

The Authority of Al-Qur'an

By:

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(Note: It is requested that the following be read with concentrated attention.)

PREFACE

In this work, I have explained the various misapprehensions concerning the Qur'an which are prevailing among those who identify themselves as Muslims and consequently, their rectification by Qur'anic evidence. The fundamental reason for the origination of these misconceptions is that in the present age, the Muslims have themselves given up the divinely imposed duty of intellectual analysis of the Book of Allah and instead have become blind followers of the teachings of the sect in which they are born into and consider whatever the Clergy feeds them, to be the absolute truth, without verifying whether or not the faith they have inherited or have been tutored to accept has been sanctioned by the Book of Allah.

Such misconceptions, which are accepted by the majority, and patronized by vested interests, not only transformed the vigorous activity generated by the Qur'anic teachings into passivity, it rather changed the entire outlook of the life of Muslims. The passive Islam predominant in the Muslim world today is poles apart from the dynamic Islam presented by the Qur'an. Belief in one God has been replaced by belief in a number of gods. The concept of sovereignty of Allah in human affairs has been changed to the concept of sovereignty of the people or the sovereignty of individual human beings. As a result the Centralization of the *Ummah* has been lost, and the Muslim world is divided into numerous sects and parties. Instead of subservience to Allah, the Muslims today are subservient to man-made conjecture, Clergymen, and all sorts of Economic and Political exploiters. The mission of the messenger of Allah was to release humanity from the heavy burdens and the fetters that were upon them (7:157), and he demonstrated this by implementing the divine values decreed in the Book of Allah. But the enemies of Islam hatched up concepts and doctrines and injected them among the Muslims which resulted in completely defacing the '*Deen*' brought by the messenger and instead replaced it with man-made Religion, and where ever the Muslims enjoyed power, it got separated into '*Church and State*'.

As a result of these misconceptions, which are basically injected by the enemies of Islam in the name of Islam itself, the Muslims of today are groaning under the pressure of the same weights and are bound by the same shackles from which the messenger (p) came to release them. The '*Pharaohs*' or the Political exploiters, the '*Hamans*' or the Religious and intellectual exploiters and the '*Qaroons*' the Economic exploiters are again rampant as much in the Muslim countries as in any other part of the world. Instead of one central organization and one code of life given by the Qur'an, there are hundred and one ways of life which have made the Muslim *Ummah*, now divided into nations on territorial basis, fall steep into a state of fear and dependency. They struggle to get out of it, but without the guiding light of the Qur'an, fail to do so. The people who were to be witnesses over the deeds of mankind, were to be the guarantors of world peace and were supposed to be the torch bearers of civilization, science and technological progress are themselves in a position of ignominy and helplessness.

The only hope of their escape from their present day plight lies in the reunion into a stable and well knit *Ummah* and this objective cannot be achieved unless there is a conviction that the Qur'an has the final authority for all matters of Islam and is the complete, immutable and only message of Allah that exists on the face of the earth.

The day the Muslim world realizes the Authority of the Book of Allah, and become consciously aware of its teachings, then that day would be the

beginning of Islamic Renaissance.

This work is aimed at the realization of that Authority.

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MISCONCEPTION #1

Whatever Nabi (S.A.W) uttered is "wahi" (Revelation). Surah 53:3-4 says that he does not speak of his own desire but it is a revelation sent to him. Therefore whatever speech Nabi (S.A.W) uttered in life and acted upon was revelation from God.

CLARIFICATION

The Qur'an has differentiated between the ordinary human speech of *Nabi* (S.A.W) and the "wahi" or revelation sent to him, and has clarified that it is only the Qur'an that is revealed on him, and all that he uttered in life was not revelation but only the Qur'an was the inspired revelation from God. The following is evidence from the Qur'an to this effect.

a) In Surah Tauba, *Nabi* (S.A.W) is admonished about the Munafiqeen (Hypocrites) who were reluctant to struggle in the cause of God with their lives and possessions:

<Afalla_hu 'ank (a), lima azinta lahum hatta_ yatabayyana lakal lazina sadaqu_ wa ta'lamal ka_zibin(a).>

"Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave until those who spoke the truth had become manifest to you and you had known the liars?" (9:43)

In the above ayah *Nabi* (S.A.W) is admonished as to why he had given permission to the Hypocrites until the truthful people were made distinct from the liars. Had everything spoken by *Nabi* (S.A.W) been a revelation from God, then the above Qur'anic revelation would not have opposed the speech of *Nabi* (S.A.W) in which he had given the permission to the Hypocrites for non-participation in Jihad. Thus this confirms that whatever *Nabi* (S.A.W) uttered is not revelation but his human speech is separate from Divine revelations.

b) In Surah Al-Araaf it is mentioned that when *Nabi* (S.A.W) did not bring them a revelation, the unbelievers objected and this objection of theirs is identified:

<Wa iza_ lam ta'tihim bi a_yatin qa_lu_ lau lajtabaitaha>

"And when thou bringest not a verse for them they say: Why hast thou not chosen it?" (7:203)

Now had everything uttered by *Nabi* (S.A.W) been a revelation from God, then in the above verse it would be meaningless to identify this objection of unbelievers as to why the messenger has not selected the revelation by himself, as under the assumption, whatever he speaks is considered as revelation of God. Allah has identified in the above verse that it is the Qur'anic Ayat that are the revelations that *Nabi* (S.A.W) used to bring to his people, and not everything he uttered as a human being. This is further clarified by the rest of the verse:

<qul innama_ attabi'u ma_yu_ha_ ilayya mir rabbi, ha_za_ basa_ 'iru mir rabbikum wa hudaw wa rahmatul liqaumiy yu' minu_n(a). Wa iza_ quri'al qur'a_nu fastami'u_lahu_ wa ansitu_ la'allakum turhamu_n(a).>

"Say: I follow only that which is inspired in me from my Sustainer. This (Qur'an) is insight from your Sustainer, and a guidance and a mercy for a people that believe. And when the Qur'an is recited, give ear to it and pay heed, that ye may obtain mercy." (7:203-204)

It is clearly evident from the above verses that whatever *Nabi* (S.A.W) spoke was not revelation, as otherwise Allah would not have identified this aspect when He says: *<Wa iza_ lam ta'tihim bi a_yatin>* "And when thou bringest not a verse for them" If everything spoken by *Nabi* (S.A.W) were revelation Allah would never have said the above as everything uttered by *Nabi* (S.A.W) would have then already be revelations from God. It should be noted that while in verse 203, it is confirmed that whatever *Nabi* (S.A.W) spoke was not revelation, in verse 204, it is being urged that when the Qur'an is being recited then it should be listened to attentively, thus indicating that it is the Qur'an which is the only revelation of God.

c) In Surah At-Tahrim, it is mentioned that *Nabi* (S.A.W) made something prohibited on himself, which Allah had made permissible.

"O Nabi! why do you forbid (yourself) that which Allah has made lawful for you; you seek to please your wives; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (66:1)

In the above verse it is again confirmed that whatever *Nabi* (S.A.W) did or acted upon was not entirely revelation, but he also acted upon his own initiative, otherwise the admonition from Allah would not have come in which it is said: *<lima tuhar rimu ma_ ahal lal la_hu laka>* "why do you forbid (yourself) that which Allah has made lawful for you" It is evident from this verse that *Nabi* (S.A.W) also made decisions on his own and acted on his own initiative at times instead of the revelation of God, and thus proves that all the decisions and actions of *Nabi* (S.A.W) were not "wahi" or revelation of Allah.

d) In Surah Al-Baqara the unbelievers are pointed out to the total revelation sent to Muhammad (S.A.W) and they are challenged to bring a Surah similar to all that has been sent down to him:

<Wa in kuntum fi raibim mimma_ nazzalna_ 'ala_ 'abdina_ fa'tu_ bisu_ratim mim mislih(i), wad'shuhada_ 'akum min du_nilla_hi in kuntum sa_diqin(a)>

"And if ye are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto Our slave (Muhammad), then bring a Surah similar to it, and call your witnesses beside Allah if ye are truthful." (2:23)

In the above verse the challenge is for *<mimma_ nazzalna_ 'ala_ 'abdina>* "that which We reveal unto Our slave", and against it, a "Surah" is called to duplicate. All those of sane mind know that it is only the Qur'an which is composed of Surahs, and the books which various sects term as revelation of God besides Qur'an, are not composed of Surahs. Had Allah sent some revelation apart from Qur'an, then such revelation would also have been included in the challenge to produce something like it, but the words *<fa'tu_ bisu_ratim mim mislih>* "then bring a Surah similar to it" clearly establish that Allah has revealed only the Surahs of Al- Qur'an which were sent down to Muhammad (S.A.W) and which are called to duplicate against *<mimma_ nazzalna_ 'ala_ 'abdina>* "that which We reveal unto Our slave".

e) In Surah Al-Maidah, the believers are told that they should not raise questions about things which may cause them confusion, but if they question about them during the revelation of the Qur'an, then the Qur'an will give their answers:

"O you who believe! do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you, and if you question about them when the Quran is being revealed, they shall be declared to you; Allah pardons this, and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing." (5:101)

Now if everything uttered by *Nabi* (S.A.W) were revelation then the believers would not have been restricted to seek the answers to their questions from the Qur'an. By restricting the believers to the Qur'an alone for getting answers to their queries, it is confirmed that apart from Qur'an whatever *Nabi* (S.A.W) spoke was not divine inspiration but his ordinary human speech, otherwise the believers would not have been restricted to get answers through Qur'anic revelation.

f) In Surah At-Tauba the Hypocrites are exposed as those who are afraid of any message being revealed in the Qur'an which will expose them:

"The hypocrites fear lest a Surah (chapter of the Qur'an) should be sent down to them telling them plainly of what is in their hearts. Say: Go on mocking, surely Allah will bring forth what you fear." (9:64)

Now the ordinary speech of *Nabi* (S.A.W) other than the Qur'anic revelation was always presented to the Hypocrites day and night, but they did not fear that, and instead demonstrate their hesitation against the Qur'anic message only. Furthermore the believers are also identified as those who are eager to receive the Qur'anic revelation:

"And those who believe say: Why has not a Surah (chapter of the Qur'an) been revealed? But when a decisive chapter is revealed, and fighting is mentioned therein you see those in whose hearts is a disease look to you with the look of one fainting because of death. Woe to them then!" (47:20)

Now if everything *Nabi* (S.A.W) uttered in his life were "wahi" then would not the believers be satisfied with those "revelations" outside of the Qur'an? Does not the eagerness of the believers for Surahs from the Qur'an to be revealed clearly indicate that it is only the Qur'anic message which is the revelation of Allah?

g) In Surah Hood, the entire revelation of Allah is identified to be only the Qur'an:

<Fa la'allaka ta_rikum ba'da ma_yu_ha_ilaika wa-da_'iqum bihi sadruka ay yaqu_lu_lau la_unzila 'alaihi kanzun au ja_'a ma'ahu_malak(un), innama_anta nazir(un), walla_hu 'ala_kulli shai'iw wakil(un).Am yaqu_lu_na-ftara_h(u), qul fa'tu_bi 'ashri suwarim mislihi muftaraya_tiw wa-d'u_man-istata'tum min du_nilla_hi in kuntum sa_diqin(a).>

"Then, it may be that you will give up part of what is revealed to you <ma_yu_ha_ilaika> and your breast will become straitened by it because they say: Why has not a treasure been sent down upon him or an angel come with him? You are only a warner; and Allah is custodian over all things. Or, do they say: He has forged it. Say: Then bring ten forged chapters like it <fa'tu_bi 'ashri suwarim mislihi muftaraya_tiw> and call upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." (11:12-13)

In the above verses the words *<ma_yu_ha_ilaika>* "what is revealed to you" are pointing out to the complete and entire revelation sent to the messenger because it is indicated that he may give up, or his breast may feel straightened by part out of this whole revelation *<ba'da ma_yu_ha>*, and it is clear from the above verses that the unbelievers used to claim that since no angel has descended to warn us or the messenger has not received any treasures from heaven therefore the message being delivered by the messenger is not from Allah. In reply to this the unbelievers are challenged that if you say that the messenger has forged the message then why don't you also bring ten Surahs similar to what Allah has revealed on the messenger. The challenge to bring ten Surahs forged is against *<ma_yu_ha>*, i.e. "what is revealed" and only Surahs are called to simulate. No other speech or book other than the Surahs of the Qur'an has been included to re-produce in the above challenge. If the speech of *Nabi* (S.A.W) other than the Qur'anic Ayat were also revelation, then the challenge would have not only included ten Surahs, but also those utterances which were revelations but not contained in the Qur'an. Restricting the challenge to produce only Surahs of the Qur'an clearly indicates that apart from Qur'an there exists no other revelation sent by Allah to His messenger, otherwise that too would have been included in this challenge.

