

E-BOOK

# THE GRANDEUR OF THE NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE QUR'AN

Maḥmūd Ibn Aḥmad al Dosary (PhD)

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# Introduction

Human beings can do their best to describe the magnificence of the Qur'an in their own words; but as much as they try to be eloquent and pithy in their description, Allah's description of the Qur'an is better and more fitting. This is only natural since none is more acquainted with His speech than He is. Allah (sp) described the Qur'an in two important ways: First, He (sp) gave it different names. It is a well-known feature of the Arabic language that, the more names a thing has, the more significance is attached to it. This applies to everything: people, beings, events, things. The Day of Judgment, for instance, has been given many names because of its importance and because of the terrifying and awful things that will take place during it. Also, the Prophet (s) has more than a few names; he was given those names to honor him and to show his importance among mankind. The examples of things or people or beings that have many names in Arabic due to their importance are many – and as we will see in this section, the Qur'an is no exception. And second, Allah (sp) gave a description of the various qualities, features, and attributes of the Qur'an (which will be the topic of the next section *In Sha Allah* – Allah willing).

As we listen to or read the Qur'an, we should contemplate the meanings of the names that Allah (sp) has given to the Qur'an. In this section, I will endeavor to explain the meanings and significance of those names.



## Part First:

# The Grandeur Of The Qur'an's Names

## First: *Al-Furqaan*

Allah (sp) gave the Qur'an the name *Al-Furqaan* in the following four Verses:

1) Allah (sp) said:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا

*"Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'an) to His slave (Muhammad) that he may be a warner to the 'Alamin (mankind and jinns)." (Qur'an 25: 1)*

2) Allah (sp) said:

وَأَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ

*"And He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong (this Qur'an)." (Qur'an 3:4)*

3) Allah (sp) said:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ  
وَالْفُرْقَانِ



*“The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur’an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between wrong and right).” (Qur’an 2:185)*

4) Allah (sp) said:

وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَىٰ مُكْثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنزِيلًا

*“And (it is) a Qur’an which We have divided (into parts), in order that you might recite it to men at intervals. And We have revealed it by stages.” (Qur’an 17:106)*

Before going into the meaning of the word *Al-Furqaan*, I should point out that the translation of it in the abovementioned Verses – the criterion – will not do for the purpose of this discussion. A single word such as ‘criterion’ does not sufficiently explain why Allah (sp) named the Qur’an *Al-Furqaan*.

The first step in understanding the meaning of *Al-Furqaan* is to explain its various connotations in the Arabic language, and to study its root word. The three-letter root word of *Al-Furqaan* is *Faraqa*, which means to separate, part, or divide. *Faariq*, which is derived from *Faraqa*, means something that distinguishes, or it means that which makes something distinctive, a meaning that is similar to that of the word ‘criterion’. For criterion can mean a standard or test by which a thing is identified. These definitions will suffice for the purpose of this discussion.

In the last of the aforementioned Verses, *Al-Furqaan* is mentioned in its verb form: *Farraqnaahu*. Based on how the Verse was recited by Alee (r), Ibn Abbaas (r2), Ibn Masood (r), Ubai bin Kaab (r), Qataadah (r), and Ash-Shabee – they recited the word with two letter *Rahs*, whereas the majority of scholars recited it with one letter *Rah* – *Farraqnaahu* means that the Qur’an was divided into parts; or in other words, it was revealed in parts, and not all at once. And according to how the Verse was recited by the majority of scholars, *Faraqaahu* means either, “We have made clear the Qur’an,” or, “In it, We have distinguished between truth and falsehood”.

As for *Al-Furqaan* in the first three Verses, scholars disagree about its meaning. In all, there are three scholarly opinions of why the Qur’an is named *Al-Furqaan*:



1) It is named *Al-Furqaan* because it was revealed in parts over a period of more than twenty years; remember that the root word of *Al-Furqaan*, *Faraqa*, means to separate, part, or divide. The Qur'an is unique in this sense, since every other divinely revealed Book was revealed all at once.

This interpretation of *Al-Furqaan* is corroborated by how Alee (r), Ibn Abbaas (r), bin Masood (r) , Ubai bin Kaab (r) , Qataadah (r), and Ash-Shabee recited the Verse:

وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَىٰ مُكْثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنزِيلًا

“And (it is) a Qur'an which We have divided (into parts), in order that you might recite it to men at intervals. And We have revealed it by stages.” (Qur'an 17: 106)

They recited the verb form of *Al-Furqaan* with two of the letter *Rahs*, which conveys the meaning of dividing into parts.

2) The Qur'an is called *Al-Furqaan* because it distinguishes truth from falsehood, the lawful from the forbidden, good from evil, guidance from misguidance, happiness from misery, believers from disbelievers, and justice from tyranny. Remember that *Faariq*, which is derived from *Faraqa*, means something that distinguishes, or that which makes something distinctive. For the same reason, Umar (r) was called *Al-Faarooq*, which like *Al-Furqaan*, is derived from the root *Faraqa*. Umar (r) was called *Al-Faarooq* because, through him and his actions, truth could be distinguished from falsehood. Or in other words, he was so clearly upon the truth that he acted as a standard by which the truth could be identified.

Ibn Aashoor (may Allah have mercy on him) said, “The Qur'an is named *Al-Furqaan* because, with more frequency than any other divinely revealed book, it clarifies the difference between truth and falsehood... A sufficient example in this regard is the fact that the Qur'an is more comprehensive in its explanation of *Tawheed* (Islamic Monotheism) than are the *Torah* and the *Injeel*. Verses such as,



لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۖ

“There is nothing like unto Him” (Qur'an 42: 11); illustrate this point.”<sup>1</sup>

Scholars have pointed out that, just as the Qur'an distinguishes truth from falsehood, so too does it act as a dividing line between different eras. For with the revelation of the Qur'an, the era of tangible miracles (the Prophet (s) and previous Prophets came with many tangible miracles, such as the splitting of the moon, the healing of blindness, etc.) came to an end. Similarly, the era of regional divinely revealed messages came to an end, and was replaced by an era of a universal divinely revealed message; in the former, Prophets (peace be upon them) were sent to specific groups of people, and in the latter, Prophet Muhammad (s) was sent to all of mankind.”<sup>2</sup>

