



**THE
QUR'AN
IN
ISLAM**

**ITS IMPACT & INFLUENCE
ON THE LIFE OF MUSLIMS**

ʿAllāmah Sayyid M.H. Ṭabāṭabāʿī



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Book Description

From a general discussion of the Holy Qur'an's essential relevance to humanity, stressing God's guidance of all His creatures toward happiness and well-being, the author proceeds to show how the Qur'an contains the fundamental roots of Islam and the proof of prophethood as the Word of God. Copious quotations from the Qur'an are given to illustrate its teachings, its exoteric and esoteric dimensions and the meaning of exegesis. The eternal validity of Qur'anic revelation is examined in depth, together with the attitudes of both Muslim and non-Muslim writers to the questions of Revelation and Prophethood. The relationship of the Qur'an to the sciences shows to what extent it encourages us to study all manner of natural and physical sciences, as well as philosophy, literature and every available branch of knowledge. The book closes with a brief description of how the Qur'an has come down to us.

“THE QUR'AN IN ISLAM should be read now more than ever before because the current aberrations propagated in the name of Islam in general and Shi`ism in particular necessitate the uncompromising and clear statement of the traditional Islamic perspective as expounded by such masters as `Allamah Tabataba`i. Moreover, the present book marks an important addition to the literature in English on the central theophany of Islam, the Noble Qur'an.”

– From the [Foreword](#) by Seyyed Hossein Nasr

About `Allamah Sayyid M. H. Tabataba`i

`Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba`i – may God shower His blessings upon his soul – was one of the great masters of the traditional sciences in Iran during the 20th century. He was born in 1903 into a distinguished family of scholars in Tabriz, where he also carried out his earliest religious studies. Like many Shi`ite scholars, he pursued more advanced studies in Najaf and then returned to Tabriz. But in 1945, following the Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan, he came to Qum, where he settled until his death in 1982. From this centre of Shi`ite learning the light of his knowledge and presence began to disseminate, and continued to spread, among students not only of that city but also throughout Iran, and even beyond...

More in the [Foreword](#) of this book.

Acknowledgements

We wish to express our thanks to all who contributed toward making this book possible: Assadullah ad-Dhaakir Yate, translation; David Elisha, editing; Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, indexing; and Blue Cliff, cover design. Special gratitude is expressed to Seyyed Hossein Nasr for his contribution of the foreword to this book.

Foreword

Over a quarter of a century has passed since this book was written by `Allamah Tabataba`i in Persian – with the express purpose of being translated into English, as part of a trilogy whose aim was to make Shi`ism better known in the Western world.¹ Commissioned originally by Professor Kenneth Morgan of Colgate University in New York, who came to Iran with the aim of launching the project, this trilogy was written and assembled in a short period by `Allamah Tabataba`i in Persian and – in the case of the sayings of the Imams – Arabic. But it is only now, with the appearance of this translation, that the goal of the project is finally achieved, long after the author has left this abode of transience.

It was our task to collaborate with the `Allamah, to achieve the completion of the two works of this trilogy which he had set out to write himself, namely *Shi`ah dar Islam* and *Qur'an dar Islam*. Our role was to point out to this venerable master the questions which a Western audience needed to have treated and the types of discussion that such works needed to consider, while he himself set out to compose these books in his masterly and at the same time unassuming style. Only after the composition of these works did he begin to select the sayings of the Imams which were to be collected and translated in the anthology.

The completion of *Shi`ah dar Islam* – after many journeys made by us between Tehran and Qum, where the `Allamah resided, as well as meetings in the cool mountain retreats surrounding Tehran – turned out to be a major event for the study of Shi`ism, not only in the West but also within Iran itself. Even before we completed the edition and translation of the work in English, the Persian edition with our humble introduction appeared in Iran, and soon became one of the most widely read works on Shi`ism. It seems that a work written with a Western audience in mind also bore a message of great significance for Shi`ites themselves.

