

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah,
And Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is His Messenger,
And the Last of the Prophets

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ

SURA Al-Fātihā

**THE ESSENCE OF
THE HOLY QURAN**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“Blessed be He, in Whose Hands is Dominion; And He has Power over all things

He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is the best in deeds, and He is the Exalted in Might, The Most Forgiving;

He Who created the seven heavens, one above another; No lack of proportion will you see in the creation of the Most Gracious.

So turn your vision again. Do you see any flaw? Turn your vision again and again (search and research). The vision will come back to you, dull and discomfited, in a state worn out. ” (Sura Al-Mulk, Ayaat 1- 4)

I am grateful to all my sources of knowledge, Nevertheless special thanks are due to Mrs. Faiza Ghaznvi, Farhan Zainulabdin, Dr. Muhammad Akram Sheikh, Engr. Tariq Masood, Munir Ahmad Jonda, Muhammad Aslam Khan, Col. (R) Bakhtiar Hakeem, Dr. Farooq-e-Azam, Malik Masood Gul and Dr. Asim Mahmood for their keen interest in the completion of this work. May Allah bless them all with His Pleasure.

Sultan Bashir Mahmood
July, 2010

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ مَكِّيَّةٌ وَهِيَ سَبْعُ آيَاتٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ

الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝ إِيَّاكَ

نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝ اهْدِنَا

الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ

أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ

عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝

THE ESSENCE

The Holy Quran begins with *Sura-Al-Fātihā* which means “The Opening”. This is the preface to the Divine Revelation. It is the mission statement of every Muslim, a supplication to Allah for guidance on the Right Path, a firm resolve to follow the righteous people in life, and the commitment to shun away from the ways of the non-believers and the misguided ones. The rest of the Holy Quran is the road map for the implementation of these fundamentals.

In ayat 87 of *Sura Al-Hijr*, *Sura Al-Fātihā* is glorified with the name, ‘Saba-Al-Mathani’ (سبع المثاني) which means, “Seven often repeated (ayaat)”. This is a really a miraculous prediction. There is indeed no piece of literature in any language, or any other revelation, which is so often recited as this *Sura*. Today, there are about 2000 million Muslims in the world, and even if only a small percentage of them may be supposed to observe the daily five time prayers, this *Sura* being the compulsory reading at every stage of prayer, is recited billions of times each time.

Authentic traditions (Ahadith) of the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم), glorify this *Sura* with the title of “Umm-ul-Quran” (ام القرآن) i.e. “Essence of the Quran” and rest of the Book of Allah is its elaboration. Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is also reported to have called it the most important *Sura* of the Holy Quran (Sahih Al-Bukhari 6/4474). It is narrated by Abu Hurairah (رضى الله عنه) that he (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) said, **“I swear by Allah who is the Master of my life, neither the Torah, nor the Ingeel (New Testament), nor the Psalms of David have anything to compare with the opening chapter of the Holy Quran and no other chapter of the Quran itself can compare with it”** (Sahih Al-Muslim).

Reward for the recital of *Sura Al-Fātihā* is immense. The Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is quoted to have said that (when recited with full devotion and commitment) its reward is like reciting two-thirds of the Holy Quran. Hazrat Ali (رضي الله عنه) reported that Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) had said, “***Sura Al-Hamd is a special blessing of Allah to me, equivalent of the rest of the Holy Quran***”. It is also reported that *Sura Al-Fātihā* has in it the cure for every spiritual as well as physical diseases of man. **The Messenger of Allah, (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) and his companions, (رضي الله عنهم) used to recite this *Sura* for the healing of the sick” (Sahih Al-Bukhari).**

In its spirit, *Sura Al-Fātihā* is a prayer for the family and society as a whole in which the individual beseeches Allah not for himself only but for the whole of Ummah. For example, when He prays for the Right Path he does not say “Show me the Right Path” but “Show us the Right Path” (اهدنا الصراط المستقيم). Thus it is a constant reminder of our obligations for the good of others as much we care for our ownself.

It also elevates man’s thinking horizon from the mundane world to the concept of multiple worlds, and Allah as the Creator and Sustainer of each one of them (رب العالمين). Thus, it invites man to reflect into the Grandeur of Allah in the universe, how has He created all this out of nothing, and how does He nourishes of it, and then end in the Universe?

While reciting *Sura Al-Fātihā* a Muslim repeatedly makes commitment to Allah *Subhan-Hu* of his/her complete submission before Him only, that he/she will not worship anyone but Him only; and will not beg or beseech before anyone but to Him only. We are His slaves and only He is our sole Master (اياك نعبد واياك نستعين). As such, *Sura Al-Fātihā* is a Reminder of freedom from all types of exploiting forces and false gods.

In essence, *Sura Al-Fātihā* exhorts mankind to adopt the path of life that leads to Jannat, the path of the Rightly guided people. The Holy Quran is its Road Map and Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is the ideal on this path. Lest we go astray or fall prey to evil forces, it teaches us to always remain at guards against the wrongdoers. Only thus we can remain steadfast on Islam which means **“Peace in Surrender to Allah only”**.

SURA AL-FĀTIHĀ WITH MEANINGS

1. (I stand) By the Name of Allah, (Who is) Ar-Rahmaan, Ar- Raheem

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۞

2. All Praise and Glorification is due to Allah only, (Who is) the Rabb of the worlds (Universe)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۞

3. He is Boundless in His Love and Grace; Timeless in His Kindness and Mercy.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۞

4. (He is) the Absolute Authority on the Day of Judgement.

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۞

5. (O, Allah!) To You and You alone we submit and worship, And to You and You alone we beseech for help.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ
نَسْتَعِينُ ۞

6. (O, Allah!) Show us and guide us on the Straight Path.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۞

7. The Path of those, on whom You have showered Your Blessings;

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۞

Nor (the path) of the condemned ones who have earned Your wrath; And neither of the confused ones who go astray and have lost their way.