From the above evidence it is abundantly clear that it is only the Qur'an which was sent as "wahi" (inspiration) and "nuzuul" (descent or revelation) from Allah. In Surah An-Najam where it says that *Nabi* (S.A.W) does not speak of his own desire, but it is "wahi" sent to him, then in this verse the "wahi" refers to the Qur'an alone, and does not include everything *Nabi* (S.A.W) uttered in life, as the above verses prove to the contrary and establish the Qur'an to be the only revelation received by the messenger of Allah. It says in Surah An-Najam:

"By the evidence of the star when it goes down. Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray; Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed. <In huwa il la_wahyu_yu_ha>" (53:1-4)

In the above verse the particular "*Nataq-un-Nabi*" (Speech of *Nabi*) is identified as *<In huwa il la_wahyu_yu_ha>* "It is naught but revelation that is revealed.", Now what is this "wahi" that is sent to him? Does this include everything he utters? The evidence from the Qur'an brought to light above says to the contrary, and identifies that *Nabi* (S.A.W) was given only the Qur'an as revelation. Then what does this "wahi" refer to? Allah Himself clarifies this matter in Surah Ash-Shoora:

"And thus have We revealed to you an Arabic Quran, <auhaina_ilaika_qur_a_nan_arabiy_yan> that you may warn the mother city and those around it, and that you may give warning of the day of gathering together wherein is no doubt; a party shall be in the garden and (another) party in the burning fire." (42:7)

Allah Himself identifies the "wahi" sent to Muhammed (S.A.W) as the Arabic Qur'an, as indicated by the words *<auhaina_ilaika_qur_a_nan_arabiy_yan>* "We revealed to you an Arabic Quran". *Nabi* (S.A.W) also testifies as to what consists of the "wahi" (inspiration) that is sent to him, when he says:

"And this Quran has been revealed to me <u_hiya_ilayya_ha_zal_qur'a_n> that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches" (6:19)

Thus internal evidence from the Qur'an it self testifies about what comprises the "wahi" that is inspired on the messenger of Allah. The above evidence makes it as clear as the shining of the sun that the human speech of *Nabi* (S.A.W) is separate from divine revelations and that it is only the Qur'an which is the divine message bestowed upon him by Allah.

MISCONCEPTION # 2

Since the Qur'an says that we should obey Allah and His messenger, therefore this implies that to obey Allah we have to obey the Qur'an, while obedience to the messenger means obedience to some other books apart from the Qur'an.

CLARIFICATION

When the Qur'an says that we have to obey the messenger then it does not stop there only but also identifies as to what is the divine message that is bestowed on the messenger and in turn the messenger propagated to the people. The following verses inform us what is that divine teaching that the messenger received from Allah and is then delivering to mankind:

WHAT IS THAT TEACHING THAT THE MESSENGER RECEIVED FROM ALLAH?

In Surah Al-Maidah, the messenger is ordered to deliver the Divine revelation received by him, otherwise he would not have fulfilled his mission:

"O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Sustainer <balligh ma_ unzila ilaika mir rabbik>; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people." (5:67)

In the above verse the messenger of Allah is ordered to deliver what has been revealed on him. Or what the Qur'an identifies as "*ma_ unzila ilaika mir rabbik*". Now what are those divine teachings and laws that are revealed on the messenger? The following verses clarify as to what consists of *<ma_ unzila ilaika>* (what has been revealed to you):

"And We have revealed the Book to you which has the clear explanation of everything <wa nazzalna_ 'alaikal kita_ ba tibya_ nal likulli shai'iw>, and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit." (16:89)

Thus it is the Book of Allah which contains the clarity for all matters requiring guidance, that has been revealed on the messenger. In Surah An-Nisa, the divine teaching received by the messenger is again identified as:

"Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allah has shown you; and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous." (4:105)

Once again it is the book of Allah which has been identified as the divine teaching which has been bestowed upon the messenger and through which the messenger himself is to judge people. Again we are reminded:

"And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires (to turn away) from the truth that has come to you;" (5:48)

Again it is confirmed that the messenger received the Book of Allah and he is to govern among people by Allah's Book and he cannot deviate the slightest bit from the Qur'an. Now it has been confirmed by the above and many other verses in the Qur'an that the messenger has received the Book of Allah as divine teaching. Now what is that teaching that the messenger is to pass on to people, through which they are admonished by him? The following verses identify this aspect:

WHAT IS THAT TEACHING WITH WHICH THE MESSENGER ORDERED PEOPLE?

Allah commands the messenger:

"We know best what they say, and you are not one to compel them; therefore remind him by means of the Quran who fears My Promise." (50:45)

Thus Allah commands the messenger to admonish people by the Qur'an, and the messenger confirms himself that his mission is <tazkir bil Qur'an> "Admonishing with the Qur'an", not any other book:

"Allah is witness between you and me; and this Quran has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches." (6:19)

Again:

"O People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much; indeed, there has come to you light and a clear Book from Allah; With it Allah guides him who will follow His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His will and guides them to the right path." (5:15-16)

According to above verse the messenger is propagating the Book of Allah among the people of the Book. Again we are reminded as to what the messenger is giving to his people as a teaching so that they receive divine guidance:

"I am commanded only that I should serve the Sustainer of this city, Who has made it sacred, and His are all things; and I am commanded that I should be of those who submit; And that I should recite the Quran. Therefore whoever goes aright, he goes aright for his own soul, and whoever goes ' astray, then say: I am only one of the warners." (27:91-22)

The messenger is to recite the Qur'an, so that whoever wishes, he can take guidance, says the above verse. Again it is emphasized that it is only the Qur'an whose propagation has been made as an obligation on the messenger:

"Most surely He Who has made the Quran binding on you will bring you back to the destination. Say: My Sustainer knows best him who has brought the guidance and him who is in manifest error." (28:85)

The above verse identifies that it is the Qur'an which is <Farz> (an obligation) on the messenger. The above evidence from the Qur'an makes it quite clear that the messenger received the Book of Allah as divine teaching and he is delivering the message of Allah as is contained in Qur'an to the people. The above verses also make it evident that the messenger cannot deviate the slightest bit from the Qur'an and all his judgements are based entirely on Allah's divine Book., as said in 5:48. The messenger does not propagate his own personal laws or teachings, but only the divine message received by him, and that divine message has been identified in the above verses as Allah's Book. Obedience and subservience is only to Allah's laws, and the messenger does not make people obey his own teaching, but the law of Allah contained in al-Qur'an. Obedience to the messenger means obedience to the message of Allah, as the messenger is delivering the message of Allah to mankind and no other laws. It is only the law of Allah that people are asked to follow and be obedient to, says the Qur'an. The following verses identify this aspect:

OBEDIENCE IS ONLY FOR THE LAW OF ALLAH

"Surely the 'HUKM' (Law and Rule) is for none but Allah." (12:40)

"He does not make any one His associate in His 'HUKM' (Laws and Ruling)." (18:26)

The phrase *<la_yushriku fi hukmihi ahada>* "He (Allah) does not associate anyone in His Laws." (18:26) Makes it quite clear that obedience and rule is only for the Law of Allah and no other law. Even a messenger of Allah does not have the authority to make anyone subservient to his personal commands, but obedience and subservience is only for the law of Allah, as the following verse declares:

"It is not meet for a Human Being that Allah should give him the Book and Government and 'Nabuwah' (Direct reception of Divine Messages), then he should say to people: Be subservient to me rather than Allah; <ku_nu_ 'iba_dal li min du_nilla_h> but on the contrary (he would say): Become sustenance providers (to mankind) because of your teaching the Book and your studying (it yourselves)." (3:79)

The above verse declares that even a 'Nabi', i.e. a person who is a direct recipient of Allah's message cannot make any other human being subservient to his own laws, but he too is asking the people to be obedient to the law of Allah by studying the Book of Allah and teaching it to others as well.

The rule of Allah is ordained all over the universe in the form of natural laws, but in human affairs, it is established by governing all matters of human life though the injunctions contained in Allah's Book. Muhammad (S.A.W) is himself made to confirm that it is by introducing the injunctions of Allah's distinctly elucidated Book, that Allah's government is to be established in human affairs:

<Afaghairalla_hi abghi hakamaw wa huwal lazi anzala ilaikumul kita_ba mufassala>

"Shall I then seek a Ruler other than Allah? When He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) distinctly elucidated;" (6:114)

MESSENGER DELIVERS ONLY THE LAW OF ALLAH, AND PEOPLE ARE TO OBEY THE LAW THAT ALLAH GIVES THEM THROUGH THE AGENCY OF HIS MESSENGER

It is clearly established in the above verse that the messenger of Allah is also to put into practice the laws contained in the Book of Allah, and this clearly makes it evident that obedience to the messenger means obedience to the laws contained in Allah's Book which the messenger is to establish in human affairs. The messenger of Allah delivers only the message of Allah, and does not ask people to be obedient to any other rule or law other than that given in the Book of Allah. The following verses confirm that obedience to the messenger means obedience to the message being delivered by him:

"And obey Allah and obey the messenger and be cautious; but if you turn back, then know that only a clear deliverance of the message is (incumbent) on Our messenger." (5:92)

"And Allah has made for you of what He has created shelters, and He has given you in the mountains places of retreat, and He has given you garments to preserve you from the heat and coats of mail to preserve you in your fighting;

even thus does He complete His favor upon you, that haply you may submit. But if they turn back, then on you devolves only the clear deliverance (of the message)." (16:81-82)

"And if you (o people) reject (the truth), nations before you did indeed reject (the truth); and nothing is incumbent on the messenger but a plain delivering (of the message)." (29:18)

"And obey Allah and obey the messenger, but if you turn back, then upon Our messenger devolves only the clear delivery (of the message)." (64:12)

"Say: Obey Allah and obey the messenger; but if you turn back, then on him rests that which is imposed on him and on you rests that which is imposed on you; and if you obey him, you are on the right way; and nothing rests on the messenger but clear delivering (of the message)." (24:54)

The above verses clearly define what is meant by obedience to Allah and His messenger. The double negative used in the phrase, *<wa ma_ alar rasu_li il lal bala_ghul mubin>* *"..and nothing rests on the messenger but clear delivering (of the message)." Unambiguously states that the messenger makes people obedient only to the message of God that is revealed on him, and does not deliver any other teachings apart from the message of God. This clarifies that obedience to Allah and his messenger does not mean that Allah is giving some separate teachings while messenger ordains some separate injunctions, but clearly states that Allah has revealed his Book on His messenger and the messenger in turn delivers the law contained in the Book of Allah, and we have to obey those laws that Allah has sent to us through the agency of His messenger.*

OBEDIENCE IS ONLY FOR THE MESSAGE RECEIVED AND DELIVERED BY THE MESSENGER. NO OTHER BOOK APART FROM THE QUR'AN IS TO BE FOLLOWED AS DIVINE GUIDANCE

In Surah Al-Araf, it is stated that the believers are to follow and obey only the Book of Allah and not obey any other source besides that:

"A Book revealed to you-- so let there be no straitness in your breast on account of it-- that you may warn thereby, and a reminder close to the believers. Follow what has been revealed to you from your Sustainer and do not follow guardians besides Him (His Laws), how little do you mind." (7:2-3)

"Itiba" (Following and obedience) is only for "..what has been revealed to you from your Sustainer.." and the phrase "..do not follow guardians besides Him ..." makes it evident that only the revelation of Allah is to be obeyed and no other source besides that.

The messenger of Allah is reminded that Allah has not given any books apart from the Qur'an which the people should study:

"And We have not given them any books which they study, nor did We send to them before you a warner." (34:44)

The *"Mushrikeen"* of all times object to the Qur'anic Ayat that are presented, but Allah confirms that He has not given any books which they are to study, apart from Allah's very own Book.

Again, Allah asks a question:

"What! shall We then treat the Muslims as the Criminals? What has happened to you? How do you judge? Or have you a book from which you study?. That you have surely therein what you choose?" (68:35-38)

The question of Allah in the above verses "Or have you a book from which you study?" indicates that Allah has not given any other divine book for study apart from the Qur'an.