While we were translating and editing *Shi`ite Islam*, `Allamah Tabataba`i terminated *Qur'an dar Islam*; on his advice, it was decided to have this also published in Persian as soon as possible. This work, likewise, became instantly popular and, like *Shi`ah dar Islam*, has gone into

¹ The other two volumes in the trilogy, *Shi`ite Islam*, edited and translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, London, Allen & Unwin, and Albany, New York, SUNY Press, 1975; and *A Shi`ite Anthology*, selected and with a foreword by `Allamah Tabataba`i, translated with explanatory note by William Chittick and introduction by S. H. Nasr, London, Muhammadi Trust, and Albany, New York, SUNY Press, 1981, have already become well known as important sources in English for the study of Shi`ism.

numerous editions besides being translated into other Islamic languages. Meanwhile, we began the translation of *Qur'an dar Islam* as soon as the publication of *Shi`ite Islam* in both its English and American editions was accomplished. Many sessions were spent with the `Allamah over various questions of translation, and the work progressed slowly because of both the `Allamah's busy program and our own crowded schedule. Over half of the work was translated when our library – and with it the manuscript of the translation – was lost during the events of 1979. It is, therefore, particularly gratifying finally to see the appearance of the translation of this work in English and the realization of the goal which was intended from the beginning.

The author of this book, `Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba`i – may God shower His blessings upon his soul – was one of the great masters of the traditional sciences in Iran during this century [20th century].² He was born in 1903 into a distinguished family of scholars in Tabriz, where he also carried out his earliest religious studies. Like many Shi`ite scholars, he pursued more advanced studies in Najaf and then returned to Tabriz. But in 1945, following the Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan, he came to Qum, where he settled until his death in 1982. From this centre of Shi`ite learning the light of his knowledge and presence began to disseminate, and continued to spread, among students not only of that city but also throughout Iran, and even beyond.

From the 1950s onward, his journeys to Tehran became a weekly or bi-weekly event, and he taught and conducted intellectual discussions with a small group of students, of which we had the honor of being one. This activity complemented his teaching activities in Qum. The circle in Tehran, which included not only such well-known Shi`ite scholars as Murtada Mutahhari, but also (during the fall season) Henry Corbin, and occasionally other Western scholars of Islam, helped to spread the influence of the `Allamah's teachings further, and soon he became recognized as one of the major intellectual figures of Shi`ism, at once master of the religious sciences (especially Qur'anic commentary), Islamic philosophy and gnosis (*`irfan*).

Despite eye-problems which continued to hamper his activities to the very end, `Allamah Tabataba`i was an extremely prolific author. In addition to teaching throughout the week and training countless students, he wrote nearly every day, and important books and articles continued to flow from his pen. After writing such major philosophical works as *Usul-i*

² We have already dealt with his life in our preface to *Shi`ite Islam*, pp. 22-5.

Falsafay-i Ri'alism in five volumes, he edited the *Asfar* of Sadr al-Din Shirazi with his own commentary, and a selection of commentaries on other masters prior to Shirazi, in seven volumes. Later, at our request, he composed two masterly summaries of Islamic philosophy: the *Badayi' al-Hikam* and the *Nahayat al-Hikam*.

Meanwhile, parallel with all this activity in the domain of traditional philosophy and gnosis (about which he wrote less in a direct manner but alluded to frequently in his philosophical works and certain shorter treatises), `Allamah Tabataba`i continued to work indefatigably on his Qur'anic commentary, *Tafsir al-Mizan*, which he finally completed in his mid-seventies. This monumental commentary, consisting of some twenty-seven volumes (written in Arabic, but also translated into Persian), is one of the most important Qur'anic commentaries of this century and is a blinding witness to the remarkable mastery of its author in the domain of Qur'anic sciences. This commentary, based on the principle of having one part of the Qur'an interpret other parts (*al-Qur'an yufassiru ba`dahu ba`dan*), is a *summa* of Islamic religious thought, in which the sciences of the Qur'an, theology, philosophy, gnosis, sacred history and the social teachings of Islam are all brought together.