3) The famous scholars Ikrimah and As-Suddee proclaimed that the meaning of *Al-Furqaan* is safety or salvation. Theirs is an interpretation that has nothing to do with the linguistic meaning of the word *Furqaan* or of its root word. They explained that the Qur'an was named *Al-Furqaan* because mankind, which was in a state of darkness and misguidance, found safety and salvation in the Qur'an. Based on this interpretation of *Al-Furqaan*, some scholars of *Tafseer* maintain that criterion in the following Verse actually means safety and salvation:

وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

“And (remember) We gave Moses the Scripture (the Torah) and the criterion (of right and wrong) so that you may be guided aright.” (Qur'an 2:53)

It might be that there is no contradiction between the said opinions; perhaps, therefore, *Al-Furqaan* denotes all three of the aforementioned meanings: 1) The Qur'an is *Al-Furqaan* because, unlike other revealed books, it was revealed in parts and not all at once; 2) The Qur'an is *Al-Furqaan* because it distinguishes truth from falsehood; and 3) the Qur'an is *Al-Furqaan* because it contains in it salvation from darkness and misguidance. It is possible that the Qur'an was named *Al-Furqaan* for only one of the said

<sup>1</sup> At-Tahreer Wat-Tanweer (1/71).

<sup>2</sup> Fee Dhilaal Al-Qur'an (5/2547).





meanings; nonetheless, the other meanings are true as well. The point here is that, when something is given a name that conveys a variety of meanings, it often points to the importance of that thing; such is certainly the case regarding the Qur'an, regardless of the actual reason why it was named *Al-Furqaan*.

## Second: *Al-Burhaan*

Again, it will be of use to the reader to consider the meaning of the word *Burhaan* in the Arabic language before attempting to understand why it was chosen as a name for the Qur'an. The word *Burhaan* is often given the same translation as the word *Hujjah*, which means proof or evidence. But the fact is that *Burhaan* conveys a deeper meaning; not just any proof, but clear and decisive proof – proof that is conclusive, convincing, and irrefutable.

Allah (sp) used *Burhaan* as a name for the Qur'an in only one Verse of His Noble Book:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ

*"O mankind! Verily, there has come to you a convincing proof from your Lord."* (Qur'an 4:174).

By giving the Qur'an the name *Burhaan*, Allah (sp) was directing His speech to Jews, Christians, and all other disbelievers – notice that Allah (sp) began the Verse with, "O mankind." In the abovementioned Verse, Allah (sp) warned all non-Muslims that the Qur'an was clear and convincing proof against the falsehood they followed. As the following Verse indicates, Allah (sp) provided disbelievers with many signs and proofs:

سُورِهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي ۖ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۚ

*"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'an) is the truth."* (Qur'an, 41:53)

But in the aforementioned Verse from Chapter *An-Nisaa*, it is as if Allah (sp) is informing disbelievers that, all by itself, the Qur'an is conclusive evidence of the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah (s) and of the message he came with.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Fathul-Qadeer* (1/542), *Adwaa Al-Bayaan* (7/79, 80), and *Tafseer As-Sa'dee* (1/217).



### Third: *Al-Haqq*

The word *Haqq* has one primary meaning: truth. Used as a name for the Qur'an, *Haqq* is preceded by *Al* (the), so that *Al-Haqq*, as a name for the Qur'an, means not only truth, but the absolute truth. It is as if, by naming the Qur'an *Al-Haqq* (the absolute truth), Allah (sp) is alluding to previously revealed Books. If that is the case, the message Allah (sp) is sending the People of the Book is that, whereas the Qur'an consists purely of the absolute truth, previously revealed Books, as a result of human tampering, consist of a mix of truth and falsehood.

Allah (sp) called the Qur'an *Al-Haqq* in many Verses of the Qur'an; here are some examples:

1) Allah (sp) said:

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

*"And verily, it (this Qur'an) is an absolute truth with certainty."* (Qur'an 69:51)

2) Allah (sp) said:

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ ۖ

*"Nay, We fling (send down) the truth (this Qur'an) against the falsehood (disbelief), so it destroys it, and behold, it (falsehood) is vanished."* (Qur'an 21:18)

It is stated in this Verse that the truth, or the Qur'an, is cast down against falsehood and destroys it. "Destroys it" is a translation of *Yadmaghu*. One should appreciate the imagery of this wording, because the original meaning of *Yadmaghu* in the Arabic language is to pierce a person's head and skull and to reach inside of his brain. So, with the wording of the Verse, we get a sense, or picture, of how the Qur'an easily penetrates, and thus destroys, falsehood.

3) Allah (sp) said:

وَكَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ ۚ قُلْ لَسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ۚ



*“But your people (O Muhammad) have denied it (the Qur'an) though it is the truth. Say: I am not responsible for your affairs.” (Qur'an 6: 66)*

4) Allah (sp) said:

وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهُ ۚ فَلَا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ  
مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*“But those of the sects (Jews, Christians and all the other non Muslim nations) that reject it (the Qur'an, the Fire will be their promised meeting place. So be not in doubt about it (i.e. those who denied Prophet Muhammad and also denied all that which he brought from Allah, surely, they will enter Hell). Verily, it is the truth from your Lord, but most of the mankind believe not.” (Qur'an 11:17)*

That the Qur'an is the absolute truth from Allah (sp) implies that no one should have any doubts about the truthfulness of the Qur'an. In this Verse, Allah (sp) states this point explicitly: “So be not in doubt about it.” In the translation of the abovementioned Verse, the explanation of “so be not in doubt about it” is given in parentheses: “(i.e. those who denied Prophet Muhammad (s) and also denied all that which he brought from Allah, surely, they will enter Hell)”. Nonetheless, in his *Tafseer*, Abu As-Sa'ood said that “so be not in doubt about it” means: So be not in doubt about the Qur'an and about the fact that it has come down from Allah (sp).<sup>4</sup> That there can be no doubt about the fact that the Qur'an was sent down by Allah (sp), the Lord of all that exists, is explicitly stated in other Verses of the Qur'an, such as in the Saying of Allah (sp):

الم (١) تَزِيلُ أَلْ كِتَابٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*“Alif-Lam-Mim, (These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings). The revelation of the Book (this Qur'an) is from the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists) in which there is no doubt” (Qur'an 32: 1, 2)*

Or in the Saying of Allah (sp):

الم (١) ذَلِكَ أَلْ كِتَابٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۚ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

<sup>4</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'ood* (4/195).