Again, Allah confirms that He did not give any other Book apart from the Qur'an:

"Or have We given them a book so that they follow a clear argument thereof? Nay, the unjust do not hold out promises one to another but only to deceive." (35:40)

In Surah Az-Zukhruf it is said about the unbelievers:

"Or have We given them a book before this which they hold fast to?" (43:21)

In Surah Al-Haqqa, after identifying that it is the Qur'anic verses which are the sayings of the messenger, it is mentioned about the messenger that had he invented any sayings by his own self and then attributed them to Allah, he would then have been held accountable for it:

"And if he had uttered against Us some of the sayings. We would certainly have seized him by the right hand. Then We would certainly have cut off his aorta. And not one of you could have withheld Us from him." (69:44-47)

In Surah As-Saffat, Allah challenges the unbelievers to produce their book of authority, thus confirming that all man written books being used by Religions have defect and deficiency:

"What is the matter with you, how is it that you judge? Will you not then mind? Or have you a clear authority? Then bring your book, if you are truthful." (37:154-157)

The messenger is made to confirm that apart from the Qur'an and the revelation given to Moses (which contains the very same message as the Qur'an. Ref 42:13) there is no other book which can give the guidance of Allah:

"Say: Then bring some (other) book from Allah which is a better guide than both of them, (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful." (28:49)

Above verse confirms that there is no other Book apart from the Qur'an (which contains the message of Moses as well) that can give us divine guidance. Allah commands the believers that the very purpose of revealing His Book is that we become subservient to His laws and that we make 'Deen' pure and do not introduce any innovations. It is the Book of Allah which determines what is true from what is false, but people still abandon the Qur'an and seek obedience from the laws of humans:

"The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. Surely We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, therefore serve Allah, keeping 'Deen' sincere for Him in obedience. Now, surely, sincere obedience in 'Deen' is due to Allah (alone) and (as for) those who take guardians besides Him, (saying), We

do not serve them save that they may make us nearer to Allah, surely Allah will judge between them in that in which they differ; surely Allah does not guide him aright who is a liar, ungrateful." (39:1-3)

The above verses remind us that we should serve Allah by following the Qur'an, keep 'Deen' "khalis" (Pure and sincere) for Him, and do not become like those who serve others besides Allah under the delusion that they will bring them closer to Him. Surah Al-Fatir informs us that it is only the Qur'an that is revealed on the messenger and that the *Ummah*, inherited only the Book of Allah, and no other Book as divine guidance:

"And that which We have revealed to you of the Book, that is the truth verifying that which is before it; most surely with respect to His servants Allah is Aware, Seeing. Then We gave the Book for an inheritance to those whom We chose from among Our servants; but of them is he who makes his soul to suffer a loss, and of them is he who takes a middle course, and of them is he who is foremost in deeds of goodness by Allah's permission; this is the great excellence." (35:31-32)

Only the Book of Allah was given as an inheritance to the *Ummah*. No other Book.

OBEDIENCE TO ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER ARE NOT TWO SEPARATE OBEDIENCES BUT ONE OBEDIENCE

The Qur'an has identified that obedience to Allah and His messenger do not mean two separate obediences, such that to obey Allah we have to obey the Qur'an and to obey the messenger we have to obey some books other than the Qur'an. The term "Allah and His messenger" represents a single source of law and obedience, as is evident from the following verses:

In Surah Tauba, a declaration is given by Allah through the agency of His messenger about the "mushrikeen", with whom the Believers had made a contract:

"And an announcement from Allah and His messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allah and His messenger are free from liability to the idolaters; therefore if you repent, it will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken Allah; and announce painful punishment to those who disbelieve." (9:3)

The announcement of immunity in the above verse was given by the messenger to the people but it is identified to come from "*Allah and His messenger*". It is obvious that the messenger did not issue a separate declaration from Allah such that one announcement came from Allah and the other from the messenger, but it is Allah who had commissioned this declaration and it was in turn delivered to people through the agency of His messenger. But the announcement is attributed to both Allah as well as his messenger. This clearly confirms that Allah and His messenger are not two separate sources to give laws and ordinances of a divine nature but it is Allah who is the supreme source of all divine law, but He does not give those laws directly to each and every human being but selects someone as His messenger and it is through the agency of the divinely selected emissary, that the message of Allah is conveyed to the people.

In Surah Al-Anfaal, it is stated:

"O you who believe! obey Allah and His messenger and do not turn back from Him while you hear" (8:20)

In the above verse the Believers are called upon to obey Allah and His messenger but the verse ends with the phrase: *<wa la_ tawallau 'anhu wa antum tasma'u_n>* "and do not turn back from Him while you hear". Here the believers are identified to be those who were listening to the messenger who delivers the Qur'anic laws to them, as the singular pronoun *<anhu>* "from him" indicates. This confirms that Allah and His messenger are not two separate sources of divine law to be obeyed but one source, as the above verse identifies both Allah's as well as His messenger's obedience but ends in the singular pronoun, and not a dual one. This pronoun in the singular is for the messenger to whom the Believers are asked to listen to attentively.

The ultimate source to whom obedience and subservience is due is Allah, but since Allah does not communicate with each and every individual directly, he selects a person among mankind, and reveals His laws and injunctions on His selected emissary. That person, who is divinely chosen, then delivers those Laws that he has received from Allah. Such a person has been called as "Nabi" and "Rasul". He is a "Nabi" on account of his direct reception of the divine message, and "Rasul", as he does not keep the divine message to himself but also delivers it to mankind. The messenger not only calls people to obey those laws which he has received by divine revelation but he himself is also obedient to those laws. It is those laws and injunctions which are contained in the Book of Allah, that are bestowed on the messenger by objective divine revelation and the messenger delivers those to his people and asks them to show obedience to what he is propagating. The Qur'anic verses are themselves identified as the divine utterances of the messenger *<qaul-ur-rasool>*, as the following verse informs us:

<In nahu_ laqaula rasu_lin karim>

"Most surely, it (the Qur'an) is the saying of an honourable messenger." (69:40)

Thus he who listens to the messenger listens to what the messenger propagates. By listening to the messenger people listen to what God has revealed on him and by obeying those injunctions which are delivered by the messenger the people indirectly obey Allah as well, as it is Allah Himself, who has given that teaching to his selected emissary. That is why it is stated in the Qur'an:

"Whoever obeys the messenger, he indeed obeys Allah, and whoever turns back, so We have not sent you as a keeper over them." (4:80)

From the above Qur'anic evidence it is clearly established that obedience to the messenger is not obedience to his personal orders but to the divine laws that have been revealed on him, and that Allah and his messenger are not two separate obediences but it is a term which stands for one single source of divine law and obedience.

MISCONCEPTION #3

The messenger received a separate revelation known as "Az-Zikr" which was outside the Qur'an. The purpose of this hidden revelation was to enable the messenger to give additional details and explanations of the Qur'an. This is what is stated in Surah Al-Nahl 16 and verse number 44.

CLARIFICATION

Arabic Transliteration and English Translation of 16:43-44 is as follows:

<Wa ma_ arsalna_ min qabluka illa_ riju_ lan nu_ hi ilaihim fas'alu_ ahlaz zikri in kuntum la_ ta'lamu_ n(a), Bil bayyina_ ti waz zubur(i), wa anzalna_ ilaikaz zikra litubayyina lin na_ si ma_ nuzzila ilaihim wa la'allahum yatafakkaru_ n>

"And We did not send before you any but men to whom We sent revelation-- so ask the followers of the Reminder if you do not know-- With clear arguments and scriptures; and We have revealed to you the Reminder <Az-Zikr> that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect." (16:43-44 M.H.Shakir's translation)

In the above verse, it is stated that Allah has sent down "Az-Zikr" on the messenger, let us see as to how the Qur'an identifies "Az-Zikr". The following verses inform us what comprises "Az-Zikr" translated as "The Reminder":

"This We recite to you of the communications and the wise reminder. <zikril hakim>"(3:58)

"A Book revealed to you-- so let there be no straitness in your breast on account of it-- that you may warn thereby, and a reminder close to the believers. <zikra_ lil mu'minin>" (7:2)

"And you do not ask them for a reward for this; it is nothing but a reminder for all mankind. <zikrul lil 'a_ lamin>" (12:104)

"And they say: O you to whom the Reminder <Zikr> has been revealed! you are most surely insane:Why do you not bring to us the angels if you are of the truthful ones? We do not send the angels but with truth, and then they would not be respited. Surely We have revealed the Reminder <Zikr> and We will most surely be its guardian." (15:6-9)

"And this is a blessed Reminder <Zikrun mubarakun> which We have revealed; will you then deny it?" (21:50)

"And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him; it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Quran.<Zikrun wa Qur'an un mubeen>" (39:69)

"Surely those who disbelieve in the reminder <kaffaru biz Zikre> when it comes to them, and most surely it is a Mighty Book: Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One." (41:41-42)

"Therefore hold fast to that which has been revealed to you; surely you are on the right path. And most surely it is a reminder for you and your people <Zikru laka wa le qaumika>, and you shall soon be questioned." (43:43-44)

The above verses identify that "Az-Zikr" is not some special revelation outside of the Qur'an but it is an attribute of the Qur'an itself. There are many other verses in which the circulation of the word "Zikr" clarifies that it is nothing but an attribute of Allah's Book itself.

Having identified the word "Zikr" to be another attribute of Allah's Book, let us see what is meant by <Litubayyina> "..that you may make clear..", as traditionalists imply that <Litubayyina> means to give additional details and explanations added to the Qur'an, which is why "Az-Zikr" was revealed on the messenger.

The word <Litubayyina> comes from the root <ba> <ya> <noon>, i.e. <bayyana> which carries the meaning of:

"To be or become manifest, evident." *A Dictionary and Glosarry of the Koran by J.Penrice pp-21*

"Be evident, render clear." *Arabic English Dictionary by F. Steingass pp-155*

"Manifest, bring into view, disclose." *Al Mawrid Arabic English Dictionary pp-256*

"To show, Manifest" *Al Asri Arabic English Dictionary pp 85*

"To be or become plain, Evident, come out, visible, to announce." *Hans Wehr Arabic-Eng. Dictionary pp-87*

The meaning of this word is further clarified as its occurrence in the Qur'an is expounded upon. This word, <tabayyanun> has occurred in the Qur'an as opposite of <katmun> (3.187) and <Akhfaaun> (5.15) both of which carry the meaning of : "to hide or to keep to one's self" .

Following is the circulation of this word in Qur'anic verses:

"And when Allah took a covenant from those who have been given The Book, that they shall make it evident to mankind <latubayyinunnahu_ linna_si>, and they shall not keep it secret <wa la_ taktumu_nah>.." (3:187)

Further clarified in

"O People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you making evident to you <YUBAYYINU LAKUM> much of what you concealed from the Book <KUNTUM TUKHFU_NA MINAL KITA_B> and passing over much; indeed, there has come to you light and a clear Book from Allah." (5:15)

From the above the meaning of the word under discussion is more expounded as 'To make evident what is hidden or concealed'. Finally in Surah Al-Baqara the meaning of this word is confirmed to be 'Clear' or Evident' and not what the traditionalists suggest, i.e 'to give additional details'.

We are told:

"Let there be no compulsion in Deen. Truth stands out clear from error <qad tabayyanar rushdu minal ghaiy> .." (2:256)

Thus the above circulation has clearly demonstrated that "Az-Zikr" is not some revelation that the messenger received outside of the Qur'an but simply an attribute of the Qur'an itself Furthermore "Litubayyina" does not carry the meaning of giving additional details but simply means to make evident or known what is hidden or concealed. In 16:44 when Allah informs the messenger that:

"And We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect." (16:44)

Then it is simply being stated that:

- Allah sent down His Book on the messenger. *"And We have revealed to you the Reminder.."*

- But this Book is meant for all mankind, and not only for the messenger, as clarified by the statement *"..that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect."*

- The messenger's job is to make the Book evident to them and not limit it to himself only, as clarified by the phrase *"..that you may make clear to men.."*. This is further elucidated in Surah Al Maidah where it says:

"O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Sustainer; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people." (5:67)

The command for not keeping the Book of Allah to one's self only is because those who do not make it evident to people are deprived of divine blessings and bounties. See 2:159

Thus it is clear from the above that the messenger was to make the Book of Allah clear and evident to all mankind. Now how was the Book of Allah made evident to people? How did the messenger clarify the Qur'anic teachings? The answers to these are provided in the next chapter.

MISCONCEPTION #4

The messenger's job was not just to deliver the Qur'an like a postman but his duty is also to explain and give commentary of the divine message. In many Quranic verses it is stated that he gives the knowledge of the Book. The knowledge and Tafsir (Exegesis) of the Book of Allah that the messenger has given is contained in the books of traditions. Thus Qur'an is the theory while the compilations of traditions are its Tafsir.

CLARIFICATION

While it is correct to state that the messengers duty was not restricted to merely reciting the Qur'an to his people, as is evident by the words: *"..He will give them the knowledge of the Book .."* (2:129), it is also an incontestable fact that the books of traditions that are upheld by various sects and attributed to the messenger, do not contain the explanation of each and every verse of the Qur'an. What exists in those compilations are some ascribed paradoxical reports limited to certain verses only. No book of tradition contains the complete commentary and explanation of the Qur'an from Surah Al-Fatiha, the first chapter to Surah An-Naas, the last chapter, that it could attribute to the messenger of Allah.

This being the case, the question arises that how did the messenger confer the knowledge of the Book of Allah to his audience? And where can we find those explanations? The Qur'an provides us the adequate answer to these questions of extreme importance.

Allah informs us that His Book has been kept independent of all sorts of traditions for its exegesis, by indicating that the Qur'an is its own commentary.