The present volume is in a sense the synthesis of the venerable master's life-long study of the Noble Qur'an. Although the book is written in a simple language and may appear to be introductory, it is a work of great depth and synthetic quality. It treats many questions concerning the sacred text which have rarely been discussed together in a single work. The book, although short, distils many volumes into its pages and is like the synopsis of a major commentary. It brings out the significances of the Qur'an for the life of Muslims, the features of the sacred text which seem enigmatic, the inner and outer levels of meaning of the Text and the sciences of Qur'anic exegesis. It also treats in a clear and direct manner the Shi'ite understanding of the Qur'an and the role of the Imams in its interpretation. It is a veritable prolegomenon to the study of the Sacred Book, and is perhaps the most accessible introduction available in English to the study of the Qur'an as traditionally understood by the mainstream of Shi'ite thought, in fact Islamic exegetical thought in general.

This book reflects, moreover, not only the learning of the author but also his spiritual qualities. `Allamah Tabataba`i was not only an outstanding scholar but also a person of great spiritual realization who lived constantly in the remembrance of God. During the twenty years during which we had the honor of being his student, and observing him in all kinds of

circumstances – from being alone with him in a room, to sitting at his feet in a mosque filled with hundreds of students – never did he cease to remember God and invoke Him. His countenance always reflected a light which seemed to shine from the world beyond, while his gentle voice seemed to issue from the other shore of existence. In his presence, one could not but think of God and the world of the Spirit. The reality of the Qur'an, which he had studied and written about for so many years, seemed to have penetrated into his very being, enabling him to speak of a knowledge that was always wed to spirituality and rooted in the sacred.

`Allamah Tabataba`i was at once one of the greatest of Qur'anic commentators, a leading contemporary Islamic philosopher in the tradition of Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra, and a gnostic who was at home in both the metaphysical works of Ibn `Arabi and the inebriating poetry of Rumi and Hafiz. In him, intelligence, scholarship, piety and the love of God met in a union which is encountered rarely in any age, and especially this period of the eclipse of the Spirit. His soul was embellished with the virtues extolled by the Qur'an and the prophetic *Sunnah*, while his mind explored like a soaring eagle the vast expanses of Islamic thought. To have met him was to have met the veritable Islamic scholar (or *`alim*), and to gain a taste of what traditional Islamic learning must have been when the whole of the Islamic intellectual tradition was fully alive.

The *Qur'an in Islam*, as well as the other works by the `Allamah, should be read now more than ever before, because the current aberrations propagated in the name of Islam in general, and Shi`ism in particular, necessitate an uncompromising and clear statement of the traditional Islamic perspective, as expounded by such masters as `Allamah Tabataba`i. Moreover, the present book marks an important addition to literature in English on the central theophany of Islam, the Noble Qur'an. May all those interested in the understanding of Islam be able to benefit from this book, and also come to gain some insight into the mind and soul of a great contemporary Muslim scholar who lived and died in constant awareness of God, and who saw in His Word as contained in the Noble Book at once a guide for life, the basic source of all knowledge, the sword of discernment between truth and falsehood and a "presence" whose experience makes possible here a taste of the realities of paradise.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Bethesda, Maryland

December, 1986

Introduction

We are placing before the reader a book which discusses the profoundest document of the sacred religion of Islam. Among the themes of this book are the following:

- The position of the Glorious Qur'an in the Islamic world
- What do we mean when we speak of "the Qur'an?"
- What value does the Qur'an hold for Muslims?
- The Qur'an as a book whose importance is global and eternal
- The Qur'an as a revelation from a divine, not a human, source
- The relationship between the Qur'an and the sciences
- The characteristics and features of the Qur'an

We are investigating the importance of a book which Muslims have never ceased to respect and venerate and whose validity they have never rejected. They are able to use it to support any claim made in the name of Islam, despite being troubled by inner conflicts and sectarian splintering, as are the other major world religions.

The purpose of this work is to define the position of the Qur'an in such a way that the Holy Book explains itself, rather than merely giving our own opinions concerning it. There is clearly a great difference between these two ways of approaching the matter.

