

# MATALIB-AL-FURQAN

An Explanation (Tafseer) of the Qur'an from the Qur'an

By Ghulam Ahmed Parwez

Presentation of Some Salient Points for English speakers: A Humble Attempt

By Shaikh Abdool Aziz Shaikh

## Preamble/Introductory Comments

This simple and humble attempt to understand the work of the great scholar, Choudhry Ghulam Ahmed Parwez, in his Tafseer "Matalib-al-Furqaan" of the Qur'an from the Qur'an, and with apology to him, to reproduce some of the salient and principle points so that non-Urdu scholars would have some access to the great work of this great Qur'anic scholar of the twentieth century.

The correct way of understanding the Qur'an is through the Qur'an itself as Allah says in Surah 75.19:

**19** Again on Us rests the explaining of it.

شَمْرًا إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ۝

Allah has taken the responsibility to explain the Qur'an to the readers. And the Qur'an explains all.

And further the Qur'an says In Surah 16.89:

We have revealed the Book to thee explaining all things,<sup>b</sup> and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit.

وَكَذَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا  
تُبَيِّنُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۗ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَى  
لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

The Qur'an does not have any deviousness or obscurity Surah 18.1; no contradictions Surah 4.82; neither any doubt Surah 2.1.

Allah states that the Qur'an has been revealed in clear understandable Arabic in Surah 26.195:

**195** In plain Arabic language.

بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ ۝

It is also necessary to investigate how certain Arabic words were used during the period that the Qur'an was being revealed, hence the need to study "Lughat-al-Qur'an", which in most cases gives the history of every word. It is important to note that not only is the explanation of the Qur'an from Allah but even the words of the Qur'an are from Allah, Surah 9.6:

word of Allāh, كَلِمَاتٍ

The Qur'an collection is not like other books where the books are divided into chapters according to subject matter, but the Book of Allah is such that the same subject is discussed in various chapters and in various places and explained in many instances, by repeating the explanation again and again; this the Qur'an refers to "Tasreef of the Ayah" as explained in Surah 6.105:

**105** And thus do We repeat the messages, and that they may say, Thou hast studied; and that We may make it clear to a people who know.

وَكَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِيُقْوُوا  
دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَنَّ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

There is again the need to think and ponder "Tadabbur" on the verses of the Qur'an as the Qur'an itself says in Surah 41.53:

+53 We will soon show them Our signs in farthest regions and among their own people,<sup>a</sup> until it is quite clear to them that it is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord is a Witness over all things?

سَرَّيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَقْصَىٰ وَفِي أُنْفُسِهِمْ  
حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعِنَا لَهُمْ آتَاةُ الْحَقِّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ  
يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

This Verse means that as man discovers more and more scientifically and within oneself the secrets of knowledge become more and more exposed to all who study the Qur'an and are in synch with it and assisted by the varying degrees of knowledge from external sources. This is what is meant by getting to grips with Verses Mutashabihat as pointed out in Surah 3. Verse 7. and Surah 11 Verse 1 compared with Surah 39 Verse 23. The "abstract realities" and deeper bases of knowledge come to the fore and become more and more understandable as knowledge increases.

The requirement of "tadabbur", Surah 4 Verse 82,

82 Will they not then meditate on the Qur'an? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy.<sup>a</sup>

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۗ وَكَوَكَّلْنَا مِنْ  
عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمُوهَا آيَاتٍ كَثِيرًا ۗ ﴿٨٢﴾

is that it is of the utmost necessity that all past thoughts and baggages be removed from one's mind to really understand the Verses of the Qur'an as is stated in Surah 56.79:

77 Surely it is a bounteous Qur'an,  
78 In a book that is protected,  
79 Which none touches save the purified ones.<sup>a</sup>

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾  
فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ﴿٧٨﴾  
لَّا يَسْطُرُ إِلَّا لِلْمُطَهَّرِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

These word appear at the beginning of all 113 Suwar and is missing in Surah Tauba (114). Some scholars believe that this Verse is not part of the Wahi but when we examine Surah 27 Verse 30 we see that it is used when Sulaiman AS addresses a letter to the queen of Saba; thus the Qur'an itself proves that it is definitely part of the Qur'an.