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَالضَّالِّينَ ۞

EXPLANATION AND INTERPRETATION

The opening ayat of *Sura Al-Fātihā* is the declaration of allegiance to Allah Subhana-Hu. It is بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ “*(I stand) By the Name of Allah, Who is Ar-Rahmaan, Ar-Raheem*”. Except *Sura Tauba*, No 9, all other *Suras* of the Holy Quran begin with this wonderful ayat. Thus it is the most repeated ayat of the Book of Allah i.e. 114 times pointing out the mission before every Muslim “*I shall stand by the Name of Allah always*”.

Spiritually, as you say “By the Name of Allah” (بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ), you connect yourself with the Master of the Universe directly. As you promise to stand by Him and He stands by you. No wonder, every task then becomes easier to perform. It also determines the difference between the worldview of a Muslim and a non-Muslim. All human beings eat, drink, sleep, wake up and carry out different types of activities. But for the Muslim the same becomes an act of worship as he performs them in the Name of Allah.

This ayat also contains the miraculous mathematical key of the Holy Quran, discovered recently which is a mind-boggling miracle indeed¹ (For explanation please see annexure - I).

Allah, the Supreme Reality

Sura Al-Fātihā and so the Holy Quran, begins with the word, Allah (الله) which is the personal Name of our Creator. All other attributes of Him are integrated in this Blessed Name. For this reason it is also called “The Grand Name of the Master of the Universe”. Since it has no equivalent in any other language so it cannot be translated. Thus it would be only appropriate to call Him by this name only. He is Allah, like whom there is none. You should not call Him

1 Sultan Bashir Mahmood, “Kitab-e-Zindgi” (HQRF), Islamabad 2003.

God also. That is not His name. Phrases like Godly Godhead, or Goddess, Father or Son etc are the inventions of the anis guided people only.

At a number of places in the Holy Quran, believers are advised for the constant remembrance of Allah, and so repeatedly recite His Holy Name. It is a unique tonic for the spiritual development as well as mental peace. Litter Allah—Allah—Allah, in your heart or by tongue as many times as possible daily, standing, sitting, reclining or lying on your sides. With each repetition of devotion you will feel spiritual satisfaction and elevation that cannot be described in words.

To achieve best results we must utter His Holy Name “Allah” solemnly with full devotion and concentration, slowly and clearly, as ordered in *Sura Al-Muzzammil* ayat 8, **“Remember the Name of your Rabb always and devote yourself to Him exclusively”** *وَادْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا*

Peace of Mind with the Zikr of “Allah”,

As we pronounce, “Allah” we utter two sounds. The first is ALLLL..... a sound of continuation in the time domain. Tongue touches the upper jaw just behind the frontal teeth and stays there until it gets another signal from brain to change. The second sound is LAHHH..... in which tongue stands alone in the cavity of mouth and remains so till it gets new command to change or the breath breaks. Thus the vocal sound of ALLAH is ALLL---LAHHH in the time-space continuum. We may represent this by the following diagram. (Fig 1)

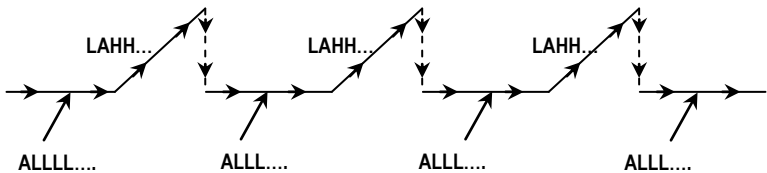


Fig 1: The pattern of vocal sounds for the solemn repetition of the Name Allah ...ALLL...LAHH....

It is reported² that the point of contact of the tongue while saying ALLL..... contains the mechano receptors that secrete anti-depression hormones important for the peace of mind. They are absorbed by the tongue while standing alone in the cavity of mouth on saying LAHHH..... Thus repetition of ALLAH – ALLAH – ALLAH.... gives peace of mind, about which it is revealed in the Holy Quran **“Behold! Peace of mind is in the solemn remembrance of Allah only”** **الآ بذكر الله تطمئن القلوب**.

This is called Zikr (ذكر) of the name of ALLAH and is highly recommended for those who suffer with depression, unknown fears and uncalled for tensions. In solitude they should repeat the Name of Allah, in middle loud voice as explained above at least 3 to 5 minutes in one sitting. For this purpose close your eyes, say with your tongue clearly and solemnly ALLL.....LAHH, ALLL..... LAHH.... simultaneously seeing with the eyes of your mind creations of Allah throughout the Universe. For example;

Ask who has made them? Answer - Allah.

Ask who nourishes them? Answer - Allah

Ask who can give? Answer - Allah

Ask who can take away? Answer –Allah

Ask who can give life? Answer – Allah

Who gives dean Allah

Who heals Allah

Who is everywhere Allah

Who is wayside you Allah

Who is outside you Allah and so mal so forth.

And so on

This is called “Zikr with Fikr” of the Name of Allah”; Feeling the presence of Creator in His creations everywhere, His Grandeur all around, everything hymen its praises.

2 Dr. Asim Mahmood, Founder President of Muslim Medical Forum, Islamabad, Medical workshop, Shifa International, Islamabad, 8th June, 2007.

Perception of the Absolute Reality

We are reminded in the 2nd ayat of *Sura Al-Fātihā* that everything in the universe is witness to His existence and hymn His praises. It everything, in the universe, from the subatomic particles of the atom to the giant galaxies in the Heavens testify the Splendor of their Creator and Nourisher (الحمد لله رب العالمين) why must we not do the same.

Billions of galaxies with trillions of their stars twinkling in the heavens testify to His Greatness and hymn His praises. Who else then could be worthy of praise besides Him?

We shall have grasped the spirit of this message also when everything in nature begins to remind us about the Glory of our Creator. Thus humbled by His Presence everywhere we should acknowledge automatically in gratitude, (الحمد لله رب العالمين). “All Praise for Allah, the Sustainer and Nourisher of the worlds”.

