.

Therefore, in the next verse it is said:

“Verily it is an evil abode and (an evil) station.”

Although these servants of the Beneficent remember and worship Allah in the midnight and do their duties in the day, their heart is still full of the fear that their duties to be done rightly. It is that fear that is the powerful factor of doing duties more and better.

It functions as an inward powerful police that controls man and man does his duties in the best way, while no one observes and controls him and he still thinks that he is guilty before Allah.

The difference between the Arabic word /mustaqarr/ (abode) and the word /muqam/ (station) is that the Hell is a perpetual home for pagans and it is a temporal place for believers. So, to both groups who enter the Hell reference is made.

It is obvious that the Hell is a bad place and residence.

How can one be calm in the blazing Fire? Is there comfortableness and easiness in the killing flames?

It is also possible that both these words, 'Mustaqarr' (abode) and 'Muqam' (station), mean the same and they are for more emphasis on the perpetuity of the Hell chastisement.

It is the opposite of the Paradise about which we read in this Surah, verse 76:

"Abiding therein, how excellent the abode, and the resting-place."

Anyway, the special servants of Allah fear the Fire of the Hell more than that they desire the Paradise.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 67

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا

67. *"And those who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, and are stationed between the two (extremes)."*

The Arabic word /qawam/ means moderation and the word /qiwam/ means something as a help for standing.

Imam Rida (as) announced that moderate prodigality and expenditure is the famous criterion that is mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 236:

*"...the rich according to his means, and the straitened according to his means, a provision in a fair manner."*²¹

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

*"To spend for the sake of the falsehood is extravagance (though it is a little), and to be stingy in the path of the Truth is thrifty and frugal (/iqtar)."*²²

There is another verse that says:

*"And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it to the utmost (limit) of its stretching, so that you should sit down blamed, empty-handed."*²³

In this holy verse, the fifth attribute of the servants of the Beneficent, which is moderation and avoiding any excess and defect in jobs and affairs, especially the issue of alms-giving, is mentioned.

It says:

"And those who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, and are stationed between the two (extremes)."

It is interesting that this verse speaks in a way that it takes the issue of spending something which is certain and exists, so that it does not need mentioning, for it is one of the given duties of any man.

Thus it talks about the way and manner of the spending. It indicates that they have a just spending and are neither prodigal nor grudging. They neither spend so much that their wife and offspring gets hungry, nor they are so economical that other persons do not get help from them, and there is ever a firm station between the two.

Commentators have various opinions about the Qur'anic words /'israf/ (extravagance) and /'iqtar/ (to be economical).

All these opinions say one matter that /'israf/ is to spend too much, undue, and for the sake of none-Allah, and /'iqtar/ is to be less than what is necessary and right.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 68

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا

68. *“And those who do not call with Allah any other god, and do not slay the soul which Allah has forbidden except for just cause, nor commit fornication, and whosoever does this shall find a requital of the sin.”*

In this verse, polytheism, murder, and adultery, which are of the greatest sins in narrations, are mentioned.²⁴

Homicide is of the greater sins, but the holy phrase:

“Illa Bilhaqq’ (‘except for just cause’)

says that sometimes murder is necessary and right, including:

1. Retaliation of homicide
2. Incest
3. Adultery of a pagan with a Muslim woman
4. The adultery of the one who has spouse
5. One who claims prophethood
6. Vilifying and insulting the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as)
7. The adulterer who forces woman to do fornication
8. Muslim sorcerer
9. Corrupter and combatant who uses weapon for frightening people
10. Apostate
11. One who stands against and fights with just Imam of time
12. Polytheist

Anyway, the sixth attribute of the true servants of the Beneficent (Allah), that is mentioned in the verse under discussion, is sincere monotheism which is free from any polytheism and multi-worshipping.

It says:

“And those who do not call with Allah any other god...”

The light of monotheism has illuminated all of their heart and their personal social life, and the darkness and gloom of polytheism is no longer in the thought and soul of theirs.

Their seventh attribute is that they do not murder any innocent.

It says:

“...and do not slay the soul which Allah has forbidden except for just cause...”

It is understood from this noble verse that all humans are basically honorable and respected. It is forbidden to murder them, unless a phenomenon occurs that overshadows this natural respect and provides permission of murder.

The 8th attribute of theirs is that their realm of chastity never gets polluted.

The verse says about them:

“...nor commit fornication...”

