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**COMPILATION OF
AL-QUR'AN:**

**THE VERBATIM RECORD OF
THE WORDS OF ALLAH (SWT)
OR
THE UNCREATED WORDS OF
ALLAH (SWT)**

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FORWARD

It is a distressing fact that most Muslims lack proper understanding about the universal relevance of the Qur'anic Message which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) for the guidance of all mankind. There is considerable misapprehension too about Islam and the Message of the Qur'an in the minds of Non-Muslims. The **Indian School Of Excellence (INDSET)** is making a humble endeavour through a series of monographs on Islam and Qur'an to project the image of Islam in its proper perspective and to explain the significance of the Qur'anic Message in a scientific and systematic way.

The main object of this Monograph is to present an authentic account of the Compilation of Al-Qur'an which contains the uncreated words of Allah (SWT) and represents the verbatim record of words of Allah (SWT) communicated to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) through Archangel Jibreel (Gabriel). This is not acceptable to the Orientalists who level all sorts of wild and irrational criticisms against the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). These criticisms have been critically, objectively and dispassionately examined in this Monograph. They have been found to be unsubstantiated and baseless. An attempt has been made to present logical and convincing arguments to establish the authenticity of the Qur'an as the uncreated word of Allah (SWT). We humbly hope that our readers, both Muslims and non-Muslims, will find our arguments equally convincing. It may be stressed however that despite all the efforts of the critiques of the Qur'an its

pristine purity will be maintained till eternity because Allah (SWT) has promised it (al-Hijr; 15:9).

In conclusion this Monograph stresses on the unity of the three monotheistic religions viz. Judaism, Christianity and Islam which have all stemmed from the same divine source i.e. Allah (SWT). They are all notably marked for their strong commonality of thoughts, concepts, values and ideologies. With this strong convergence of values these three monotheistic religions should pool their resources to eliminate evil and corruption, conflict and confrontation and establish and ensure enduring peace and progress of human civilization the world over.

We conclude with a prayer to Allah (SWT) to graciously bless our efforts with success (*Aameen*).

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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COMPILATION OF AL-QUR'AN
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INTRODUCTION

Adam and Eve committed the mistake of disregarding the directive of Allah (SWT)¹ in the Heaven. Though pardoned, they were commanded to descend to Earth and dwell therein which also was made the abode of their progeny i.e. Mankind, till the Day of Judgement. While asking Adam and Eve to leave the Heaven for Earth, Allah (SWT) also willed to commission periodically His Messengers for the guidance of mankind. Those who follow the paths shown by the Prophets will have nothing to fear and will live in eternal bliss whereas those who defy them will be condemned to the fire of hell: *"We said: 'Get you down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.' But those who reject Faith and belie Our Signs, they shall be doomed to the Fire; they shall abide therein"* (al-Baqarah; 2:38-39). This divine will was carried out with unfailing regularity: *"...Allah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent the scripture in truth to judge between people in matters they differ..."* (al-Baqarah; 2:213).

1. SWT: Stands for 'Sub'hanahu Wa Ta'la', meaning 'Pure and Exalted'.

The chain of divinely commissioned Prophets terminated with Prophet Muhammad (SAWS).² The Qur'an consequently became the final, the ultimate, and the lasting divinely revealed book for the guidance of mankind. The protection of its purity and uncorrupted originality was guaranteed by Allah (SWT) *"It is We Who has sent down the Qur'an and surely We will guard it from corruption"* (al-Hijr; 15:9).

The Divine Messengers, who were all human beings, were sent to all the peoples of the world in all ages in order to communicate with them in their respective languages; some of whom, as stated above, came with divine books of guidance: *"For We assuredly sent amongst every people a Messenger (with the command) serve Allah and eschew evil....."* (al-Nahl; 16:36).

There is clear mention in the Qur'an of these Prophets and ancient divine books: *"Then if they reject you (O Muhammad) so were Messengers rejected before you, who came with clear signs, proofs, evidences and the Scripture and the Book of Enlightenment"* (al-e Imran; 3:184). This is reiterated: *"And if they belie you, those before them also belied their Messengers who came to them with clear signs, and with the Scriptures, and the Book giving light"* (Fatir; 35:25).

These Divine Books sent through different Messengers since the dawn of civilization have been referred to as '*Zubur-il-Awwaleen*' or the Scriptures of the ancients: *"And verily (the essence of) this [revelation] is indeed found in the ancient books of divine wisdom"* (ash-Shu'ara; 26:196).

2. SAWS: Stands for '*Sallallahu Alaihi Wo Sallam*', meaning 'Blessings of

While there were many divine books only four are specifically mentioned in the Qur'an viz. *Taurat* (Torah), *Injeel* (Gospel), *Su'huf-e-Ibrahim* (Book of Abraham 87:19), and "*Zubur*" to Prophet Dawood (David) (17:55).

None of these ancient divine books preceding the Holy Qur'an, excepting *Taurat* (Torah or Old Testament) and *Injeel* (Gospel or New Testament) are extant. *Taurat* and *Injeel* are not available in the *Hebrew Aramaic* language in which they were revealed. Further, they have been heavily distorted because of frequent human interventions. This is even admitted in the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Holy Bible* (Catholic India Edition - 1999): "Occasionally it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission and that none of the version provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can now follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text." However, glimpses of original text can be traced in certain parts of the Old and New Testaments which have fortunately escaped interpolation. It is only the Qur'an, which has retained its immaculate originality in the language it was revealed viz. Arabic, and is the one and the only Scripture which can truly claim to contain the words or the verbatim record of the words of Allah (SWT).

The object of this Monograph is four fold:

- (1) To examine critically and objectively, the steps taken by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and his premier Companions, immediately after his death, to preserve and protect the Qur'an from corruption and retain its originality.
- (2) To analyse dispassionately, the arguments of the critics of the Qur'an, and to explain rationally the weaknesses in their arguments.

- (3) To analyse the areas of agreement and disagreement, similarities and contrasts between the Qur'an, that is marked for its immaculate purity, and the Old and the New Testaments, which have lost their originality because of excessive human intervention.
- (4) To stress on the commonality of the concepts, thoughts, values and ideologies of the three monotheistic religions viz. Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

PART - I

COMPILATION OF THE QUR'AN

COMPILATION OF THE QUR'AN

Al-Qur'an, the words of Allah (SWT) revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), is a unique divine gift to mankind for its guidance till eternity. This Holy Book of the Muslims has remained uncorrupted for the last 14 hundred years. The claim of the Muslims, on the authority of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), that it was directly revealed and delivered to him by Archangel *Jibreel* (Gabriel) has been contested by the western scholars - the Orientalists. They refuse to accept its character and contrive to assign its authorship to the Prophet (SAWS) either singly or in collaboration with Jewish and Christian scholars. In this part of the Monograph, it is proposed to examine the method adopted by the Prophet (SAWS) and his Companions to ensure the authenticity of the Qur'anic verses as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and also to look into, objectively and dispassionately, the contention of the Orientalists that the Qur'an was not the word of God but authored by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). There are various other criticisms which will also be critically examined in this Monograph.

There is very strong evidence with well-established chain of narrators going right up to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and his Companions that:

- (1) The Qur'anic verses in the written form were available right from inception. It is being repeatedly mentioned as a 'Book' in the Qur'an i.e. a written text implying that its text was available in writing. The availability of the Qur'an in written form is authenticated by the fact that 'Umar's (RA)³ sister had the text of *Surah Ta-Ha* written on a

3. RA: Stands for '*Razi Allahu Anhu/Anha/Anhuma/Anhum*', meaning 'Pleasure of Allah be upon him/her/twain/them'.

parchment sheet which he read and immediately accepted Islam (Manazir Ahsan Gilani [1986]: *Tadween-e Qur'an* (in Urdu) pp: 48-49).

- (2) The Prophet (SAWS) utilized the services of nearly 40 Companions as scribes to write the text as soon as it was revealed, indicating also under divine guidance the exact sequence in which they were to be placed. Hanzalah bin Rabie (RA), one of the prominent Companions, was the chief among the scribes of the Qur'an and would invariably be available to write the revealed verses when others were not available. Hence, there was no problem in transcribing the Qur'anic text immediately after revelation in its correct sequential order as dictated by the Prophet (SAWS).
- (3) It is pointed out in a number of authentic Traditions that the Prophet (SAWS) used to encourage his Companions to read from the written text which was thousand times more beneficial than reciting from memory. Further during the course of his Last Sermon when the Prophet (SAWS) asked his audience to acquire knowledge before it disappears, an Arab queried "if this could ever happen when we have the written text of the Qur'an with us" (Manazir Ahsan Gilani op. cit. p: 49-50). The Prophet (SAWS) also advised the Companions not to carry the Qur'anic text to the lands of the enemy. These testify to the fact that written texts of the Qur'an were always available with the Companions of the Prophet (SAWS).

The purity of the Qur'anic text and its sequential order were also protected and maintained by *Huffaaz* plural of *Haafiz*, (who can recite the Qur'an by memory). A large number of them existed during the lifetime of the

Prophet (SAWS). This is borne out by the tragedy of Bir Ma'una, in the region of Najd, when nearly forty selected Muslim *Huffaaz*, including Harith Ibn Saminah, Harun Ibn Milhen, Urwah Ibn Asma, Ka'b Ibn Zaid, 'Amr Ibn Umayyah al Damari (RA) and others, under the leadership of Mundhir bin 'Amr (RA), were deputed to preach and propagate Islam in the region of Najd at the invitation of Abu Bin 'Amer bin Malik (RA). Excepting two, all were treacherously killed by 'Aamir bin Tufail in the fourth year after *Hijrat* (Migration). The Prophet (SAWS) was deeply shocked and disturbed. (Yusuf Kandhlawi [1989] *Lives of the Sahabah*, vol.1, pp: 582-583).

MUS'HAF UMM

During the *Khilafat* (Caliphate) of Abu Bakr (RA) and within a year of the death of the Prophet (SAWS) a military expedition was dispatched to Yamama in Najd - It included a large number of *Huffaaz* also, quite a few of whom were killed in this expedition. The death of such a large number of *Huffaaz* was most disturbing and called for some immediate steps to protect both the sanctity and the originality of the Qur'an.

'Umar (RA) pleaded with the *Khalifah* (Caliph), Abu Bakr (RA) that if steps were not taken to protect the originality and veracity of the Qur'anic text it might (God forbid) also meet the same fate as had happened with the *Taurat* (Torah) and *Injeel* (Gospels). Abu Bakr (RA) appreciated the idea and asked Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) who was one of the main scribes of the Qur'an during the time of the Prophet (SAWS) to start an authentic compilation based on the complete original text prepared during Prophet's (SAWS) life directly under his direction and supervision. These were mostly written on Camel Skin (*Riqa*), white thin slabs of stone (*Lekhaf*) and planks of wood from near the base of palm trees (*Aseeb*). Even the

sequences of the *Surah* (Chapters) were also fixed by the Prophet (SAWS).

It has been pointed by all the early commentators, such as Al-Sayuti and Tabari, and even modern distinguished Islamic scholars viz. Saleh Sub'hi (Lebanon), *Maulana* Manazir Ahsan Gilani (*Tadween Qur'an*) and Mufti Mohammad Taqi 'Usmaani (*'Uloom-ul Qur'an*), that the entire Qur'anic text, as approved by the Prophet (SAWS), was obtained from his residence in a scattered form (Saleh Sub'hi [1986]: *'Uloom-ul Qur'an*, pp:101-102 – Urdu Translation – Original in Arabic). It is also borne out by the fact that all the reciters who had memorized the Qur'anic text (*Huffaaz*) followed the same sequence as in the present text.

Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) was clearly instructed by the First *Khalifah*, Abu Bakr (RA) to compile the Qur'anic text in the same order as directed by the Prophet. He was assisted in this task by Ubay Ibn Ka'b, (RA) and even by 'Umar (RA). While commencing this momentous task Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) used the following material and procedure to produce an authentic text of the entire Qur'an which would have the approval and consensus (*Ijma*) of the entire knowledgeable members of the Muslim *Ummah* in Madinah.

- (1) The Qur'anic text which was prepared under the supervision and direction of the Prophet (SAWS) and was available in scattered form at his residence was obtained.
- (2) Qur'anic verses and *Surahs* (Chapters) available in writing with the various Companions were collected. Many of the Companions had their dictation directly from the Prophet (SAWS).

- (3) The services of numerous reciters (*Huffaz*) of the Qur'an who had memorized the text were utilized for comparison with the written text.

In order to ensure fool - proof authenticity, no textual material was accepted as correct unless two witnesses confirmed that the Qur'anic verses submitted for inclusion were dictated by the Prophet (SAWS) himself. The veracity of the text was also verified by those reciters who had memorized the Qur'anic text (*Huffaz*). These verifications and particularly those by *Huffaaz* also ensured that the correct sequence, as arranged by the Prophet (SAWS), was also being maintained. Further, the compilation made by Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) was compared with the collections made by other Companions. This checking and cross checking was repeatedly done to ensure the accuracy of the Qur'anic text, as revealed by *Jibreel* to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), and as communicated by the latter to his scribes and to other Companions.