Famous Spanish theosophist Ibn-al-Arabi (1165-1240) elaborates that Allah is the mirror in which man contemplates and man is the mirror in which Allah contemplates. Only He knows His essence. Man needs Allah to exist and Allah needs the Man to know Him. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273) adds that if man wants Divine Light to reflect through his mirror, he must keep it clean of dust and impurities³.

About Him, **Hazrat Ali (رضي الله عنه)**, is reported to have said, **“He is the First and there is no one before Him, He is the Last and there is no one after Him, He is the Innermost and the Outermost, above and below everything, All-encompassing, all the time”** (Nahja-tul-Balagha). The same theme is revealed in ayat 3 of *Sura Al-Hadid*. In modern terminology we may say that ***space and***

time are merely two subsets of the superset of His Supreme Reality. Thus space does not limit Him and time cannot overpass Him. They are of Him, and He is independent of them⁴, the Absolute Reality, the Grand Singularity, like whom there is none. Since man's knowledge is relative only, we can never perceive Allah physically. Indeed He is beyond Physics Spiritually everything is a strong evidence as well as reminder of His Glory.

Concept of Multiple Worlds

The ayat 2 (الحمد لله رب العالمين) is a marvelous message for modern science also. The Holy Quran introduced mankind with the concept of mule 'worlds' (عالمين) at its very beginning in a age when Man was tied to his immediate surroundings only and different religions preached about Allah as their God exclusive. Even now for science it is an interesting possibility but for a student of Quran it is a Reality. That is why he/she says; where science ends the Holy Quran begins. No doubt it was a great leap forward for the human intellect. Companions of the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) immediately grasped the spirit of this great message and started looking out in the universe far beyond the earthly world. For example, it is reported by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him)⁵ that, **“There are forty thousand worlds, our world is only one of them”**. Abdullah Bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) is reported to have said that: **“Inhabitants of the other worlds are much like us on the earth”**. He went to say that **“They have their own Adam, Musa and Jesus and all other prophets (PBUH) similar to ours”**⁶. May be wanted to say that different worlds are copies of each other.

4 Sultan Bashir Mahmood, "Talash-e-Haqeeqat," Dar-ul-Hikmat International Islamabad, 2004.

5 Mufti Muhammad Shafi, Ma'ar'ful Quran, page 65, published by Muktaba Darul Aloom Karachi, 1996

6 Abu Al-Aala Maudoudi, "Tafhim-ul-Quran".

Spiritual demonstration of the multiple worlds can be seen in the journey of Miraaaj (معراج) of the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) which was to show him some of the wonders of creations in the heavens and beyond (*Sura Bani-Israael* ayat-I). In this journey, crossing over the bounds of time and space, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) was taken everywhere, saw everything and came back in no time⁷.

With this paradigm shift of the mind, Islamic scholars started exploring unknown worlds and thus set the stage for the modern science and technology which the West has expanded tremendously. More and more splendor behind the meanings of this ayat is revealing everyday with the continuous new discoveries being made by the science of cosmology. For example the 19th century showed that earthly world may not be the only world, 20th century declared, “there must be a large number of other worlds besides it”, and now the 21st century talks about the multiple universes⁸. All praise for Allah who is the Rabb of all of them (الحمد لله رب العالمين).

True to the meaning of this aya a Muslim should be outward looking, exploring type, seeing beyond himself/herself and feel the presence of the supreme Creator all over the universe.

The Absolute Love, Mercy and Compassion

The next ayat (الرحمن الرحيم) of *Sura Al-Fātihā* declares that Allah is Ar-Rahmaan, Ar-Raheem, there are two attributes of Allah in their meaning the word Rahmaan and Raheem are synonymous having the common root “Rahma (رحمة)”. Both convey the meanings of compassion, love, grace and mercy.

7 Al-Bukhari Al-Muslim and other writers of Ahadith

8 Max Tag Mark, “Parallel Universes” (www.sciam.com) Scientific American, 2006

Fine difference in their meanings can be felt from the type of vocal sounds of these two attributes. Ar-Rahmaan has a rising sound conveying that compassion of Allah is boundless in the space domain. The sound of Ar-Raheem creates a sense of continuity in the time domain, something being endless and limitless. Thus together “Ar-Rahmaan-Ar-Raheem” (الرحمن الرحيم) mean that Mercy, love and compassion of Allah is all over the Space-Time Continuum. Figure 2 shows the same idea graphically.

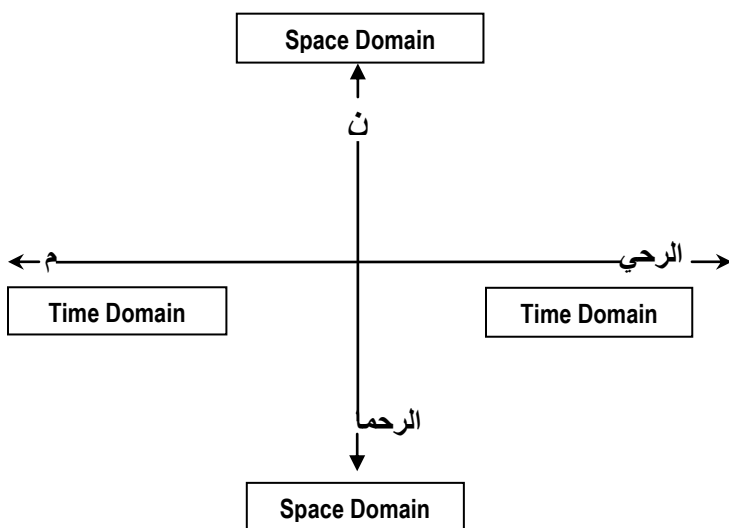


Fig 2: Space – Time effects in the vocal sounds of AR’RAHMAAN and AR’RAHEEM

Together they mean that Allah is most Loving and Kind, Compassionate and Merciful; for all time every where even for those who do not believe in Him. He says, “My Mercy overrides My Anger” (انا رحمتي غلبت غضبي). His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is known as “Mercy for all the Worlds” (رحمة للعالمين), He said that love of Allah for man exceeds seventy times the love of a mother to her infant child. If man takes one step forward to Allah, He takes ten steps to him/her.