They choose faith when they face dilemma of faith and paganism, they choose security when they face dilemma of security and insecurity, they select purity when they face

dilemma of purity and defilement, and they struggle to make an environment which is free from polytheism, insecurity, immodesty, and impurity.

In the end of the verse, to show more emphasis, it adds:

"...and whosoever does this shall find a requital of the sin."

The Arabic words /'im/ and /'aam/ originally means deeds that prevent man from achieving reward, then they have been applied to any sin, but here it means the punishment of wrong action. Some say that the word 'Ithm' means sin and the word 'Atham' means the chastisement of sin.²⁵

If we see that some of commentators say that it means 'desert' or 'mountain' or 'a deep well in the Hell', these are, in fact, to state the kind of its extensions. In Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 33, we talked about the philosophy of prohibition of adultery in detail.

It is interesting that the above holy verse first talks about polytheism, then about homicide, and finally about adultery. It is understood from some narrations that the importance of these three sins is as they are mentioned sequentially in the verse.

Ibn Mas'ūd asked the Prophet (S):

"Which sin is greater than other sins?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"To consider a match for Allah while it is He Who has created you."

Then he asked the Prophet (S):

"Which sin comes next?"

He said:

"To kill your child for fearing that he may eat food with you."

Again he asked him (S):

"Which sin comes next?"

He said:

"To betray the spouse of your neighbour, and Allah sent down its confirmation in this verse by saying:

"And those who do not call with Allah any other god, and do not slay the soul which Allah has forbidden except for just cause, nor commit fornication, and whosoever does this shall find a requital of the sin."²⁶

Though this narration speaks about a special kind of fornication and murder, with regard to generality of the concept of the verse, this ordinance is about all kinds of them, and this narration is a clear extension of it.

Anyway, the command of the holy Qur'an about avoiding polytheism, adultery, and homicide is not only a sermon, it is a rule that if it is disobeyed, severe chastisement will be its compensation. Divine chastisements do not have any exception; anyone who commits wrong action will be punished.

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 69-70

يُضَاعَفُ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدُ فِيهِ مُهَانًا

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

69. "On the Day of Judgment, the chastisement will be doubled to him, and he shall abide therein in abasement."

70. *“Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, then these are they who, Allah changes their evil deeds to good ones, And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”*

Multiplication of wrongdoers’ punishment which is cited in the phrase ‘will be doubled’ is not against divine justice, for double punishment happens when sin or wrong action has got multiplied evil and gloomy effects.

For example, an adulterer not only commits sin, but also he forces other one to commit sin, and an illegitimate issue may get born, who has negative tendencies. In homicide, a murderer kills someone, but some persons will get bereaved, orphaned and he makes society insecure.

Each of the above items has individually a separate punishment, as one who forms and creates a bad tradition or custom in society will be punished each time that someone practices this custom during the course of history and its founder has a share of its sin.

Since all commentators believe that fornication by itself brings no perpetuity of chastisement in the Hell, therefore, only those polytheists who commit adultery will remain in the Hell forever. Yes, false and true belief and paganism and polytheism have effect on punishments.

Since these three sins (polytheism, homicide, and adultery) are extremely important, again this verse puts emphasis on them and says;

“On the Day of Judgment, the chastisement will be doubled to him, and he shall abide therein in abasement.”

Questions

Here, there arise a few questions: Why is the punishment of theirs doubled? Why are not they punished as much as they have committed sin? Is this consistent with the principles of justice?

Another matter is that the verse speaks about perpetuity of chastisement and abiding in the Hell, while we know that abiding in the Hell is only for pagans. Only the first sin of three sins mentioned in the verse is paganism, and murder and adultery cannot bring perpetual chastisement.

About the first question, commentators have discussed a lot and what seems more correct is that the purpose of doubling of chastisement is that for each of these three sins there are separate punishments that on the whole the punishment gets doubled.

Moreover, sometimes a sin will be the source of other sins, such as paganism that causes the obligations to be left and commitment of illegal things to be done, and this makes the Divine punishment double.

Therefore, some of commentators say that this verse is the reason of this famous principle which says:

“As pagans are responsible for fundamentals of religion, they are responsible for positive laws, too.”²⁷

About the second question, we can say that some of sins are so great and bad that cause a person to die while having no faith, as we said about homicide in verse 93 of Surah An-Nisa’.

It may also be true about fornication especially when it is adultery.

Another possibility is that the Qur’anic word /xulūd/ (abide for ever) is about persons who commit all of these three sins (polytheism, homicide, fornication) together. The next verse testifies to this meaning.