When the compilation was almost complete, Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) realized that the last two verses of *Surah at-Tawbah*; 9:128-129, could not be located in the collection left by the Prophet (SAWS) nor were they available with any other Companion dictated to him directly by the Prophet (SAWS) except Khazima bin Thaabit Ansari (RA) who had directly received it from the Prophet (SAWS). According to an authentic Tradition the evidence by Khazima bin Thaabit Ansari (RA) was treated as equal to testimony by two witnesses. On the basis of this authority the two verses were accepted by Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) (of course supported by other *Huffaaz*) on the single testimony of Khazima bin Thaabit Ansari (RA). With the inclusion of these two verses the compilation work was completed. There was complete unanimity among the Muslim *Ummah*, that the compilation was the exact text of the Qur'an revealed to the Prophet (SAWS).

The main features of this first compilation by Zaid bin Thaabit Ansari (RA) were:

- (1) The Qur'anic verses in each *Surah* were arranged as directed by the Prophet (SAWS).
- (2) Each *Surah* was compiled separately. They were all put together in a *Mus'haf* (Book) and constituted one authentic volume of the Qur'anic text.
- (3) The text was written in *Hairi* script and in such a way that it could be recited in seven distinct dialects.

Thus the main significance of the first compilation by Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr (RA) was that the entire Qur'anic text, which was written down during Prophet's (SAWS) time and was lying scattered, was neatly and carefully scribed on sheets of parchment, pieced together in one volume (*Mus'haf*) with a general consensus on its authenticity. This volume thus acquired the status of the main referral text of the Qur'an and was called *Mus'haf-Um*. This *Mus'haf-Umm* was kept in the custody of Umm-ul Mo'mineen Hafsa (RA) where it remained till after her death.⁴ It was subsequently burnt by Marwan bin Hakam, the Governor of Madinah, after the compilation of *Mus'haf* 'Uthman.

COMPILATION OF MUS'HAF 'UTHMAN

The need for a fresh compilation of the Qur'anic text and production of a standard version of the Qur'an which commanded the consensus was acutely felt when differences arose in the recitation of the text in different

4. Jalalad Din as-Suyuti in his book *Tarikh al-Khulafa* however mentions that *Mus'haf-e-Um* after the death of Abu Bakr (RA) was kept in the custody of 'Umar (RA). (P:67; English Translation by Abdussamad Clarke Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd., London.)

tribal dialects. With the expansion of Islam to Syria and Iraq it was observed that the people of Syria and Iraq differed widely in their pronunciation and style of recitations of the Qur'an while they were waging war together to conquer Armenia and Azerbaijan. The people of Iraq insisted on the accuracy of their version, and the people of Syria were equally adamant about the correctness of their style of recitation. This conflict risked the splitting of the Qur'an into many versions, and threatened its universal acceptability. The danger of many Qur'ans in seven major dialects loomed large. Hazifa bin al-Yaman (RA), one of the prominent Companions of the Prophet, observed this with great dismay and concern during his stay with the people of Syria and Iraq. He feared that this difference, if allowed to go unchecked, may harm the unity of the Book. On his return to Madinah, he reported to *Khalifah 'Uthman (RA)*: "O Chief of the Believers! Save this *Ummah* before they differ about the Book (Qur'an), as Jews and Christians did before" (Denver - p: 53). An idea of different styles of pronunciation of the Qur'anic verses can be obtained from the fact that Ibn Mas'ood (RA), a distinguished Companion of the Prophet (SAWS) and an authority on the Qur'an, who belonged to Hazli tribe used to recite *Hatta Hin* as *Atta Een*. 'Umar (RA) always checked and corrected him. If such differences in pronunciation and styles of recitation had been allowed to grow it would have been disastrous for the unity of the Qur'an and Islam. There would not have been one Qur'an but many Qur'ans named after various *Sahaba* (Companions).

Even before Hazifa bin al-Yaman had brought the disturbing news of strong differences in styles and dialects in Qur'anic recitations 'Uthman (RA) himself was conscious of it because they were noticeable in Madinah itself. When Hazifa bin Yaman (RA) strongly underscored the great dangers, *Khalifah 'Uthman (RA)* convened a

meeting of some of the leading Companions of the Prophet and raised the issue with them and sought their advice. They in turn asked him as to what action he was contemplating to forestall the danger. He opined that in order to eliminate risks and dangers in future he would like to have only one *Mus'haf* containing authentic text for reference, reading and *recitation* for one and all. The other Companions endorsed this brilliant idea and requested him to implement it. He implemented it with full vigour and authority. (Taqi 'Uthmani: *Uloom-ul Qur'an* p: 189 Urdu).

Realising the gravity of the situation, *Khalifah* 'Uthman (RA) immediately appointed a committee of four Companions of the Prophet (SAWS) headed again by Zaid bin Thaabit, who had compiled *Mus'haf-e-Umm* during the *Khilaphat* of Abu Bakr (RA): Zaid bin Thaabit Committee which originally had four members included besides himself such distinguished *Sahabah* or Companions as 'Abdullah bin Zubair (RA), Sa'eed bin al'Aas (RA) and Abdur Rahman bin Harith bin Hisham (RA). It was later expanded to include 12 other members including Ubayy bin Ka'b (RA), Katheer bin Aflah (RA), Malik bin Abi Aamir (RA), Anas bin Malik (RA) and 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas (RA). This Committee was asked:

- (1) To prepare multiple copies of *Mus'haf-e Abu Bakr*.
- (2) To arrange *Surahs* (Chapters) in sequential order as was done during the life of the Prophet (SAWS). In *Mus'haf-e Abu Bakr Surahs* or Chapters of the Qur'an were each written on parchments and compiled separately.
- (3) To transcribe the *Surahs* or Chapters in distinct *Quraysh* dialect as instructed by *Khalifah* 'Uthman (RA) and written in such a way that it would conform to the seven principal styles of recitations.

The Committee went about its task very meticulously. It first checked scrupulously the veracity of *Mus'haf-Umm* 'which was obtained from *Umm-ul Mo'mineen* Hafsa (RA)' by adopting the same procedure which Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) had adopted earlier in compiling *Mus'haf-Umm*. While checking this time they discovered that one verse from *Surah Ahzab*; 33:23 was inadvertently omitted. Again this verse was available directly dictated by the Prophet (SAWS) only with Khazima bin Thaabit Ansari (RA) and was included since, as explained earlier, his single testimony was, as decided by the Prophet (SAWS), treated equal to two. This single volume came to be known as *Mus'haf 'Uthman - Al-Qur'an* as we know.

Seven official transcripts of this authentic standard Qur'anic text, approved and accepted by the Muslim *Ummah*, knowledgeable about the Qur'an in Madinah, were prepared and a copy each was transmitted to Makkat-al-Mukarramah, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Basra and Kufa. One of the transcripts was retained in Madinah with *Khalifah 'Uthman*. There was complete *Ijma* (consensus) on the authenticity of *Mus'haf-e 'Uthman*. It was accepted by all including Ali (RA) who categorically approved the action of *Khalifah 'Uthman* and stated that it was done in consultation with him and other Companions.

Once the standard transcript of the Qur'an was distributed to the major centres of Islam, *Khalifah 'Uthman* (RA) ordered that the transcripts prepared by various Companions and other individuals be destroyed. They were all destroyed even that of Ubayy bin Ka'b (RA) and Ali (RA). Ibn Mas'ood (RA) alone refused to destroy his personal transcript. Despite his non-compliance, the acceptability of *Mus'haf 'Uthman* was unanimous as the authentic text of the Qur'an, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). Its acceptability was further established by the fact that five years later Mu'awiya's

troops fixed pages from the Qur'anic text of *Mus'haf* 'Uthman on their spears in an endeavour to stop a fiercely raging battle. "However, nobody accused anyone else of using a partisan version of the text, which would have made a splendid accusation against the enemy" (Ahmad Von Denffer: *Uloom-ul Qur'an* p: 56). Consequently, the acceptability of *Mus'haf* 'Uthman as the authentic Holy Book of Islam not only got confirmed but also shut the doors of speculation in future.

ORIENTALISTS CRITICISM ON MUS'HAF 'UTHMAN

The Orientalists are very critical on the compilation of a single Qur'an by the Thaabit Committee during the *Khilaphat* (Caliphate) of 'Uthman (RA) and destruction of other contemporary texts of the Qur'an in the custody of other Companions. They are trying to make a mountain of a molehill by over-stressing the point of variant readings and the controversy it raised between the adherents of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (RA) and Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (RA) in Kufa and Basra, and even in Makkah and Madinah. Even a sympathetic and understanding orientalist like Kenneth Cragg has this to write on this issue: "If the sequences which the Qur'an now possesses - the sequences of the chapters and the sequences inside - were as Muhammad decided they should be, as a Muslim devotee believes, it is hard to understand why there should have any uncertainty afterwards or why any debate should have been arisen. For it does appear that collections or recensions of what was authentically Qur'anic tended to vary (*Readings in the Qur'an*: Kenneth Cragg 1987, p: 26). In his criticism Kenneth Cragg has simply overlooked the following incontrovertible facts at the time of Prophet's (SAWS) death:

- (1) All parts of the revelation were available both in the written form and as memorized by a number of Companions.
- (2) All pieces were available on loose writing material making it easy to arrange them in the order, instructed by the Prophet (SAWS).
- (3) Sequential arrangement of the *Ayaat* (verses) within the *Surah* (Chapter) as directed by the Prophet (SAWS) was preserved in the written form, as well as in the memory of the Companions. Similarly, the sequence of the *Surahs* (Chapters) as determined by the Prophet (SAWS) was also well preserved in the memory of the Companions.
- (4) It may also be mentioned that the Prophet (SAWS) himself used to revise the revealed part of the Qur'an every year, to the hearing of *Jibreel* (AS) during the month of Ramadhaan. It was revised twice in that month preceding his demise.

It may be noted that all the *Surahs* (Chapters) complete with their respective verses did exist but were lying scattered, written on different objects, during the Prophet's (SAWS) life time. They only required to be organized. Consequently, immediately after his death, a standard referral Qur'anic text properly arranged was not available. Therefore, most of the Companions recited from memory. Some of them had their own written Qur'anic texts such as the first four *Khulafah* (plural of *Khalifah*), 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood, Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (RA), Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) and a few others. There was no difference in their contents but the dialectical difference was marked which created some confusion. It is not correct to state that there was "uncertainty" about the correct text of the Qur'an and that "it does appear that collections or recension, of what was authentically Qur'anic tended to vary" (Kenneth Cragg, p: 26). What really varied was the

pronunciation of certain words and styles of recitation or *Qira'at* on account of dialectical differences and not the textual content. This has been adequately explained by Denffer in *Uloom-ul Qur'an* pp: 46-56. These written *Masaa'hif* (Books) of the Companions numbering 23 differed in the arrangement of the *Surahs* and were not in the same order in which the *Huffaz*, used to recite without seeing the text of the Qur'an. Those who had memorized the Qur'an used to recite in the order of the *Surahs* fixed by the Prophet (SAWS) and not as per the *Masaa'hif* of the various Companions. Further the *Masaa'hif* of some of the Companions contained their own elucidatory notes on certain verses of the text, hence could not be treated as authentic. Consequently, the *Masaa'hif* with the individual Companions could not attract the consensus of all the Companions. This is precisely what was accomplished by *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) and *Khalifah* 'Uthman (RA).

The Zaid bin Thaabit Committee had fixed certain norms, as explained earlier, to determine the authenticity of the Qur'anic verses. The verses which could not measure up to those norms were rejected outright irrespective of the personality submitting it for inclusion. This was precisely the reason for the exclusion of *Surat-al-Kahl* and *Surat-al-Hafd* as well as a verse on man's greed following *Surah* 10:24.

The Orientalists also accuse 'Uthman (RA) of having burnt the primary collection of Ali (RA) (whose codex was arranged chronologically) that of Ubayy Ibn Ka'b and others. Their contention is that "if 'Uthman had not ordered all other copies of the Qur'an to be burned, there would be four or more testimonies to its validity. He burned Qur'ans which were the primary collections made by eye witnesses and ear witnesses of what Muhammad (SAWS) said" (Campbell. p: 118). They further point out that 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's (RA) collection differed in the

order of the arrangement of *Surahs* from *Mus'haf 'Uthman* and that it did not include *Surahs* 1, 113 and 114.