Sometimes in view of the ongoing miseries in the world, one may complain “why so much of them if Allah is all Compassionate?” To this the Holy Quran tells plainly that it is the people themselves who directly or indirectly are responsible for their miseries. Allah does not harm anyone. It is their own deeds which keep falling on them in the shape of different kinds of problems and calamities⁹. Thus behind every suffering, we should analyze our own faults, sins, greed and corruption. Even natural calamities are caused as a collective effect by the accumulated sins of people (*Sura Al-Nisa* ayat 40, *Sura Al-Nisa* ayat 79). In this process many innocents may also suffer. However, they will be compensated justly on the Day of Judgement. (يَوْمَ الدِّينِ).

The Day of Ultimate Judgement

Islam teaches that whereas Allah is the Most Compassionate, Merciful and Loving, He is supremely Just Judge also, everyone will get full measure of justice from Him on the Day of Judgement. In this respect *Sura Al-Fātihā* reminds us, “**He (Allah) is the Absolute Authority of The Day of Judgement**”. مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝ It takes our imagination beyond the present order of time and space and gives hope and confidence to the weak, poor and oppressed ones against the wrongs they suffer now at the hands of the exploiters. They will be definitely compensated and the wrongdoer will be punished it is also a tidings for the good people. In this world they may not be recognized but Allah *Subhana-Hu* is certainly going to reward them in the Hereafter.

Due to the misuse of the freedom given to Man the present world is indeed full of deceptions and injustice at the hands of the powerful. They exploit the weak and survival is generally for the fittest only. Thus the weak are generally subjected to a lot of inequalities, pressures and sufferings

due to their own faults or greed of others, environment, natural calamities or historical factors. All this will be settled justly on the Day of Judgment. Everyone will get what he/she really deserved. Sufferers will be compensated, and exploiters will be punished. In the face of this reality one must be always very careful of his/her own conduct with others.

Three Phases of Existence

Attributes of Allah as Rabb, Ar-Rahmaan, Ar-Raheem and Maalik-e-Youm-id-Din highlighted in the first four ayaat of the opening chapter of the Holy Quran invite our attention to the Pre-Universe, Present Universe and Post-Universe phases of our existence also.

The first phase begins in the infinity of the Pre-Universe when everything was frozen in the Design (لوح محفوظ). This was the state hidden in the state of “Nothingness”. However, as ZERO is the depository of all “positives” and “Negatives”, the “Nothingness” of Pre-Universe contained everything. Allah being always there, there were also many of His spiritual creations in that hidden world. For example, the Angels, (ملائکہ) Jinni (جن) and Human Spirits (انسان) were the inhabitants of the Pre-Big Bang World. The present four-dimensional world may be said only the visible manifestation of that hidden reality. At the time of death, we go back into the hidden dimensions of the Pre-Universe.

Pre-Universe and Post-Universe

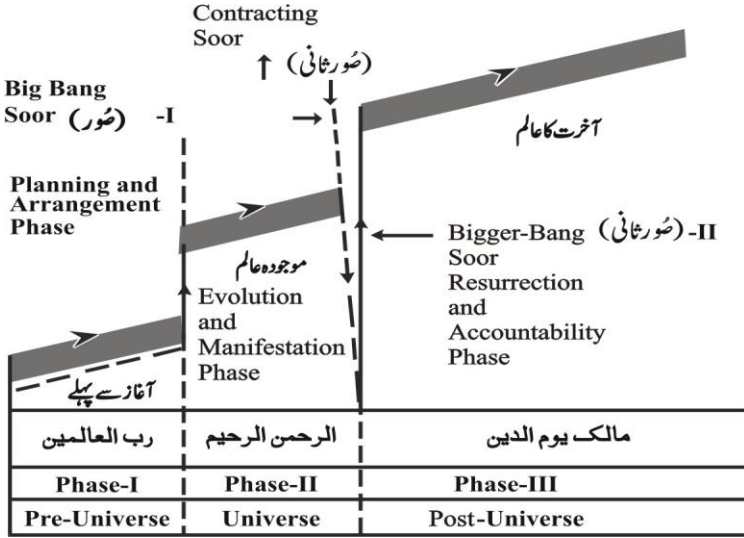


Fig 3 Three stages of Existences

The present phase of the Universe is the physical reflection of the blessings of Ar-Rahmaan, Ar-Raheem, manifested by the order and balance which science now sees everywhere. In *Sura Ar-Rahmaan* ayat 7, *Allah Subhana Hu* says, “**He raised the heavens and set the order and balance thereby**”. So the present dynamic phase of order and evolution of the universe is the visible manifestation of the Compassion, Love and Beauty of the Creator.

Yuum-id-Deen is the phase of Resurrection when the present order of existence would be annihilated to reappear in the shape of the grand New Order of Eternity. However, in that world also the re-born creatures will continue carrying the memory of their past deeds. Those who would qualify the test of life will go to Jannat and those who fail, they will fall into Jahannam (Hell). So beware of the fate ahead and keep your face towards Allah only, as He has said; “**And call not unto any other god along with Allah, There is no god but Allah. Everything will perish except**

His Countenance, Unto Him you will be brought back”
28(88) (For detail please see Ref¹⁰)

Allah the Absolute Master and Helper

In the first focus against we were introduced with the Grandeurs of Allah. The following ayat is about the faith of a true believer. **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۗ ﴿١٠﴾** ***“(O, Allah!) To You and You alone, we submit; And to You and You alone, we beseech for help”***.