*“Alif-Lam-Mim. (These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings). This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt.” (Qur'an 2: 1, 2)*

5) Allah (sp) said:

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عِلْمَ الْغُيُوبِ (٤٨) قُلْ جَاءَ الْوَحْيَ الْوَحْيُ وَمَا يُبْدِي  
الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ

*“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Verily! My Lord sends down Inspiration and makes apparent the truth (i.e. this Revelation that had come to me), the All-Knower of the Ghaib (unseen)’. Say (O Muhammad): ‘The truth (the Qur'an and Allah's inspiration) has come, and Al-Batil (falsehood – Iblis) can neither create anything nor resurrect (anything).’” (Qur'an 34:48, 49)*

#### **Fourth: An-Naba Al-'Adheem**

Allah (sp) called the Qur'an *An-Naba Al-'Adheem* twice in the Noble Qur'an: In Chapter *Saad*, and in Chapter *An-Naba*. This name consists of two words: *An-Naba*, which means news or information or tidings, and *Al-'Adheem*, which means great. To be sure, the name is apt: the Qur'an is indeed great news. It is great in its style; its awe-inspiring Verses; its profound meanings; its important message; its laws and legislation; its parables and stories; and so on.

And it certainly does contain a great deal of information - hence the appropriateness of *An-Naba*, in *An-Naba Al-'Adheem*. The Qur'an gives us crucial information about the most important questions of life: Who is our creator? What are His attributes? What is the purpose of life? Allah (sp) answers all of these questions, informing us about His greatness, about our duty to worship Him without associating partners with Him, about the laws by which we are to live on earth, and about everything we as human beings need to know about regarding both religious and worldly affairs. Furthermore, the Qur'an informs us about the histories of past nations. In terms of history, the Qur'an informs us about what happened in the beginning – the creation of Adam (p) – and what will happen in the end – with some people entering Paradise, and others, the Hellfire – as well as many matters in



between. So it is based on all of these reasons that Allah (sp) named the Qur'an *An-Naba Al-'Adheem*. Allah (sp) said:

قُلْ هُوَ نَبَأٌ عَظِيمٌ (٦٧) أَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ

“Say: ‘That (this Qur’an) is great news. From which you turn away’” (Qur’an 38: 67, 68)

The news that is contained in the Qur’an was intended just as much for all of mankind in general as it was for the Quraish and Arabs in particular. So, just as the Qur’an was great news for the Quraish, it is the same for Muslims of today. What is frightening about this comparison is that today’s Muslims have, at least in some ways, reacted similarly to the reaction of the Quraish more than fourteen centuries ago: Many Muslims today, though they proclaim the Testimony of Faith, do not appreciate the magnificence of the Qur’an, and do not contemplate the truth that it contains.

## Fifth: *Al-Balaagh*

In the Arabic language, *Al-Balaagh* can convey a variety of meanings. The root verb of *Al-Balaagh*, *Balagha*, means to reach or to ripen. *Ablagha*, a verb form derived from *Balagha*, means to inform. *Taballagha* (with something), another verb that is derived from *Balagha*, means to deem something to be sufficient; it can also mean to use something as a means of reaching a specific goal. *Bulghah*, a noun that is derived from *Balagha*, means something that is sufficient for one's needs. Given the interrelated nature of Arabic words that share the same root letters, *Balaagh* as a name can potentially convey any of the aforementioned meanings.

Allah (sp) called the Qur’an *Al-Balaagh* in Chapter *Ibraaheem*:

هَٰذَا بَلَاغٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا بِهِ

“This (Qur’an) is a Message for mankind (and a clear proof against them, in order that they may be warned thereby.” (Qur’an 14:52)



In his famous *Tafseer*, As-Sa'dee (may Allah have mercy on him) said that the Qur'an has been given the name *Balagh* because "It is used as a means of reaching the highest of rankings (in Paradise)."<sup>5</sup>

In *Al-Itqaan Fee 'Uloom Al-Qur'an*, As-Suyooti (may Allah have mercy on him) said that the Qur'an is called *Al-Balaagh* because "it conveys to people that which they are commanded to do, as well as that which they have been forbidden from doing." As-Suyooti (m) then said, "Perhaps, however, it is called *Al-Balaagh* because it stands alone and is sufficient, with it, one does not need anything else (i.e., any other book to act as a guide)." So the Qur'an is completely sufficient for us; we must rely on it alone, and not on manmade laws or previously revealed books that have been tampered with. The reader should note that both As-Suyooti's and As-Sa'dee's interpretations of *Al-Balaagh* are based on one of the linguistic meanings either of *Al-Balaagh* or of one of its related words – which are mentioned above.

## Sixth: *Ar-Rooh*

Allah (sp) named the Qur'an *Ar-Rooh* in this Verse:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا ۚ مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا  
الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا ۚ نَهْدِي بِهِ لِمَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ

"And thus we have sent to you (O Muhammad) *Ruhan* (an Inspiration, and a Mercy) of Our Command. You knew not what is the Book, nor what is Faith? But We have made it (this Quran) a light wherewith We guide whosoever of Our slaves We will." (Qur'an 42:52)

In the Arabic language, *Ar-Rooh* means soul, spirit, or essence. In his *Tafseer*, Abu As-Sa'ood (may Allah have mercy on him) said that the Qur'an has been named *Ar-Rooh* because it is to the heart of man what the spirit is to his body: The spirit infuses man's body with life, and the Qur'an infuses man's heart with life.<sup>6</sup>

It follows, therefore, that, bereft of the Qur'an; a person is not alive but dead. Ignorance, pride, disbelief – these and similar vices destroy a man, rendering him dead, even if outwardly he seems to be alive. So from the greatness of the Qur'an is

<sup>5</sup> *Tafseer As-Sa'dee* (1/428).