In other words, the position we attribute to the Holy Qur'an, through reason or lack of it, if found to be contrary to the Qur'anic views, will not be valid. If it is something about which the Qur'an is silent, in view of the existing differences of opinion among the Muslims, a unanimous acceptance of such a view would not be possible. The only position which may be acceptable is what is denoted by the Holy Qur'an itself.

Therefore, in this inquiry and discussion, we must answer the question as to what the Holy Qur'an says in this connection, and not what we, who follow a certain school of Islamic law, say about the Holy Qur'an.

Chapter 1: The Value of the Qur'an in the Eyes of the Muslims

The Qur'an Contains a Pattern of a Complete Way of Life for Man

The religion of Islam is superior to any other in that it guarantees happiness in man's life. For Muslims, Islam is a belief system with moral and practical laws that have their source in the Qur'an.

God, may He be exalted, says, "*Indeed this Qur'an guides to the path which is clearer and straighter than any other*" [17:9]. He also says, "*We have revealed to you the book which clarifies every matter*" [16:89].

These references exemplify the numerous Qur'anic verses (*ayaat*) which mention the principles of religious belief, moral virtues and a general legal system governing all aspects of human behavior.

A consideration of the following topics will enable one to understand that the Qur'an provides a comprehensive program of activity for man's life.

Man has no other aim in life but the pursuit of happiness and pleasure, which manifests itself in much the same way as love of ease or wealth. Although some individuals seem to reject this happiness, for example, by ending their lives in suicide, or by turning away from a life of leisure, they too, in their own way, confirm this principle of happiness; for, in seeking an end to their life or of material pleasure, they are still asserting their own personal choice of what happiness means to them. Human actions, therefore, are directed largely by the prospects of happiness and prosperity offered by a certain idea, whether that idea be true or false.

Man's activity in life is guided by a specific plan or program. This fact is self-evident, even though it is sometimes concealed by its very apparentness. Man acts according to his will and desires; he also weighs the necessity of a task before undertaking it.

In this he is promoted by an inherent scientific law, which is to say that he performs a task for "himself" in fulfilling needs which he perceives are necessary. There is, therefore, a direct link between the objective of a task and its execution.

Any action undertaken by man, whether it be eating, sleeping or walking, occupies its own specific place and demands its own particular efforts. Yet an action is implemented according to an inherent law, the general concept of which is stored in man's perception and is recalled by motions associated with that action. This notion holds true whether or not one is obliged to undertake the action or whether or not the circumstances are favorable.

Every man, in respect of his own actions, is as the state in relation to its individual citizens, whose activity is controlled by specific laws, customs and behavior. Just as the active forces in a state are obliged to adapt their actions according to certain laws, so is the social activity of a community composed of the actions of each individual. If this were not the case, the different components of society would fall apart and be destroyed in anarchy in the shortest time imaginable.

If a society is religious, its government will reflect that religion; if it is secular, it will be regulated by a corresponding code of law. If a society is uncivilized and barbaric, a code of behavior imposed by a tyrant will appear; otherwise, the conflict of various belief-systems within such a society will produce lawlessness.

Thus man, as an individual element of society, has no option but to possess and pursue a goal. He is guided in the pursuit of his goal by the path which corresponds to it and by the rules which must necessarily accompany his program of activity. The Qur'an affirms this idea when it says that "*every man has a goal to which he is turning, so compete with each other in good action*" [2:148]. In the usage of the Qur'an, the word *deen*¹ is basically applied to a way, a pattern of living, and neither the believer nor the non-believer is without a path, be it prophetic or man-made.

God, may He be exalted, describes the enemies of the divine *deen* (religion) as those "*who prevent others from the path of God and would have it crooked*" [7:45]

This verse shows that the term *Sabil Allah* – the path of God – used in the verse refers to the *deen of fitrah* – the inherent pattern of life intended by God for man. It also indicates that even those who do not believe in God implement His *deen*, albeit in a deviated form; this deviation, which becomes their *deen*, is also encompassed in God's program.

¹ Usually translated to mean religion, the word strongly implies transaction between the Debtor (God) and the indebted (man). Hence, living the *deen* means repaying one's debt to the Creator.