The word "ISM" is used for that entity whose detailed "sifat" becomes apparent through His works that follow. This is an Attribute of Allah and Allah is understood by his Attributes in the Qur'an Surah 59 Verse 24:

24 He is Allāh; the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner: His are the most beautiful names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ  
الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي  
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٤﴾

"ISM" is followed by "Allah" and this is the name of Allah. It is followed by "Rahman" and "Rahim" and this regarded as the "Sifat" or Attributes of Allah. Details will follow In Surah 1.

This opening Verse in the Qur'an explains to the reader that whatever will now be said and done will be to illustrate the "Rahmaniat" and the "Raheemiat" of Allah and this will be the reason for the Revelation of the Verses that follow.

Thus when a Muslim says the above بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ at the time he/she commences a task or function they are actually saying that whatever is being attempted, is being done with the "Sifat" of "Rahmaniat" and "Raheemiat" of Allah and that this would be conspicuous in their actions (the mercy of Allah in its very detail being exposed in the action being attempted). The explanation of "Rahmaniat" and "Raheemiat" will follow in Surah Fateha.

## SURAH 1 VERSE 1

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ (1) AL Fateha – The Opening

1 Praise be to Allāh, the Lord<sup>a</sup> of the worlds,<sup>b</sup>

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Many persons of other religions have on many occasions ventured the question alluding to the fact the Allah/God that Muslims believe in, is Himself hungry to be praised all the time in that "All Praise" is due to Him alone. This concept and understanding is incorrect thinking because they have not understood the concept of "Hamd" (like many Muslims who claim to study the Qur'an). The *Wahi* of the Qur'an has explained, that it is not that Allah requires the creation to Praise Him, but that man, himself, needs to understand the significance of this command as the "Hamd" is not preceded by the word قُلْ (Qul). And it has ramification that applies to man rather than Allah

In fact, according to the Qur'anic explanation to translate "Hamd" as praise is far from being correct. In the Arabic language other words are used to explain "praise". The weakness of the English language forces us to use the word "praise". This concept becomes more acute and extensive when "Al" is used in the Arabic, and it also adds to the explanation as it is the definite article "the", meaning "The Hamd".

الْحَمْدُ

This word in the Arabic language is used for something that is extremely elegant and beautiful, that would instantaneously bring about a spontaneous exclamation of surprise, awe, and astonishment for a thing that is precious and rare. This action of appreciation and awe is called "Hamd". However, there are certain conditions required of man, that have to be fulfilled for this action to be regarded as the fulfilment of "Hamd".

The entity whose "Hamd" is being performed needs to be an extraneous force and able to be perceived; expressed and manifested. Without these characteristics the feeling of "Hamd" and appreciation does not enter one's heart. The opposite is also true in that persons require to be praised and thanked for something they have not done contrary to the "person" of Allah, as He is always providing for His creation; Refer Surah 3.188:

**188** Think not that those who exult in what they have done, and love to be praised for what they have not done — think not them to be safe from the chastisement; and for them is a painful chastisement. +

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا آتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسِبْهُمْ بِمَقَاتِرٍ مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾

The entity whose "praise" is being done must be by the choice and authority of the entity "praised". A mechanical action does not qualify to be "praised". If someone has an attribute from birth then this will also not be subject to the same kind of "praise". Another requirement is that the "praise" must emanate from the depth of feeling/heart for the entity. Care must be taken that the action is not hypocritical.

The entity whose "praise" is being exercised must be well-known by the doer, it must not be by suspicion or vision. It must not be via blind faith. The entity that is "praised" must be able to reach heights beyond ones feeling and expectation etc. Art may be praiseworthy by being a beautiful piece of work but may not "praiseworthy" because of the artist.

### How can this "Hamd" be applied?

Firstly, the definitely article, "Al", denotes that all and all kinds of "praise" in its finite and infinite form is only for Allah. Allah is beyond the thought, judgement, suspicion and conception of man and the whole creation. Allah says in Surah 6 Verse 104, that "Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends all; and He is above all comprehension, the Aware". As it is only possible to recognise the art of an, absent artist through his work so it is with Allah, but the difference is million-fold. Allah says in the Qur'an Surah 17.44:

**44** The seven heavens and the earth and those in them declare His glory. And there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification. Surely He is Forbearing, Forgiving.<sup>a</sup>

تَسْبِيحٌ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ  
وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ط وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ  
بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ  
إِنَّكَ كَانَتْ حَلِيمًا عَفُورًا ﴿٤٤﴾

The whole creation is the manifestation of the "Hamd" of Allah. Man can only recognise the worthiness of this "Hamd" through recognising the vastness of the creation of Allah. Refer Surah 9.112 wherein believers are

referred to as **الْحَامِدُونَ**,

**112** They who turn (to Allāh), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of Allāh — and give good news to the believers.

الَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيَحْكُمُونَ  
بِحُكْمِ اللَّهِ وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِالْمُشْرِكِينَ  
وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ مِثْلَ مَا  
يُنذَرُونَ أُولَئِكَ سَنَجْزِيهِمْ  
أَجْرًا كَثِيرًا بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

It is thus necessary that believers are attentive to the creation around them and investigate how it can be used for the betterment of mankind; this results in man being **الْحَامِدُونَ** "Hamidoon", Refer Surah 3.190:

**190** In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are surely signs for men of understanding.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ  
لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾

It is true that intellect dictates that man should delve into every aspect of creation so that mankind, can reach the Truth of creation, Surah 3.190:

**190** In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are surely signs for men of understanding.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ  
لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾

And those who keep the laws of Allah in front of them at all times and ponder over them, Surah 3.190:

**191** Those who remember Allāh standing and sitting and (lying) on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee! Save us from the chastisement of the Fire.<sup>a</sup>

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقَوْمًا وَعَلَى  
مُجُوهِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا  
خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا  
سُبْحَانَكَ قِنَاعًا عَدَّ ابْنُ  
النَّاسِ ﴿١٩١﴾

And when, after proper and successful research they are confronted with the result that has been explained in the Qur'an, they say "O! Our Nourisher, you have not created this in vain..." It is this context that results in the

Qur'an calling the believer **الْحَمِيدُونَ** in Surah 9 Verse 112 above. This same person is also referred to as "Ulema" reflected in Surah 35:37:

**27** Seest thou not that Allāh sends down water from the clouds, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various hues? And in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of various hues and (others) intensely black.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً  
فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا  
وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ  
مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

"Have you not seen the scientific and organised water cycle..." "and this results in fruit, vegetables etc..." "And have you seen the huge mountains and their different colours and what they have inside their depths"

**28** And of men and beasts and cattle there are various colours likewise. Those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allāh. Surely Allāh is Mighty, Forgiving.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ  
مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى  
اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
عَزِيزٌ عَفُوفٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

Observation of the different hues amongst animals and humans and these are those who are possessors of knowledge and referred to as "Ulema" and it is they who spontaneously declare the **حمد** "Hamd" and say, "Surely Allah is the Mighty and the Protector".

And then in Surah 45 Verses 3 & 4 the M'umin is one who also recognises the vastness and Truth of creation:

**3** Surely in the heavens and the earth are signs for believers.

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ  
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾

**4** And in your creation and in the animals He spreads abroad are signs for a people who are sure;

وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ  
آيَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

These are in fact those who are conscious of Allah, "The Muttaqee"- "those who develop their faculties to act on the command of Allah", Surah 10 Verse 6:

**6** Surely in the variation of the night and the day, and that which Allāh has created in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for a people who keep their duty.

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ  
اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ  
لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦﴾

And then Allah issues a challenge in Surah 45 Verse 6:

**6** These are the messages of Allāh, which We recite to thee with truth. In what announcement will they then believe after Allāh and His signs?<sup>a</sup>

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَنْزِيلُهَا عَلَيْكَ يَا مُحَمَّدٌ  
فِي آيَاتٍ حَدِيثَةٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾

Up to now the argument has been concerning material and natural creations but mankind also requires guidance for the innate personality in man. This Guidance can only come from the Qur'an and Allah has referred to this as "Hamdiat, Surah 18:1:

**1** Praise be to Allāh! Who revealed the Book to His servant, and allowed not therein any crookedness,<sup>a</sup>

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ  
الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا ﴿١﴾

When one pays attention to the verses of the Qur'an then without doubt there will be **الْحَمْدُ** "The Praise" on their lips. It is this Book that will take man towards the straight path as in this Book there is no confusion or doubt. The first person to have established the concept of "Hamd" in the period of the Qur'an is recognised by the "name of Ahmad AS", Surah 61 Verse 6:

اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ Meaning one who practices extensive "Hamd" and thus he becomes "Muhammad", Surah 48 Verse 29: مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ and he will be in the state of "Mahmood", Surah 17:79:

**79** And during a part of the night, keep awake<sup>a</sup> by it, beyond what is incumbent on thee; maybe thy Lord will raise thee to a position of great glory.<sup>b</sup>

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ ۖ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّخْرُومًا ۝

It was this position and status that changed the situation of the oppressed and tormented and gave them freedom from oppression, Surah 6:45: And in this way Allah's "Hamdiat" was cast in stone.

**45** So the roots of the people who did wrong were cut off. And praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.<sup>a</sup>

فَقُطِعَ دَائِرَةُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ۗ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

### Eloquence, Beauty, Dignity and Grandeur

It is obvious that the entity that is the recipient of this category of "Praise" must be the endowment of the above attributes. However, these attributes must accompany the ability to demand obeisance and accountability, Surah 64 Verse 1: There would be fasaad (corruption) and oppression if there is no accountability and balance; thus "Hamidoon" becomes a necessity.

**1** Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth glorifies Allāh. His is the kingdom, and His the praise; and He is Possessor of power over all things.

يُسَبِّحُ اللَّهَ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

لِلَّهِ ("for" Allah)

This is the proper name of "God" (*Al-il'ah*), and all other names denote His various Attributes. *il'ah*, by definition, is one: -

1. to whom someone looks for protection in bewilderment,
2. from whose grandeur one gets dazed,
3. whose overall sovereignty or lordship is accepted,
4. whose laws and directions are obeyed and followed, and
5. who is at the highest pedestal and remains unseen (Taj).

Keeping in view the above Attributes, the name *Allah* as it appears in the *Qur'an* would mean a Being Who is Supreme but remains hidden from human eyes; before Whose dignity and grandeur the human perceptions become dazed; Whose Sovereignty extends over the entire universe; Whose obedience is a must. By accepting Him, *IL'AH*, one must accept only His Sovereignty and obey His Laws.

Human mind just cannot perceive Him in any shape or physical form nor can explain Him. He is beyond human perceptions, Surah 6 Verse 104:

**104** Clear proofs have indeed come to you from your Lord; so whoever sees, it is for his own good; and whoever is blind, it is to his own harm. And I am not a keeper over you.

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَآئِرٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ كَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَكَمَنْ عَمِيَٰ فَعَلَيْهَا ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ۝

Nothing is like Him, Surah 42 Verse 11:

**11** The Originator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs of the cattle, too, multiplying you thereby. Nothing is like Him; and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.<sup>a</sup>

قَاطِرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ  
مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْإِنْعَامِ  
أَزْوَاجًا يُدْرِكُكُمْ فِيهَا وَلَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ  
شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ۝

However, we explain His Attributes as mentioned in the *Qur'an*, to believe in *Allah* would mean to acknowledge and accept His Sovereignty with all His Attributes, as mentioned in the *Qur'an*, in the most balanced and proportionate manner Surah 17 Verse 110; (See "Rab" for explanation of "Originator");

**110** Say: Call on Allāh or call on the Beneficent.<sup>a</sup> By whatever (name) you call on Him, He has the best names. And utter not thy prayer loudly nor be silent in it, and seek a way between these.<sup>b</sup>

حَتَّىٰ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا  
تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ وَلَا  
تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتُ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ  
بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۝

If one goes through the annals of human history, one would find one thing common all along. Irrespective of the time and the place, there has always existed a supreme being, someone supernatural before whom one should bow, who should be worshipped, to whom one should pray for assistance and for the fulfilment of ones desires, one who should be dreaded and before whom one should offer sacrifices. Even in the farthest corners of the globe where no human being from outside had ever set foot, and where the inhabitants were totally unaware or untouched by any foreign influences and were living in the earliest stage of human civilisation, travellers and research scholars came across traces of some super-natural being which they worshipped. However, its details differed from place to place. These were the perceptual differences which made every god different from the god of the other tribe, or country, or religion. It is, therefore, incorrect to say that the gods of all religions is the same - Rama or *Raheem* is one and the same thing. The Father of Christians, the Judea of Jews, the Ishwar or Parmatma of Hindus and Armazd of Zoroastrian are totally different from each other – and their attributes are different from those of *Allah* of the *Qur'an*. He is above all perceptions! He cannot be transformed out of a stone or a log of wood. The real concept of *Allah* can only be perceived by explaining His Attributes as narrated in the *Qur'an*, since only the *Qur'an* is exalted from the inter-play of human thought. It is because of this reason that the *Qur'an* does not accept the existence of god which various people or tribes or religions have carved out of their own thoughts. The question then arises as to why is it necessary to have faith in *Allah* of the *Qur'an*?