The Orientalists also challenge the authenticity of *Mus'haf 'Uthman* on the ground that certain verses relating to *Rijm* (punishment for adultery) and ten *Ayaat* of *Raza'at-ul Kabir* for grown up people were lost by *Umm-ul Mo'mineen* Ayesha (RA). These were at best abrogated Qur'anic verses and did not form part of the written collection obtained from Prophet's (SAWS) residence or from any of his Companions. None of them remembered it, nor did anyone have any written text of these verses directly dictated by the Prophet. They could not fulfil the prescribed criteria and hence were not accepted. Even Ayesha (RA) did not object to their exclusion although she herself was a *Haafizah*. (Feminine gender of *Haafiz*)

While conceding the genuineness of *Mus'haf-e 'Uthman* and also realising that its general acceptability could not be disproved the Orientalists come out with an amazing and unscholarly statement: "If a critical examination of the Kur'an on these lines leads to a satisfactory result it must not be taken to mean that the canonical Kur'an gives an absolutely true and faultless reproduction of the utterances of the Prophet" (H.A.R. Gibb - J.H. Kramers (Ed) (1961) *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Luzac and Co. London p: 281). And then proceed on to make another preposterous statement that "Even 'Uthman himself, according to one story, did not adhere to the text authorized by him, but read *Surah* iii. 104 with an addition not now found in it" (op. cit p: 282). They make this incredible statement in spite knowing the fact that he was martyred while he was reading the Qur'an from his copy of *Mus'haf 'Uthman* (35 *Hijrah* - 655 AD) which still has his blood stains, and is well preserved in the Topkapi Museum of Istanbul (Turkey).

Dr. Campbell's objection and that of other Orientalists regarding the destruction of primary collections of Ali (RA), Ubayy bin Ka'b (RA) and others prepared by the "eye witnesses and ear witnesses of Muhammad" does not carry any conviction. They must be aware of the fact that before the Council of Nicea - 325 C.E., the Gospel of St. Barnabas was accepted as canonical in the churches of Alexandria. "It is known to have been circulated in the first two centuries after Christ (PBUH)⁵ from the writings of Irenaus (130 - 200 AD). After this Council, four Gospels were selected out of a minimum of three hundred available, and the rest including the Gospel of Barnabas were ordered to be destroyed. All Gospels written in Hebrew were also ordered to be destroyed." [Mish'al Ibn 'Abdullah (1996) *What Did Jesus Really Say?* pp. 227-228]. Most of the Gospels which were destroyed were closest to the period when Jesus (PBUH) preached and in the language in which he had preached. The correctness of the Gospel of St. Barnabas is being established by the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Holy Qur'an that we have today is based on the eyewitnesses and ear witnesses, not one but hundreds of them. There were such witnesses also who had taken dictation of the Qur'anic verses direct from the Prophet (SAWS). Further, there was general consensus among the Companions on the Qur'anic text prepared by the Thaabit Committee under the instructions of *Khalifah 'Uthman* (SAWS). Thus, the authenticity of the Qur'anic text, that it was the same text revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) as arranged by him was indisputably established. After the preparation of this consensus edition, the retention of the collection of other individuals would have caused confusion. As for instance, Ibn Mas'ood's (RA) collection did not have *Surahs* 1, 113 and 114. Every Muslim knows that no *Salaat* is complete

5. PBUH: Stands for 'Peace Be Upon Him'.

without reciting the first *Surah* or *Surah Faatiha*. That was reason enough to reject Ibn Mas'ood's (RA) Mushaf. It was Ibn Mas'ood's personal choice not to record it while he always used it during *Salaat*. Similarly, the Orientalists have themselves observed that chronological arrangement was meaningless. The Qur'an, which is extremely coherent, becomes totally incoherent if arranged chronologically. Therefore, the destruction of Ali's (RA) collection was the right thing to do and he fully approved of it. 'Uthman (RA) was keen and the leading Companions of the Prophet (SAWS) including Ali (RA) fully supported him that there ought to be one and only one Qur'an fully authenticated, to be followed by the Muslims the world over. That was a memorable and monumental achievement unifying the entire Muslim *Ummah* on a single Qur'an. Allah (SWT) used *Khalifah* 'Uthman as the instrument to protect and preserve the originality of the Qur'an: ***"We have without doubt sent down the message and we will assuredly guard it (against corruption)"*** (al-Hijr; 15:9).

Before concluding this section on the compilation of Al-Qur'an it must be mentioned that *Mus'haf 'Uthman* did not contain any diacritical points (*A'eraab*). This created great difficulty in its correct reading and recitation when Islam expanded beyond the borders of Arabia, among non-Arabs, in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Central Asia, Turkey and India. Even illiterate Arabs could not recite the verses correctly. In order to remove this difficulty the use of the diacritical points in the Qur'anic text had become absolutely necessary. A contemporary scholar Thabi't Al Du'ali had already initiated its use in the Qur'anic text but it was officially and formally introduced "into the Qur'anic script during the time of the fifth Umayyad *Khalifah* 'Abd-al Malik bin Marwan (66-86 H/687-705) and during the governorship of Al-Hajjaj in Iraq." (Ahmad, Von Denffer

(1994): *Uloom-ul Qur'an*, the Islamic Foundation, Leicestershire, England, pp: 56 and 59).

CRITIQUES OF THE QUR'AN AND THE NATURE OF CRITICISM

So far as the Muslims are concerned, the authenticity of the Qur'anic text has never been in doubt. They firmly believe that it is the same text which was divinely revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). The arrangement of the Qur'anic verses and the sequences of the *Surahs* or Chapters were finalised by him before his death. The presence of a large number of Companions who had memorized the Qur'an in the sequence in which we find them in the millions and millions of copies of the Qur'an all over the world adequately testify to this fact. However the critiques, who are mostly distinguished Orientalists, feel otherwise. They argue that the Qur'an was authored by the Prophet (SAWS), revised many times over, lacks coherence, linkage among the *Surahs* are either weak or missing, and it is disorganised. In the words of J. Kritzeck it is "a most unreadable and incongruous patchwork" (Mohd. Khalifah: *The Sublime Qur'anic* p:52). Further they charge that the Qur'an was tampered with by adding external material or deleting verses which were found in others' collection. We propose to analyse objectively some of these criticisms of the Qur'an.

QUR'AN WAS AUTHORED BY MUHAMMAD (SAWS)

Right from Th. Nöldeke to Burton the Orientalists have laboured with the idea that the Qur'an was authored by the Prophet (SAWS) and it was not the word of God. They have also accused that some of the ideas and thoughts were directly taken from *Taurat* (Torah) and the Gospels (Nöldeke). Some have gone to the absurd extent that the Prophet had with him an uncorrupted copy each

of the *Taurat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospel) (Burton/Schwally). At the same time they admit "that he possessed no real knowledge of the New Testament" (Gibbs - Kramer - op.cit p: 276). While making such irrational criticism they should have borne the fact in mind that unlike the Qur'an, the original texts of the other two divine Books, as revealed by Allah (SWT), were not available even with the Christian priests living during the life time of the Prophet (SAWS). Then how could he have them?

They also claim that Muhammad (SAWS) was inspired by the *Taurat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospel) because of the striking similarities in part of their texts, and in certain punishments prescribed in the Qur'an for certain sinful acts. Nöldeke further points out that "Even in the rare passages where we can trace direct resemblances to the text of the Old Testament (comp XXI. 105 in Qur'an with Psalms XXXVII. 29; 1:5 in Qur'an, with Psalms XXVII. II) or the New (Testament) - (Comp. VII: 50 in Qur'an, with Luke XVI. 24; XLVI : 20 in Qur'an, with Luke XVI. 25), there is nothing more than might readily have been picked up in conversation with any Jew or Christian. In Medina, where he had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Jews of some culture, he learned something out of *Mishna* e.g. verse **V: 35** corresponds almost word for word with *Mishna Sanh V:35*; compare also 11:183 with *Mishna*.1.2. That these are only cases of oral communication will be admitted by any one with the slightest knowledge of the circumstances. Otherwise we might even conclude that Muhammad had studied the Talmud; e.g. the regulation as to ablution by rubbing with sand where water cannot be obtained (iv:46), corresponds to a Talmudic ordinance (Ber. 15a). Of Christianity he can have been able to learn very little in Medina; as may be seen from the absurd Travesty of the institution of Eucharist in V: 112"- (Nöldeke: *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1902, Vol.16, Koran p: 600). It may be noted that the Qur'anic verses 1:5; 7:50; 21:105 and 46:20

which Nöldeke assumed were picked up in conversation with Jews and Christians were all revealed in Makkah where the Prophet (SAWS) had hardly any contact with them.

The Orientalists further point out that the Prophet (SAWS) collected his stories from other sources as well. As for instance it is pointed out that the *Surah* al-Qadr or the Night of all Divine Decree when “*descend the angels and the Ruh (Gabriel) by Allah’s permission with all Decrees*” (al-Qadr; 97:24) was apparently a late off- shoot of the old Babylonian idea of a day on which the events of the year were settled” (Gibbs – Kramer – op.cit p: 274). This is imagination running wild, pure and simple. When even *Taurat* (Torah) and *Injeel* (Gospel) were inaccessible to him how could he have gained access to this story from the historic past of a distant Babylonia? However, it might have been that this injunction of Divine Decree was first revealed to Prophet Ibrahim (AS) in his *Su’huf* (revealed Book,) and was again revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) as happened to a number of Biblical stories. Babylon might have received this story from Prophet Ibrahim (AS) who had spent a considerable period of his missionary life in Babylonia before migrating to Palestine. There will be no difficulty in appreciating the striking similarities in the verses of the Qur'an and that of the Old Testament or New Testament if we admit the fact that the source of all the three religious texts is Allah (SWT). The only difference being that the Qur'an contains only the words of God whereas human hands have intervened heavily in the case of the Old and New Testaments. On account of human interpolations, these two religious books have admittedly, lost their originality. Being the last of the revealed books and totally uncorrupted, the Qur'an mostly confirms the divine injunctions given in the Old and New Testaments, as repeatedly asserted therein e.g. 2:41,89; 3:3; 4:27; 5:47; 6:92; 12:11; 35:31, and also corrects

where distortions have crept in as in the case of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Crucifixion of Christ and the ritual of Eucharist. The Qur'an has thus also been playing the role of guarding the veracity of the revelations made in the other two revealed books. It is thus revealed in the Qur'an: *"To you We sent the scripture in truth confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah had revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that hath come to you. To each among you have We prescribed a law and an open way. If Allah had so willed He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He has given you; so strive as in a race in all virtues (in good deeds). The goal of you all is to Allah: It is He that will show you the Truth of the matters in which you dispute."* (al-Ma'edah; 5:48 also see 46:12; 46:30; 3:3).

Since all the divinely revealed books, excepting Al-Qur'an, have been corrupted by human intervention Orientalists simply refuse to accept that the Qur'an contains only the words of Allah (SAWS) as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) during the period of his prophetic mission which lasted for nearly 23 years. This irrational attitude has been adopted accepting the fact that "the text of the Qur'an we now have in our hands is the text which has come down to us in the form in which it was organised and approved by the Prophet (SAWS). What we have got today in our hand is the Mushaf of Muhammad (SAWS)" (Burton quoted in - Von-Denffer: *Uloom-ul Qur'an* - p: 163). This view is supported by Kenneth Cragg also "It is substantially agreed that the Qur'an as we have it truly constitutes the dalliances of Muhammad in the distinctive state of wary (as differentiated from what became tradition) and does so comprehensively and exclusively". This fact, the Orientalists are still not prepared to accept the truth that the Qur'an contains only the words of Allah

(SWT), which religious books of all other religions, as found today cannot claim. It is all the more surprising when both the *Taurat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospel) categorically state that the new Prophet will communicate only what he will directly hear from Allah (SWT). The declaration by God in *Taurat* (Torah) that "I will put my words in his mouth" and that the Prophet (SAWS) will communicate only the command he directly receives from God (Deuteronomy 18:18-19); and the statement of Jesus in the Gospel of John that the new Prophet "will speak only what he hears from God" (John 16:12-14) support each other and confirm the fact that the Qur'an contains only the words of Allah (SWT). If the Orientalists admit that the Qur'an contains only the words of Allah (SWT), untouched and unspoiled by human hands, then, perhaps, they will have to accept its superiority over other religious books, which, as found today, are human creations and will have also to concede the fact that the Qur'an contains the ultimate Truth revealed by Allah (SWT) to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). They, therefore, fabricate all sorts of charges which are frivolous, mere figments of imagination and are not supported, in the least, by facts. As for instance Jeffrey accused Zaid bin Thaabit (RA) and his committee of arranging the Qur'an "as they saw best adding other material that came to them where it seemed appropriate" (Mohd. Khalifah; p: 52). The critic is fully aware of the fact that the Zaid bin Thaabit's (RA) committee adopted rigorous criteria for inclusion of verses in the Qur'anic text. The critic of the Qur'an seldom mention about the rigid norms adopted by the Thaabit committee in the compilation of both the *Mus'haf-Um* and *Mus'haf 'Uthman*. There is not only total lack of appreciation but deliberate suppression of this crucially important fact. Hence, criticism of this nature hardly carries any weight.