It says:

“Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, ..”

Thus there will be no problem. Some of commentators say that 'khulūd' here means to abide for a long time not perpetually, but the first and the second commentaries seem more correct.

It is interesting that in addition to the issue of common and general punishment, there is another punishment which is to get offended and insulted and this is psychological. It also can be a commentary on the issue of punishment to be double, for they have both physical and spiritual punishments.

But, in view of the fact that the holy Qur'an does not close the path of return to the wrongdoers and invites and encourages them to repent their sins, it says in the next verse:

"Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, then these are they who, Allah changes their evil deeds to good ones, And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

As we said, three sins of the greatest sins were mentioned in the previous verse and opportunity is provided for returning and repenting of these persons, for every regretful wrongdoer can return to Allah on the condition that his repentance is real and its sign is doing righteous deeds which is brought up in the verse, otherwise, to merely repent verbally or having passing regret in the heart is not the reason of repentance.

The important issue about the above verse is how Allah changes their sins to good deeds.

Changing Evil Deeds to Good Deeds

Here are a few commentaries all of which can be acceptable:

1. When man repents and acquires faith in Allah, deep transformation happens throughout his whole entity. And because of this inward revolution, later all his evil deeds will change to good deeds.

If formerly he committed homicide in future defending the oppressed and fighting with oppressors would take its place. If he was adulterer, he would later become pure and modest. This divine aid and success is achieved under the light of faith and repentance.

2. Allah removes all his evil deeds out of His grace, favour, and bestowal, and replaces them by good deeds.

'Abūthar narrated that the Prophet (S) said that on the day of Resurrection some persons are called to come and Allah commands to remind him his small sins and to hide his greater sins. It is said to him that he has done such and such small sin that day. He will confess to it and his heart is frightened and shakes because of greater sins.

Here, if Allah wants to do him a favour, He commands to give him a good deed, in stead of each evil deed and he will say that he has some important sins which he does not see. Abūzar says that at this time the Prophet (S) smiled in a way that his teeth appeared.

Then he recited this verse:

"...Allah changes their evil deeds to good ones..."²⁸

3. The third commentary is that the purpose of evil deeds is not the nature of deeds man does, but it is the gloomy effects that they have on the soul and spirit of man. When man repents and believes, these gloomy effects will be removed from his soul and they will be changed to good effects. This is the meaning of changing evil deeds to good deeds.

Of course, these three commentaries are not inconsistent and it is likely that all of them are included in the concept of the verse. Imam Rida (as) said that the Prophet (S) was told that that person was a miserable man, for he had done many sins.

The Prophet (S) said:

"It is not at all as you say, but he has been freed and his destiny has become good, his sins are vanished and changed to good deeds. For when he was passing a way, he saw a believer whose pudendum was visible but he was not aware of it, (it seems that he was sleeping). This person covered that believer's body and, for not making him ashamed, he did not tell him about this matter."

When the believer found out, he prayed for him in this way:

'May Allah bestow you a lot of reward and make your resurrection peaceful and get easy with your reckoning!'

Allah fulfilled his prayer about that person and made his destiny good."

When this good tiding of the Prophet (S) came to that wrongdoer, he repented of all his sins and became a worshipper of Allah. After one week a group of Islam enemies attacked Medina and the holy Prophet (S) issued the command of defense. That person went with other Muslims to holy war and when fighting he got martyred and his destiny became good and happy.²⁹

Yes, real repentance changes man's deeds and reforms his improper behaviour. As in the world of creation Allah creates flowers from soil and manure, He changes man's evil deeds to good deeds.

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 71

وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا

71. "And whoever repents and does good, he verily repents toward Allah with true repentance."

Real repentance happens when it is along with good deeds. This noble verse explains the manner of correct repentance.

It says:

"And whoever repents and does good, he verily repents toward Allah with true repentance." (And gets his reward from Him)."

It means that not only repentance and abandonment of sin must be because of evilness of sin, but also its motivation must be to make intention sincere and to return to Allah. Therefore, for example, although stopping drinking wine or stopping lie for the harms that they have is good, the value of this stopping is when it has divine motivation.

Anyway, anyone who really and earnestly repents of his sins returns to Allah and to His countless rewards.