It is a commitment which we make with Allah every time we recite *Sura Al-Fātihā*. It is that of an obedient servant, who surrenders his own will to his loving Master. How unfortunate that most of us do not honor this commitment in our practical lives. Besides Allah, we have also invented a number of other gods to whom we keep submitting and imploring for mercy in the hope to promote our selfish motives. This is the core reason of downfall of the Muslims today. Most popular of these gods are the living standard, craze of self glorification, sex, fashion and secularism.

The use of the word “We” instead of “I” in this and subsequent ayaat implies that our responsibility is not limited to our own-self but includes family and society as a whole also. In this respect Muslims are commanded in *Sura Al-Tahrim* ayat 26, ***“O You Who believe! Save yourself and your family from the Hell Fire, fuel of which will be mankind and stones together”*** 66(6).

It reminds us to strive together on the path of Jannat. Those who are greedy for their own salvation only, are liable to suffer a lot for their selfish attendee. In this respect there is a very instructive story told by Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). He is reported to have said **“When Allah decided to**

10 S. B. Mahmood, 'Doomsday and life after Death' – 1987, Holy Quran Research Foundation, Islamabad.

punish a wicked nation, the angels implored that there was also a very pious person in it. Allah ordered to punish him first because he did not care to prevent others from the wickedness.” So in *Sura Al-Asr*, where we are taught that besides personal piety, we must exhort one another to live a righteous life, and bear suffering patiently. Only then we can escape the loss, and earn a fruitful Hereafter life.

وَالْعَصْرِ ۝ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ ۝ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝

“By the passing Time Behold! Man is in continuous loss, except those who have faith and do good deeds; And exhort, and support one another in the Truth; And counsel one another to persevere in their struggle for Truth”. Thus salvation also lies in the caring and the sharing with others. To be contented with the personal piety only, is not enough for salvation. A Muslim is not only responsible for his/her own self but for the society also.

Structural Symmetry of *Sura Al-Fātihā*

Before we proceed further, it will be interesting to note that *Sura Al-Fātihā* is arranged symmetrically around letter “Wao” (و) of ayat (اياك نعبدو واياك نستعين). It consists of 31 words in all. If you count the words before and after “Wao” (و) they are 15 on either side. Four (4) words in بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم, 4 words in الحمد لله رب العالمين, 2 words in الرحمن الرحيم, 3 words in اليوم الدين, 5 words in اياك نعبدو واياك نستعين (2 words on either side of (و, W), 3 words in اهدنا الصراط المستقيم, and 10 words in, صراط الذين انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين, i.e. total 31)

As such the *Sura Al-Fātihā* is seen symmetrically balanced around the letter و, (Wao) of ayat اياك نعبدو واياك نستعين, 13 words before and 13 words after this ayat and 2 each on either side of wao as arms of the balance. This is shown in Fig 1.3. What a beauty!

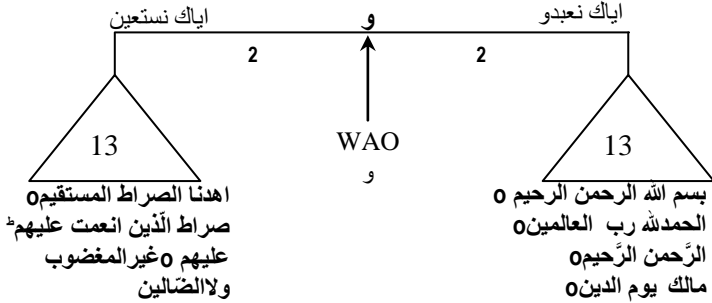


Fig 4: Structural Symmetry of Sura Al-Fatihā

In this context, the following Hadith of Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is highly thought provoking. He said: *“When the believer says (الحمد لله رب العالمين) Allah says, “My servant has praised Me”. When he says (الرحمن الرحيم), Allah says, “My servant has paid homage to Me”. When he says, (مالك يوم الدين) Allah says, “My servant has proclaimed My greatness”. When he says ايك نعبدو وايك نستعين) Allah says, “This is common to Me and My servant. He shall be given what he prays for”.*

In this symmetry there is a lesson for everyone; that we must also keep a balance in our own lives, especially, in setting of our priorities for this life and the life Hereafter. We can maintain this balance by keeping on the Right Path, and avoiding the path of the wrong doers. This is reminded in the aya 6 and 7 of *Sura Al-Fatihā*.

Believer’s Objective of Life (اهدنا الصراط المستقيم)

After that a believer has made the commitment to be the servant of Allah Subhana-Hu only, and to depend for help in Him only, he/she prays to Allah for the righteous life, leading to the Jannat in the Hereafter.

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ **“O Allah! lead us to and keep us on the Straight Path”.**

The Right Path is the way east of the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). It goes straight to Jannat. However it is not an easy path. Shaitaan constantly working to misguide us. Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is reported to have said that ***Jannat is surrounded by thorny bushes whereas the roads leading to Jahannam are very attractive.*** Thus to keep on the Right Path is the greatest challenge of our lives. It is a constant fight against many types of internal and external enticements and sinful suggestions of Shaitaan who is our worst enemy. In this struggle it is Allah only, who can save us from falling prey to the evil forces. Thus the believer prays to Him: **غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٥٧﴾** ***(“O Allah! save us from the path of those) who have earned Your Wrath, and also from the path of those who have gone astray”.***

It is a reminder that to keep on the right path it is very important to keep away from the company of the wrong doers. Environment cannot be escaped. If you are in the company of rebels of Allah, or follow those who have gone astray, then how much careful you may be, someday they are bound to affect you. And there are plenty of them in these days. So-called liberal muslims, secularistic philosophers, atheists, extremist religious fanatics and non-believers fall in this category of people. Allah forbids the believers to be intimate with them. Working relations are allowed but friendship is not excused. As for adopting their cultures undermining the Islamic values, it is the most despicable act in the Sight of Allah. Ultimately the Right Path is sealed for such people for ever. So we must be always on guard against the evil in our surrounding.