LACK OF COHERENCE IN THE QUR'AN AND LINKS BETWEEN CONSECUTIVE SURAHS

The Orientalists have failed to appreciate the links between the *Surahs*. They have wasted much of their time, energy and money in trying to arrange the Qur'anic verses chronologically like any other ordinary history book.

Thematic linkages between the various chapters and verses are very strongly established right from the opening *Surat-al Fatiha*, the First Chapter. In this Chapter, man beseeches Allah (SWT) to guide him to the path of righteousness and protect him from the path of those condemned by Him and those who got misled. The entire Qur'an focuses around this theme as is highlighted in the opening verses of Chapter-2. Thus thematic coherence and unity is distinctly marked in the Qur'an irrespective of the period, date and location when they were revealed. In modern historiography also thematic unity is being more emphasised rather than their chronological order.

The idea of coherence in the Qur'an has been comprehensively dealt with by Mustansir Mir in his book *Coherence in the Qur'an* (1986-American Trust Publications - Washington). He conclusively shows that the Muslim exegetes always considered coherence as one of the key and miraculous characteristics of the Qur'an. The concept of coherence was refined by Tabatabai and Syed Qutb who were of the view that each *Surah* (Chapter) possessed an axis or *Mehwar* round which the rest of the verses of that *Surah* were woven. The idea was further refined by Hameeduddin Farahi and Ameen Ahsan Islahi who held the view that "discourse will possess *nazm* when it has *tartib*, *tanasub* and *wahdaniyat*, that is, when it is well-ordered, well-proportioned, and well-unified" (Mustansir Mir, P: 33). It may be noted that the word *Surah* means "a wall enclosing a city". It implies therefore that each *Surah* is a well-knit, integrated unit centred around a focal

theme. Keeping this in view, Farahi and Islahi introduced the concept of *'amud* (literally pillar, column). The *'amud* constitutes the hub of the *Surah* or its focal theme around which all the verses of the *Surah* revolve. "The *'amud* is thus the bed-rock of a *Surah's nazm* (order). It is the unifying thread of the *Surah*, which can be understood as a unit only after its *'amood* has been discovered" (Mustansir Mir; p: 41). Once the focal theme or *'amud* or pivotal point is identified it will not be difficult to establish coherence within a *Surah* or a group of *Surahs*. In order to illustrate his point of coherence in the Qur'an, Islahi has put the Qur'anic verses into Seven Groups. Each Group is notably marked by a focal theme or *'amood*. Islahi's Group-II includes *Surahs* 6 to 9: al-An'am (The Cattle), al-A'raaf (The Heights), al-Anfaal (The Spoils) and at-Tawbah (Repentance) "The *'amood* of the group is Islam as religion of Abraham and makes the point that the four *Surahs* would thus appear to be systematically arranged in the Qur'an. Al-An'am is the *Surah* of Invitation: it invites the Quraysh, to embrace Islam. Al-A'raaf is the *Surah* of warning it warns the Quraysh. And at-Tawbah is the *Surah* of war: it announces war against the Quraysh because they have been unfaithful to the religion of Abraham, declares Muslims to be the rightful heirs to that religion, and replaces the Quraysh by Muslims as the custodians of Ka'bah - the symbol and legacy of Abrahmic religion" (Mustansir Mir p:86). The links among the four *Surahs* of this group are well established. The sequential unity of the theme of the four *Surahs* cited above is self-evident. There is no dearth of coherence. It is surprising that the Orientalists fail to appreciate these manifest realities. Obviously, it has more to do with their prejudiced perception and hence they fail to perceive coherence in Qur'anic verses and *Surahs*.

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE QUR'AN

While the Qur'an asserts that it is free from all contradictions (*Surah an-Nisa*; 4:82) the Orientalists in the Middle Ages and in recent times too have attempted to high-light some non-existent contradictions. This is basically due to their flawed understanding of the meaning of the verses due to poor translation or perverted thinking. This is evident from the following comment of Daniel: The Qur'an "both permitted and forbade augury. It asserted that good is from God and sin from man but then said that both good and evil are of God. He (the Qur'an) said that those who were rich in this world will be lost in the next; but then he says that Abraham was rich in this world and yet to be numbered among the good". He cited verses 17:13 and 27:47 to suggest that Islam approves foretelling or augury. This is not correct as neither of the two verses has anything to do with augury. *"And We have fastened every man's deeds to his neck, and on the Day of the Resurrection, We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open."* (al-Isra; 17:13)

Whereas in the other verse the people of Thamood insolently told their Prophet Saalih (AS); *"They said "We augur ill omen from you and those with you." He (Saalih) said "your ill omen is with Allah; nay, but you are people that are being tested."* (an-Naml; 27:47)

It is evident from these verses that Prophet Saalih (AS) never foretold anything. He simply warned them that their future was in the hands of Allah (SWT).

Citing another instance of contradiction in the Qur'an, the critic refer to the Qur'anic verses 2:144 and 2:177 regarding the direction of *Salaat* for Muslims: "In prayer the faithful are ordered in one passage to turn towards Jerusalem and in another they are commanded to turn towards Mecca while in a third they are taught that it is of no importance in what direction they turn in prayer"

(Gardener J: *The Faiths of the World*, vol.2, 279, Fullerton, 1920). While verse 2:144 categorically commands the Muslims to turn their faces towards Ka'bah, "the Inviolable place of worship", Gardener claims that this has been radically altered in verse 2:177 and nullifies the importance of the direction of *Salaat* as asserted in 2:144. He failed to appreciate the spirit of verse 2:177, which stresses the importance of the purity of faith with which the *Salaat* ought to be offered. The context in verse 2:177 is totally different, and leaves no scope for confusion. Still, surprisingly, Gardener was confused, presumably he did not apply his mind judiciously otherwise he would not have written that "it is of no importance in what direction they turn in prayer". It must be asserted that the direction of prayers towards Ka'bah is of cardinal importance to Muslims.

Levy repeated this accusation 40 years later which, as we have already noted, is preposterous. In his book on the "*Social Structure of Islam*", Levy remarks about contradictions in the revelations to the Prophet. "Specifically he declares that all living things were created from water, although man, according to another idea, was created of clay" [Levy. R (1962)]: *The Social Structure of Islam* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge p: 465]. In order to substantiate his claim he cites the following three verses.

Allah (SWT) has created every moving (living being) from water (24:45, also 21:30). He created man from clay like that of the potters (55:14). Created man from a clot. (96:2)

Perhaps a scientist would not have disputed these scientific truths as stated in the Qur'an. That every living being is created out of water is a fact endorsed by all the scientists. That a special clayey paste which emerged out of water was used by Allah (SWT) to create man, is referred to in 55:14, whereas verse 96:2 refers to the procreation of man after the creation of the first couple Adam and Eve.

Hence, there is no contradiction in any of the Qur'anic statements. The contradictions, to which the Orientalists have referred, are the consequences of their misinterpretation and faulty understanding of the Qur'anic verses. The assertion of the Qur'an that it was free from all contradictions remains intact and un-assailed.

AL-QUR'AN: A LIVING MIRACLE

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet said "Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believed but what I have been given is divine inspiration which Allah (SWT) has revealed to me so I hope that my followers will out-number the followers of other Prophets on the Day of Resurrection" (*Bukhari* vol.VI, p:504).

The Qur'an is a living miracle. It is unique and has remained un-imitated despite repeated attempts. Its language- Arabic - has been a dynamic and living language right through the ages, never treated as archaic and obsolete. The language of the Qur'an is as fresh, current and intelligible as it was during the period of its revelation. The literary excellence of the language of the Qur'an has remained unsurpassed and can never be excelled.

THE TAHADDI OR CHALLENGE OF THE QUR'AN

The Challenge (*Tahaddi*) to others to imitate the Qur'an has been posed by the revelation itself on various occasions and in various ways. They were categorically told that even if both Jinns and human beings combined their efforts they would not be able to produce a book like the Qur'an:

"Say: Then bring ye a book from Allah which is a better guide than either that I may follow it if you are truthful." (Al-Qasas; 28:49)

"..... 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." (Al-Isra; 17:88)

This challenge is repeated more than once. The enemies of the Prophet were challenged to produce just ten *Surahs* like in the Qur'an if their charge of it being composed by the Prophet (SAWS) was justified (11:13) or only one *Surah* (2:23 and 10:38). This challenge of the Qur'an stands even to this day;

"If you are in doubt as to what we have revealed from time to time to our servant, then produce a Surah like it and call your witnesses or helpers besides God if your (doubts) are true but if you cannot - and of surety you cannot - then fear the fire, whose fuel is men and stones - which is prepared for those who reject faith." (al-Baqarah; 2:23-24)

"Or do they say 'he forged it'? Say bring then a Surah like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if you speak the truth." (Yunus; 10:38)

This challenge posed by Qur'an has never been met and, as the Qur'an asserts, cannot be met. This eloquently expresses the *I'jaaz* or Miracle of the unique and inimitable Qur'an, the Word of Allah (SWT). (Denffer; p: 151)

The eloquent language of the Qur'an with elegant diction has remained unique and inimitable. It could not be matched in the past during the lifetime of the Prophet despite Qur'anic challenge to his contemporaries to produce even a single Chapter of the grandeur and excellence of the Qur'an's language. They simply failed. The European Orientalists were initially critical of the Qur'anic language but that was largely due to their ignorance of the Arabic language. The Orientalists have now come to appreciate the "inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy".

(Arbery: *The Koran Interpreted* - 1955, p: 21) Arbery who has produced a good translation of the Holy Qur'an admired the elegance and the power of the Qur'anic Arabic: "the rhetoric and the rhythm of the Arabic of the Koran are so characteristic, so powerful, so highly emotive, that any version whatever is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendour of the original. (Arbery, op.cit. p: 24)

To maintain the majesty of language without ever revising it even once during the long twenty three years of revelations is undoubtedly a miracle and an act of divinity. It is an established fact that the Prophet (SAWS) immediately after the revelation would call for a scribe and dictate what was revealed. Thereafter it would promptly spread among the Prophet's (SAWS) Companions, many of them would commit the revealed passage to memory. There was hardly any time for revision since immediately after the revelation the revealed verses were made accessible to the Companions. It is only a canard spread by some of the Orientalists that the Qur'anic verses were revised and re-revised by the Prophet (SAWS). They could never substantiate it.

The sweep of the subjects covered by Qur'anic revelations is so vast, so diverse and so unique that it is beyond the competence of human mind to cover them with consistency and without any contradiction.

The confirmations and corrections of the Biblical stories in the Qur'an testify eloquently to its divine source. The Qur'an corrects the biblical story regarding the Crucifixion of Christ. The alleged Crucifixion as described in the Qur'an is more or less corroborated in the Gospel of St. Barnabas. The Biblical stories also occasionally complement the historical facts referred to in the Qur'an. As for instance the Bible is able to identify precisely the Pharaoh who was contemporary of Moses and who was

sunk into the Nile while crossing. He was Mernepath, successor to Ramses-II, as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. (Maurice Bucaille: *The Qur'an and Modern Science* p: 45 edited by Dr. A.A.B Philips -1995). It is to this Pharaoh, Mernepath, that the Qur'an refers to in the following verse: *"Today I will save your dead body so that you may be sign for those who come after you....."* (Yunus; 10:92)

The mummified body of this king is in existence even today.

PREDICTIONS IN THE QUR'AN: THEIR ACCURACY

Very few events have been predicted in the Qur'an but where they have been predicted their correctness stands unchallenged.

(1) Khusru Parvez the Persian Ruler inflicted a humiliating defeat on the forces of the Byzantium Emperor Heraclius. The Qur'an however predicted that eventually the forces of Byzantium would emerge victorious of which there appeared little possibility then. This proved absolutely correct. The Persians were decisively beaten in the battle of Mosul in Dec. 627 AD. The cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Antioch, and Jerusalem which were lost to the Persians were recaptured by the Emperor of Byzantine. In the final peace agreement status quo ante was restored. This is what was predicted in *Surah ar-Rum*: *"The forces of Byzantium (Rumi) Empire have been defeated in a land close by. But they, even after [this] defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious within a few years. With Allah is the decision, in the past and the future."* (ar-Rum; 30:2~4).

(2) The conquest of Makkah and that the believers will be complete master of this town was clearly predicted in two verses. Once in *Surat-al Balad* (90) which was revealed in Makkah (Mecca) long before the Prophet's (SAWS) *Hijrat* (migration) and again in *Surah al-Fath* (48) after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah was signed in the 6th year of the *Hijrah*.