Almost all the psychologists and research scholars agree on one thing: a human being consists of a body and a soul. This "Soul" or "Self" (Personality of the *Qur'an*) is given to every individual in a latent or undeveloped form by *Allah*. The mission or object of a human being in this earthly life is, to manifest and develop this "Self" in such a way that even after death it is capable of entering into another higher, totally different phase of life and does not lag behind. To test or examine whether one's "Self" is getting developed or not, one must have a model or a test before him - in the absence of which he is likely to get astray. Or worse, everyone could set his own standards. The supreme, the complete, the most balanced and infinite Being to serve as a perfect model is *Allah* Whose Attributes are called *Asma-ul-Husna*. These *Asma-ul-Husna* are spread over the pages of the *Qur'an* as glittering pearls and man ought to incorporate them in his person to the extent of human limitations. The way in which these Attributes (*Asma-ul-Husna*) can enrich the personality of a human being can best be ascertained from the day-to-day life of the exalted person of *Muhammad Rasool-Allah AS*.

In other words a human being can examine and test from time to time if his "Self" is getting developed by comparing himself with these Attributes. As a human body gets nourishment according to well known physical laws, there also have to be some laws and values for the development of the "Self." These laws and values are explained in the *Qur'an* as various Attributes of *Allah*. If someone wants to test the development of his "Self," he should examine as to what extent the Attributes of *Allah* are reflected in his own person. That is why it is necessary to have faith in *Allah* alone. The word "*Allah*" has been used 2,697 times in the *Qur'an*.

# رَبِّ

The literal meaning of رَبِّ is "one who provides nourishment". The Qur'anic understanding will, however, be to provide all the care, sustenance and nourishment, every step of the way, through each and every evolutionary process and progress from the origin of that of any created item, to its ultimate goal and condition. This is what

the Qur'an refers to as "Rabubiyat" and the one who provides this detailed nourishment as رَبِّ. And because this process has to be part of the whole process of development at every level the Rab must provide for every eventuality. As an example the leaves of coniferous plants that remain green even in winter with resilient leaves to withstand the harshness of winter are referred to as "al ribatu". It must be remembered that "Lord" by a long

shot falls short of the need to define رَبِّ. To understand the concept of رَبِّ fully, we need to dwell a little on the concept of "cause and effect" in creation. Everything that comes into being in the Universe is as a result of certain conditions coming together. It is totally incorrect to believe that everything happened by "accident" and without any control and without any Laws from Allah. Many a scientist can postulate the "effect" of creation but cannot fathom the "cause and this ultimately leads man to be in awe of the "character and personality" of Allah (see above) To illustrate Allah states in Surah 2 Verse 117:

**117 Wonderful Originator<sup>a</sup> of the heavens and the earth! And when He decrees an affair, He says to it only, Be, and it is.<sup>b</sup>**

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا  
قَالَ مَا يَفْعُلُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾

(He is the One who initiates (the creations) and keeps them revolving and functioning; it is obvious that everything is created from the point of its initiation then passes through different stages to its developing process till completion; its initiation is according to Allah's law and its completion after different stages is also according to His laws)

Meaning Allah the Bringer into existence the originator of the Universe without any source, matter or "cause" as a molecule or a point of light which may only be "conjecture" on the part of man and in Surah 6 Verse 14:

**14 Say: Shall I take for a friend other than Allāh, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds and is not fed? Say: I am commanded to be the first of those who submit. And be thou not of the polytheists.**

قُلْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ أَلْتَتَّخِذُ وَلِيًّا فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُهُ وَلَا يَطْعَمُهُ قُلْ  
إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ  
وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