<sup>6</sup> *Tafseer Abu As-Sa'ood* (8/38).



that it infuses the hearts of men with life, and it thus distinguishes between the living and the dead. Allah (sp) said:

إِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ  
(٨٠) وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادِيَ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ تُسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ  
بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

*“Verily, you cannot make the dead to hear (i.e. benefit them and similarly the disbelievers), nor can you make the deaf to hear the call, when they flee, turning their backs. Nor can you lead the blind out of their error, you can only make to hear those who believe in Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, Verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), and who have submitted (themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims).” (Qur’an 27: 80, 81)*

## Seventh: Al-Mau'idhah

Allah (sp) said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ

*“O Mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Qur’an, ordering all that is good and forbidding all that is evil.” (Qur’an 10:57)*

In the Arabic language, *Mau'idhah* means a sermon or a reminder. During the course of a sermon, a preacher promotes virtue, repudiates vice, softens the hearts of his audience, and promises rewards for good-doers and punishment for evildoers. Each of these tasks is performed by the Noble Qur’an, which explains why Allah (sp) named it *Al-Mau'idhah*. The main difference, however, is that the preachers of sermons are human beings, whereas the Qur’an is from Allah (sp).<sup>7</sup> It is as if Allah (sp) is saying in the abovementioned Verse: O people! What has come to you is a Book that is full of practical wisdom; a book that informs you about both evil and good, and then exhorts you to follow what is good, and to repudiate what is evil. This Book that has come to you consists of comprehensive reminders and advice; and it

<sup>7</sup> Tafseer Ath-Tha'aalabee (2/181).





guides you to the truth and to the Straight Path that leads to ultimate happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter.<sup>8</sup>

At the end of the aforementioned Verse, Allah (sp) informs us that *Al-Mau'idhah* (the Qur'an) is "from your Lord". This brings home the significance of the Qur'an being compared to a sermon or reminder; it is the ultimate sermon and reminder and all human beings are in dire need of it because it comes not from human beings, but from the Lord of all human beings and of all that exists. Can there be a sermon that is of greater value, that penetrates more deeply the hearts of men, or that is more profound in its wisdom than one that comes from our Creator and Lord, Allah (sp)? Even if all of mankind and all jinns were to work together to produce something that is similar to the reminder we are given in the Qur'an, they would not even come close to achieving their goal. For every sermon there are generally two groups of people in the audience: Those who do not benefit from it – either they don't listen to it, or they forget it when they get home, or they decide to act contrary to what was said during it – and those who listen to it and benefit from it. In the following Verse, we learn that those who benefit from the sermon and reminder of the Qur'an are those who are pious and fear Allah (sp) - and we ask Allah (sp) to make each of us one of them:

هَٰذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

*"This (the Qur'an) is a plain statement for mankind, a guidance and instruction to those who are Al-Muttaqun (the pious)."* (Qur'an 3: 138)

## Eighth: Ash-Shifaa

The meaning of *Shifaa* in Arabic is simple: a cure or a remedy from an ailment. Allah (sp) called the Qur'an *Shifaa* in three Verses of His Noble Book:

1) Allah (sp) said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

<sup>8</sup> *Tafseer Al-Baidaawee* (3/204), and to *At-Tafseer Al-Muneer Fi-l-'Aqeedah Wa sh-Sharee'ah Wal-Manhaj* by Dr. Wahbah Az-Zuhailee (6/213).





“O Mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Qur'an, ordering all that is good and forbidding all that is evil, and a healing for that (disease of ignorance, doubt, hypocrisy and differences, etc.) in your breasts.” (Qur'an 10:57)

Thus the Qur'an is a cure for the diseases that afflict the hearts of men; one should be aware that those diseases – such as doubt in ones faith, hypocrisy, jealousy, malice, etc. – are ultimately more harmful than any disease that afflicts a person's body.

2) Allah (sp) said:

وَنُزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ ۖ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ

“And We send down from the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism and act on it.” (Qur'an 17: 82)

This Verse means that the Qur'an, in its entirety, is both a cure and a mercy for believers. In Verses wherein the Qur'an is described as being a cure, we are correct in concluding that those Verses are referring to diseases of the heart. But even though the Qur'an is a cure for diseases of the heart, it can be a cure for physical diseases as well. Scholars say that, in the aforementioned Verse, the Qur'an is described as being a cure both to spiritual and physical diseases. Their interpretation is corroborated by authentic *Ahaadeeth* in which it is mentioned that reciting certain Verses of the Qur'an can have the effect of curing certain physical ailments.<sup>9</sup>

3) Allah (sp) said:

قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءٌ ۖ

“Say: It is for those who believe, guide and a healing.” (Qur'an 41:44)

A good explanation of how the Qur'an acts as a cure was given by Fakhrur-Raazee in his *Tafseer*: “First, be clear on the point that the Qur'an is a cure for both spiritual diseases and for physical ailments. How the Qur'an acts as a cure for spiritual diseases is clear. Spiritual diseases are of two kinds: 1) False beliefs, and 2) vile acts and manners. As for the former, the worst form of false beliefs involves having incorrect beliefs regarding Allah (sp), the Prophets, resurrection, or Divine

<sup>9</sup> At-Tahreer Wat-Tanweer (14/150).



Preordainment. The Qur'an contains in it the truth regarding all of these issues; furthermore, it refutes those who hold false beliefs regarding them. As for the latter, the Qur'an lists vile deeds and manners, points out why they are vile, and guides mankind to their opposites: to good deeds and noble manners. (Thus it is clear how the Qur'an, through information and reminders and commands, acts as a cure for spiritual diseases.) How, then, does the Qur'an act as a cure for physical ailments? The answer to this question is simple: If one seeks blessings from it when one recites it, then that has the effect of warding off diseases and ailments.”<sup>10</sup>

Ar-Raazee widened the scope of the meaning of *Ash-Shifaa* in the abovementioned Verses. We should

widen the scope of its meaning even further and agree that, just as the Qur'an is a cure for diseases of the heart, soul, and body, it is also a cure for ailments that are causing our societies to decay in this day and age. Such ailments can, among other things, be political, economic, or societal in nature. We, as a society, are afflicted with many diseases, and we should look to the Qur'an to cure all of our woes, and not just a headache, stomachache, or other similar ailments.<sup>11</sup> One of the ways in which the Qur'an is magnificent and great is that it contains in it a panacea for all of our woes on earth - for false beliefs, base manners, physical diseases, as well as all forms of societal problems.