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was much harassed, persecuted in his city of birth, Makkah, when he commenced his mission to preach Islam. In the first two verses of *Surah al-Balad* he is being comforted and assured by Allah (SWT) that despite all the pain and suffering being inflicted on him by his opponents and enemies of Islam he will eventually return victorious and honoured in his city of birth i.e. Makkah: *"I do swear by this city and thou art a free man of this city."* (Al-Balad; 90:1-2)

This verse thus clearly predicts the triumphant return of the Prophet (SAWS) to his native town Makkah where he was born a free man in a noble family which was the custodian of the holy shrine, Ka'bah. Similarly, it was predicted in the Qur'an that the Muslims would be performing pilgrimage in Makkah, in total peace, performing all the rituals unhindered: *"Truly did Allah fulfil the vision of His messenger. You shall enter the sacred mosque, if Allah wills, with minds secure, heads shaved, hair cut short, and without fear for He knew what you knew not, and He granted besides this, a speedy victory."* (al-Fath; 48:27)

Following the appearance of this vision the Prophet (SAWS) proceeded towards Makkah with his Companions and the sacrificial animals but he was stopped at Hudaibiyah, at the outskirts of Makkah, by the Quraysh. However the negotiations that followed led to the Treaty of Hudaibiyah (6, *Hijrah*), under which the Muslims were allowed to enter Makkah and the shrine of Ka'bah next year without hitch and hindrance, performing all their rituals in total peace without any fear. The Qur'an called this treaty a "Manifest Victory" and eventually it proved to be the final step towards the conquest of Makkah and complete control of the shrine of *Ka'bah*.

Another prediction in the Qur'an is about the humiliating death of Abdul 'Uzza bin Abdul Muttalib

(Abu Lahab 'Father of Flame' called so because of his reddish complexion) and his wife Umme Jameel. Despite being step uncle of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), he was his inveterate enemy and his wife also behaved equally venomously. The verses in *Surah al-Lahab* (The Flame) refer to this inimical attitude of Abu Lahab and his wife and predicted that they would die an ignominious death. Abu Lahab died of the disease Adasa i.e. malignant pimples all over the body with stinking smell. His sons shifted him outside the house on his death on account of the stench coming out of his decomposed body. No member of the family came near him. He was eventually buried by Abyssinian labourers. Umme Jameel, Abu Lahab's wife, was also a sworn enemy of the Prophet (SAWS), used to strew thorns and thorny bushes near the entrance to the Prophet's (SAWS) residence. Although rich, she used to carry load of firewood and thorny bushes from the forests with a rope tied round her neck to support the load. She died of suffocation when the load of wood slipped from her head and the rope choked her around the neck. And she collapsed dead.

SCIENTIFIC REVELATIONS IN THE QUR'ANIC VERSES TESTIFY TO THEIR DIVINE ORIGIN

Revelations on scientific themes in some of the Qur'anic verses are indeed amazing. They cover a wide area spread over the fields of astronomy, some aspects of physical and chemical sciences, medical and biological sciences and even natural resources. Maurice Bucaille published his work in 1976 declaring "the Qur'an while inviting us to cultivate science, itself contains many observations on the natural phenomena and includes explanatory details which are seen to be in total agreement with modern scientific data." Since this pioneering publication, a significant number of other scientific works

relating to Qur'an and Science have been published. Dr. Mansour Hassab El Naby in his book the *Glorious Qur'an and Modern Science* (1990) asserts "You cannot find a single error in the Qur'an and you have to ask yourself if a man was the author of the Qur'an how he could have written facts in the seventh century AD. that today are shown to be in keeping with modern scientific knowledge (p:2). A group of scientists at the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, in their Introduction to the Scientific Indications in the Holy Qur'an (1990) remark that nearly "one eighth of the total number of verses in this Book are devoted to Science and Technology". Dr. Nurbaki, remarks: "The truth is emerging that the Koran is more alive and everlasting with each passing day. Its scientific wisdom is, as it were, rejuvenated with the passage of time (*Verses from the Holy Koran and the Facts of Science* 1992: Indus Publishing House, Karachi p:13). Recently the Indian School of Excellence Trust (INDSET) has published a Monograph (No: 17) entitled: *Selected Qur'anic Verses Classified by Scientific Themes* (1999). In this Monograph "250 definitive verses (*Muhkumaat*) of the Qur'an have been identified bearing significant degree of positive correlation with the corresponding scientific facts. This is only illustrative of the scientific miracles contained in the Qur'an" (p: XXXI). In his Foreword to a book by Shah Manzoor Alam, *Scientific Significance in Selected Qur'anic Verses*, the Rector of the Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, writes: "It brings out the stunning truth that the Holy Qur'an anticipated more than 1400 years ago some scientific facts which the scientists discovered only in the 19th and 20th centuries. This fact furnishes an irrefutable evidence of the divine character of the Holy Qur'an or else how an unlettered Prophet (SAWS) could have spoken with unerring accuracy of the scientific discoveries which constitute the pride of the western civilization". While details can be looked into the books cited above some of

the key scientific truths revealed in the Qur'an are highlighted below.

The accuracy of scientific predictions in the Qur'an regarding the movement of celestial bodies, concept of expanding universe, creation of all material objects in pairs, the growth and development of human embryo and foetus in mother's womb, and its lodging within three layers of darkness and a number of other phenomena testify eloquently to the divine character of the Qur'an.

One of the most remarkable revelations in the Qur'an concerns the orbital movement of the sun. While astronomer Jan Oort of the Netherlands discovered this fact in 1927, the Qur'an had revealed it in the 7th century: *"And the sun runs its course for a period determined for it, that is the decree of (Him) the Exalted in might, the all knowing."* (Yasin; 36:38)

The scientists, particularly the astronomers and astrophysicists assume a constantly expanding universe. This is endorsed by the Qur'an: *"And it is We Who have built the Universe with our creative power and verily it is We Who are steadily expanding it."* (al-Zaariyaat; 51:47)

That all living beings have been created out of water is now a well established scientific fact while the Qur'an revealed this more than 1400 years ago: *"...We made from water every living thing...."* (al-Anbiya; 21:30)

The Qur'an declares unambiguously that all animate and inanimate objects are created in pairs. It was only in the 1930s that Dirac's theory of electron conceptualised that every matter should have antimatter. The relevant verse of the Qur'an on the subject is very precise: *"Glory to Allah, who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge."* (Yasin; 36:36)

The Qur'an also indicated the existence of extra-solar planets in the last verse of *Surat-at Talaq*: ***"It is Allah Who has created seven heavens and of the earth the like there of (i.e. seven). His command descends between them (heavens and earths). That you may know that Allah has power over all things."*** (At-Talaq; 65:12)

The existence of these extra solar planets is only now being gradually discovered by the scientists/astronomers.⁶

Dr. Keith Moore in his book *The Developing Humans* acknowledges the fact that the Qur'an very clearly and correctly describes the embryological growth from the blastocyst (*Alaq*) stage, to somite formation (*Mudgha*) and finally the foetus stage. What is more surprising for Dr. Moore is the reference to the three veils within which the embryo is lodged in the mother's womb: ***"...He makes you in the womb of your mother in stages one after another in three veils of darkness, such is your lord and Cherisher....."*** (az-Zumar; 39:6)

Dr. Keith Moore has identified these three veils as (1) the maternal anterior abdominal wall, (2) the uterine wall, and (3) the amino-chronic membrane.

Do these scientific revelations not distinctly; clearly and categorically testify to the divine origin of the Qur'an as the word of God? Do we need any other proof?

INFLUENCE OF THE HISTORICAL FACTORS ON THE COMPILATION OF THE DIVINELY REVEALED BOOKS

The Orientalists have completely overlooked the historical factors which led to the tampering with the texts of the *Taurat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospels). The absence of these vicissitudes of history helped the Qur'an to retain

6. For details see: *The New York Times* (Science Times), January 16, 2001.

its originality. The historical factors have substantially influenced and modified the original text of the *Taurat* (Torah). Firstly, the original *Taurat* (Torah) was destroyed when the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Palestine in 589 BC., destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem, burnt the original copy of the *Taurat* (Torah) and deported the entire Jewish Population to Babylonia. The Babylonian influence on the restoration of Torah is notably marked. It was first restored in its originality by Ezra (*Ozair*) on his return from Babylonia one hundred fifty years later (450 B.C.) because he could recite *Taurat* (Torah) by heart. It was again corrupted later and again a Jewish sage Hillel, a Babylonian, attempted to restore it to its pristine purity somewhere around 200 BC. Consequently under his influence "the texts of the Pentateuch and Samuel which were chosen for the Rabbanic Recension appear to be of Babylonian origin rather than the prevailing late Palestinian texts that were available" (Frank Moore Cross - Chapter II in Hershel Shanks [Ed]: *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* [1992] p: 50). The impact of Hellenistic culture on Jewish religious thought and religious texts has been phenomenal since the conquest of Palestine in 332 B.C. by Alexander the Great. It was to such an extent that to "extreme Jewish Hellenizers the ancestral God of Israel was simply another manifestation of the supreme deity known in Syria as Bal Shamin (Master of Heaven) and in the Greek World as Zeus Olympus." (Schiffman, LH). Under the Greek influence there was a Greek Recension of the Torah as well called Septuagint, an old Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, there are three textual families of the original *Taurat* (Torah). The Babylonian which later was called Masoretic text, the old Palestinian text which later became the Samaritan Recension and the third was the Egyptian or the Greek Recension, the Septuagint. The Samaritan priests/scribes used to harmonize their biblical text by eliminating

repetitions and contradictions and by bringing about thematic unity in the text of the Torah (Schiffman p: 170 also see p: 148; Cross op cit.). All the three Recensions have genuine textual differences (p: 170, Schiffman op. cit). The Masoretic Recension constitutes the Recension used by the Rabbis and is the predominant Recension used by the Jews (Schiffman p: 172 op. cit).

As regards the Gospels, we are aware of the fact that there are four Gospels: Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, originally in Aramaic or Hebrew. These Gospels were first written between 40 and 70 years after the death of Jesus. They were not the verbatim records of what Jesus had said. Because of the lapse of 40-70 years between the death of Jesus and the appearance the four Gospels "his sayings and deeds were shaped by the needs of the Palestinian Jesus Movement;... The Jesus traditions were edited by Jesus followers ... some of the traditions derive authentically from Jews. They were passed on by Jews who had amazing memories and who lived in polemical relations with many who did not believe in Jesus and rejected the claim of his followers that he was the long awaited Messiah" (Charlesworth, JH [Ed] 1995: *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p:7). It is common knowledge that the New Testament, as found today, was finalised under Roman Emperor Constantine in the conference of Nicea in 325 CE. It was also then ordered to destroy all the other texts, except those approved, including the Gospel of Barnabas and all the textual material in Hebrew Language ("What Did Jesus Really Say?" pp: 381-382).

In contradistinction, Islam in its initial phase was free from the political turmoil and historical vicissitudes which corrupted the contents of the Torah and the *Gospels*. It may be noted that the entire Qur'anic text as dictated by the Prophet (SAWS) was already available in written form. A standard referral text of the Qur'an, as communicated to the Prophet (SAWS) by Archangel Jibreel (Gabriel) was

compiled in a *Mus'haf* within a year of his death. Multiple copies of the standardised text of the Qur'an with distinct dialectical clarity in script were prepared by the 14th year of the Prophet's (SAWS) death, during the Caliphate of 'Uthman (RA). A copy each was sent to the then major centres of Islam in Makkah, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Basra and Kufa. This momentous task was accomplished when Islam retained its purity and was unsullied by historical and political turbulence. It is this standardised text with the addition of diacritical marks which is being used by over a billion Muslims the world over.

CONTINUITY OF THE DIVINE MESSAGES AND THEIR CULMINATION IN THE QUR'AN⁷

It is indeed surprising that the people of the Book i.e. the Jews and the Christians stop the evolution of the divine message with Jesus Christ. This is being done despite the fact that in both *Taurat* (Torah) and *Injeel* (Gospel) it is distinctly stated that a final messenger, inspired by divine guidance, will eventually arrive to guide mankind to the path of piety and righteousness. It is recorded in Deuteronomy (part of Torah or *Taurat*) that Allah (SWT) told Moses that He will raise a Prophet like him who will communicate truthfully the divine instructions received by him (Duet. 8:18-19). This prophesies is repeated later in Deuteronomy in unambiguous terms: "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their own people. I will put my words in the mouth of the Prophet who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the word that the Prophet shall speak in my name I myself will hold accountable" (Deuteronomy 18:18-19, the

7. For a detailed discussion on this topic see Monograph 9-10: Islam was the Religion of all the Prophets – Muhammad (SAWS) was the Last Prophet.

Holy Bible - The New Revised Standard Version p: 171). There are a number of predictions about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) in various books of the Bible. In Isaiah it is stated: "A shoot will come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah; 11:1-2 op. cit. P:809). In these two verses the "stump of Jesse" clearly refers to the branch of Ismael since this word according to Encyclopaedia Biblica is contracted from Isma'il" (see Jamal Badavi Muhammad: 1997, "Muhammad in the Bible", pp: 18-19).