Some Traditions On Repentance

1. On a Friday the Prophet (S) delivered a sermon and said:

"O People! Before, you die, return to Allah and repent of your evil behaviour. And before you get involved in affairs of life, do righteous and good deeds and amend the affairs that are between you and Allah so that you get successful and happy. And pay alms a lot so that you are provided provisions."³⁰

2. The Prophet (S) said:

"Anyone who does not repent of the sin he has done is not believer and will not be interceded."³¹

3. Imam Rida (as) said that the Prophet (S) said:

"The parable of a faithful person before Allah, is like the parable of a favorite angel, and the believer is really more preferred than this angel in the view of Allah. And before Allah nothing is more preferred and liked than a man or a woman who repents."³²

4. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Although believer returns to Allah while he asks Allah forgiveness and repentance, Allah bestows repentance and forgives his sins, for Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. He accepts repentance and He forgives sins (and evil deeds), so be aware that you do not make believers hopeless of Allah's Mercy (and forgiveness)."³³

5. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Allah gets happy when His faithful servant repents and returns to Him, as one of you gets happy when he finds something he has lost.”³⁴

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 72

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

72. “And those who witness no falsehood, and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly.”

Not only committing sin is unlawful, but also attending a sinful gathering and viewing a sin is forbidden. To avoid attending a sinful gathering and being disrespectful to sinners is a kind of prohibition of sin.

Following the previous holy verses in which some of the attributes of the servant of the Beneficent are mentioned, this verse explains the 9th outstanding attribute of theirs and says:

“And those who witness no falsehood...”

Great commentators have cited two various commentaries on this verse: some say that the witness of (‘Zūr’) means ‘false testifying’, for the word ‘Zūr’ means deviation and inclination, and since lie, falsehood and oppression are some deviated affairs, they are called ‘Zūr’.

This phrase (Shahadat-uz-Zūr) is mentioned in the book ‘Shahadat’ of our jurisprudence. It is prohibited in various narrations, though in those narrations this verse has not been taken as an evidence.

Another commentary is that the purpose of ‘Shuhūd’ is ‘attending’ and ‘participation’, which means that the special servants of Allah do not attend false gatherings and parties.

In some narrations of Imams (as) this word has been interpreted as parties of profane singing, in which frivolous and deviating singers as well as playing musical instruments take place.

Undoubtedly the purpose of these narrations is not to limit the extensive concept of the Qur’anic word ‘Zūr’ to profane singing, but one of the clear extensions of it is profane singing.

It also includes all gatherings and parties in which wine is drunk, lie is told, backbiting happens, and such like.

Another possibility that does not seem unlikely is that both commentaries are truly applied to the meaning of the verse.

Thus, special servants of Allah, or the special servants of the Beneficent, neither bear false witness nor attend sinful and vain parties, for attending such parties is both confirming sin and preparation to defilement of soul and heart.

Then, the 10th attribute of theirs, which is having positive aim in life, is mentioned.

It continues saying:

“...and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly.”

In fact, they neither attend false and vain parties, nor do they get defiled with vanity and falseness.

With regard to the matter that the Qur’anic word /laqw/ includes any job that has no rational aim, it is clear that they have always a rational, useful, and good aim in their life and they dislike those who are after vain and futile matters.

If they face such vain affairs in their life, they avoid them in a way that their negligence shows that they are inwardly discontented with such deeds. They are so magnanimous that such defiled environments never affect them.

No doubt being heedless to such deeds happens when there is no better way to prohibit evil deeds and to struggle with corruption, otherwise they certainly stand against them and do their duties to the end.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition says that the purpose of the Qur'anic word 'Zūr' in phrase:

'La Yashhadūn az-Zūr'

is profane singing.³⁵

In tafsir-i-Majma'-ul-Bayan, we read that 'passing by nobly' is when such believers are helpless to mention the name of an evil thing, they say it ironically, as we read in a narration by Imam Baqir (as) that when they want to say pudendum, they say it implicitly.

Of course, this is one of the extensions of dignified behaviour. Imam Sadiq (as) said that Allah enjoined ear to avoid any unlawful things and then he (as) recited this verse.³⁶

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 73-74

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

73. *"And those who, when admonished with the Signs of their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind."*

74. *"And those who say: 'O' our Lord! Grant us from our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us for the pious ones (their) Imams."*

Acts of worship and having insight are attributes of the servants of the Beneficent. They knowingly follow religion. Therefore, this noble verse mentions the 11th attributes of theirs which is to have an ear that can hear and an eye that can see at the time effacing with Allah's revelations.

It says:

"And those who, when admonished with the Signs of their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind."