("Fatra":means to tear asunder: to tear apart for the first time the molecule or "point of light" comes into being: for the first time it is included in the Connotation) Surah 21 Verse 30:

**30 Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, so We rent them.<sup>a</sup> And We made from water everything living.<sup>b</sup> Will they not then believe?**

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا  
وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ  
أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

The continuation of the origin of the Universe through the splitting of the "effect" that had been brought into existence through the origination as described in Surah 2 Verse 114. The realm prior to 2/114 is regarded in

Qur'anic terminology as أَمْر (Amr) and the process of this أَمْر is regarded as the realm of أَمْر wherein the "planning" of the Universe as we see and experience now and will until the end of time and space, and the

command of كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ("be and so it is") is issued by Allah and its "coming into being" commenced and the

process continued till now and will continue to do so until the end of time according to the specific immutable Plan and Law of Allah as indicated in Chapter 48 Verse 23, Surah 17 Verse 177 and Surah 31 Verse 43, (Please note that all this is for our understanding and Allah explains it as such; the actual process will not be understood by man).

**23** (Such has been) the course of Allāh that has run before, and thou wilt not find a change in Allāh’s course.

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ  
وَكَأَنَّ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ۝

**77** (This is Our) way with Our messengers whom We sent before thee, and thou wilt not find a change in Our course.<sup>a</sup>

سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ  
رُسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا ۝

**43** Behaving proudly in the land and planning evil. And the evil plan besets none save the authors of it. So they wait for naught but the way of the ancients. But thou wilt find no alteration in the course of Allāh; and thou wilt find no change in the course of Allāh.

اسْتَكْبَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ  
وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ  
فَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا سُنَّتِ الْأَوَّلِينَ  
فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا  
وَكَأَنَّ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا ۝

After “Amr”, “Origination” and “Splitting”, the next step is the realm of Creation or **خَلَقَ** (Khalafa, Surah 10 Verse 3); and this is the commencement of putting together that had been originated and split under now, in a state of **خَلَقَ** ; and this is the stage that man is in a position to understand and examine and investigate and test;

and the process of **خَلَقَ** could take billions of years. This is the commencement of understanding of the Universe for man; prior to this stage mankind and scientists can only have a glimpse from the Qur’an; the initial and detail knowledge is only known to Allah and man will not have access to this knowledge in its entirety, but understand what the Qur’an explains. The period of this whole process of eons is also only known to Allah. By comparison and ease of understanding Allah explains this as in 6 period, Surah 10 Verse 3:

**3** Surely your Lord is Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is established on the Throne of Power regulating the Affair.<sup>a</sup> There is no intercessor except after His permission. This is Allāh, your Lord, therefore serve Him. Will you not mind?

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى  
عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ طَمًا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ  
إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ  
فَاعْبُدُوهُ ط أَقْلًا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۝

(Thus **خَلَقَ** , Khalafa would mean to evaluate the origin of something; to create with it other objects so that creation becomes balanced and proportionate: and it becomes clean and smooth: “Bada” and “Fatara” mean to bring something from nothingness into existence: to create for the first time; to invent: thus Khalafa would mean to give different shapes and form to elements already in existence through “Bada” and “Fatara” according to the **أَمْر** “Amr” of Allah and His immutable Laws).

The whole process of creation as explained above is regarded as “the theory of organic evolution”. This is by no means the full and ultimate explanation; it is only the beginning. Scientists have been able to construct a “history”

of the Universe back to a tiny fraction of a second after the Big Bang took place; **خَلَقَ**. At that moment, it is reckoned, there occurred the first comprehensible event of Creation: gravity broke free from the single unifying force that had hitherto existed. And this is whence man's knowledge commences. What happened before, is still an unknown, a mystery. Scientists estimate that gravity broke free 10 to the minus power 43 seconds after the Big Bang – or a decimal point followed by 42 zeros and a 1. If this fact is so awesome then one can only begin to appreciate the concept of **أَمْرٌ** "Amr", "Bad'a" and "Fatara".