In order to leave no doubt about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), Allah (SWT) gets this prophesy repeated by Prophet Jesus. The most striking predictions about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) are found in John 14,15 and 16. In the words of Jesus "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever" (John 14:14-16). It obviously implies that the message of the Advocate or his teachings will live forever. This is a clear reference to the Message of Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an which will last till eternity. It further states: "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you all that I have said to you" (John 14:25-26). Further, on, Jesus asks his followers "When the Advocate comes whom I will send to you from the Father, the spirit of Truth who comes from the Father he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27, p: 110). This prediction of Jesus is further confirmed and elaborated upon: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the

Advocate will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you. And when he comes he will prove the world wrong about sin, righteousness and Judgment, about sin because they do not believe in me, about righteousness because I am going to the father and you will see me no longer; about judgment because the ruler of the world has been condemned." (John 16:7-14; p: 110). It may be noted that in John 16:12-14, Jesus speaks of the incompleteness of his message: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the spirit of Truth comes he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak to whatever he hears and he will declare to you things that are to come. He will glorify me; he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

In these verses, Jesus clearly declared that he was leaving his message incomplete which will be completed by the spirit of Truth i.e. the Advocate. Further his message was contaminated as the people neither listened to him nor followed him when he advised them to act righteously and fear about the Day of Judgement. Jesus himself talked about this contamination which is distinctly mentioned in the Gospel of Barnabas: "But when God will take me away from this world, Satan will rise again his accursed sedition, by making the impious believe that I am God, the son of God. At such time my doctrine shall be contaminated so much that scarcely shall there remain thirty faithful ones" (The Gospel of Barnabas, 96 as quoted in Misha'al Ibn 'Abdullah: 1996 - *What Did Jesus Really Say?*, p: 397). The situation will be corrected when the Advocate arrives for he will "teach everything and will guide you into all Truth that He receives directly from God."

It is thus abundantly clear from the predictions in both the *Taurat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospel) that in the evolution of divine revelations neither of them contained the last and final words from Allah (SWT) for the guidance

of mankind and none of them claimed it. They both distinctly predicted the arrival of the last Prophet (SAWS) with the final words from Allah (SWT) for the guidance of all mankind. It is significant to note that the Qur'anic verse which reveals that Prophet Jesus had predicted the arrival of another Prophet whose name will be Ahmad is also confirmed by the Jewish Haggi: The Qur'an reveals: *“And remember Jesus the son of Mary, said: O children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad...”* (As-Saff; 61:6)

Godfry Higgins in Anacalypsis remarks that the name of the Messiah who has to come after Jesus appears in Chapter-2, Verse seven of the Haggi. “And the desire of all nations shall come.” Here the Hebrew word HMD (Translated as desire) literally means Mohammed or Mahomet. Hence Sir Higgins categorically states “Here Mohammad is expressly foretold by Haggi and by name; there is no interpolation here.” (M.A. Youssef: "The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Gospel of Barnabas, and the New Testament", pp: 110-117).

This is fully corroborated in the Gospel of St. Barnabas. Jesus pointed out that because of acute contamination of his teachings “God will have mercy upon the world and will send His Messenger for whom He has made all things. He shall come from the south with power and shall destroy the idols and the idolaters. He shall take away the dominion which Satan has over men. He shall bring with him the mercy of God for salvation of those who shall believe in His words” (The Gospel of Barnabas 96-as quoted in *What Did Jesus Really Say?* op. cit. p: 397).

Thus, the evolution of the divine revelations could not be complete without the last Messenger who would bring the ultimate divine guidance from Allah (SWT) which will remain valid till the Day of Judgement. The last divine

Messenger stemmed from the progeny of Prophet Isma'il and culminated in the personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) which is testified to by both the Christian and Jewish religious texts. He also carried with him the ultimate Book of Guidance i.e. the Holy Qur'an, which will survive in its pristine purity and remain valid till the Day of Judgment. The Qur'an declares that the communication of divine Message and commissioning of divinely ordained Prophets which commenced with the descent of Adam to earth both consummated and terminated with Prophet Muhammad (SAWS): *"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men but (he is) the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets....."* (al-Ahzab; 33:40)

With the deliverance of the final divine guidance through the Qur'an Allah (SWT) also proclaimed the perfection of *Deen-e-Islam* which was for all mankind: *".....This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favours upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion....."* (al-Ma'edah; 5:3)

It is significant to note that the Qur'an alone, among all the scriptures including *Taurat* (Torah) and *Injeel* (Gospel), emphatically claims that the *Deen* for all the peoples of the world was perfected during the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAWS). These religious values governing the conduct of human life in almost every sphere of activity were permanently enshrined in the immutable, inimitable and incorruptible Qur'an to act as a heavenly guide to human beings to the path of piety and righteousness till the Day of Judgement.

In the final analysis and on the authority of the earlier divine scriptures of the monotheistic religions—Torah of the Jews and Gospel of Christians, it can be incontrovertibly concluded that the chain of divinely ordained Prophets terminated with Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and that the evolution of the Divine message

culminated in the revelation of the Qur'anic verses, which contain the ultimate truth for the eternal guidance of mankind being the words of Allah (SWT), and will stay immaculately pure till the Day of Judgement.

PART - II

**BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN:
SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES
ON IDENTICAL THEMES**

BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES ON IDENTICAL THEMES

Bible includes both the Old and the New Testaments. The Old Testament includes the Pentateuch "The first five books of the Bible, called Torah in Hebrew. Torah literally means 'teaching' and includes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Besides these five books of the Torah, the Old Testament contains over 40 other books. The New Testament includes the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and a host of other books including the Revelation which is the last book of the New Testament. The Pentateuch or (Torah) was revealed to Prophet Moses and the four Gospels are supposed to contain the divine revelations to Prophet Jesus. They however lost their originality admittedly because of human interpolations. This is also admitted in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition, for India: "Occasionally it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission and that none of the versions provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best Judgement of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text." (To The Reader - 1993 Edition). As far as the Qur'an is concerned it is transmitted directly from Allah (SWT) through Archangel Gabriel (*Jibreel*) to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and has thus retained its originality. It never needed any reconstruction which was not even allowed. The *Mus'haf-e 'Uthman* or the 'Uthman Codex of the Qur'an which is the only Codex of the Qur'an being universally used by each and every Muslim the world over eloquently testifies to its originality.

There are a large number of common topics and events which are described in the Pentateuch (Torah) and

revealed in the Qur'an also. As for instance both speak of the Creation of the Universe, the Sin committed by Adam and Eve, the Bush Fire, the Miracle of Moses, the story of Haroon (Aaron) and the Golden Calf, the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), the Great Flood during the Period of Prophet Nuh (Noah) and many others. It will be interesting to examine the degree of concordance and discordance between the accounts furnished in the Pentateuch (Torah) and the revelations in the Qur'an on some of these identical topics. Further, the human values, ethics and morality ordained in the three divine books are strikingly similar. This strong identity of themes and admirable unity of the ethical and moral values distinctly suggest the commonality of the source from where they have originated. It is now proposed to examine critically and objectively their texts on some selected common themes in order to find out the degree of contrasts and similarities in the contents of the Qur'an and the two preceding divine books viz. **Torah of the Jews** (or Old Testament) and **Gospels of Christians**. The degree of contrasts between the Biblical accounts and Qur'anic revelations on identical themes will reflect the amount of human intervention in restoring, reconstructing and shaping the Biblical stories, compared with the Qur'an which is immaculately pure, and corruption free.

CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE IN SIX DAYS

Both the Torah and the Holy Qur'an speak of the creation of the universe in Six Days but their accounts widely differ:

Genesis (Pentateuch): According to Genesis the nights and days were created even before the creation of the sky and the earth: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep

while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said 'let there be light' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening there was morning the first day" (Genesis 1:1-5). The sky was created as a dome the Second Day (Genesis 1:6-8). On the third day was created the earth with all its vegetation (Genesis 1:9-13). This was followed by the creation of the stars, the sun, the moon, the days and years and the seasons on the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19). The birds, land and sea animals were created on the fifth day (Genesis 1:20-23) and finally on sixth day was created man. The Genesis records: "Then God said: let us make human kind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth - So God created human kind in His image" (Genesis; 1:26). After the creation of man on the sixth day: "God finished the work that He had done and He rested on the seventh day from all the work that He had done" (Genesis 2:2).

The Qur'an: The Qur'an also refers to the creation of the universe in Six Days or *Sittah Ayyaam*. It is agreed by all the authorities on Qur'anic exegesis that the Six Days represent six periods or stages and not six calendaric days as indicated in the Genesis cited above (Alam Manzoor: 1999 - *Scientific Significance in Selected Qur'anic Verses*, p:23). At the outset it may be mentioned that the duration of the celestial days in the Qur'an widely varies. In one context it points that the duration of the celestial day is equal to one thousand calendar years: "*He rules all affairs from the heavens to the earth then it ascends unto Him on a Day the measure of which is thousand years of your reckoning.*" (as-Sajdah; 32:5)

In another context, the measure of a celestial day is equal to 50 thousand earthly years (*Surat-al Ma'arij*; 70:4). The celestial days therefore distinctly represent periods and hence cannot be treated as equal to calendaric days of 24 hours. The creation of the universe in the Qur'an is being described right from its origin when the solar system was non-existent and there was no concept of calendared days, months and years and of even nights and days. As cited above the Genesis treats them as calendared days. The scientists will always challenge the validity of this concept.

The creation of the universe is explicitly revealed in the Qur'an in the following verses: *"Say: Is it that you deny Him Who created the earth in two days? And do you join equals with Him? He is the Lord of (all) the worlds. He set on earth mountains standing firm, high above it, and bestowed blessings on the earth, and measured therein all things to give them nourishment in due proportion, in four days, in accordance with (the needs of) those who seek (sustenance). Moreover He comprehended in his design the sky and it had been (as smoke): He said to it and to the earth: "come you together willingly or unwillingly." They said "We do come (together) in willing obedience. So He completed them as seven firmaments in two days, and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command. And We adorned the lower heaven with lights, and (provided it) with guard....."* (*Fussilat* or *Ha-Meem*; 41:9~12)

The Qur'anic verses cited above present an integrated and unified concept of the creation of the universe. Alam points out "The Qur'an conceives of an integrated system of the universe including the solar system and the system of galaxies. This process was started simultaneously with the creation of the earth or the solar system and is implied in the following Qur'anic verses *".....the earth and the heavens were joined together*

(as one unit of creation) before we clove them asunder..."
(al-Anbiya; 21:30)

Subsequently they were integrated into a well-knit system: *"Moreover (thumma), He turned to heaven when it was a smoke and said to it and to the earth come you together willingly or unwillingly: they said we do come in willing obedience."* (Fussilat or Ha-Meem; 41:11)

Thus the process of "cloving asunder" and "coming together" of the galaxies, the solar system and the seven heavens as part of a unified system was accomplished simultaneously in two celestial days. In order to comprehend their correct meaning and significance the two verses 9 and 12 of *Surah Fussilat* (41) have to be read together." (Alam Manzoor [1999] : "Scientific Significance in Selected Qur'anic Verses" - Riyadh, pp:23-24). The earth was set in order in the remaining four celestial days and made habitable for all types of living beings. In contrast to this integrated, systematic and stage by stage creation of the universe including the earth and the solar system the Genesis presents the creation of each phenomena in isolation. The inter-linkage among them is not even conceived of. At the end of each day and creation of each phenomena such as the sky (dome); the earth etc., the Genesis records **"And God saw that it was good. And there was evening there was morning."**

The Genesis offers some scientifically inconsistent statements. The days and nights are formed right on the first day of creation while the formation of the solar system is referred to on the fourth day: **"God made the two great lights-- the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night-- and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening there was morning, the fourth**

day" (Genesis 1:16-19; p:1). The Qur'an is completely free from such illogical and unscientific statements.

Another sharp difference between the *Taurat* (Torah) and Qur'an is with regard to God resting on the seventh day. It is stated in the Genesis **"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and their entire multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that He had done and He rested on the seventh day from all the work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed, because on it God rested from all the work that He had done in creation"** (Genesis 2:1-3 p: 2). The Genesis presents God as a physical God Who because of the strain He had undergone in the creation of the universe including the earth and its living beings was tired, needed rest to recuperate His stamina and energy, hence the seventh day was declared a hallowed day or a Sabbath, for rest and relaxation by God for Himself and for the mankind.

The presentation of God in human image Who gets tired after six days of hard and strenuous work is categorically rejected by the Qur'an: ***"And indeed We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days and nothing of fatigue touched Us."*** (Qaaf; 50:38)

Allah (SWT) is the Supreme Authority. He has only to command the things to be created 'Be' (Kun) and they are instantly created (*Fayakun*) He could create Adam without parents and Jesus without father. He is incomparable (*laisa kamislihi shai'in*).

The Qur'anic concept of Allah (SWT) is that He is the Supreme Being, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe ***".....Ever living One, the One who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him....."*** (al-Baqarah; 2:255). He never tires.