The Qur'an is not like an ordinary book, such that most other books discuss a specific topic at one place and have their subjects compiled and bifurcated within specific chapters.

Unlike this, the Book of Allah has its topics spread out throughout itself within various chapters. For example, if we were to ascertain as to what Allah's Book says about the topic of divorce we find verses dealing with the subject of divorce in Surah Al-Baqara which is the second Surah (chapter) of the Qur'an, Surah Al Nisa the fourth Chapter, then in Surah Al Ahzaab the thirty third chapter and further in Sura At Tal'aaq which is the sixty fifth chapter of the Qur'an.

By compiling all the verses about the topic of divorce as discussed in all the locations of the Qur'an we come to know what the Book of Allah has to say about this subject. And we observe that each verse clarifies and explains the other. It is by this manner that Allah Himself has dealt with different subjects in His Book, i.e. by repeating topics in various chapters throughout the Qur'an. The manner of exegesis is <Tasreef ul Ayaat> or recurrence and repetition of subjects within the Qur'anic verses, and it is by this method that the Book of Allah deals with various topics and provides its own explanation. We are reminded:

<unzur kaifa nusarriful a_ya_ti la'allahum yafqahu_n>

"See how We repeat the verses that they may understand." (6:65)

<Wa laqad sarrafna_lin na_si fi ha_zal qur'a_ni min kulli masal(in), fa aba_aksarun na_si illa_kufu_ra>

"And certainly We have repeated for mankind in this Quran, every kind of similitude, but the majority of mankind do not consent to aught but denying." (17:89)

Allah Himself has circulated topics within His Book, and what is unclear at one passage is made distinct by another verse in another passage within the Qur'an itself. One verse will throw light on the other. Furthermore we are informed that the messenger of Allah also explained the Qur'an by the Qur'an itself:

<Wa kaza_lika nusarriful a_ya_ti wa liyaqu_lu_darasta wa linubayyinahu_liqaumiy ya'lamu_n>

"And thus do We repeat the verses and that they may say: You have read; and that We may make it clear to a people who know." (6:108)

It is evident from the above that the messenger's lectures on the Qur'an were based on <tasreef_ul_ayat>, i.e. recurrence of Ayat, to clarify topics within the Qur'an. The messenger gave *Dars ul Qur-an*, by this manner, and the Qur'an was clarified by the Qur'an itself. This is further supported in Surah Al-Furqan, where a certain objection of the unbelievers is identified:

<Wa qa_lal lazina kafaru_lau la_nuz zila alaihil qur a_nu jumlataw wa hidah kaza_lika linusab bita bihi fu a_daka wa rat talna_hu tartila_Wa la_yatu_naka bimasalin il la_jina_ka bil haq qi wa ahsana tafsira>

"The unbelievers say: "Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once? Thus (is it revealed gradually) that We may strengthen thy heart thereby and We have

rehearsed it to thee in slow well-arranged stages gradually. And no example do they bring to thee but We bring to thee the truth and the best explanation." (25:32-33)

The above verses inform us about a matter of grave importance. To the objection of unbelievers as to why is not the Qur'an revealed all at once, it is stated that the Qur'an is revealed in stages due to the following reasons:

(1) So that the messengers heart may be strengthened. This is confirmed when it is stated: *"Thus (is it revealed gradually) that We may strengthen thy heart thereby and We have rehearsed it to thee in slow well-arranged stages gradually."* Hence the messenger was encouraged and enjoined to be steadfast by the revelation of Qur'anic verses.

(2) So that the arguments that the unbelievers may bring forth should be answered sufficiently by 'Haqq', i.e. the Qur'anic truth. As it is stated: *"And no example do they bring to thee but We bring to thee the truth.."*

(3) The third reason for the gradual descent of the Qur'an is to provide *<Ahsan_ul_Tafsir>*, i.e. the best explanation and exegesis of Allah's Book.

<Wa la_yatu_naka_bimasalin_il_la_jina_ka_bil_haq_qi_wa_ahsana_tafsira>

"And no example do they bring to thee but We bring to thee the truth and the best 'Tafsir' (exegesis)" (25:33)

Thus Allah revealed verses which provided *Tafsir* of other verses themselves. What remained ambiguous in one verse, its clarification and exegesis was provided by Allah Himself by the gradual descent of other verses of the Qur'an. Hence Allah provided the *Tafsir* of the Qur'an by the Qur'an itself, and did not make His Book dependent on any compilations of traditions for its exegesis. It is by this manner that Allah gave the *Tafsir* of His Book to the messenger and the messenger in turn conveyed to his audience. The messenger did not give any separate book of *Tafsir* to the *Ummah* as the *Tafsir* of the Qur'an which he imparted on the *Ummah* was contained inside the pages of the Qur'an itself.

While it is identified that the Qur'an explains its self by repetition of verses, we are also instructed to ponder and reflect on Allah's Book, for the message of the Qur'an will be evident to those who will strive to comprehend its meaning and conduct research on it. It is mentioned that those who will use their faculties of understanding and engage in an inquiry into the meaning of the divine message, for them the Qur'anic verses will be rendered plain:

"Thus do We make the verses distinct for a people who reflect." (10:24)

"Indeed We have made the verses distinct for a people who will utilize their understanding." (6:98)

Along with stating the above, we are also advocated to ponder and reflect on the Book:

"A Book We have revealed to you abounding in good that they may ponder over its verses, and that those endowed with understanding may be mindful." (38:29)

Thus the injunction to reflect and ponder over the Book has been given for all generations, so that in the light of divine guidance they seek the solutions to the problems of their times. The meaning of the Qur'an will be made clear by the

repetition of verses and likewise people are asked to use their abilities of reason and intellect to understand the Qur'an. The following verses shed further light in stating that the meaning of Allah's Book will be evident by <Tasreef ul Ayat> and it is in this manner that Qur'an should be understood:

" See how We repeat the verses that they may understand." (6:65)

"See how We repeat the verses, yet they turn away (from the truth rendered by recurrence of Ayat)." (6:46)

It is Allah, who is the 'Mufasir' i.e commentator of the Qur'an, and the *Tafsir* of one verse was provided by the revelation of other verses which would throw light on the subject under discussion. Thus it is said:

"Ar-Rahmaan (The Beneficent God). It is He who teaches the Qur'an." (55:1-2)

Not only was the revelation, compilation and protection of the Book taken up by Allah himself, but also its explanation. As we are informed:

"Do not move your tongue with this (Qur'an) to make haste with it. Surely on Us (devolves) the collecting of it and the reciting of it. Therefore when We have recited it, follow its recitation. Again on Us (devolves) the explaining of it." (75:16-19)

Hence it is Allah who provides the *Tafsir* of His Book by <Tasreef ul Ayat>, that is, by repetition of verses. We will now observe the manner of *Tafsir* of Qur'anic subjects that is given by Allah in His Book itself and which was consequently taught by the messenger to his audience.

EXAMPLE OF TAFSIR PROVIDED BY ALLAH IN THE QUR'AN ITSELF, AND GIVEN BY NABI (S.A.W) TO THE UMMAH

Here we demonstrate how the Qur'an has clarified its own concepts and thus becomes its own best *Tafsir*. In Surah Al-Baqara, the very beginning of the Qur'an, it is stated that Allah's Book is guidance for 'Mutaqeen' (those who guard from injurious activity):

"That is The Book, there is no perplexity in it, guidance for the 'Mutaqeen'." (2:2)

In the above verse, a question can be raised as to, who are the 'Mutaqeen'? What are their qualities? The answer to these questions and many others like them are given in the Qur'an itself, in the advancing verses of Sura Al Baqara as well as other verses. Like:

"And hasten to the protection given from your Sustainer against the consequences of faults; and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is (as) the heavens and the earth, it is prepared for the 'Mutaqeen'. (They are) Those who spend in ease as well as in straitness, and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men; and Allah loves the doers of good (to others). And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember (the law of) Allah and seek protection from the consequences of their faults-- and who can give protection from the consequences of faults but Allah, and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done." (3:133-135)

Thus the above verses shed light on the attributes of 'Mutaqeen', similarly further *Tafsir* of above is given in other passages of the Qur'an:

"Surely the 'Mutaqeen' will be in the midst of Garden and springs. Taking joy in the things which their Sustainer gives them, because before that they lived a good life. (further details given about them) They were in the habit of sleeping but little by night. And in the hours of early dawn they were found seeking protection from the consequences of faults. And in their wealth was the right of him who asked and also of those who were prevented (from asking)." (51:15-19)

The 'Mutaqeen' always keep the divine guidance before themselves while dealing in any situation pertaining to human affairs, thus they guard themselves from the injurious effects of those actions which are not consistent with the divine laws:

"Surely those who guard (al lazina attaqau), when a visitation from the Shaitan afflicts them, they remind themselves (of the divine laws), then lo! they see (the right way)." (7:201)

Apart from implementing the social laws given for human guidance in Allah's Book, the 'Mutaqeen' also concentrate on harnessing the laws of nature, and guard themselves from the ill effects of being unaware of their utilization. They are reminded about this aspect in the following Surah:

"He it is Who made the sun a shining brightness and the moon a light, and ordained for it mansions that you might know the computation of years and the reckoning. Allah did not create it but with truth; He makes the signs manifest for a people who have knowledge. Most surely in the variation of the night and the day, and what Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for a people who guard <qaum in yataqoon>." (10:5-6)

From above we observe how the Qur'an itself gives the explanation of its Ayat and how its passages shed light on other passages. Further example of the *Tafsir* of Qur'an by the Qur'an itself is demonstrated by considering the following verse:

"O you who believe! Be not like those who annoyed Moses, but Allah cleared him of what they said, and he was worthy of regard with Allah." (33:69)

In the above verse, some people are mentioned who used to annoy Moses, the messenger of Allah in a certain way. Now who are these people and in what manner did they harass a messenger of God? The Qur'an itself provides the detailed description of this category of people and their means of harassment.

TAFSEEL (DETAILS) OF ANNOYANCE IMPARTED TO MOSES BY HIS PEOPLE:

Although his people should have been grateful to Moses for bringing them out of the bondage of Pharaoh, but instead of expressing their gratitude they used to say:

"They said: 'We have had (nothing but) trouble both before and after thou came to us.'" (7:129)

They were given heavenly sustenance in the form of <Man wa salwa>, but they rebelled even at that and said to Moses:

"O Moses! we cannot endure one kind of food (always).." (2:61)

While passing through a habitation they observed some people being dedicated to the service of idols, and seeing this they asked Moses, a messenger of God who had always taught them not to bow down before anyone except Allah, that:

".. O Moses! Make for us a god as they have (their) gods He said: Surely you are a people acting ignorantly." (7:138)

When Moses went for communion with Allah for a few days, they started worshipping the calf. (see 20:86). When they were told to maintain a certain type of behaviour while entering a city, they deliberately acted insolently (see 2:58-59). When Moses directed them to have belief in Allah, they told him:

"O Moses! We will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly.." (2:55)

When God instructed them through the agency of Moses to slaughter a calf in order to purify them from the false sanctity they had developed due to the worship of idols, they gave numerous excuses, the details of which are given in (2:67-71). Moses asked them to enter the Holy land which was written for them, but instead they again started making excuses and replied:

"..go therefore you and your Sustainer, then fight you both surely we will here sit down." (5:24)

This was the attitude and insolent behaviour that the people of Moses demonstrated in front of their messenger, and it was because such annoying behaviour that Moses was compelled to say:

"And when Moses said to his people: O my people! why do you annoy me? And you know indeed that I am Allah's messenger to you.."(61:5)

And he thus implored God:

"He said: My Sustainer! Surely I have no control (upon any) but my own self and my brother; therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors."(5:25)

Hence it is by bringing forth the above mentioned narratives of the Children of Israel, the Believers in the Qur'anic message were instructed:

"..Be not like those who annoyed Moses.." (33:69)

The reader can see how clearly and without any vagueness the Qur'an has listed the annoyance that the people of Moses had imparted to their messenger, and the manner in which the meaning of verse 33:69 is clarified in the Qur'an itself. But against this the books of traditions attribute the following narration to the person of the messenger, to demonstrate his explanation of the divine Book. While considering the Tradition given below, it should be kept in mind that the messenger was to give the *Tafsir* of the Qur'an by repetition of verses, and explained the Qur'an by the Qur'an itself, as stated in 6:104.