The best and firmest path in life for man is the one which is dictated by his innate being and not by the sentiments of any individual or society. A close examination of any part of creation reveals that, from its very inception, it is guided by an innate purpose towards fulfilling its nature along the most appropriate and shortest path; every aspect of each part of creation is equipped to do so, acting as a blueprint for defining the nature of its existence. Indeed all of creation, be it animate or inanimate, is made up in this manner.

As an example, we may say that a green-tipped shoot, emerging from a single grain in the earth, is “aware” of its future existence as a plant which will yield an ear of wheat. By means of its inherent characteristics, the shoot acquires various mineral elements for its growth from the soil and changes, day by day, in form and strength until it becomes a fully-matured grain-bearing plant – and so comes to the end of its natural cycle.

Similarly, if we investigate the life-cycle of the walnut tree, we observe that it too is “aware”, from the very beginning, of its own specific purpose in life, namely, to grow into a big walnut tree. It reaches this goal by developing according to its own distinct inherent characteristics; it does not, for example, follow the path of the wheat-plant in fulfilling its goal just as the wheat-plant does not follow the life pattern of the walnut tree.

Since every created object which makes up the visible world is subject to this same general law, there is no reason to doubt that man, as a species of creation, is not. Indeed his physical capabilities are the best proof of this rule; like the rest of creation, they allow him to realize his purpose, and ultimate happiness, in life.

Thus, we observe that man, in fact, guides himself to happiness and well-being merely by applying the fundamental laws inherent in his own nature.

This law is confirmed by God in the Qur'an, through His Prophet Moses, when he says, “*Our Lord is He who gave everything its nature, then guided it*” [20:50]. It is further explained in 87:2-3 as “*He who created and fashioned in balanced proportion and He who measures and guides*”.

As to the creation and the nature of man, the Qur'an says,

By the soul and Him who fashioned it and then inspired it with wrong action and fear of God; he is truly successful who causes it to grow and purifies it and he is a failure who corrupts and destroys it [91:7-10].

God enjoins upon man the duty to “*strive towards a sincere application of the deen,*” (that is, the *fitrah* of God, or the natural code of behavior upon which He has created mankind), since “*there is no changing (the laws of) the creation of God*” [30:30].

He also says that “*In truth, the only deen recognized by God is Islam*” [3:19]. Here, Islam means submission, the method of submission to these very laws. The Qur'an further warns that “*the actions of the man who chooses a deen other than Islam will not be accepted*” [3:85].

The gist of the above verses, and other references on the same subject, is that God has guided every creature – be it man, beast or vegetable – to a state of well-being and self-fulfillment appropriate to its individual make-up.

Thus the appropriate path for man lies in the adoption of personal and social laws particular to his own *fitrah* (or innate nature), and in avoiding people who have become “denaturalized” by following their own notions or passions. It is clearly underlined that *fitrah*, far from denying man's feelings and passions, accords each its proper due and allows man's conflicting spiritual and material needs to be fulfilled in a harmonious fashion.

Thus, we may conclude that the intellect, *`aql*, should rule man in matters pertaining to individual or personal decisions, rather than his feelings. Similarly, truth and justice should govern society and not the whim of a tyrant or even the will of a majority, if that be contrary to a society's true benefit.

From this we may conclude that only God is empowered to make laws, since the only laws useful to man are those which are made according to his inherent nature.

It also follows that man's needs, arising from his outward circumstance and his inner reality, are fulfilled only by obeying God's instructions (or laws). These needs may arise through events beyond man's control or as a result of the natural demands of his body.

Both are encompassed in the plan of life that God has designated for man. For, as the Qur'an says, the “*decision rests with God only,*” [12:40 and 67] which is to say that there is no governance (of man or society, of the inner or the outer) except that of God.

Without a specific creational plan, based on the innate disposition of man, life would be fruitless and without meaning. We may understand this only through belief in God and knowledge of his Unity, as explained in the Qur'an.

From here we may proceed to an understanding of the Day of Judgment, when man is rewarded or punished according to his deeds. Thereafter, we may arrive at knowledge of the prophets and of prophetic teachings, since man cannot be judged without being first instructed in the matter of obedience and disobedience. These three fundamental teachings are considered to be the roots of the Islamic way of life.