## الْعَالَمِينَ

The meaning of the root of **الْعَالَمِينَ** "A'limeen" has two considerations. Both mean "to get to know and recognise". "A'lim" (with a kasra) means one who has knowledge of something and "A'lum" (with fataha) would mean that which leads one through it, to get to know and understand something e.g. a flag of a country or army or a symbol. Thus through the creation we get to know that there is a Creator, Allah. Man gets to know Allah through Whom man understands oneself which leads to grasping the scheme of this whole Universe. This understanding through the Qur'an, leads to the knowledge that all of Creation is not by accident, but via the Law and "Amr" of Allah; Created in Truth

The Oxford Dictionary meaning of Creation is "The whole of created or existing things regarded collectively; all things; including the solar system, space and the heavens; and all that is in them, constituting a systematic whole; the cosmos, total order". A Muslim believes even more and that is **الْعَالَمِينَ** would include even that which is beyond creation as we know it.

This Universe continues to progress and expand according to the Law of Allah as reflected in Surah 35 Verse 1:

**1 Praise be to Allāh, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Maker of the angels, messengers flying on wings, two, and three, and four.<sup>a</sup> He increases in creation what He pleases.<sup>b</sup> Surely Allāh is Possessor of power over all things.**

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنِحَةٍ  
مَثَلِي وَثَلثَ وَرُبَعٌ يَزِيدُ فِي  
الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

No one can tell how many new galaxies are coming into being and how many reach their end at any given time.

This is within the knowledge of Allah only. Now keep all this in mind and reflect on: **رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ**. As man continues to flourish in knowledge more and more of the old understandings that existed when the Qur'an was revealed (that nourishment only takes place for those items that have life; matter and other ancient lifeless objects do not have nourishment as understood today) recede into the background. Even if we understand the

concept of **رَبِّ** as was understood by the Arabs of yore then we will also need to believe that Allah applies the same law of "Rububiyat" in the whole of space as Qur'an states in Surah 42 Verse 29 that:

**29 And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and what He has spread forth in both of them of living beings. And He is All-powerful to gather them together, when He will.**

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى  
جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ ۝

The ending if the above Verse is quite intriguing that Allah will bring these beings that have life, together someday; that is a meeting of "earthlings and aliens". The Qur'an has also stated, in Surah 41 Verse 53, while displaying the Truth of Allah that:

**53** We will soon show them Our signs in farthest regions and among their own people,<sup>a</sup> until it is quite clear to them that it is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord is a Witness over all things?

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَقْصَىٰ وَفِي الْأَقْسَىٰ  
حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّكَ الْحَقُّ وَلَمْ  
يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

These Verses of the Qur'an illustrate clearly that all what has been said by the Qur'an concerning origination and creation is not based on mere suspicion or opinion but Truth.

If we take the meaning of "A'limeen" to be restrictive to the earth only than it will mean the international community of man in all periods, and man on earth has not been neglected, as together with Surah 12 Verse 104 there is also reference to man in Surah 45 Verse 20; Surah 2 Verse 185 and Surah 34 Verse 28:

**104** And thou askest them no reward for it. It is nothing but a reminder for all mankind.

وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ  
إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

**20** These are clear proofs for men, and a guidance and a mercy for a people who are sure.

هَذَا بَصَائِرٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ  
لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

**185** The month of Ramaḍān<sup>a</sup> is that in which the Qur'ān<sup>b</sup> was revealed, a

شَهْرٌ رَّمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion.<sup>c</sup> So whoever of you is present in the

هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَ  
الْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ  
وَمَا أَرَسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا  
وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ  
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

**28** And We have not sent thee but as a bearer of good news and as a warner to all mankind, but most men know not.<sup>a</sup>

If we look at Surah 12 Verse 104, above and Surah 21 Verse 107 we witness the Universality of the message and responsibility of man, and also direction to mankind for implementation on earth.

**107** And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the nations.<sup>a</sup>

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

By extension this verse refers to all those who follow the message brought by the Nabi AS.

The above Verses also illustrate that Allah is not addressing any single tribe, nationality, population or any religious group or sect. The Message is for all mankind. This law of "Rububiyat" puts the responsibility of care and nourishment on Allah for all of creation (by extension on all of mankind); refer Surah 11 Verse 6:

**6** And there is no animal in the earth but on Allāh is the sustenance of it, and He knows its resting-place and its depository. All is in a clear record.

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ  
رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا  
كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٦﴾

The provision of the facilities is on Allah but ensuring its distribution for all rest on mankind and especially the Believer and who is being referred to as **الْحَيُّونَ** .