It is stated in Sahih Al-Bukhari:

"It has been narrated to me by Ishaq bin Ibraheem, as Ruh bin Ubadah told us, from Auf who was informed by Al Hasan, Muhammad and Khilas, that he narrated from Abu Hurraira who said that, Allah's Apostle said, "(The Prophet) Moses was a shy person and used to cover his body completely because of his extensive shyness. One of the children of Israel hurt him by saying, 'He covers his body in this way only because of some defect in his skin, either leprosy or

scrotal hernia, or he has some other defect.' Allah wished to clear Moses of what they said about him, so one day while Moses was in seclusion, he took off his clothes and put them on a stone and started taking a bath. When he had finished the bath, he moved towards his clothes so as to take them, but the stone took his clothes and fled; Moses picked up his stick and ran after the stone saying, 'O stone! Give me my garment!' Till he reached a group of Bani Israel who saw him naked then, and found him the best of what Allah had created, and Allah cleared him of what they had accused him of. The stone stopped there and Moses took and put his garment on and started hitting the stone with his stick. By Allah, the stone still has some traces of the hitting, three, four or five marks. This was what Allah refers to in His Saying: "O you who believe! Be you not like those Who annoyed Moses, But Allah proved his innocence of that which they alleged, And he was honorable In Allah's Sight."33/69- (Sahih Bukhari Volume 4 Hadith 616)

The readers are urged to carefully examine the above narration in which a mighty messenger of God is humiliated in front of his people, and the Qur'anic repetitions pertaining to the subject. The guile of the people who forged this tradition should also be observed, as to how they absolved themselves from this fictitious tale, by cleverly attributing it to the person of the messenger of Allah (p), thus taking advantage of the immense love and respect that the Muslims have for him in their hearts in order to insert their forgeries within the house of Islam. While the Qur'an has informed us that the messenger imparted knowledge of Allah's Book by giving its explanation as occurred within the passages of the Book itself, can we consider the story given in the above tradition to earnestly come from the messenger?

To any person who sincerely seeks to ascertain the meaning of the Qur'an it will be apparent that passages of the Qur'an explain and comment each other, and are not dependent on any outside source for their exegesis. Although many Modern day translators of the Qur'an are also marred by traditional preconceptions in their work, but they have also realized this fact, and have acknowledged that the Qur'an is its own '*Tafsir*'.

Renowned Islamic Scholar, Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, has the following to say as concluding remarks in the preface to Qur'anic commentaries, given in his world famous translation and commentary of the Qur'an:

"It has been said that the Qur'an is its own best commentary . As we proceed with the study of the Book, we find how true this is. A careful comparison and collation of passages from the Qur'an removes many difficulties. Use a good concordance, such as the one I have named among the Works of reference, and you will find that one passage throws light on another." The Holy Qur'an- Translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali, pp xi

Another renowned Translator of the Qur'an, Muhammad Asad also acknowledges that the Qur'an provides its own *Tafsir*, when he states the following in the foreword of His Translation:

"The Qur'an must not be viewed as a compilation of individual injunctions and exhortations but as one integral whole: that is, as an exposition of an ethical doctrine in which every verse and sentence has an intimate bearing on other verses and sentences, all of them clarifying and amplifying one another. Consequently, its real meaning can be grasped only if we correlate every one of its statements with what has been stated elsewhere in its passages, and try to explain its ideas by means of frequent cross references, always subordinating the particular to the general and the incidental to the intrinsic. Whenever this rule is faithfully followed, we realize that the Qur'an is - in the words of

Muhammed Abduh- "its own best commentary". The Message of THE QUR-AN by Muhammad Asad, pp vii

A person should approach the Book for the purpose of sincerely seeking divine guidance, and should keep his mind receptive and free from all pre conceived notions. If this is done, the meaning of the Qur'an will be clearly apparent to him and he will discover that the Qur'an is a simple, clear and self explanatory Book, kept independent from all sorts of traditions for its exegesis.

MISCONCEPTION #5

It is stated in Surah Al-Ahzaab, verse no. 21 that "Indeed you have in the messenger of Allah, an excellent example to follow.", therefore to follow his example, we must look into the books of traditions and the stories that are attributed to him.

CLARIFICATION

It is stated in Surah Al Ahzaab:

<Laqad ka_na lakum fi rasu_lil la_hi uswatun hasanatul liman ka_na yarjul la_ha wal yaumal a_khira wa zakaral la_ha kasira>

"Certainly you have in the messenger of Allah an excellent example (to follow) for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much." (33:21)

The example of the messenger, i.e how he behaved, is embodied in the Qur'an, and we have to follow his personality as reported in the Qur'an, that is why the only category of people that the Qur'an has identified to bear witness over Muhammad (S.A.W) are those who have a thorough knowledge of the Qur'anic principles, as stated by the following verse:

"And those who disbelieve say: You are not a messenger. Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and whoever has knowledge of the Book." (13:43)

To follow the messengers example we have to attain knowledge from Allah's Book only, as otherwise the above verse would not have restricted the category of people to have gained knowledge from only Allah's Book, and would have included other books as well.

"Uswatun Hasana" i.e. an excellent example to follow means that we know how the messenger behaved in life and what are the principles he worked upon.. This aspect is identified in Surah Yunus:

"I follow naught but what is revealed to me; surely I fear, if I disobey my Sustainer, the punishment of a mighty day." (10:15)

Therefore, if we are to follow his example, then we should also act as he did, and that is that we also follow the revelation sent to him, which is contained in the Qur'an. The messenger acted upon the Qur'an, so if we are to follow his example then we should do the same.

In Surah Al Mumtahina it is stated that in Ibraheem and his companions we also have an excellent example to follow:

<Qad ka_nat lakum uswatun hasanatun fi ibra_hima wal lazina maahu>

*"Indeed, there is for you an excellent example in Ibrahim and those with him."
(60:4)*

Does this mean that we also seek his example from traditions and heresy attributed to him? No, it does not mean that. What it means is that the conduct of Ibrahim as reported in the Qur'an, is an example for the Believers, and they should base their conduct on that pattern.

MISCONCEPTION #6

It is said in a tradition attributed to the messenger that he was given the Qur'an and something similar to it, as revelation from Allah. This thing which is similar and co-equal to Allah's Book consists of the reports attributed to the person of the messenger are found in the books of traditions, i.e. the Hadith Literature.

CLARIFICATION

Allah has emphatically denied the idea that there is something "similar" or co-equal to the Qur'an, when He has unambiguously stated that:

"Say: If the whole of mankind and jinns should combine together to bring something similar to this Quran, they can not bring anything similar to it, though some of them were aiders of others." (17:88)

How can anyone say that the messenger was given something similar to the Quran, when the Qur'an itself states that nothing is similar or equal to itself?

In Surah At-Tur, the unbelievers are challenged:

"Or do they say: He has forged it. Nay! they do not believe. Then let them bring a 'Hadith' similar to it if they are truthful." (52:33-34)

The unbelievers are challenged to produce a 'Hadith' or speech similar to the Qur'an, thus the divine challenge in the words: *<Falyatu_bihadisim mislihi in ka_nu_sa_diqin>* "Then let them bring a 'Hadith' similar to it if they are truthful.", indicates that there is no speech or 'Hadith' that is similar or co-equal to the Book of Allah. In Surah Al-Baqara we are told that no one will ever be able to produce anything in similarity or equality to Allah's Book:

"And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful. But if you do (it) not and never shall you do (it), then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel; it is prepared for the unbelievers." (2:23-24)

The claim that something else is similar or equal to the Qur'an has been proved false by the above clear and unambiguous verses. Furthermore the Qur'an has itself been identified as the *<qaul ur Rasul>*, i.e. saying of the messenger (See

69:40) and among one of its attributes is *Ahsan-ul-Hadith*, i.e. the Best Speech, or '*Hadith*' in Arabic.

"Allah has revealed the best 'Hadith' (speech), a book conformable in its various parts, repeating, whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Sustainer, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah; this is Allah's guidance, He guides with it whom He pleases; and (as for) him whom Allah leaves to err, there is no guide for him." (39:23)

Identifying itself as the most beautiful '*Hadith*', the Qur'an informs us that it contains the '*Hadith*' of the messengers of Allah (See 20:9, 51:24, 79:15) and it is none else but the Book of Allah itself which is the actual '*Hadith*' given to the *Nabi* (S.A.W), as the following verses indicate:

"Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this 'Hadith'." (18:6)

"This is a warner of the warners of old. The near event draws nigh. There shall be none besides Allah to remove it. Do you then wonder at this Hadith?" (53:56-59)

"But nay! I bring as evidence the location of stars; And most surely it is a very great oath if you only knew; Most surely it is an honored Quran, In a book that is protected. None shall have access to it (its meaning) save those who have purified themselves (from wrong concepts and ideologies). A revelation by the Sustainer of the worlds. Do you then hold this 'Hadith' in contempt? And to give (it) the lie you make your means of subsistence." (56:75-82)

"So leave Me and him who rejects this Hadith; We will overtake them by degrees, from whence they perceive not." (68:44)

While identifying His own Book as the '*Hadith*' of the messenger, Allah also warns us not to accept any other '*Hadith*' other than His very own Book, which is the '*Ahsan-ul-Hadith*', i.e. the Best *Hadith*. The following verses inform us of the sufficiency of the '*Hadith*' which Allah gave to His messenger in the form of Qur'an:

"In which Hadith, then, after it, will they believe?" (77:50)

"Do they not consider the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and whatever things Allah has created, and that may be their doom shall have drawn nigh; In which Hadith would they then believe in after this?" (7:185)

"And who is more true in giving Hadith than Allah?" (4:87)

Allah categorically informs us that we are to accept no other Hadith other than His Book, which is the sufficient '*Hadith*' having the divine approval:

"These are the Ayat of Allah which We recite to you with truth; then in which Hadith would they believe after Allah and His Ayat? Woe to every sinful liar, Who hears the Ayat of Allah recited to him, then persists proudly as though he had not heard them; so announce to him a painful punishment. And when he comes to know of any of Our Ayat, he takes it for a jest; these it is that shall have abasing chastisement." (45:6-9)

As Allah informs us that His Book contains the '*Hadith*' of messengers, it is the '*Best Hadith*' and that people should not accept any other '*Hadith*' other than His verses, He also identifies miscreants who will fabricate '*Hadith*' to mislead people from the path of Allah and attribute those fabrications to Allah and His messenger. The following verses identify such enemies of Islam:

"In their (all the messengers mentioned in the Quran) narratives there is certainly a lesson for people of understanding. It is not a 'Hadith' which could be forged, but a verification of what is before it and a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe." (12:111)

The above verse states that the Qur'an is not a forged '*Hadith*' or speech, thus confirming the existence of '*Hadith*' which will be fabricated but will be deceptively attributed to the messengers of Allah.

In Surah Luqman we are told:

"And of men is he who purchases vain 'Hadith' <Lahwal Hadith> to lead astray from Allah's path without knowledge, and to take it for a mockery; these shall have an abasing chastisement. And when Our Ayat (verses) are recited to him, he turns back proudly, as if he had not heard them, as though in his ears were a heaviness, therefore announce to him a painful chastisement." (31:6-7)

Such persons take "*Lahwal Hadith*" i.e. futile speech for the sole purpose of misleading others from the path of Allah. The above verse also gives their identity as being those who will demonstrate arrogance whenever the Qur'anic guidance will be presented to them. Such a category of people is further clarified in Surah Al-Anaam:

"And thus did We make for every Nabi an enemy, the Shaitans from among men and jinn, some of them inspire each other with varnished sayings of deception, and had your Sustainer pleased they would not have done it, therefore leave them and that which they forge. And that the hearts of those who do not believe in the hereafter may incline to it and that they may be well pleased with it and that they may earn what they are going to earn." (6:112-113)

And

"And We did not send before you any Messenger or Nabi, but when he desired (to propagate the divine message), the Shaitan cast (forgeries) in his desired message; but Allah annuls that which the Shaitan casts, then does Allah establish His Ayat (Verses), and Allah is Knowing, Wise. So that He may make what the Shaitan casts a trial for those in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are hard; and most surely the unjust are in a great opposition" (22:52-53)

It is the enemies of Islam who produce and promote such sayings of deception, and people will always show an inclination to their falsehood, as the verses state. Such Satanic minds always fabricate their falsehood but attribute them to Allah:

"He (the Satanic mind) only enjoins you evil and indecency (Fahisha), and that you may speak against Allah what you do not know." (2:169)

Those people who follow such Satanic deceptive sayings which are falsely attributed to Allah and His messenger, always think of themselves to be on the right path and to be on true guidance, and will always remain blind from the Qur'anic message, whenever it is presented.

" And whoever is dim sighted to the reminder of the Beneficent God, We appoint for him a Shaitan, so he becomes his associate. And most surely they turn them away from the path, but they (the people who are dim sighted to the Qur'an) calculate that they are guided aright!" (43:36-37)

We should be on guard from such Satanic inspirational sayings of deception and should be aware of the actual divine teachings of Allah's Book. Thus it is clear from above evidence that nothing is similar or equal to the Qur'an, the Qur'an is itself the saying of the messenger and the 'Hadith' given by Allah. Furthermore Allah has questioned the people as to which 'Hadith' they will accept after His Book, and has also identified Satanic people who will invent false sayings but present it with guile as divine truths. We should hold fast to the Book of Allah and be aware of such deceptive elements.