## Ninth: *Ahsanul-Hadeeth*

Ahsanul-Hadeeth literally means the best of speech.

Allah (sp) said:

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ

“Allah has sent down the best statement.” (Qur'an 39:23).

According to the author of *Tafseer As-Samarqandee*, *Ahsanul-Hadeeth* in this Verse means the most perfect of speech.<sup>12</sup> Here, Allah (sp) is praising the Book He (sp) revealed to Prophet Muhammad (s), describing it as being categorically, and without exception, the very best speech. The abovementioned Verse, therefore, clearly proves that the Qur'an is superior to all of the other books that Allah (sp) sent down

<sup>10</sup> *At-Tafseer al-Kabeer* (21/29).

<sup>11</sup> *Mafaateeh Lit-Ta'aamul ma'al-Qur'an* (pgs. 34, 35).

<sup>12</sup> *Tafseer As-Samarqandee* (3/174).



to earth, such as the Torah or the Injeel (the Gospel); upon this point scholars from the early generations of Islam are in agreement, for not a single one of them made the claim that, since all divinely revealed Books are from Allah (sp), they are all equal in status.<sup>13</sup> That the Qur'an is the best

speech signifies, among other things, that it is the most eloquent of all speech and that the meanings it conveys are more profound and wise than those that are conveyed by any other speech.

According to the author of *Fathul-Qadeer*, the Qur'an is called "*Hadeeth* (speech)" because the Prophet (s) related it verbally to his people, informing them through speech the Verses that were being revealed to him.<sup>14</sup> In fact, Allah (sp) named the Qur'an *Hadeeth* not just in the abovementioned Verse, but in a number of other Verses as well; here are four examples:

فَبَأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ ۖ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*"In what message after this will they then believe" (Qur'an 7: 185)*

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ ۖ نَفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِمْ إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

*"Perhaps, you, would kill yourself (O Muhammad) in grief over their footsteps (for their turning away from you, because they believe not in this narration (the Qur'an))." (Qur'an 18: 6)*

أَفَمِنْ هَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ

*"Do you then wonder at this recital (the Qur'an)" (Qur'an 53: 59)*

فَذَرْنِي وَمَنْ يُكَذِّبُ هَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ ۖ

*"Then leave Me Alone with such as belie this Qur'an." (Qur'an 68:44)*

<sup>13</sup> *Kutub WaRasaail Wa Fataawa Ibn Taymiyyah Fit-Tafseer* (11/17).

<sup>14</sup> *Fathul-Qadeer* (4/458).



**Part Second:**

# The Greatness of the Qur'an's Attributes

**First: *Al-Hakeem***

*Al-Hakeem* is another Arabic word that carries many shades of meaning; so again, it will be of use to the reader to become acquainted with the family of words that have in common with *Al-Hakeem* the root word *Hakama*. One of the meanings of *Hakama* is to judge. *Ahkama*, which is derived from *Hakama*, can mean to perfect something. And *Hikmah*, which is also derived from *Hakama*, means wisdom. These definitions should help the reader understand why Allah (sp) described the Qur'an as being *Al-Hakeem*. Of the many Verses in which Allah (sp) described the Qur'an as being *Al-Hakeem*, I will focus on two only:

1) Allah (sp) said:

تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

“These are the Verses of the Book (the Qur'an) *Al-Hakim*” (showing lawful and unlawful things, explaining Allah's (Divine) Laws for mankind, leading them to eternal happiness by ordering them to follow the true Islamic Monotheism, - worshipping none but Allah Alone – that will guide them to Paradise and save them from Hell) (Qur'an 10:1, 31: 2)



Based on the various shades of meanings of the word *Hakama* and the family of words that are derived from it, *Al-Hakeem* in this Verse can be interpreted in more than one way:

- In the Qur'an all laws and legislations are perfected. This interpretation is corroborated by the Verse:

كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ

“(This is) a Book, the Verses whereof are perfected (in every sphere of knowledge, etc.)” (Qur'an 11:1)

- The Qur'an acts as a judge, issuing rulings that inform us about what is lawful, and about what is forbidden; also, the Qur'an judges among men by the truth. This interpretation is corroborated by the Verse:

وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۚ

“And with them He sent the Scripture in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed.” (2:213).

It appears as if the translator of the abovementioned Verse from Chapters *Younus* and *Luqmaan* based his translation on this interpretation of the word *Al-Hakeem*. And Allah (sp) knows best.

- The Qur'an contains in it important judgments. So, for instance, in the Qur'an Allah (sp) judged that Paradise will be the reward for those who obey Him and that the Hellfire will be the punishment for those who disobey Him.

- The Qur'an is perfect and contains in it neither falsehood nor contradictions; this was the interpretation of the eminent scholar Muqaatil. In his Tafseer of the aforementioned Verse from Chapters *Younus* and *Luqmaan*, As-Sa'dee (m) listed a variety of ways in which the Qur'an has been perfected:

- a. It is worded in the best of ways, and its wording points to the most important and lofty of meanings.
- b. It is safe from human tampering. We recite the exact same Qur'an that was recited by the Prophet (s) and his Companions (rp). And it will, by the



guarantee of Allah (sp), remain in its pristine form. So unlike previously revealed Books, it will not undergo changes at the hands of corrupt men.