Certainly it does not refer to the deed of pagans, for they do not even pay attention to Allah's verses, but it refers to hypocrites or those apparently Muslims who blindly and deafly follow Allah's verses, while they neither understand its reality and find its depth, nor they know Allah's purpose, nor they think about it, nor do they practically use it through inspiration in their life.

Of course, one can not pave the path of Allah blindly and deafly; before anything an ear that hears and an eye that sees are needed for this way. It needs an eye that can see inwardly and deeply and an ear that is sensitive and punctilious.

If we think correctly we see that the damage of this group, who blindly and deafly, as they imagine, pursue the divine verses, causes to religion of truth is not less than the damage that the enemies who knowingly cause to the foundation of the religion of truth, and sometimes it is more.

Basically, conscious perception of religion is the main source of resistance and forbearance, for those who have blind eye and deaf ear can be easily deceived and they can be deviated from the main path by distorting religion and they can be led to paganism and disbelief.

They are tools and puppies in the hands of foes and good victims for devils. Only insightful believers who see and listen carefully may remain stable and do not become puppies of this and that person.

When Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about the commentary of this verse, he said:

"The purpose is the insightful ones that are not skeptic!"³⁷

In the next verse, the 12th attribute of these real believers, which is paying special attention to training and education of their issue and family and for which they feel seriously responsible is mentioned.

The verse says:

"And those who say: 'O' our Lord! Grant us from our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes..."

It is clear that its purpose is not to sit in a corner and pray for them, but prayer is the reason of their inward love and fond for this affair and the main key is struggle and attempt.

Certainly such people leave no stone unturned in training their issues and wives, and they making them acquainted with the main principles and positive laws of Islam and paths of truth and justice, and when having no way and no choice, they ask Allah, the Merciful, and pray.

Basically each correct praying is so, man must try his best and when there is something out of his power, he must pray.

The Arabic phrase /qurrata 'ayn/ means the apple of one's eye, which means a person who is the cause of happiness and pride.

This is originally derived from the word /qurr/ which means coolness and coldness, and since it is said (and many commentators specify this) that the tears of eagerness and happiness are always cool, and the sorrowful tears are always hot and burning, the phrase /qurrata 'ayn/ means something that causes the eye of man to get cool, that is: tears of happiness and eagerness are shed from his eyes and this implies happiness and joy.

The issue of training children and guiding wife and responsibility of parents for their children is of the most important issues on which the holy Qur'an puts emphasis. We will explain it in the commentary of verse 6 of Surah At-Tahrim, if Allah wills.

The 13th attributes of these outstanding sincere servants of Allah, which is from one aspect one of the most important ones, is that they never get satisfied by going the path of truth lonely, but they are so high-minded that they want to be the Imam and leader of the believers and to invite others to this upright path.

They do not do only all right for themselves like recluses but they try to save one who is sinking.

Therefore, it is said in the end of the verse that they are those who say:

"...and make us for the pious ones (their) Imams."

It must be noted that they do not pray for taking the place of great persons exorbitantly, but they acquire the means and qualifications of greatness and leadership in a way that all deserved attributes of a real leader are included in them and this is a very difficult job with severe conditions.

Certainly it is not forgotten that these verses do not state all the qualities of the believers but they define the specialties of a choice group of them who are at the top and are entitled as 'the servants of the Beneficent'.

Yes, they are special servants of Allah and as the general mercy of Allah includes all people, the mercy of servants of Allah is, from some aspects, general, too. Their knowledge, speech, thought, power, and writing all function for guiding people to the path of the Truth.

They are paragons and examples of the humane society.

They are counted as examples for pious persons. They are like guiding lights and lamps in deserts and seas, which call those who are lost to them and save them from falling down and sinking.

In many narrations we read that this verse is about Imam Ali (as) and family of the Prophet (S) and Imams (as). Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"The purpose of this verse is us."*³⁸

Without doubt, Imams (as) are of the most obvious extensions of this verse, but this does not limit the concept of the verse that other believers can be imams and leaders of others in various degrees.

Some of commentators say that not only asking spiritual and divine leadership is not forbidden, but also it is preferred and good.³⁹

Meanwhile, we must pay attention that though the Qur'anic word 'Imam' is singular, sometimes it is used in plural sense. In this verse it is so.