Goal of a Muslim – Hidayah

The ayaat 6-7 of *Sura Al-Fātihā* spell the goal of life for every true Muslim. It is to seek for Hidayah, the Light of Allah that will take you through the darkness of evil to the abode of Jannat. It is the path of direct approach between the Man and His Rabb. All ways other than hidayah are stray and crooked paths, making it impossible to reach the destination of Jannat. As told in *Sura Yaseen* ayat 4, it is the Path of Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). ***“Yaa-Seen! I swear by the Quran full of wisdom, Indeed you (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) are of the Messengers of Allah (the last one) on the Right Path.....”***

Hidayah is of three types¹¹:

The first type is natural to all things. All animate and inanimate things, even a photon of energy, have a built-in nature. We call it instinct, the natural behaviour about which Allah says in the Holy Quran, ***“Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High, who has created all things, well proportioned, and built in them Hidayah” (Sura Al-Aala ayat 1-2).***

It is further clarified, ***“All the seven heavens and the earth, and all that is in between them hymn His praises. There is nothing which does not celebrate His praises; but you do not understand their mode of praising, Indeed He is very Tolerant and Forgiving” 17(44).*** Thus everything, without exception, even the atoms and molecules, have a mind of their own. In the humans it manifests in the shape of our conscience. We must develop it, listen to it very carefully.

The second type of guidance is the revelation from Allah to His chosen men called prophets. The last of them is

Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). Hidayah was completed on him in the form of the Holy Quran. Thence onward it is must for everyone to accept it in full and act upon it. Those who accept this Guidance are called believers (Muslims) and those who reject it are the disbelievers (Kafirs) like every other thing in life it also will not come without effort. If we are serious to learn about it we must spend a fair amount of our time to study and understand the Book of Allah.

The third type of guidance is a special gift from Allah to those who sincerely strive in His ways. When a believer has moulded his/her life according to the guidance of the Holy Quran, it would begin to descend on him/her directly from Allah Subhana Hu. It is a gift of Allah about which He says in the Holy Quran; *“As for those who follow the straight path, Allah will increase their Hidayah”* 47(17). Then He says; *“Those who strive for Us, We shall surely guide them to Our paths”* 29(69).

This is a sort of bonus for sincerely pursuing the teachings of the Holy Quran. It will open the mind of the believer to the higher spiritual realities.

What is the Sirat-e-Mustaqeem الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ؟

Sirat-e-Mustaqeem is the road map of Jannat. It is Islam, what has been the religion of all the earlier prophets. It is “acting upon certain Do’s and Don’ts,” as ordered by Allah Subhana-Hu in the Holy Quran and taught by the last of his Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) by his own example. As example the following ayaat of Sura Al-In’aam 6(152-154) explains its salient features. One must reflect carefully in their meanings and strictly act upon them:

“Come, I will rehearse what Allah has prohibited you from”:

Join not anything as equal with Him;

Be good to your parents:

Kill not your children on a plea of want; We provide sustenance for you and for them;

Come not near to shameful deeds, whether open or secret; Take not life, which Allah has made sacred, except by way of justice and law:

Thus does He (Allah) commands you, that ye may learn wisdom. 6(152)

And come not near to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength;

Give measure and weight with (full) justice: No burden do we place on any soul but that which it can bear;-

Whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned;

And fulfill the Covenant of Allah: (accepting Him only as your Rabb) Thus does He commands you, that you may be admonished. 6(153)

Verily, this is My Way, leading straight (الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ),

Follow it, follow not (other) paths: They will scatter you about from His (straight) Path:

Thus does He (Allah) commands you, that ye may be righteous. 6(154)

Thus Right Path is traced by the right belief and right deeds, some of which have been summarized in the above quoted ayaat of *Sura Al-In'aam*. Life of the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is the perfect source of guidance for every seeker of Truth. We should follow him blindly even if we fail to understand the wisdom some times. It will take us to Jannat, anyway.

Who are the blessed ones?

With the reference to *Sirat-e-Mustaqeem*, ayat 7 especially mentions about the people called "The blessed ones" (انعمت عليهم), Who are they? Do such noble souls live in our times also? If so, how can we recognize them?

First of all let us know that there can be no period without them. Difference is relative only. The world will cease to exist when they would not be there. It is also not very difficult to recognize them. The criterion is that their company inspires you with the feeling of Allah and love for His Messenger (peace be upon him). However in the rush of life, it may not be easy to find them. Therefore, as described earlier, we should simply keep our eyes on the glorious example of the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) and his companions (رضى الله عنهم) and ponder in the Book of Allah for Guidance. Then, Insha Allah, the blessed ones will themselves come to us to share their experiences and knowledge with us. But never forget that they are not the source of Hidayah but beckon lights only. They are not the Path but Road Signs only. Path is Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) and source is the Book of Allah only.

Who are the condemned ones?

In the last ayat of *Sura Al-Fātihā*, the Right Path has been highlighted by the contrast between the ‘Blessed Ones’ and the ‘Condemned Ones’. Lest they fall prey to the enticements of Shayateen believers are warned to shun away from the company, ways and culture of the condemned ones and also of those who have gone astray. All evil people, hypocrites, non-believers and secularists fall in this category. Even those who walk in the extremities of Islam are dangerous examples. They are in great numbers everywhere and we must be very careful of them. However, it does not mean to cultivate enmity with them, we are advised not to make them friends. Particularly, we must not adopt their anti-Islamic customs and cultures and never depend upon them in difficulty. Non muslims will never accept you as friends even if you seek for their friendship sincerely.

As for the ones who have gone astray (ضالين) the most common example of them are the so-called Christians who

have left the true path of the Prophet Hazrat Isa (Jesus Christ – PBUH) and preach the doctrine of Trinity i.e. “Three in one, and one in three: The God, The son and The Holy Ghost”. However, there is no shortage of misguided people among the Muslims too. Moreover, the media in the secular hands has also become a very powerful misleading tool of Shaitaan. Thus to keep on the Right Path is no longer easy these days. Therefore, we must always pray to Allah *Subhana-Hu* earnestly for His Guidance and Support.