- c. All of the information it contains – about previous nations, about the unseen world, about natural phenomenon in the universe, etc. – corresponds exactly to reality. Even after the advent of modern science, there is no new knowledge we have that contradicts any part of the Qur'an.
- d. Everything it orders us to do is either purely good or the overriding good. And anything it forbids us from doing is either purely evil or the overriding evil. Incidentally, it is often the case that Allah (sp) juxtaposes a command with the wisdom and benefits of following it; likewise, He (sp) frequently forbids something and then explains the wisdom behind its prohibition.
- e. The Qur'an consists of a perfect balance between giving people hope of rewards if they obey Allah (sp), and terrifying them with the prospect of punishment if they disobey Him.
- f. Various aspects of stories, legislations, and commands are repeated throughout the Qur'an. Yet, in spite of all of that repetition, there is never any contradiction between one Verse of the Qur'an and another.<sup>15</sup>

2. Allah (sp) said:

وَالْقُرْآنُ الْحَكِيمُ

“By the Qur'an, full of wisdom (i.e. full of laws, evidences, and proofs)” (Qur'an 36: 2)

In this Verse, *Al-Hakeem* is interpreted as meaning full of wisdom; nonetheless, it is important to note that, regardless of what the actual meaning of *Al-Hakeem* is, each of the aforementioned interpretations conveys a true meaning and points to the magnificence and greatness of the Qur'an.

## Second: *Al-'Azeez*

Describing the Qur'an, Allah (sp) said:

وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ

<sup>15</sup> Tafseer As-Sa'dee (4/101).



“And verily, it is an honorable respected Book” (because it is Allah’s speech, and He has protected it from corruption, etc.)” (Qur’an 41:41)

The translator of this Verse based his translation on one of the meanings of ‘Azeez; something that is honored and revered. ‘Azeez has other meanings as well; for instance, it can mean something that is precious and valuable. And ‘Azeez is derived from ‘Izzah, which means unassailable, invincible, impregnable, or something that is defended in such a way that it cannot be defeated. The relationship between the two stated meanings is that, if something is valuable and precious, those that own it will defend and protect it. ‘Azeez can also mean something that always triumphs and is never defeated; this meaning of ‘Azeez applies to the clear and irrefutable proofs of the Noble Qur’an.<sup>16</sup> Allah (sp) described the Qur’an as being ‘Azeez because, by virtue of the absolute truth it contains, it is unassailable: It is protected by Allah and it is impossible to find mistakes in it.<sup>17</sup>

In summary, the scholars of Tafseer have given various interpretations for why Allah (sp) has described the Qur’an as being ‘Azeez. The reader would do well to notice that each of the following interpretations is based on one of the abovementioned meanings of ‘Azeez:

- 1) The Qur’an is safeguarded from the *Shaitaan* (the Devil, who can find no way to distort or corrupt it in any way whatsoever.
- 2) The Qur’an is deemed honorable by Allah (sp) (hence the abovementioned translation of ‘Azeez in Verse 41 of Chapter 41 *Fussilat*; therefore, it is our duty to honor and revere the Qur’an.
- 3) It is impregnable in that it is inaccessible to and well fortified against falsehood.
- 4) The Qur’an will always remain triumphant: People cannot say anything that is similar to or better than it.
- 5) It is an honorable Book because it is Allah’s speech, and, as such, is not something that has been created.

Again, regardless of what the exact intended meaning of ‘Azeez is in Chapter 41 *Fussilat*, each of the abovementioned interpretations says something true about the Qur’an. It is a well-known fact that, in the sciences of Tafseer, there are generally two kinds of opposing interpretations: 1) When two different interpretations are in

<sup>16</sup> *At-Tahreer Wat-Tanweer* (25/71).

<sup>17</sup> *Tafseer Ibn Atiyyah* (5/19).



conflict with one another; in such instances, one interpretation is correct and the other is false; and 2) When two different interpretations are not in conflict with one another, but instead convey different aspects of the truth. To better understand this principle, consider three

People's description of a garden: One of them says it is beautiful; another says it is green; and the third person says its fruits are ripe. Who is telling the truth? Well, it is possible that all three of them are telling the truth: The garden is beautiful and green, and its fruits are ripe. Similarly, in the Noble Qur'an, it often occurs that one scholar of Tafseer gives one interpretation of a Verse, while a second scholar gives another, and both of them are correct. Each of them is describing one aspect of the Verse's overall meaning. This is part of the beauty of the Qur'an: A single Verse can convey many meanings. This principle applies at least most of the time to the names and attributes of the Qur'an: A single attribute can be interpreted in three, four, or five (or more) different ways, and each interpretation is correct. In regard to the word 'Azeez, it is interesting to note that Allah (sp) used it to describe the Qur'an, the Prophet (s), and the nation of Muslims. As for the Qur'an, Allah (sp) said:

وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ

*"And verily, it is an honorable respected Book"* (because it is Allah's speech, and He has protected it from corruption, etc.) (Qur'an 41:41).

Describing the Prophet (s), Allah (sp) said:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ

*"Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well). It grieves him ('Azeez 'Alaihi) that you should receive any injury or difficulty."* (Qur'an 9: 128)

And in regard to the nation of Muslims, Allah (sp) said:

وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*"But honor, power and glory belong to Allah, His Messenger (Muhammad), and to the believers."* (Qur'an 63: 8)





### Third: *Al-Kareem*

The word *Kareem* means honorable or noble. Describing the Noble Qur'an, Allah (sp) said:

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ (٧٥) وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَّوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ (٧٦) إِنَّهُ لَقُرْءَانٌ كَرِيمٌ (٧٧)

*"I swear by Mawaqi' (setting or the mansions etc.) of the stars (they traverse). And verily, that is indeed a great oath, if you but know. That (this) is indeed an honorable recital (the Noble Qur'an)." (Qur'an 56: 75-77)*

Allah (sp) has conferred honor upon the Qur'an, raising it in status above all other divinely revealed Books. That Allah (sp) honored the Qur'an also means that it is above being a fabrication or a product of magic.<sup>18</sup>

Allah (sp) conferred honor upon the Qur'an in the very Verses wherein He (sp) described the Qur'an as being "an honorable recital". He (sp) didn't immediately state the fact that the Qur'an is an honorable recital; no, He (sp) preceded that statement with an oath: "I swear by Mawaqi' (setting or the mansions, etc.) of the stars." Then Allah (sp) made it clear that He (sp) was making an important oath: "That is indeed a great oath, if you were but to know." In the following Verse, Allah (sp) stated what that great oath was about: It was about affirming the lofty status of the Qur'an.