MIRACLE OF THE ROD (STAFF) OF MOSES

Exodus (Pentateuch): While describing the divinely gifted miracles to Moses, the Exodus records as follows: **"The Lord said to Moses "what is in your hand? He said "A staff". And he said throw it on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses drew back from it. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and seize it by tail" - so he reached out his hand and grasped it, and it became staff in his hand (Exodus 4:2~4; p:51).**

Qur'an: The above statement in the Exodus conforms to the Qur'anic revelations in *Surat-un Naml*; 27:7~12 and *Surat-ul Qasas*; 28:29~32. What is amazing however that is when Moses and Aaron (*Haroon*) are before Pharaoh the Miracle of the Staff is associated with Aaron and not with Moses to whom it was originally gifted. This is how this miracle is recorded in Exodus 7:8~10, under the title **Aaron's Miraculous Rod**. **"The Lord said to Moses and Aaron' When Pharaoh says to you perform a wonder then you shall say to Aaron "take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh and it will become a snake"**. This is a glaring contradiction. In the Qur'an the Miracle of the Staff consistently stays with Prophet *Musa* (Moses) (AS).

ACCOUNT OF THE BURNING BUSH

The account of the Burning Bush is mentioned both in the Torah and the Qur'an (*inni aanustu nara*)(27:7). One very fundamental difference in the account of the "Burning Bush" between the Torah and the Qur'an is that in the former God addresses Moses as "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). In contradistinction in the Qur'an Allah (SWT) addresses Moses: **"O Moses, verily I am Allah, the Exalted in might, the Wise!"** (an-Naml; 27:9)

In *Surah Al-Qasas* he is addressed: *".....O Moses, verily I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds."* (al-Qasas; 28:30)

In *Surah Ta-Ha* Moses is addressed: *"But when he came to the fire, a voice was heard "O Moses! Verily I am thy Lord!....."* (Ta-Ha; 20:11-12)

It may be noted that in none of the Qur'anic verses Allah (SWT) calls himself God of a particular community/nation/ethnic group as in Exodus. He is always according to Qur'an, Lord of the worlds (*Rabb-il 'aalameen*). Barring this, the accounts of the Burning Bush or Fire as given in the Torah and the Qur'an are strikingly similar. In Torah, however, Moses is gifted with a third miracle: **"When water from the river Nile will be thrown by Moses on the ground it will turn into blood on the dry ground"** (Exodus 4:9). This miracle is not mentioned in the Qur'an and Torah does not record this miracle having ever been performed by Moses.

CHARACTERIZATION OF PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE QUR'AN

OLD TESTAMENT

Another sharply contrasting feature between the Bible (including both the Old and New Testaments) and the Qur'an is that in the former the characters of some of the prophets are badly denigrated. As for instance Prophet Aaron has been blamed for making the Golden Calf. The story of Samri, the real sinner, the maker of this Calf, as revealed in the Qur'an, is not to be found in the Exodus. The Qur'an puts the blame squarely on Samri and vouchsafes for the innocence and integrity of Prophet *Haroon* (Aaron).

Can we imagine a Prophet of great virtue and piety committing adultery, or turning into an idol-worshipper! Prophet David (Dawood) (AS) is charged with adultery in

the Samuel (Old Testament): **"It happened, late one afternoon when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful - (she is Bath-Sheba, daughter of Eli'am and wife of Uri'ah the Hittite - So David sent Messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her"** (2 Samuel 11:2-4; p:284).

The most despicable charge that can be levelled against a Prophet is to call him an idolater. But this is precisely what has been done against Prophet Solomon in I Kings (Old Testament) under the title Solomon's Errors: **"For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other Gods; and his heart was not true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon followed Asstarte, the goddess of Sidonians, and Mil'com, the abomination of the Ammonites"** (1 Kings; 11:4-5 p:316). This is blasphemy, pure and simple. No Prophet can ever be guilty of such a heinous sin.

QUR'AN ON THE PIETY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF PROPHETS

In contradistinction, the Qur'an clearly affirms the piety and righteousness of all the prophets. In the case of these three Prophets viz. *Haroon* (Aaron) (AS) *Dawood* (David) (AS) and *Suleiman* (Solomon) (AS) Allah (SWT) Himself stands witness, as revealed in the Qur'an, of their nobility, piety, high moral stature and total submission to the will of Allah (SWT). He declares in the Qur'an that Prophet *Haroon* (Aaron) tried his best to dissuade the Israelites from worshipping the Golden Calf but they would not listen to him: *"Aaron had already before this said to them: "O my people! You are being tested in this: For verily your Lord is (Allah) most gracious: so follow me and obey my command. They said we will not abandon this cult,*

but we will devote ourselves to it until Moses returns to us.” (Ta-Ha; 20:90-91)

The guilt of Prophet Dawood (David) (AS) was not adultery, far from it, rather he was proud of his piety and sense of Justice. Exegetes differ on the cause for which he was put to test. Nonetheless he was tested by Allah (SWT) which he soon realised and sought divine pardon. He was pardoned and rewarded magnanimously *“...And David gathered that We had tried him; he asked forgiveness of his Lord, fell down, bowing in prostration, and turned (to Allah in repentance). So We forgave him this (lapse): he enjoyed indeed a near approach to Us and a beautiful place of final return. O David! We did indeed make you a vicegerent on earth: so judge you between men in truth (and justice).....” (Sad; 38:24-26)*

Similarly, the Qur'an unambiguously testifies to the piety and virtue of Prophet Solomon: *“And We did try Solomon: We placed on his throne a body (without life): but he did turn (to us in true devotion). He said: O my Lord! forgive me and grant me kingdom which, (may not be) bestowed to another after me; for you are the Grantor of Bounties (without measure).” (Sad; 38:34-35)*

STORY OF PROPHET JOSEPH: BIBLE AND QUR'AN

Similarly it is observed that the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) (AS) as told in the (Genesis: 37-38 pp:34-44), though essentially the same as revealed in the Qur'an in *Surah Yusuf* (Chapter-12) loses its moral fibre because of the irrelevant details in the Genesis. His dreams and his attitude towards Potiphar's wife are almost similarly described. His innocence however is not immediately established in the Genesis which the Qur'an does. His imprisonment and his eventual release from the prison and rise to power because of his adeptness in interpreting

dreams are correctly and identically described in both the *Taurat* (Torah) and the Qur'an. The Qur'anic account is very precise, dignified, and well balanced. Prophet *Yusuf* (Joseph) (AS) does not demonstrate his emotions loudly as made out in the Torah: **“And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it”** (Genesis; 45:2). In the Qur'an he is shown to be generous towards his step brothers. He was not revengeful despite all their venomous and inimical actions against him. He pardoned them, one and all, and settled them in Egypt with honour and dignity. These noble sentiments and high moral lessons that we draw from the Qur'anic revelations are totally missing from the Torah. The Torah reads more like the *Decline and Rise of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbons than a divine revelation. Glimpses of divine revelation do occasionally show up in *Taurat* (Torah) but essentially it seems to be a human creation and not a pure uncorrupted divine revelation which the Qur'an is.

THE GREAT FLOOD DURING PROPHET NOAH'S TIME: TORAH AND QUR'AN

The Great Flood during the time of Prophet Nuh (Noah) (AS) is described in great detail in the **Genesis Pentateuch**. The dimensions of the boat built by Prophet Nuh (AS) are also furnished. It was made of cypress wood, 300 cubits in length, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits in height. Besides providing this valuable information, it furnishes the precise month, day and year in Noah's life (six hundredth year) and then proceeds further furnishing a graphic account of the intensity, the magnitude and the period for which the flood lasted. It is in the magnitude of the flood that the Genesis and Qur'an sharply differ. While the former makes it global covering all the high mountains and all the continents of the earth, the Qur'an covers only the area where the people of Nuh (Noah) lived and were

to be punished. The **Genesis** describes the flood as follows: **"the waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters swelled above the mountains covering them fifteen cubits deep-He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, human beings and animals and creeping things and the birds of the earth; they were blotted out from the earth"** (Genesis - 7:19-21, and 23). This account is grossly exaggerated and factually incorrect. Firstly it is not corroborated by the Qur'an. Secondly, it is strange that a flood of the magnitude which submerged all the high mountains such as the Himalayas, the Alps, the Rockies and the Andes under 15 cubit deep water has not left any geological record. They all existed during the lifetime of Prophet Nuh (Noah) (AS) himself. Hence, scientifically, it sounds incredible.

Qur'an: The Qur'an makes the Great Flood, area and people specific. Addressing the rich people of his area who used to mock at his constructing and assembling the ark Prophet Nuh (Noah) (AS) remarked *"But soon will you know who it is on whom will descend a penalty that will cover them with shame - or will be unloosened a penalty lasting."* (Hud; 11:39)

Soon after this warning was sounded, the fountains of the earth gushed forth with the command of Allah (SWT) *".....We said embark therein, of each kind two, male and female, and your family - except those against whom the word has already gone forth - and the believers. And only a few believed with him. So He said embark you on the ark in the name of Allah whether it moves or be at rest! For my Lord is, be sure, Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. So the ark floated with them on waves (towering) like mountains, and Noah called out to his son, who had separated himself (from the rest) O my son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers: The son replied: "I will*

betake myself to some mountain. It will save me from the water" Noah said "This day nothing can save from the command of Allah, any but those on whom He has mercy!"- And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the Flood. Then the word went forth: "O earth! Swallow up thy water, and O skies withhold (thy rain)! And the water abated, and the matter ended. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and the word went forth: 'Away with those who do wrong.'" (Hud; 11:40-44)

The Qur'an confirms that it was a flood of colossal magnitude caused by both torrential rains and gushing forth of springs from the earth as given in the Genesis. It, however, rejects the story that it was global in dimension. The Qur'anic revelation is very clear that the Great Flood was the expression of wrath of Allah (SWT) on the sinners among the people of Noah. Hence subjecting the entire world to this tormenting penalty would be surely unjust and cannot be associated with Allah (SWT).⁸

8. Those interested in further details about the contradictions in the Bible may refer to: Mish'al Ibn 'Abdullah (1996): *What Did Jesus Really Say*, Islamic Assembly of North America (IANA), 3588 Plymouth Real Suite # 270, Ann Arbor, MI 48105, USA.

PART - III

**TAURAT (TORAH), INJEEL (GOSPELS)
AND THE QUR'AN**

**COMMONALITY OF ETHICAL NORMS
AND MORAL VALUES**

**TAURAT (TORAH), INJEEL (GOSPELS)
AND THE QUR'AN
COMMONALITY OF ETHICAL NORMS
AND MORAL VALUES**

That the *Taurat* (Torah), the *Injeel* (Gospel) and the Qur'an have originated from the same divine source is decisively brought out if we look into the divine injunctions in the three Holy Books pertaining to the eating of unclean animals, interest on loans, justice and honesty, respect for parents, fornication, homosexuality etc.

UNCLEAN FOOD

The pig has been declared unclean in both the **Deuteronomy** and **Leviticus (Pentateuch)**. It is recorded in **Deuteronomy** (14:8) "And the pig because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud is unclean for you. You shall not eat their meat and you shall not touch their carcasses."

It is commanded in **Leviticus** (17:12) that "No one among you shall eat blood."

It is emphatically stated in the **Exodus** (2:20): "**Whoever sacrifices to any God other than Lord alone shall be devoted to destruction.**"

These three fundamental prohibitions which are recorded separately in the Books of the Pentateuch of the Old Testament are expressed concisely and categorically in the following verse of the Qur'an: "*He has only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine and that*

on which any other name has been invoked besides that of Allah...." (Al-Baqarah; 2:173 – see also 5:3&16:115).

JUSTICE FOR ALL

The Qur'anic injunctions and the Exodus of the Pentateuch exhort people to act with fair play and justice. There is a general instruction in the Qur'an to dispense justice with equity: *".....and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice....."* (an-Nisa, 4:58)

The Qur'an sternly warns the Muslims that your desire to protect your relations, your personal prejudices, or under pressure from rich and influential people, should not detract you from the path of Justice: *"O you who believe stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts) lest you swerve, and if you distort justice, or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that you do."* (an-Nisa; 4:135 see also 4:105; 7:29; 16:90 and 57:25).

It is further stressed in another verse. *"O you who believe stand out firmly for Allah as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do."* (al-Ma'edah; 5:8)

Exodus (Pentateuch): The instructions given to the Jews in the Exodus are very much similar to the Qur'anic injunctions cited above: Under the title **Justice for All** it is recorded in the Exodus: **"You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as malicious witness. You shall not follow a majority in wrong doing, when you bear witness in a law suit, you shall not side with a majority so as to pervert justice; nor shall you be partial to the poor in a Law suit -- When**

you come upon your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you shall bring it back. -- You shall not pervert the justice due to the poor in their law suits. -- Keep far from a false charge and do not kill the innocent and those in the right, for I will not acquit the guilty" (Exodus; 23:1-7).

RESPECT FOR PARENTS

The Torah and the Qur'an are very categorical about respect and honouring the parents.