Surah al-Furqan - Verses 75-76

أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا حَسُنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا

75. *"Those (servants of the Beneficent) shall be rewarded with the high stations (in Paradise) because they were patient, and they shall be met therein with welcome and salutations."*

76. *"Abiding therein; how excellent the abode, and the resting-place."*

After completing these attributes, these special servants of Allah, with their attributes, are referred to and in a short conclusion their divine reward is brought up as follows:

"Those (servants of the Beneficent) shall be rewarded with the high stations (in Paradise) because they were patient..."

The Arabic word /qurfah/ means something that is picked up and consumed, such as water that man gets from spring for drinking. Then this word was applied to upper parts and stories of a building and houses. Here it implies the best places of the Paradise.

Since the servants of the Beneficent, with such attributes, are in the first row of other believers, their heavenly rank and position must be also the highest.

It must be noted that this high rank is given to them for they have been patient and tolerant for the sake of Allah. It maybe thought that this is another attribute of theirs, but it is not a new one, it guarantees the fulfilment of the previous attributes. Is it possible to worship Allah, to be humble and modest, to struggle with low desires and to stop vain witness without patience and perseverance?

This statement reminds one of the famous tradition stated by Imam Ali (as) who said:

*"The relationship of patience and tolerance with faith is like the relationship of head with body."*⁴⁰

The survival of body depends on the existence of the head, for what controls all limbs is located in man's head.

Thus, the Qur'anic word /sabr/ (*patience*) has got an extensive concept which includes tolerance and resistance against difficulties being on the path of worshipping Allah, struggling with low desires and withstanding factors of sin. If in some narrations we read that its purpose is only poverty and financial weakness, these are the extensions of it.

Then it says:

"...and they shall be met therein with welcome and salutations."

The dwellers of the Paradise welcome each other, and angels say hello to them and, more importantly, Allah says hello and welcomes them, as we read in verse 58 of Surah Ya-Sin:

"Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord!"

In verses 23 and 24 of Surah Ar-Ra'd we read:

"...and unto whom the angels will enter from every gate,"

"Peace (be) upon you..."

Commentators have various opinions about the meaning of the Qur'anic words /tahiyyat/ and /salam/. The word /tahiyyat/ originally means to pray for life and the existence of other person. And the word 'Salam' is derived from the word 'Salamat (health) and it means to ask health for someone.

Thus the first word is for asking life and the second word is for making this life healthy and without danger, though they both can sometimes mean one thing.

Of course, in common language, the meaning of the word /tahiyyat/ is more extensive and it, envelops any word, which causes happiness and respect and kindness, said to someone at the time of entrance.

To emphasize more on this subject in a different style, the noble verse says:

"Abiding therein; how excellent the abode, and the resting-place."

Surah al-Furqan - Verse 77

قُلْ مَا يَعْزُبُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا

77. "Say (to the disbelievers:) 'My Lord would not esteem you at all were it not for your prayer (unto Him), but you: indeed have belied (the Truth), and soon you shall be (in) the grip (of the inevitable)."

The Arabic word /'iba'/ means weight and heaviness. The Qur'anic sentence /ma ya'ba'u bikum rabbi/ means that Allah does not value and weigh you, unless under auspices of your worshipping and prayer.

This verse is the last verse of Surah Furqan. It is in fact the conclusion of all discussions of the Surah as well as the attributes of the servants of the Beneficent which were mentioned in the previous verses.

The Prophet (S) is addressed here, where the Qur'an says:

"Say (to the disbelievers:) 'My Lord would not esteem you at all were it not for your prayer (unto Him)..."

Though there are many probabilities about the meaning of the word /du'a/ (prayer) mentioned here, all of them have approximately one root and source.

Some say that it means to pray. Some say that it means faith. Some say that it means worshipping and monotheism.

Some say that it means thanking. Some say it means to call Allah at the time of difficulties and disasters. However the root of them is faith and paying attention to Allah.

Therefore, the verse implies that what makes one valuable and respected before Allah is having faith in Allah and His servitude.

Then it says:

"...but you: indeed have belied (the Truth), and soon you shall be (in) the grip (of the inevitable)."

It may be considered that there is no coherency and relationship between the beginning and the end of the verse.

But, by some careful study it gets clear that the main purpose is that formerly polytheists and pagans denied the revelations of Allah and His prophets, and if these people do not return to Allah and do not worship Him, no value and respect they will have before Him and the punishments of their denials will be certain.

One of the evidences that confirm this commentary is a tradition by Imam Baqir (as) who was asked whether too much recitation of the Qur'an is preferred or too much praying. He answered that too much praying is best and then Imam (as) recited this verse.41