Aameen (آمين) i.e. May Allah accept our prayer!

It is reported by Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) said, “**When Imam says, (in congregation prayers) غيرالمغضوب عليهم ولاالضالين (i.e. not the way of those who earn Your Wrath, nor of those who go astray); then you must say Aameen (آمين), for if one’s utterance of Aameen coincides with that of the angels, then his past sins will be forgiven**” (Sahih Al-Bukhari 6/4475).

ANNEXURE - I

MIRACULOUS MATHEMATICAL BASE OF THE HOLY QURAN

Research conducted in the structure and arrangement of the Holy Qur'an into words, ayaat and *Suras* reveal an extraordinary mathematical marvel. Its letters, words, sentences and chapters are designed and arranged according to a very special mathematical code discovered in 1976 after the invention of computers. In its design, the number 19 holds the key position¹².

This number is typical in mathematics also. It is non-divisible by any number, consists of the first and the last integer of Arabic numerals, and if you add both numerals (9+1) it converges to 10 which converge to Unity (1+0=1). In the holy Qur'an this number occurs only once in Ayat 30 of *Sura Al-Muddaththir* where it is revealed that there are 19 guards on Hell fire. Thus the number "19" may have something to do with the Qur'anic security system also. If one attempts to change anything in the Holy Qur'an then this code will give the alarm bell.

When researchers started counting words and letters in the text of the Holy Qur'an with the help of computers, they were surprised to note that in many cases their occurrence was a multiple of 19. Initially they took it to be mere coincidence. But it was clearly more than a coincidence, as they fathomed the pervasive nature of the phenomenon throughout the Qur'an.

In 1976 computers were first used to carry out mathematical analysis of the contents of the Holy Qur'an in USA¹². It was then discovered that the occurrence of certain words, ayaat and Huroof-e-Muqattiaat was as if deliberately designed to

12 Rashid Khalifa, "The Quran, the Visual Presentation of a Miracle", Islamic Production, Arizona U.S.A. 1989

fit the mysterious code of 19. That means that the author of the Holy Qur'an must have counted all the letters and words of the Holy Qur'an and then adjusted those to obey the code of 19.

This miracle starts with the very first ayat (بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ) of the Holy Qur'an, which consists of four words, Ism, Allah, Ar-Rahman and Ar-Raheem; in all comprising of 19 letters.

ب س م ا ل ل ه ا ل ر ح م ن ا ل ر ح ی م
 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The constituent words of this ayat i.e. Ism (اسم) Allah (الله), Rehmaan (رحمن) and Raheem (رحيم) constituting بسم الله (الرحمن الرحيم) are counted as 19, 2099, 57, 114 times, respectively, in the main text of the Holy Quran. Each of this number is the straight multiple of 19 with the exception of the word Allah that occurs 2099 times i.e. $142 \times 19 + 1$. It should be like this because name of Allah must be above any formula (He is Indivisible). Balance of one in $(142 \times 19) + 1$ speaks of His Unity. Is it by design or a mere coincident? One cannot be sure at this stage.

But this was only the tip of the iceberg. Quran consists of 114 chapters which is 19×6 . If you add all the *Sura* numbers from one to 114 (i.e. $1+2+3+\dots+110+111+112+113+114$) their sum total is 6555 which is also multiple of 19 i.e. $6555=19 \times 345$. It is also seen that only 113 *Suras* begin with Bismillah. It is missing in *Sura* Tauba. But, as if to complete the formula, this is compensated in *Sura* Naml in which it occurs twice thus raising the number to 114 i.e. $19 \times 6 = 114$. Could this be a coincident also?

Researchers were surprised to discover that the sum of serial numbers of all *Suras* between At-Tauba (serial number 9, one at the start of which Bismillah is missing) and An-Naml (serial number 27, which has two Bismillah), $9+10+11+\dots+26+27 = 342$, is also a multiple of 19. The

researchers have also found the baffling fact that the number of words between the first Bismillah in *Sura An-Naml* and the second one is also 342, as if designed to fit this formula i.e. $342 = 19 \times 18$.

The First Revelation and number 19

This mind boggling mathematical design is not limited to a few *Suras* or a few words. It pervades throughout the Book. It appears as if the author of this Book had pre-planned in His mind that He would write a book whose letters, words, ayaat and chapters will be arranged in a mathematical way to conform to the number 19. This is startlingly evident in the first ever revelation from Allah *Subhana-Hu* to His Messenger (Peace be upon him). These are the famed five ayaat of *Sura Al-Alaq*,

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۖ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۖ
اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ۖ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۖ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۖ

Read! With Name of your Rabb – Who created man from Alaq. Read, and your Rabb is the most Bountiful, Who taught by the Pen. Taught man that, he knew not. 96(1-5)

As can be seen, the Arabic text of this revelation consists of 19 words and 76 letters. Both numbers are a multiple of 19 ($76 = 19 \times 4$). Moreover, this revelation is part of *Sura Al-Alaq*, which is also composed of a total 19 ayaat only. More surprisingly, in the overall arrangement of the Holy Qur'an, this *Sura* is placed at the 96th position out of the total 114 *Suras* comprising of the entire Qur'an. Thus, there happen to be 95 (19×5) *Suras* before *Al-Alaq*, and 19 *Suras* after. Now prepare yourself for the most astonishing part: yes, the total sum of words comprising *Sura Al-Alaq* is $304=19 \times 16$!!

Could any human author plan his or her book so painstakingly, according to the sophisticated mathematical design like this many centuries ago? Had anyone before him, in any country of the world performed a similar feat?

Why did Muhammad (Peace be upon him) do so. How did he achieve it?