To these we may add the fundamentals of good character and morals which a true believer must possess, and which are a necessary extension of the three basic beliefs mentioned above. The laws governing daily activity not only guarantee man's happiness and moral character but, more importantly, increase his understanding of these beliefs and of the fundamentals of Islam.

It is clear that a thief, a traitor, a squanderer or a libertine do not possess the quality of innocence; nor can a miser, who hoards money, be called a generous person. Similarly, someone who never prays or remembers God cannot be called a believer in God and the Last Day, nor be described as His servant.

From this we may conclude that good character flourishes when joined to a pattern of correct actions; morals are to be found in the man whose beliefs are in harmony with these fundamentals. A proud man cannot be expected to believe in God nor be humble in respect to the Divine; nor can the man, who has never understood the meaning of humanity, justice, mercy or compassion, believe in the Day of Rising and the Judgment.

Chapter 35:10 speaks of the relationship between a sincere system of belief and a fitting character:

Pure speech rises up to Him and He raises up good deeds still further.

In chapter 30:10 we learn again of this relationship between belief and action:

Then evil was the consequence of those who do wrong action because they denied the signs of Allah and they made a mock of them.

To summarize, the Qur'an is composed of the following Islamic fundamentals which together form an interlocking whole: a primary system of belief in the Unity of God, Prophethood and the Day of Reckoning, accompanied by a second group of beliefs, namely, belief in the Tablet, the Pen (which delineates the sequence of cosmic events), the rule of destiny

and the decree (without implying pre-determination)², the angels, the throne of the Creator, and, finally, in the creation of the sky, the earth and everything between them.

Thereafter, we observe that man's well-being lies in his character being in harmony with these principles.

The *shari`ah*, namely the laws and code of behavior explained in the Qur'an and commented upon in every detail by the model of the Prophet's life, is the means whereby a man may practice these principles. At this point we should add that the Prophet's family are his chosen heirs and are entrusted with the task of exemplifying and explaining further the prophetic message and the *shari`ah* after the Prophet's death. The Prophet himself has shown that the tradition, *hadith*,³ known as the *hadith al-thaqalayn* which all sects of Islam accept, refers specifically to this matter of succession.

The Qur'an as a Document of Prophethood

The Qur'an refers on several occasions to the fact that it is the word of God, that it issues from a divine source in the very words in which the Prophet received them and which he later transmitted. The divine nature of the Qur'an is affirmed in several verses.

In 52:33-34 we read, "*or they say that (the Prophet) is inventing it. Indeed they do not believe. If they are truthful then let them produce words like it*". Likewise in 17:88 "*Say (O Muhammad), if all the jinn and mankind were to join forces to produce something like this Qur'an they could not produce it even if they were to help one another.*" Again, in 11:13 "*or they say he has invented it! Say: then produce ten verses like it which you have invented,*" and again in 10:38, "*or they say he has invented it. Say; produce a single chapter like it,*" we find further proof.

The following challenge is made in Chapter 2:23 "*and if you are in doubt concerning that which we have revealed to Our slave then produce a chapter like it.*"

² Please see our publication: *Decree & Destiny*.

³ A report of the words or deeds of the Prophet which has been transmitted to us intact by a chain, or numerous chains, of trustworthy narrators. The tradition in question here possesses an unbroken chain of transmission back to the Prophet himself; these verses confirm the miraculous quality of the book and state that it is beyond the power of man to produce such a work.

Here it should be noted that the Qur'an is addressing those who grew up with Muhammad, the man they knew to be unlettered and untutored in the matters spoken about in the Qur'an. Despite this knowledge, they still doubt.

Another challenge is issued, (to those who would find contradictions in the Qur'an, but obviously cannot):

Will they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from other than God, they would have found in it much incongruity [4:82].