MISCONCEPTION #7

The Qur'an does not contain everything required for guidance. It is incomplete and does not give us the Divine guidance for all matters requiring guidance.

CLARIFICATION

Let us proceed to see if Allah has considered His Book to be incomplete and lacking anything necessary for guidance. The following verses inform us:

THE QUR'AN HAS EVERYTHING THAT IS REQUIRED FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE

"And We have revealed the Book to you which has the clear explanation of everything, and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit." (16:89)

"In their (all the messengers mentioned in the Quran) narratives there is certainly a lesson for people of understanding. It is not a 'Hadith' which could be forged, but a verification of what is before it and a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe." (12:111)

THE QUR'AN CONTAINS A COMPLETE CODE OF LIFE

"And complete are the words of your Sustainer with truth and justice; there is none who can change His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing." (6:115)

".. nothing have we omitted from the Book.." (6:38)

"And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the words of Allah would not come to an end; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise." (31:27)

THE QUR'AN DOES NOT LACK "TAFSEEL" (DETAILED ELUCIDATION)

"Shall I then seek a Ruler other than Allah? When He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) distinctly elucidated <Kitab an Muffasalla>." (6:114)

"And certainly We have brought them a Book which We have detailed<Fassalnahu> with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe." (7:52)

"A Book of which the verses are distinctly elucidated <fussilat ayatahu>, an Arabic Quran for a people who know." (41:3)

"Indeed We have made the revelations distinct for a people who take reminder <qad fassalnā ayyati li qaumin yazekerun>". " (6:126)

"Thus do We make the revelations distinct for a people who reflect. <nuffasil ul ayyati li qaumin ya-tafekerun>" (10:24)

"Thus do We make the revelations distinct for a people who use their reason. <nuffasil ul ayyati li qaumin ya-qilun> " (30:28)

"And this Quran is not such as could be forged by those besides Allah, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a distinct elucidation of the book <Tafseel al-Kitab>, there is no doubt in it, from the Sustainer of the worlds." (10:37)

THE QUR'AN IS A CLEAR AND PLAIN BOOK, IT IS NOT UNAMBIGUOUS IN ITS MEANING

"Alif Lam Ra (This is) a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they made plain, from the Wise, All-aware." (11:1)

"Ha Mim. By the evidence of the Book that makes things clear <kitab il mubeen>. Surely We have made it an Arabic Quran that you use your reason." (43:1-3)

"Ha Mim! By the evidence of the Book that makes things clear. <kitab il mubeen>" (44:1-2)

"We have made the revelations clear to you, if you will use your reason. <bayyana lakum ul ayyati in quntum ta-qilun>" (3:118)

"And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for taking reminder, then is there anyone who will receive admonition?" (54:17)

THE QUR'AN IS SUFFICIENT FOR THE BELIEVERS

"Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Most surely there is mercy in this and a reminder for a people who believe." (29:51)

The above verses have categorically informed us that the Book of Allah is complete, does not lack any aspect of divine guidance, has the distinction and explanation of its own subjects, is clear in its meaning, and is sufficient for the Believers.

THOSE MATTERS WHICH ARE NOT GIVEN IN THE QUR'AN WILL BE DECIDED BY "SHOORA" (MUTUAL CONSULTATION) OF THE ORGANIZATION OF BELIEVERS

About certain matters, the Qur'an has even provided bye-laws and details, e.g. matters pertaining to social affairs, like marriage, divorce etc. But for some matters the Qur'an gives us only the immutable principles and does not provide the details. These invariable values are principles which do not change with

time and space, but bye laws can be framed in their light, and such would be meant for the current circumstances, and may change with time. These bye-laws will be framed by "Shoora", i.e. mutual consultation of the organization of Believers. The messenger of Allah also consulted people for matters pertaining to administration and implementation of the divine laws through such bye-laws, as the Qur'an identifies:

"And take counsel with them in the administrative affair <shawiru hum fil amr>; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust." (3:159)

Thus the messenger consulted the people in those matters whose instructions were not given in the divine revelations. The divine guidance of Allah in the Qur'an is permanent and for all times, but there may be the need for some administrative laws that need to be framed in the light of the divine permanent values. These bye-laws are not immutable but they are meant for the widespread circumstances of a certain time or era, and changes can be made in them if the circumstances require. Thus the Qur'an identifies that the Believers also enjoin their affairs by mutual consultation, in the light of the divine principles:

"And those who respond to their Sustainer and establish Salat, and their matters are administered by mutual consultation among themselves, <wa amruhum shoora baynahum> and who spend out of what We have given them." (42:38)

Thus it is by "Shoora", i.e. mutual consultation that those matters are decided upon which are not given by the Qur'an but which necessitate the prevalent circumstances. However it should be kept in mind that such bye-laws are framed by the whole community, i.e. the organization of Believers and not by any particular individual. Shoora system is the responsibility of the whole Ummah, that under the light of the Qur'anic permanent values they will frame bye laws that are required for implementing the divine values according to the prevailing times and circumstances. These bye-laws are not permanent, but only the Book of Allah is, and changes can be made in these bye laws if the need arises. It is only the Qur'anic Laws that are immutable and timeless.

"And complete are the words of your Sustainer with truth and justice; there is none who can change His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing." (6:115)

MISCONCEPTION #8

In Surah Al-Hashr, it is stated: "..So take what the Apostle assigns to you and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you.." (59:7), Therefore this implies that whatever the traditions and Hadith Literature gives us as teaching we should accept and whatever that body of literature has prohibited we should refrain from. Furthermore it is stated in Surah Nisa verse 65 that people cannot become believers until they consider the messenger as a judge in their disputes and submit wholeheartedly to what he decides. This also highlights the importance of the books of traditions and reports attributed to the messenger.

CLARIFICATION

First of all, the portion of the verse from Surah Al-Hashr, which is often quoted by advocates of traditions, is quoted out of context. The context of this verse is given as follows:

Translation by Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali

"What Allah has bestowed on His Apostle (and taken away) from the people of the townships belongs to Allah to His Apostle and to kindred and orphans the needy and the wayfarer; in order that it may not (Merely) make a circuit between the wealth among you. So take what the Apostle assigns to you and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment." (59:7)

"(Some part is due) to the indigent Muhajirs those who were expelled from their homes and their property while seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good pleasure and aiding Allah and His Apostle: such are indeed the sincere ones." (59:8)

Translation by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall

"That which Allah giveth as spoil unto His messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah and His messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, that it become not a commodity between the rich among you. And whatsoever the messenger giveth you, take it. And whatsoever he forbiddeth, abstain (from it). And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is stern in reprisal." (59:7)

"And (it is) for the poor fugitives who have been driven out from their homes and their belongings, who seek bounty from Allah and help Allah and His messenger. They are the loyal." (59:8)

From the above verses it is clear that the statement: *<wa ma_a_ta_kumur rasu_lu fakhuzu_hu wa ma_naha_kum anhu fantahu>* i.e. ***"So take what the Apostle assigns to you and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you."*** Does not refer to the teachings that the messenger is propagating among his people, but the booty or spoils that are to be assigned by him to the needy. Secondly, even if we were to accept for the sake of argument that this phrase which has been taken out of context refers to the general teachings that the messenger is to convey to the people, even then the Qur'an is very clear as to what consists of the divine teachings conveyed by the messenger and what is it that he forbids people from. He is giving only the Qur'an as divine teaching:

"We know best what they say, and you are not one to compel them; therefore remind him by means of the Quran who fears My Promise." (50:45)

And,

"Shall I then seek a Ruler other than Allah? When He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) distinctly elucidated;" (6:114)

"And this Quran has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches" (6:19)

As ordered by Allah:

"And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed; therefore follow it and guard (against evil) that mercy may be shown to you." (6:155)

While it is the Qur'an that the messenger is giving to the people as divine teaching, he forbids us from accepting any other Book as God's guidance other than the divine revelation in Qur'an:

"Say: Then bring some (other) book from Allah which is a better guide than both of them, (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful." (28:49)

And,

"A Book revealed to you-- so let there be no straitness in your breast on account of it-- that you may warn thereby, and a reminder close to the believers. Follow what has been revealed to you from your Sustainer and do not follow guardians besides Him (His Laws), how little do you mind." (7:2-3)

"And We have not given them any books which they study, nor did We send to them before you a warner." (34:44)

Thus it is clear from the above circulation, that firstly, the phrase in Surah Al-Hashr, verse 7 is quoted out of context as it refers to the spoils which are to be assigned by the messenger and not his general teachings or orders, secondly, even if we were to accept for the sake of argument that the phrase in this verse refers to the teachings and orders of the messenger, even then, the Qur'an has informed us what is it that the messenger conveyed as divine orders and what is it that he asked his people to abstain from. In Surah Nisa it is stated:

<Fala_ wa rabbika la_ yu'minu_nahatta_ YUHAKKIMU_KA fima_ shajara bainahum summa la_ yajidu_ fi anfusihim harajam mimma_ qadaita wa yusallimu_ taslima>

"But nay, by thy lord, they will not believe (in truth) until they make thee judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves no dislike of that which thou decidest, and submit with full submission." (4:65)

In the above verse it is mentioned that people are to make the messenger a judge between their disputes, and accept his decisions with the fullest conviction. How did the messenger judge among the people? Was he to govern by his own mind? The Qur'an provides us the answer to this question when it states:

"So judge between them by that which Allah hath revealed, <wa an ahkum baynahum bi maa anzal Allah> and follow not their desires, but beware of them lest they seduce thee from some part of that which Allah hath revealed unto thee. And if they turn away, then know that Allah's will is to smite them for some sin of theirs. Lo! many of mankind are evil-livers." (5:49)

The messenger was a judge among the people, but his judgements and decisions were not by his own self, but he governed by the Book of Allah. It is by <maa anzal Allah>, i.e. what Allah has revealed, or His Book, that the messenger was to govern among mankind. In Surah Al-Nahl further elucidation is given about this aspect:

"And We have not revealed to you the Book except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe." (16:64)

Thus it is clear from the above that the messenger passed judgement among the people by the Book of Allah and the differences and disputes were resolved by Allah's Book, and not any other book or opinion.

MISCONCEPTION #9

"Wahy" or revelation is of two types. One is the "wahy al Matlu" which is the recited revelation contained in Qur'an, while the other type of "wahy" is "wahy al ghayr al matlu" which is that revelation that is not recited and is outside of the Quran, and is to be found in the books of traditions.

CLARIFICATION

As seen from the evidence presented previously, that Allah validates only the Qur'an as His revelation sent to Muhammad (S.A.W). It is only the Qur'an which is the revelation and is "Matlu", i.e. recited. The following verses confute the claim that "wahy" or revelation is of two types, i.e. recited revelation and unrecited revelation, and confirm that revelation is only of the recited type:

In Surah Ar-Ra'd it is stated that the purpose of Allah's sending His messenger is that he may "recite" all that has been revealed on him, thus signifying that revelation is only of the recited type:

<Kaza_ lika_ arsalna_ ka_ fi_ ummatin_ qad_ khalat_ min_ qabliha_ umamul_ LITATLUWA_ 'ALAIHIMUL_ LAZI_ AUHAINA_ ILAIKA_ wa_ hum_ yakfuru_ na_ bir_ rahma_n(i),_ qul_ huwa_ rabbi_ la_ ila_ ha_ illa_ huw(a),_ 'alaihi_ tawakkaltu_ wa_ ilaihi_ mata_b>

"Thus We send thee (O Muhammad) unto a nation, before whom other nations have passed away, that thou mayst recite unto them that which We have inspired in thee, while they are disbelievers in the Beneficent. Say: He is my Lord; there is no God save Him. In Him do I put my trust and unto Him is my recourse." (13:30) Pickthall

In the above verse it is clearly evident that revelation is only "wahy al matlu", i.e. recited revelation as confirmed by the phrase: *<litatluwa 'alaihimul lazi auhaina_ ilaika>* *"..that thou mayst recite unto them that which We have inspired in thee.."*

In Surah Fatir, it is said that the "wahy" or inspiration/revelation is that which is present in the Book of Allah, and that is what consists of sure reality:

As for that which We inspire in thee of the Book, it is the Truth confirming that which was (revealed) before it. Lo! Allah is indeed Observer, Seer of his slaves." (35:31)

It is this "wahy" that the messenger was ordered to recite to people:

"And recite that which hath been revealed unto thee of the Book of thy Sustainer. There is none who can change His words, and thou wilt find no refuge beside Him." (18:27)

The messenger himself confirmed that the revelation he received was none less but the Book of Allah:

<wa_u_ hiya_ ilayya_ ha_zal_ qur'a_n>

"..And this Quran has been revealed to me.." (6:19)

And it was this "wahy" contained in the Book of Allah, with which he admonished mankind:

"Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I warn you only by 'wahy'. But the deaf hear not the call when they are warned." (21:45)

Thus the Qur'an has clearly stated that "wahy" or divine revelation is only of the recited type and it does not acknowledge the view which states that "wahy" is of two types, i.e. recited and un recited revelation.