So it was as if Allah (sp) was saying: I swear by the setting of the stars that this Qur'an is an honorable recital; it is the product of neither magic nor soothsaying; nor does it contain any lies; rather, it is an honorable and praiseworthy recital, which Allah (sp) as has made a miracle for His Prophet (s). The Qur'an is revered by believers because it is the speech of their Lord, and because it is a cure for the spiritual diseases from which they suffer. And the Qur'an is revered by the inhabitants of the heavens because it is revelation from their Lord.

There is one interpretation of *Kareem* that is not based on its meaning in the Arabic language; some scholars say that *Kareem* means that the Qur'an is not created. Other interpretations do take into consideration the original meanings of *Kareem* in Arabic; according to one interpretation, for instance, the Qur'an is described as being *Kareem* because it contains honorable teachings and invites

<sup>18</sup> *Fathul-Qadeer* (5/160).



mankind to adopt noble manners. And finally, it has been said that the Qur'an is described as being Kareem

because honor is gained by those who memorize it, as well as by those who recite it.<sup>19</sup>

*Kareem*, it is interesting to note, is an adjective that applies to many: Allah (sp) is *Al-Kareem* (the All-Generous, Most Munificent, etc.; one of the meanings of *Kareem* is generous). He (sp) sent down a Book that is *Kareem* (honorable). The one who descended with it was a *Kareem* (honorable) angel, and he took it down to a *Kareem* (honorable) Prophet (s), for the sake of a *Kareem* nation. And if the people of that nation adhere closely to it and follow its teachings, they will gain a *Kareem* (generous, since it is one of the meanings of *Kareem*) reward. Allah (sp) said:

إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ ۖ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ ۖ وَأَجْرٍ ۖ كَرِيمٍ

*"You can only warn him who follows the Reminder (the Qur'an), and fears the Most Beneficent (Allah) unseen. Bear you to such one the glad tidings of forgiveness, and a generous reward (i.e., Paradise)."* (Qur'an 36:11).

#### Fourth: *Al-Majeed*

*Majeed* means glorious and exalted. Allah (sp) said:

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ  
فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ

*"Nay! This is a Glorious Qur'an, (Inscribed) in Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz (the Preserved Tablet)"* (Qur'an 85: 21, 22)

This Verse means: In spite of what those who disbelieve say, this Qur'an is exalted in its wording and style, to the degree that it is a miracle. And it reaches the utmost levels of honor, nobility, and blessings. Contrary to what the disbelievers say, it is not poetry or the product of magic or soothsaying; instead, it is the speech of Allah (sp), which is protected from all forms of tampering or corruption. And it is

<sup>19</sup> Tafseer Al-Qurtubee (17/216).



inscribed with Allah (sp) in *Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz* (the Preserved Tablet). One interpretation of *Majeed* in the aforementioned Verse is that the Qur'an is exalted above all other books – even above all previously revealed Books.<sup>20</sup> According to another interpretation, that the Qur'an is *Majeed* refers to the exalted nature of its message and to the fact that it only takes a few of its words to convey a wide variety of meanings.

### Fifth: *Al-'Adheem*

This attribute was used as the title of this work. And as I have hitherto pointed out, *Al-'Adheem* connotes greatness, magnificence, and grandeur. Allah (sp) said:

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْءَانَ الْعَظِيمَ  
لَا تُمَدِّنْ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ

*“And indeed, We have bestowed upon you seven of Al-Mathani (seven repeatedly recited Verses), (i.e. Surat Al-Fatiha) and the Grand Qur'an. Look not with your eyes ambitiously at what We have bestowed on certain classes of them (the disbelievers).” (Qur'an 15: 87, 88).*

In these Verses, Allah (sp) says to His Prophet (s): “Yes, I have bestowed on certain classes of the disbelievers many worldly things. But do not look ambitiously at what I have bestowed upon them, nor upon the world and its temptations, for I have given you that which is sufficient for you: The Grand Qur'an. Since you have the Qur'an, you need nothing else. For the Qur'an is the greatest of all blessings. Every other blessing, no matter how great it is, is small and insignificant when compared with the blessing of the Qur'an.”<sup>21</sup>

### Sixth: *Al-Basheer Wan-Nadheer*

Simply put, a *Basheer* is a bearer of glad tidings, and a *Nadheer* is a warner (of impending doom or disaster). In the second of the following Verses, Allah (sp) uses both *Basheer* and *Nadheer* to describe the Noble Qur'an:

<sup>20</sup> *Tafseer Abu As-Sa'ood* (9/139), *Tafseer As-Samarqandee* (3/545), and *Tafseer Al-Qaasimee* (6/316).

<sup>21</sup> *Al-Kashshaaf by Az-Zamakhsharee* (2/549) and *Tafseer Ath-Tha'aalabee* (2/300).



## كِتَابٌ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ شِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا

*“A Book whereof the Verses are explained in detail; – a Qur’an in Arabic for people who know. Giving glad tidings (of Paradise to the one who believes in the Oneness of Allah (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) and fears Allah much (abstains from all kinds of sins and evil deeds) and loves Allah much (performing all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)), and warning (of punishment in the Hell Fire to the one who disbelieves in the Oneness of Allah).” (Qur’an 41: 3, 4)*

The reason why the Qur’an is described with these two attributes is fairly obvious. It gives glad tidings to those who believe, informing them that their reward will be Paradise; and it warns those who disbelieve that, if they continue in their evil ways, their final destination will be the Hellfire.<sup>22</sup>

Given that two of the main functions of the Qur’an, as per the meaning of the abovementioned Verse, are to bring glad tidings and to warn about impending doom, human beings must strive to understand the implications of both the glad tidings and the warning of impending doom; after all, their ultimate fate is at stake. Human beings work hard to learn about the things that will benefit them in the short term: how to gain wealth and enjoy pleasures in this life. It is only logical, therefore, that they should learn about the path that leads to eternal bliss as well as the path that leads to eternal punishment in the Hellfire.<sup>23</sup>

The qualities of being a bearer of glad tidings and a warner of impending doom are common to the Noble Qur’an and to Prophets, peace be upon them. For in describing the function and duty of Prophets, Allah (sp) said:

فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ

*“And Allah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings.” (Qur’an, 2: 213).*

And Allah (sp) gave this description of Prophet Muhammad (s):

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا

*“Verily, We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a witness, as a bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner.” (Qur’an 48:8).*

<sup>22</sup> Tafseer Ibn ‘Atiyyah (5/4).