Exodus: The Old Testament in the Exodus is emphatic about respect to parents and prescribes penalty by death if they are cursed: **"Honour your father and your mother so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you"** (Exodus; 20:12). It is further commanded: **"Whoever curses father or mother shall be put to death"** (Exodus; 21:17).

Qur'an: It is decreed in the Qur'an; *"Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel but address them in terms of honour. And out of honour lower to them the wing of humility and say: My Lord bestow on them your mercy even as they cherished me in my childhood."* (al-Isra; 17:23-24)

The Qur'an further enjoins upon the believers to be respectful and dutiful to their parents: *"And We have enjoined upon man to be good to his parents: In travail upon travail did his mother bear him and in two years was his weaning: Show gratitude to Me and to your parents, to Me is your final goal."* (Luqmaan; 31:14)

PROHIBITION ON CHARGING USURY AND INTEREST

Charging usury or interest on loans advanced is strongly forbidden both in the Qur'an and the Old Testament.

Qur'an: The Qur'an sternly warns: *“O you who believe devour not interest, doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah that you may really prosper.”* (al-e Imran; 3:130 – see also 2:275-276 and 2:278~280).

Exodus: The Exodus in the Old Testament also speaks strongly against charging interest: **“If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them”** (Exodus; 22:25).

There is however one fundamental difference between the Qur'anic injunction and Biblical law. Charging of interest is prohibited only among the Israelites. It however, can be charged on non-Israelites or foreigners (Deuteronomy; 23:19-20, p: 179). The Qur'anic injunction is applicable to all irrespective of race, ethnicity, and region, alien or local. The human intervention in Torah in the making of this command is obvious. Allah (SWT) cannot thus discriminate between Israelites and non-Israelites in this matter.

ARROGANCE AND OSTENTATIOUS DISPLAY OF WEALTH

The Qur'an, the Old Testament and the New Testament are almost identical in instructing their respective followers to help and to be good to the poor and the needy and to never treat them with arrogance and pride, expressing thanks to Allah (SWT) Who guided them to do these charitable deeds.

We have the story of Qaroon (Korah) who was an Israelite, phenomenally rich and extremely arrogant. He used to display his wealth ostentatiously. Instead of being grateful to Allah (SWT) for the wealth and treasures bestowed upon him he used to boast *"...this has been given to me because of a certain knowledge which I possess..."* (al-Qasas; 28:78)

Ignoring the fact that people, far richer than him, were earlier destroyed by Allah (SWT) for their pride and arrogance, he moved *"among his people in the (pride of his worldly) glitter....."* (al-Qasas; 28:79)

The worldly minded people were impressed and desired if they could live the way Qaroon was living. The spiritually righteous people looked upon this ugly display of wealth with contempt. They were right for Allah (SWT) eventually *".....And caused the earth to swallow him (Qaroon) up and his house; and he had not any group or party to help him against Allah, nor could he defend himself."* (al-Qasas; 28:81)

None could save Qaroon against the wrath of Allah (SWT). It was a tormenting and eye-opening lesson to those who envied Qaroon's wealth and his style of living.

Deuteronomy: Exactly similar instructions are provided in the Deuteronomy of the Old Testament: **"Do not say to yourself 'my power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, so that He may confirm His covenant that He swore to your ancestors as He is doing today"** (Deuteronomy; 8:17-18).

CHARITY AND CHARITABLE DEEDS

Charity to the poor has been stressed in both the Bible and the Qur'an. It is also emphasised in both the

holy books that it should better be done quietly without being demonstrative about it.

It is stated in the **Gospel of Matthew**: **“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for them you have no reward from your father in heaven. So whenever you give alms do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets so that they may be praised by others. Truly, I tell you they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing so that your alms may be done in secret; and your father who sees in secret will reward you”** (Gospel of Matthew - 6:1-8; p:5 NSRV Catholic).

Qur'an: It is revealed in the Qur'an: *“And whatever you spend in charity or devotion, be sure Allah knows it all but the wrong doers have no helpers. If you disclose (acts of) charity even so it is well, but if you conceal them, and make them reach those (really) in need that is best for you: It will remove from you some of your (stains of) evil. And Allah is well acquainted with what you do.”* (al-Baqarah; 2:270-271).

Displaying charity for self glorification or charity which hurts the self respect of the poor is strongly condemned in the Qur'an and is completely wasted: *“Kind words and covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is free of all wants and He is most for-bearing. O you who believe cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury - like those who spend their substance to be seen of men but believe neither in Allah nor in the last Day...”* (al-Baqarah; 2:263-264).

The striking similarity between the Biblical instructions and Qur'anic injunctions as regards charitable deeds is thus notably marked.

KILLING AN INNOCENT PERSON

Taurat (Torah-Mishnah Sanhedrin): Another extremely unique convergence of ideas can be found from the following quote from the *Taurat* (Torah-Mishnah Sanhedrin): **"He who destroys one person has dealt a blow to the entire universe, and he who saves or sustains one person has sustained the whole world"** (Ben Zion Bokser [1989]: *The Talmud Selected Writings* – p:30)

Qur'an: The striking similarity of the above quote from the following Qur'anic verse is crystal clear: *".....We ordained for the children of Israel that if any one killed a person, not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if any one saved a life it is as if he saved the life of all mankind....."* (al-Ma'edah; 5:32)

LIFE FOR LIFE ETC.: TORAH AND QUR'AN

The Judaic Law regarding Life for Life etc. is found almost verbatim in the Qur'an:

Exodus (Pentateuch): **"If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe"** (Exodus 21:23-25; p:67).

Qur'an: It is revealed in the Qur'an that Allah (SWT) *"And We ordained therein (Torah) for them (people of Bani-Israel) Life for Life, Eye for Eye, Nose for Nose, Ear for Ear, Tooth for Tooth and wounds equal for equal....."* (al-Ma'edah; 5:45)

HONESTY AND WEIGHING CORRECTLY

The Qur'anic injunctions against weighing incorrectly are in broad agreement with what is stated in the Deuteronomy of the Old Testament.

Qur'an: Addressing the people of Madyan Prophet Shu'ayb (AS) asked them to *"Give just measure and cause no loss (to others by fraud) and weight with scales true and upright. And withhold not things justly due to men, nor do evil in the land working mischief."* (ash-Shu'ara; 26:181-183)

In *Surah al-Mutaffifeen* (83) the Qur'an sternly warns *"Woe to those that deal in fraud. Those who when they have to receive by measure from men, exact full measure, but when they have to give by measure or weight to men give less than due. Do they not think that they will be called to account?"* (al-Mutaffifin; 83:1~4 – see also 11:84; and 17:35).

Deuteronomy: It is this aspect of fraudulent dealing that is presumably implied when it is commanded in Deuteronomy of the Old Testament: **"you shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, large and small. You shall have only a full and honest weight; you shall have only a full and honest measure for your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are abhorrent to the Lord your God"** (Deute-ronomy; 25:13-16).

SIMILE OF THE CAMEL PASSING THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE

This simile is referred to in the Holy Qur'an as well as in the Gospel of Luke.

Qur'an: In the Qur'an it has been referred to concerning all sinners: *"Verily, those who belie our Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, revelations etc.) and treat them with arrogance, for them the gates of the heaven will not be opened and they will not enter paradise until the camel goes through the eye of the needle (which is impossible). Thus do We recompense the Mujrimeen (criminals, polytheists sinners etc.)"* (al-A'raaf; 7:40).

Gospel of Luke: This simile in the Gospel of Luke is concerning the wealthy only and implies that all wealthy people are sinners: **"How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven."** (Gospel of Luke; 18:24-25, p:82 NRSV - Catholic) Here again the interpolation is clear.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

Psalms: It is declared in the Psalms of the Old Testament: **"The righteous shall inherit the land and live in it forever"** (Psalm - 37:29).

Qur'an: The Qur'an reveals the same Divine proclamation as follows: *"Before this We wrote in the Psalms (Zubur), after the message given to Moses: "My servants the righteous shall inherit the earth" (al-Anbiya; 21:105).*

THE AGONY OF UNBELIEVERS IN THE HELL

Gospel of Luke: In the Gospel of Luke the treatment of the sinners in the Hell is described as follows: **"Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am in agony in these flames -- (Abraham replied) between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us"** (Luke; 16:24-26).

Qur'an: In the Holy Qur'an this agonising experience of the sinners in the Hell is described as follows: *"The companions of the Fire will call to the companions of the garden: "Pour down to us water or anything that Allah does provide for your sustenance."*

They will say: "Both these things have Allah forbidden to those who rejected Him." (al-A'raaf; 7:50)

The identity of thought between the Qur'anic revelation and the description of Gospel of Luke is unmistakable.

THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT - QIYAMAH

This section on contrasts and similarities between Qur'anic revelations and Biblical accounts may be concluded by some amazing and striking similarities - relating to the Day of Judgement and solemn affirmation on the Unity of Allah in the Bible and the Qur'an. There is a story of the opening of the Seven Seals before the Day of Judgement in the Revelation to John the last book of the New Testament (pp: 245-261). On the opening of the Sixth Seal:

1. **The Sky vanished like a scroll rolling itself up** (Revelation; 6:14, p: 249, NRSV - Catholic). **Subsequently it is recorded in the Revelation that God created a New Heaven and a New Earth.**
2. **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.** (Revelation; 21:1, p: 259, NRSV - Catholic).

Qur'an: The above two statements in the Revelation of the New Testament agree with the revelations in the following Qur'anic verses *"On that Day We shall roll up the skies as written scrolls are rolled up; and as We brought into being the first creation, so We shall bring it forth a new one, a promise which We have willed upon ourselves: for, behold, We are able to do (all things)"* (al-Anbiya; 21:104).

There is reference to a new earth and new sky in Surah Ibrahim as well: *"One day the earth will be changed*

to a different earth and so will the heavens..." (Ibrahim; 14:48).

The Revelation: Finally the Revelation records in the words of God 'It is done' (*Fayakun*) and that **"I am the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."** (Revelation; 21:6 and 22:13)

Qur'an: Exactly similar are the divine revelations in *Surah al-Hadeed*: **"He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Hidden..."** (al-Hadeed; 57:3)

CONCLUSION

The aforesaid discussion does bring out areas of contrasts and contradictions between the Qur'anic revelations and Biblical accounts. However, what is most amazing is that despite contrasts and contradictions the areas of convergence, the commonality of thoughts, of values, concepts, and ideas are so immense and wide ranging that one wonders how this could have happened since Torah was revealed to Prophet Moses (AS) more than 2000 years prior to the revelation of Qur'anic verses to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), and *Injeel* (Gospel) was revealed approximately six hundred years earlier than the Qur'an to the Prophet of Islam. Muhammad (SAWS), could not have plagiarized for he was an unlettered Prophet who could not even read and write the Arabic language, the language of the Qur'an, leave apart Hebrew which was the language of both the Torah and *Injeel*. Moreover the Qur'anic verses were dictated to scribes immediately after their revelation therefore the question of incorporating and copying from accounts given or revelations made in the Torah or the *Injeel* simply did not arise. Nonetheless, it has precisely the same stories as contained in the preceding divinely revealed books and particularly the Pentateuch (Torah) with striking similarity in their content. Further, there is perfect harmony and total resemblance in the value system enshrined in each of the three revealed books. This leads us to one and only one conclusion that they were from the same divine source which ensured the commonality of the value system of the three great monotheistic religions. They all believe in the unity of Allah (SWT). The Qur'an declares: ***“Proclaim that Allah is One and that there is no God but Allah”***; the Torah (Pentateuch) emphatically states ***“I am the Lord your God-you shall have no other gods before me”***

(Exodus; 20:2-5); and Jesus declared unequivocally **“worship the Lord your God and serve only Him..”** (Matthew; 4:10, p: 3, New Testament *NRSV*—Catholic edition)

The firm belief in the unity of Allah (SWT) as an article of faith in Judaism, Christianity and Islam calls for ideological reconciliation and unity of these three religions for the liberation of mankind from sins and for their peace and prosperity. On the authority of both the Torah and Gospels we ought to accept the indisputable fact that Prophet Muhammad (SWT) was the last divinely ordained Prophet and the Qur'an was the last divinely revealed Book. The teachings of all the preceding Prophets consummated in the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SWT), and the climax in the evolutionary process of divine revelations was reached with the Qur'anic revelations which epitomize the fundamentals of all the earlier scriptures and contain the last, the final, the ultimate and the uncorrupted words of divine guidance of eternal relevance. That the Qur'an among the divinely revealed books has retained its originality, is free from all kinds of interpolations and is the only Book which contains the or the verbatim record of the words of Allah (SWT) stands un-challenged. The acceptance of this simple truth does not affect the faith and character of Judaism and Christianity but will lend tremendous strength to forces of truth, justice and righteousness against the evil and obnoxious forces which are tearing apart the cherished human values and ethical norms as enshrined in the basics of our respective religions. This will be for the ultimate good of mankind because as stated in the Psalm and confirmed in the Qur'an **“the righteous shall inherit the earth and live in it for ever.”** (Psalm; 37:29)

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