MISCONCEPTION #10

We cannot understand the Qur'an until or unless we know the "Asbaab ul Nuzul", i.e. the causes of revelation or the history attributed to the Qur'anic verses which inform us why a certain verse was revealed, and its historical background.

CLARIFICATION

The Qur'an is not meant to be a book whose injunctions are restricted to time and space. It gives immutable principles which are to be applicable in all times and eras. To suggest that the Qur'an is in need of the historical tales dominant in certain time of history for its exegesis is to limit the Qur'an to just one particular era and make it dependent on conjecture. Whereas Allah opposes this view when He states that His Book is <Zikr un lil Alameen> i.e. "A reminder to all the nations" (81:27) and <Hudan li Naas> i.e. "Guidance for all mankind" (2:185), thus for all humanity of all times and all locations, the divine principles for formation and reformation of society will be contained in Al-Qur'an. Whenever <An Naas> (Mankind) will exist, the Qur'an will provide it with divine values. These values are permanent and immutable, and do not change with the circumstances of time. The permanent values of Al-Qur'an are as applicable in present times as they were in the past. Whatever has been narrated in the Qur'an, even the reminders of previous nations and messengers, they are not given as historical tales, but they teach us some principles, and we have to consider the whole of the Qur'an to be guidance and light for the times we live in, and seek the solutions to our present day problems from the divine injunctions, instead of digging up the historical tales that are attributed to the past and then place the Book of Allah under their subjugation.

We are reminded about this aspect in Surah Yusuf:

"In their (all the previous messengers mentioned in the Quran) narratives there is certainly a lesson for people of understanding. It is not a tale which could be forged, but a verification of what is before it and a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe." (12:111)

And we are further reminded in Surah Hood:

"And all we relate to you of the accounts of the messengers is to strengthen your heart therewith; and in this has come to you the truth and an admonition, and a reminder to the believers." (11:120)

Thus all the narrated examples of the messengers and previous generations are given in the Qur'an, not as historical tales, but as divine guidance and moral lessons. While Allah has identified that His Book is guidance for all times and applicable in all eras, He also informs us about certain people who will always consider the Qur'an to be something restricted to history and not to be understood in the present times:

"Undoubtedly Allah doth know what they conceal and what they reveal: verily He loveth not the arrogant. When it is said to them What is it that your Sustainer has revealed? they say Tales of the ancients!" (16:23-24)

And,

"Heed not the type of despicable men - ready with oaths. A slanderer going about with calumnies.(Habitually) hindering (all) good transgressing beyond bounds deep in sin. Violent (and cruel) - with all that base-born - Because he possesses wealth and (numerous) sons. When to him are rehearsed Our Signs Tales of the ancients he cries!" (68:10-15)

It is evident from the above, that it is the unbelievers who term Allah's Book to be something restricted to history. Furthermore the people who hold the view that, the Qur'an cannot be understood unless the "*Asbaab ul nuzzul*" i.e. the causes of revelation and historical backgrounds that are attributed to the revelation of verses, are known, should inform us whether the body of literature upon which they insist to make the Book of Allah to be dependent to, does it provide the historical circumstances of each and every verse of the Qur'an? And is there only one consistent set of data available for this? Does the whole Muslim *Ummah* have an unerrant source for this material or does every sect have its own version of "*Asbaab ul nuzzul*"? Certainly, the Book of Allah, which is free from all discrepancies, is clear and distinct in its meaning, is applicable in all times, can never ever be subjected to a body of literature which is incomplete, contradictory with itself and established facts of science, is accepted by one sect while rejected by the other, and was compiled and collected by human beings who were not even present during the period of Qur'anic revelation, but simply compiled there history by heresy and conjecture. Indeed the Qur'an is not in need for its exegesis for such a body of literature and reports which are at a conflict with each other, are based entirely on paradoxical reports.

Conjecture, says the Qur'an is not equal to sure reality:

"Wert thou to follow those who are in a majority on earth they will lead thee away from the way of Allah. They follow nothing but conjecture: they do nothing but lie." (6:116)

We should seek the solutions given by the Qur'an for the problems of the times we live in and should strive to re structure our societies on the basis of the permanent divine values.

MISCONCEPTION #11

The Quran tells us in some verses that the messenger was to give the knowledge of 'Al-Kitab' and 'Al-Hikmah', i.e. the Book and the Wisdom. 'Al-Kitab' or The Book refers to the Qur'an while 'Al-Hikmah' or The Wisdom, is something other than the Qur'an and it is the un-recited, hidden revelation which the messenger received outside of the Qur'an and which is contained in the Books of traditions.

CLARIFICATION

When the Qur'an gives a concept then it does not leave it hanging in the air, but it also defines that concept. It is stated in certain verses of the Qur'an that the messenger of Allah was to give the knowledge of '*Al-Kitab*' and '*Hikmah*'. Now

the Qur'an will itself define what is '*Al-Kitab*', i.e. The Book or written laws, and what consists of '*Hikmah*' i.e. wisdom. The following verses inform us:

"Our Sustainer! and raise up in them a messenger from among them who shall recite to them your verses and give them knowledge of The Book and the wisdom, and provide development to their personalities; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise." (2:129)

"Certainly Allah conferred a favour upon the believers when He raised among them a messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His verses and providing development to their personalities, and giving them the knowledge of the Book and the wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error." (3:164)

In the above and many similar verses it is mentioned that the messenger is to give knowledge of the Book and the wisdom. The Book or '*Al-Kitab*', refers to the Qur'an, as this is clarified in many other verses itself, e.g.

"Alif Lam Mim. That is The Book, (Al-Kitab) there is no perplexity in it, guidance to those who guard (against evil)." (2:1-2)

"And recite what has been revealed to you of the Book (Al-Kitab) of your Sustainer.." (18:27)

But traditionalists imply that '*Hikmah*' or '*Wisdom*' in the previously mentioned verses refers to something other than '*Al-Kitab*', hence it is another type of revelation which the messenger received. According to them, this revelation which is identified as '*Hikmah*', is the un recited hidden revelation of God, and is not contained in the Qur'an but it is to be found in the books of traditions authenticated by their sect. However to term the books of traditions as '*Hikmah*' is very wrong as the Qur'an itself clarifies what is '*Hikmah*', as we shall see.

The claim that '*Hikmah*' is some revelation outside of the Qur'an is refuted by Allah Himself when after stating the divine values of the Qur'an, He says:

<Za_ lika mimma_ auha_ ilaika rabbuka minal hikmah(ti), wa la_ taj'al ma'alla_ hi ila_ han a_ khara fa tulqa_ fi jahannama malu_ mam madhu_ ra>

*"This is of what your Sustainer has revealed to you of '*Hikmah*' (wisdom), and do not associate any other god with Allah lest you should be thrown into hell, blamed, cast away." (17:39)*

Thus the above verse identifies the Qur'an itself to be '*Hikmah*', and it is confirmed that '*Hikmah*' is simply another attribute of the Book of Allah. In Surah Al-Qamar this is again repeated:

"There have already come to them Recitals wherein there is (enough) to check (them). Mature wisdom <Hikmat ul baaligha> but (the preaching of) Warners profits them not." (54:4-5)

Finally those who are under the misconception that '*Hikmah*' is *<wahy ghayr matlu>* i.e. the "un recited revelation" outside of the Qur'an, are clarified in the following verse that '*Hikmah*' is also *<wahy matlu>* i.e. recited revelation and is contained within the folds of Allah's Book, not outside of it. The wives of *Nabi* (S.A.W) are reminded:

<Wazakurna ma_yutla_fi buyu_tikun na min a_ya_til la_hi wal hikmah inal la_ha ka_na latifan khabira>

"And bear in mind that which is recited in your houses of the revelations of Allah and wisdom. Lo! Allah is Subtile, Aware." (33:34)

The above verse clearly states that 'Along with the Ayat of Allah, *'Hikmah'* was also recited in the homes of the wives of *Nabi* (S.A.W), thus this nullifies the claim that *'Hikmah'* consists of 'un recited revelation'.

The Qur'an makes it evident that *'Hikmah'* is not some revelation outside of the Qur'an, but is simply another attribute of the Qur'an itself. All the messengers of Allah, received *'Al-Kitab'* i.e. the written laws and injunctions for governing human society, but along with the law, Allah also gave the wisdom or rationale behind that law. Since the law of Allah was not meant to be applied forcefully upon people, and it is something that the people have to accept using their faculties of reason and free will, therefore whenever the Qur'an ordains a law, it also gives the wisdom or reason behind it and asks us to reflect upon the benefits we derive by implementing the divine law in our societies. E.g. After giving the injunctions for modest dress for women, the Qur'an states the wisdom or *'Hikmat'* behind that law as:

"..This (dress code) will be more proper, that they may be recognised, and thus they will not be given trouble.." (33:59)

Similarly the rationale i.e the *'Hikmat'* behind the prohibition of intoxicants and games of chance is identified when it is stated:

<Yas'alu_naka 'anil khamri wal maisir(i), qul fihima_ ismun kabir>

"They ask thee concerning intoxicants and gambling. Say: "In them is great enervation" (2:219)

The above verse identifies intoxicants, i.e. liquor, drugs, gambling etc as *"Ism"*, an Arabic word which means *"Enervation"* i.e. such a thing which produces weakness and atrophy in something. And it is no secret what gambling, drugs and alcoholic drinks are doing to human society nowadays. Thus Allah asks us to think, ponder and reflect on the benefits of implementing His laws and even gives the wisdom behind the divine injunctions. That is why among the often repeated attributes of the Qur'an, one is *<Al-Hakeem>*, that is, *"The Book of Wisdom"*, as the following verses identify:

"Ya Seen. I swear by the Quran full of wisdom. Most surely you are one of the messengers." (36:1-3)

"Alif Lam Mim. These are verses of the Book of Wisdom. A guidance and a mercy for the doers of goodness," (31:1-3)

Thus it is evident from the above that *'Hikmah'* is not some un recited revelation outside of the Qur'an, but one of the attributes of Allah's Book it self and refers to the rationale and wisdom that is given behind the divine laws. Those who insist upon claiming that *'Hikmah'* refers to the books of traditions of their sect, should be asked, that in the Qur'an, Allah says that He gave *'Hikmah'* to: David (2:215), Jesus (3:48), The Followers of Abraham (4:54), Luqman (31:12) etc, So were all these people given the books of traditions of a certain sect if *'Hikmah'*

is implied to be as such?

MISCONCEPTION #12

There is no accommodation for "Aql" i.e. reason or intellect in matters of 'Deen'. We should not attempt to understand the divine message or the interpretations of our Ancestors on the basis of reason or rational thought, but should humbly submit to whatever they convey to us. The use of "Aql" (reason) is prohibited in matters pertaining to the understanding of the Qur'an. Whatever our Ancestors have conveyed to us as "Religious truth", we should humbly acknowledge and follow that, and should not engage in any rational inquiry, as the use of reason is forbidden to ascertain the divine message.

CLARIFICATION

It is very wrong to suggest that reason ("Aql" in Arabic) has no place in the comprehension of Allah's message. The Qur'an has in many of its verses appealed to human reason. It states that in the sight of Allah the people who do not utilize their faculties of intellect and reason to ascertain the divine message do not deserve to be recognised on a human level, as the following verse points out:

"Without doubt, the worst of beasts in Allah's sight are the deaf, the dumb, who do not use their 'Aql' (reason)" (8:22)

This is an explicit description of the degeneration of man when he does not employ reason to his ministrations. Such a man, the Qur'an tells us, not only lives a worthless and debased life in this world but also renders himself inapt to live the life of the hereafter:

"There are many a people, both among the humankind and the jinns, who lead such a life as makes it obvious that they are meant for hell." (7:179)

It is so, because, as the Qur'an puts it:

"They have hearts with which they discern not, and they have eyes with which they see not, and they have ears with which they hear not ; these are as the cattle—nay are worse ; they are the heedless." (7:179)

The point is again accentuated in Surah Al-Furqan, when those who remain heedless from the Qur'anic message are identified as:

"Do you think that most of them hear or use their reason? They are but as the cattle—nay but they are farther astray." (25:44)

The importance of a rational analysis of the divine message, using the faculties of reason, cannot be stressed more than in the following verse in which the dwellers of Hell are shown to admit that they had possessed "Aql" but did not use it to any purpose, and this was the cause of their present state:

"They will (further) say: Had we but listened or used our 'Aql' (reason), we should not (now) be among the companions of the blazing fire!" (67:10)

In Surah Yasin, they are again reminded of the heedlessness concerning their duty to use their faculties of reason and intellect:

"And yet Shaitan has led astray of you a great multitude. Did ye not then apply your reason? This is the Hell with which ye were threatened." (36:62-63)

It is clear, therefore, that the Qur'an is no enemy of reason and does not regard it as a hinderance to the spiritual advancement of humans.