Since everything in the world is in a state of growth and self-perfection, then the Qur'an would of necessity lack harmony since it was revealed over a period of twenty-three years; it would lack harmony that is if we were to suppose that it was the work of a man rather than of a prophet. The Qur'an, whose messages announce and confirm that it is the work of God, also teaches us that Muhammad is a messenger, sent by God, thus confirming the authenticity of the Prophet. In chapter 13:43 God speaks Himself, as on many occasions, confirming that He is witness and testimony to the prophecy of Muhammad: *"Say God is sufficient witness between you and me."* The verse refers to disbelievers and defies their disbelief.

In another verse, the testimony of angels is added to that of God's:

"But God testifies concerning that which He has revealed to you; He has revealed it in His knowledge; and the Angels also testify. And God is sufficient witness [4:166].

Chapter 2: The Teachings of the Qur'an

The Universal Import of the Qur'an

The Qur'an is not directed towards any one particular nation, such as the Arabs, or to a particular sect of Muslims, but to non-Islamic societies as well as the Muslim nation as a whole. There are numerous references to non-believers and idol-worshippers, to the People of the Book (namely, the Jews, or the Tribe of Israel, and the Christians), exhorting each one to strive towards a true understanding of the Qur'an and of Islam.

The Qur'an calls each group to Islam by providing proofs and never stipulates that they be of Arab stock. Referring to idol-worshippers, God says, "*if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then they are your brothers in religion*" [9:11].

Likewise, God talks about the People of the Book, (Jews, Christians and we include here the Zoroastrians), without referring to them as Arabs:

Say O People of the Book come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but God and that we shall ascribe no partners to Him and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God [3:64].

It is true that before Islam spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula, Qur'anic injunctions were obviously directed towards the Arab nation. From the sixth year after the *hijrah* (the migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina), when the *deen* of Islam was being propagated beyond the peninsula, there are references which demonstrate that the Qur'an is addressing itself to mankind in general; for example, in 6:19, "*this Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may warn you and whomever it may reach,*" and in 68:52 God says, "*it is nothing else but a reminder to the worlds.*"

We read too in 74:35-36, "*In truth this is one of the greatest signs, being a warning unto men.*"

History has amply demonstrated that Islam has been embraced by a number of leading members of other religions, including the idol-worshippers of Mecca, Jews, Christians and by people from diverse communities, such as Salman of Persia, Suhayb from the Roman people, and Bilal of Ethiopia.

The Perfection of the Qur'an

The Qur'an shows man the way to a realization of his goal on earth; it describes this path in the most complete terms. It is a way of correctly viewing the reality of things; a vision – personal, social and cosmic – based on a correct manner of behavior and a precise method of interaction between men.

In 46: 30 we read that the Qur'an "*guides to the truth and a right road,*" meaning the road of right belief and correct action. On another occasion, mentioning the Torah and the New Testament, God says, "*We have revealed this Book to you with the Truth, confirming whatever Book was before it, and We keep watch over it* [5:48].

The Qur'an thus affirms the truth of the ways of guidance taught by the earlier prophets. In chapter 42:13, "*He has ordained for you that religion which He commended to Noah and that which We reveal to you (Muhammad) and that We commended to Abraham, Moses and Jesus,*" and in chapter 16:89, "*And We revealed the book to you as an exposition of all things.*"

Thus we understand from these verses that the Qur'an not only encompasses the meanings and teachings of all divine books revealed before it, but also adds to and completes them. Every thing which a man needs, both in terms of his spiritual and his social life, is contained and explained in the Qur'an.

The Eternal Quality of the Qur'an

The perfection and completeness of the Qur'an prove that its validity is not restricted to a particular time or place, since anything perfect is in need of nothing to complete it.

In chapter 86:13-14 God confirms that the Qur'an is "*a conclusive word*" and not a mere "*pleasantry.*" It contains the purest of teachings concerning belief in life-after-death, together with an exposition of the realities of existence, while, at the same time, encompassing the fundamentals of correct human behavior.

Since laws governing transactions between men are directly linked to their beliefs, such a book can obviously not be annulled or changed with the passage of time. As He says in 17:105, "*We have revealed the Qur'an with Truth and it has descended with the Truth,*" meaning that the revelations and their ongoing validity are inseparable from the Truth.

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