<sup>23</sup> Tafseer As-Sa’dee (1/7644) and At-Tafseer Al-Kabeer (27/82).



Without a doubt, spiritual development requires the emphasis of both the positive and the negative. Allah (sp), with His infinite wisdom, knows that a purely positive message – positive in the sense of promising rewards without warning about impending doom – stunts spiritual growth in human beings. When human beings focus only on the promise of salvation and rewards, they fall into a state of wishful thinking: They perpetrate evil deeds with impunity, and focus not on action or the performance of good deeds, but on a sense of entitlement, the idea that Paradise is their guaranteed destination. Similarly, a purely negative message – one that warns about impending punishment without promising rewards - also stunts the spiritual development of human beings. A person who focuses only on the Hellfire lacks an understanding of Islam, is ignorant of Allah's Mercy, is (because of his unbalanced understanding of Islam) likely to follow a deviant set of beliefs and acts of worship, and will end up losing hope in Allah (sp).

The only way to spiritual development is to strike a balance between hope and fear, hope for rewards from Allah (sp), and fear of Allah's punishment. That is why the Qur'an is both *Basheer* and *Nadheer*, containing doses of both glad tidings and warnings. The dual function of the Qur'an - of being a bearer of glad tidings and a warner – is again emphasized in this Verse:

لِيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ  
أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا

*“to give warning (to the disbelievers) of a severe punishment from Him, and to give glad tidings to the believers (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism), who work righteous deeds, that they shall have a fair reward (i.e. Paradise).”*  
(Qur'an 18: 2)

The wise person is he who benefits from the Qur'an's warnings – by casting off false beliefs and avoiding evil deeds – and rejoices upon reading the glad tidings of the Qur'an, and he does the latter by performing more good deeds.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Yu'allimuhumul-Kitaab by Muhammad Ash-Sha'aal (pg. 20).



## **Seventh: *Laa Ya'tihi Al-Baatil Min Baini Yadaih* *Walaa Min Khalfihi* (Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it)**

This quality of the Qur'an is described not with a word or two, but with an entire phrase. Allah (sp) said:

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ ۖ

“Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it.” (Qur'an, 41: 42).

In translating this Verse, the translator gave one interpretation of its meaning, but there are others as well. That there are various interpretations of this Verse can be attributed to two main reasons: First, the word *Baatil* (falsehood) can convey more than one meaning: falsehood in general, or a specific kind of falsehood. And second, ‘cannot come to it from before it or behind it’, can be intended to convey either a literal or a figurative meaning. If one understands this phrase literally, the concepts of

‘before’, ‘behind’, or ‘after’ will appear in one’s interpretation.

Ar-Raazee, may Allah have mercy on him, enumerated various possible interpretations of the abovementioned Verse. It should be noted that each one of them is plausible in that it says something true about the Qur'an.

1. The Books that came before the Qur'an - such as the Torah, Injeel, and Zaboor – do not contradict it; and there will not come any book after it that will disprove it.
2. Whatever the Qur'an declares to be true does not then become false, and whatever the Qur'an declares to be false does not then become true.
3. *Baatil* in this Verse means changes to the Qur'an - additions or the removing of passages. Therefore, the meaning of this Verse is as follows: The Qur'an is protected from having any of its passages removed and from having any foreign statements or words added to it; it is thus completely safe from having falsehood come to it either from before it or from behind it. This interpretation is supported by the saying of Allah (sp):

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ



“Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption).” (Qur'an, 15: 9)

4. Before and behind (or after) are to be taken figuratively. Therefore, the Verse simply means that, regardless of the direction it comes from, falsehood cannot reach the Qur'an, touch it, or find a way into it. The author of *Al-Kashshaaf* was a proponent of this interpretation.<sup>25</sup>
5. *Baatil* in this Verse refers to any devil. Therefore, this Verse means that no devil - whether he be a jinn or a human being - can successfully tamper with the Qur'an by adding to it, or by removing something from it. It is, and will remain, in its pristine form, the form in which it was revealed; that it will always remain as such is guaranteed by Allah (sp).<sup>26</sup>

One might say that if falsehood cannot touch the Qur'an, then what about those who have attacked the Qur'an or interpreted it falsely? The answer to this question is, yes, people have made false interpretations of the Qur'an, but Allah (sp), through His infinite wisdom, has protected it in such a way that falsehood cannot cling to it. What I mean by this is that Allah (sp) has blessed this nation with noble scholars in every era and country, so that no sooner does someone ascribe a false meaning to the Qur'an, than a scholar of *Ahlu-Sunnah* refutes him, leaving him - and his false interpretation - without a foot to stand on. Any false statement about the Qur'an is sure to be destroyed by clear proofs. And that is partly the meaning of Allah's Saying:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption).” (Qur'an, 15: 9)

All praise is for Allah (sp) Who has made it impossible for falsehood to touch His Noble Book. About that Noble Book, Allah (sp) said:

وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

“Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much contradictions.” (Qur'an 4: 82)

And in another Verse, Allah (sp) said:

<sup>25</sup> *Al-Kashshaaf* by Az-Zamakhsharee (4/207).

<sup>26</sup> *Tafseer As-Sa'dee* (4/402).



وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَىٰ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ  
يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*“And this Qur’an is not such as could ever be produced by other than Allah (Lord of the heavens and the earth, but it is a confirmation of (the revelation) which was before it (i.e. the Torah, and the Gospel, etc.), and a full explanation of the Book (i.e. laws and orders, etc, decreed for mankind) – wherein there is no doubt from the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists).” (Qur’an 10: 37)*





هذا الكتاب منشور في