The Miracle of Huroof-e-Muqattiaat (Special Initials)

Doubtless what has been narrated so far, sounds quite strange. Let's carry on with more amazing examples of the sophisticated mathematical arrangement used in the Qur'an: *suras* which begin with certain Arabic alphabetic initials, known as Huroof-e-Muqattiaat (حروف مقطعات). For example, *Sura Al-Baqara* begins with the letters ا ل م, *Sura Yaseen* with ی س. Seven *Suras* begin with letters ح م. *Sura Qaaf* begins with single letter ق, and *Sura Al-Qalam* with ن only. Altogether fourteen Arabic letters have been used for this purpose which is half of the total Arabic alphabet, and are arranged in fourteen different sets. If you add these numbers i.e. 14 (letters used as initials), 14 (different combinations) and 29 (number of *Suras* beginning with these special initials), the total (14+14+29) is 57, again a multiple of 19!

Take the example which you can easily verify by simple counting also of *Sura Al-Qalam*. It begins with letter ن. The number of times that this letter occurs in this *Sura* is 133, which is 19×7 . *Suras Araaf* and *Maryam* are the two *Suras* that begin with the letter ص. The number of times ص in these two *Suras* is 152, again 19×8 !

In *Sura Yaseen*, یس (ی س), letter ی occurs 237 times and letter س 48 times. Sum of these two letters $237 + 48 = 285$, is again (19×15) a multiple of 19!

Seven *Suras* of the Holy Qur'an (40 to 46) begin with letter ح م. Total occurrence of the letter ح and letter م respectively, in these seven *Suras* is 292 and 1,855, the sum of which is 2,147, also a multiple of 19 (19×113).

Sura Ash-Shu'raa number 42 begins with letters ح م ع س ق, while *Sura Al-Qaaf* begins with the letter ق. If you count the

letter ق in these two *Suras*, it is found to occur 57 times in each *Sura*, ($57 = 19 \times 3$) for a total of 114 times, 19×6 !!

What is more is that sum of letter ق , which is the first letter of the word Quran, in every 19th ayat of every *Sura* of the whole Qur'an, is 76, a multiple of 19!

In the above discussion only a few examples of the mystery of 19 embedded in the structure of the Holy Qur'an have been presented. For further details on this intriguing topic, you may wish to consult reference¹³, given herein. Originally this discovery was announced in 1976 in America. Incidentally, that year was also a multiple of 19 ($1976 = 19 \times 104$)! Since then more researchers have verified and enlarged upon the scope of this subject. The question however, remains, could Muhammad (Peace be upon him) or any other human author even today calculate and construct this code of 19 in the letters, words, phrases and *suras* of a voluminous Book like the Quran?

Food for thought

We know for fact that, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) never took formal education. He did not study mathematics, had no computers, no calculators. He had no time to rest in his life either. Quran was no ordinary book. It was an anthology of discourses from Allah *Subhana-Hu* over 23 years, most of the period either the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was under ferocious attack by his enemies or remained engaged in preaching of Islam and fulfilling the immense responsibilities of leadership of the nascent community of Muslims. However, all those who knew him, friends and foes, acknowledged him as an impeccably truthful and honest man. He never claimed that he was the author of the Quran. On the contrary, he always said that the Quran was revealed to him from the Creator of the universe.

He could not have told a lie about his Creator. Even then of there a large majority of humanity do not believe in him. For them above mentioned mathematical intricacies art a challenge. They must ; If it is not a revealed book then who could be the author of the Qur'an? Who could have built and designed such a large book on the basis of the intriguing mathematical code of the number 19? Even in this age of computers and information technology, such a feat is simply impossible to be performed. Then how did Muhammad (Peace be upon him) manage it, if for instant, we suppose that he is the one who authored the Qur'an?

If non-believers can get rid of their deep-seated prejudices – it will immediately become as obvious as daylight to realize that it cannot be the work of a human, but it is a Revelation from the Creator of the worlds, the living miracle of the last of the messengers of Allah *Subhana-Hu* to mankind.

As for the question, what was the necessity of designing the Holy Qur'an in this intricate mathematical fashion, we may suggest that it was done in order to provide infallible mathematical proof for the 21st century man to believe in it as the true revelation from the Creator of the worlds. Alas! A large majority of the mankind is still ignorant of this great truth. Of those who have known it, many simply say, 'strange, very strange, indeed', but do not approach it for guidance. The Holy Qur'an had predicted their this attitude in ayat 2 of *Sura Al-Qaaf* where it is said: **"So the nonbelievers say: This is a strange thing" 50(2)**. It is their misfortune that ever if the truth is revealed as the most clear reality under the sun, they still keep denying it. The noble Quran says about such people:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ ۖ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۚ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

"In their hearts is a disease, So Allah has increased their disease and for them is a painful punishment, because they have been lying". 2(10)

TAHRIK-UN-NOOR

To Spread the Light of Allah in the World

Propagation of Islam is the obligatory duty (فرض) for every Muslim. It is commanded in the Holy Quran, sura Al-Raad, ayat 40 (فانما عليك البلاغ و علينا الحساب) “So indeed, upon you is to propagate (Islam) and upon Us to reckon”. Tahrik-e-Noor is to help you in carrying out this duty in the present information age through knowledge based activities including the publication and distribution of effective literatures on Islam with sound arguments, as Allah says in the Holy Quran, “Produce the proof, if you are true” 2(111). It is to create awareness about Islam in its true perspectives for the peace and progress of mankind in this world and salvation in the world Hereafter.

The Holy Quran Research Foundation (HQRF) is working on this mission since 1987, through its highly informative, effective and impressive publications (list given) at the much discounted rates for free distribution. You may also sponsor printing of the books which you may like for free distribution on your behalf to general public, particularly students, libraries and institutes. Need not to stress that at this juncture of history when secularism is aggressively pushing its agenda against religion, by joining Tahrik-e-Noor you will help to *spread the light of Allah in the world. Write us about the type of cooperation you may like to render in the discharge of this mission. Your ideas could most valuable for us.*

Sultan Bashir Mahmood (S.I.)
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