The message of the Qur'an is not to be, accepted unquestioningly and uncritically. Man is exhorted to ponder and reflect over it and decipher it in the light of his reason. The Qur'an is full of statements which appeal to reason, statements like:

"Will they not ponder over the Qur'an?" (4:82)

"Is it then that they do not ponder over what is said.." (23:68)

"..that they may ponder over its verses.." (38:29)

"Do you not then reflect?" (6:50)

"Thus do We make the verses distinct for a people who reflect." (10:24)

"Certainly We have revealed to you a Book in which is your own reminder; what! Will you not then use your reason?" (21:10)

"We have made the revelations clear to you, if you will use your reason." (3:118)

The people who find thinking tedious are described in these words :

"These are they whom Allah (by His Law of Retribution) has deprived (as a result of their own doing) of the blessings of life and has made them deaf and has blinded their eyes. Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an or there are locks on their hearts." (47:23-24)

The Qur'an appeals to man's reason and understanding. Its teaching is presented in a language which is distinct and comprehensible.

It is evident from numerous verses that the Qur'an allocates an important role to reason in the life of man. Even the messenger of Allah is commanded not to demand blind obedience from people but to exhort them to think and ponder. The following and various other verses leave no room for doubt that the Qur'an encourages and approves of independent thinking :

"Say, I exhort you unto one thing. It is that 'ye awake, for Allah's sake by twos and singly. And then, reflect.." (34 : 46) .

Allah expects man to think and use his power of understanding. If he does this, he will be sure to follow the right path. The straight path, can be discovered and followed only with the combined help of reason and revelation contained in the Book of Allah. These sources of guidance are supplementary to each other. If they are kept within their appropriate spheres, there will be no conflict between them. Thus the messenger of Allah is made to say:

"Say: 'This is my way: I invite unto Allah upon conscious insight accessible to reason, I as well as those who follow me, and glory be to Allah, for I am not one of those who associate (others with His laws)." (12:108)

While the Qur'an identifies the crucial role of reason and intellect, it also demonstrates the fact that people who are deprived from divine guidance are the ones who blindly imitate their ancestors in matters of faith. Generally people maintain those beliefs in their lives which they have inherited from their parents and ancestors. They do not analyse those beliefs by reason nor intelligently or critically evaluate them. Many people take the faith of their ancestors to be the whole truth under the assumption that 'How could our elders and loved one's be wrong?' They are also discouraged by their parents and influentials to raise questions concerning religious beliefs and suggest blind following to their doctrines without proof. The inherited faith has always caused a barrier in accepting the truth of Allah as the beliefs of ancestors are mostly at variance with the message of Allah. In all times the foremost reaction of people, when the truth and reality of Allah is made evident to them is that they found their ancestors following something else and they will stick to their ancestral beliefs. The excuse that people give when they are told to follow Qur'an is the same and they prefer the blind following of the sect or cult in which they are born rather than personally consult the Qur'an for guidance:

"And when it is said to them: 'Follow what Allah has revealed!' They say: 'Nay! We will follow what we found our ancestors following.' What! Even though their Ancestors were void of wisdom and guidance?" (2:170)

The faith of ancestors has always been a barrier in accepting the truth of Allah and the messengers were given the the same argument.

Response to Noah (PBUH)

"..Never did we hear such a thing among our Ancestors of old." (23:24)

Response to Hood (PBUH)

"..Have you come to us that we may serve Allah alone and leave that which our Ancestors served..?" (7:70)

Response to Salih (PBUH)

"..Do you forbid us that which our Ancestors served?.." (11:62)

Response to Shoaib (PBUH)

"O Shoaib, does your Salat order that we leave of that which our Ancestors served." (11:87)

Answer to Abraham's (PBUH) question

"They said: 'Nay we but found our Ancestors doing thus what we do!" (26:74)

Joseph's (PBUH) reminder

"If not Him you serve nothing but names which you have invented, you and your Ancestors.." (12:40)

Response to Moses (PBUH) and Aaron (PBUH)

"..Never did we hear the like among our Ancestors of old!" (28:36)

Reaction to Muhammad (PBUH)

"..This is just a Man whose intention is to oppose you from that which your Ancestors served.." (34:43)

The Qur'an strongly opposes the blind following of the faith of parents and ancestors. It invites people to use their reasoning ability and intelligence in ascertaining the truth. The Qur'an not only provides evidence for its claims (see 4:174,6:104) but also asks its opponents to provide sufficient proofs (see 21:24, 27:64, 2:111, 37:157).

Blind following of ancestors involves a person to accept their beliefs without question or sufficient proof. The blind submission to ancestral beliefs is encouraged by Satan as his chief objective is to keep Mankind away from the Qur'an:

"When they are told to follow what Allah has revealed,they say: `Nay we shall follow the ways that we found our Ancestors following !' What ! Even if it is Satan beckoning them to the penalty of the blazing (fire)? " (31:21)

Instead of taking guidance for all matters requiring guidance from the Book of Allah, the unbelievers insist upon copying the ways of their fathers:

" What! Have We given them a Book before this to which they are holding fast?" (43:21)

"Nay! They say: `We found our Ancestors following a certain way and we will guide ourselves by their footsteps." (43:22)

"Just in the same manner, whenever We sent a Warner before you to any town, the wealthy ones among them said: `Surely we found our Ancestors following a certain way and we will certainly follow in their footsteps." (43:23)

It is essential once we have the opportunity in this lifetime that we use our reasoning and the criteria of Qur'an in analyzing the faith that we have inherited from our ancestors, and see whether it confirms to what the Qur'an is saying or is against its teachings. In case we are not relating the Qur'anic guidance in our lives and are blindly following our ancestors then our end has been foretold:

"Then their return is to the blazing (fire)." (37:68)

"Surely they found their Ancestors on the wrong path." (37:69)

"So they (too) rushed down their footsteps." (37:70)

Allah will question on the last day:

"The fire will burn their faces and they will grin therein with their lips displaced." (23:104)

"Were not my ayat (verses) rehearsed to you and you did but treat them as falsehoods?"(23:105)

"They will say: `Our Sustainer! Our misfortune overwhelmed us and we became a people astray!" (23:106)

People will further admit on that day:

"They will (further) say: Had we but listened or used our 'Aql' (reasoning), we should not (now) be among the companions of the blazing fire!" (67:10)

We are responsible and accountable for our own actions, we will not be held accountable about the deeds or faith of our ancestors:

"They were a people that have passed away. For them is what they earned and for you is what you earn. And you will not be questioned as to what they did." (2:141)

Therefore it is meaningless to engage in any contention regarding the piety of our ancestors, as the Qur'an has amply clarified that we are to be held accountable for our own actions, and not the deeds or faith of our ancestors. Usually the people who maintain that the deceased elders of their sect were rightly guided and should be exemplified, provide reports about their personality which are based on guesswork and oral tradition, while their opponents may refute their claims by some other reports which give a separate picture about their personalities. All this sectarian contention is because of ancestors who are no more with us and about whom we will not be questioned at all. To argue about them is therefore meaningless. If our ancestors acted upon divine values, then they will of a surety get their reward, but we should not engage in contention by maintaining a position for people about whom we have no certain knowledge and about whom we are not even to be questioned. To argue about things of which we have no knowledge will lead us nowhere. The Qur'an asks us to refrain from such ineffectual contention:

"Do not pursue that whereof you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing and sight, and the heart, each of these will be asked." (17:36)

The Qur'an lays stress on the importance of correct knowledge and advises us to accept it and act upon it. All else is dismissed as mere guess work which is far from being a trustworthy guide to action. As the Qur'an says:

"..A guess can never take the place of truth.." (53:28)

As rational beings, it is our duty not to stop till we have achieved correct knowledge. To be content with a mere presumption is to disavow our rationality.

A person should approach the Qur'an with a receptive mind free from preconceived notions, prejudice and bias. The faculties of reason are to be employed to ascertain the truth, rather than emotional inclinations. These are, according to the Qur'an, the essential pre-requisites for understanding the divine guidance. To those who do not approach it in this way, it remains a sealed book:

"But nay! I bring as evidence the positioning of stars. And most surely it is a very great oath if you only knew. Most surely it is an honored Quran, In a book that is protected. None shall have access to it save those who purify themselves (from false ideologies and pre-conceived notions). A revelation by the Sustainer of the worlds." (56:75-80)

To sum up, there is no conflict between revelation, i.e. the Book of Allah and reason: rather they supplement each other. The Qur'an asks us to employ our faculties of reason to ascertain its message and blind imitation of ancestors is detested by Allah and His messenger. We should strive to arrive at the truth by all means, instead of putting our trust in guesswork and hereditary tradition.

MISCONCEPTION #13

The Clergy are the caretakers of Religion. We should consider them to be the sole authority for the interpretation of the divine message and should humble ourselves to what they inform us. We should not challenge any thing that the Clergy has authenticated as they are the rightful descendants of the messengers of God.

CLARIFICATION

Although almost every faith of the world accepts the Clergy as the caretakers of Religion, but contrary to this widely held opinion the Qur'an states that the Clergy are infact the very opponents of the 'Deen' given by Allah. Thus it is stated in Surah At-Tauba:

"O you who believe! Most surely many among the Religious scholars and the priests eat away the property of mankind falsely, and oppose them from Allah's way; and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement." (9:34)

The Clergy hinders people from the path of Allah described in His Book, by inventing laws from their own selves and then falsely attributing them to Allah. They also tutor their followers to accept without hesitation what ever they teach, thus render useless their reasoning ability, and people are deluded to consider the concocted teachings of the Clergy to be the divine truth. The Qur'an resents such in the strongest terms:

"Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say: This is from Allah, so that they may take for it a small price; therefore woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn." (2:79)

In Surah Ash-Shoora we are reminded about those who invent Shariah-laws by themselves and then falsely attribute them to Allah and His messenger:

"Or have they associates who have prescribed for them any Shariah laws that Allah does not sanction? And were it not for the word of judgment, decision would have certainly been given between them; and surely the unjust shall have a painful punishment." (42:21)

One of the greatest gifts that Allah has bestowed upon us is the ability to think and reason. We should use this gift wisely and use it well. The Qur'an asks us not to accept anything without verifying it first, no matter how much 'pious' a source it may come from, when it says:

"Do not pursue that whereof you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing and sight, and the heart, each of these will be asked." (17:36)

The above verse clearly teaches us that we should not accept any information without first examining it with our God-given senses and mind. Following opinions or opinion leaders blindly without first verifying them from the divine code may lead to tragic ends, as the Qur'an states:

"And they shall all come forth before Allah, then the weak shall say to those who were proud: Surely we were your followers, can you therefore avert from us any part of the chastisement of Allah? They would say: If Allah had guided us, we too would have guided you; it is the same to us whether we are impatient (now) or patient, there is no place for us to fly to." (14:21)

The blind followers will disown their leaders on the day of judgement and vice versa:

"When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them), and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder. And those who followed shall say: Had there been for us a return, then we would renounce them as they have renounced us. Thus will Allah show them their deeds to be intense regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the fire." (2:166-167)

We are informed in advance that to follow our Religious leaders and great men, without verifying their teachings with the Qur'anic criteria may lead us to make the following statement on the day of retribution:

"And they shall say: O our Sustainer! surely we obeyed our leaders and our great men, so they led us astray from the path; O our Sustainer! give them a double punishment and curse them with a great curse." (33:67-68)

On the final day Allah will question us only concerning the Qur'an, and it is for this that we have to prepare ourselves. (See 23:66-67, 104, 25:30, 45:31)

Therefore our ability to think and to ponder is a supreme gift. Let us not allow any individual or group of individuals to usurp this God-given gift away from us, otherwise the consequences have been foretold in the Qur'an.

Let us be reminded that there are a thousand and one Religious Scholars in the world whose teachings are quite diverse: are they all without question, teaching the correct 'Deen' of Allah? Ofcourse not. Then how are we to know which one of them is on the right path? For Allah has also warned us about some individuals:

"A part has He guided aright and (as for another) part, error is justly their due, surely they took the Shaitans for guardians beside Allah, and they think that they are on guidance!" (7:30)

Hence to be a Muslim one has to know the will of Allah, and if we do not know the will of Allah as expressed in the Qur'an then how are we to judge who is right and who is wrong? If someone does not use his reason and senses to ascertain the Qur'anic message, then what is he following but the whims and wishes of others.

Thus the Qur'an has stated that there is no priesthood in 'Deen' and no room exists for any intermediaries between the guidance of God and mankind. The order to think and ponder over the divine message is not reserved to any special class of people but Allah asks all of us to reflect on His Book and seek guidance from it. (See 2:185, 4:82, 38:29, and 47:24)
