



GLIMPSES OF STUDY OF HISTORY AND FORMER SCRIPTURES IN THE QUR'AN

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ
يَخْرُجُوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا ﴿٢٥﴾

Surah 25 of the Qur'an is called ***Al-Furqān: The Discrimination***, and it is not surprising that it should illustrate the transformation that the Message would ultimately bring about in the lives of the Meccans. This Surah explains the universal nature of the Message of the Qur'an for the unification of mankind. Although the disbelievers argued against the Nabi AS, the Truth of the Message is reinforced. The

general statements are followed by the "qualifications" of *M'umineen* ^{مُؤْمِنِينَ} from Verses 55 onwards and the above Verse 73, illustrates one of the actions of a *M'umineen* and that is: "These people are not swayed by emotions and they take every step after a lot of deliberation, so much so that even **when the Divine Laws are presented to them, they do not submit to these by ignoring their intellect, wisdom, rationale and reason. Also, they do not respond to them as if they were deaf and blind.** They adopt the Divine Laws only after careful consideration (for it is clear that when they do not even act upon the Divine Laws without pondering over them, then how would they do so in other spheres of life)."

In general, parlance, Verse 73 is actually instructing the *M'umineen* to put the Qur'anic Verses to the "acid test", and this does not apply only to laws of nature, scientific issues, history but also claims of the Qur'an concerning previous Scriptures. This challenge is the uniqueness that only the Qur'an could put forward.

With the above in mind, let's look at some of the Verses in the Qur'an as examples of the subject under discussion.

A) Pressures and Challenges Faced by the Nabi AS

1. Surah 10 Verse 15: (Muhammad AS Must conform to Scriptures of Aforetime)

وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ لَّقَالُوا
الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا انْتِزَاعًا لِّمَا
عَبَدُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي
أَنْ أُوَدِّعَهُمْ مِنْ تَلْقَائِهِمْ إِنِّي خَشِيتُ
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ أَمْرًا مِّنْ دُونِ أَمْرِ رَبِّي
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

"O *Rasool!* When Our verses are recited to these people those who do not believe in the law of *Mukaf'at* say: "Bring a *Quran* different from this or alter some of its provisions." Say: "It is not for me to make any changes therein according to my wishes. I follow only that which is revealed to me. Indeed, I fear the chastisement of the Day of Reckoning if I go against my *Rabb*."

2. Surah 11 Verse 13: (Challenge by Allah to produce Similar as Qur'an)

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ
سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مَفْعُولَاتٍ وَإِذْعُوا مِن
أَسْطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

"These people also say that you have fabricated the *Quran*. Say to them: "Bring of your devising ten *Suwar* like it and associate with whomever you wish besides *Allah* in doing so if what you say is true (Also refer: 2/23, 10/38). But if you and those whom you associate cannot accept this challenge, then it should become clear to you that the *Quran* has been sent down by *Allah* out of His knowledge alone and that there is no authority in the universe besides Him. Ask them: "Will you not submit to it?"

3. Surah 29 Verse 51: (Direction for those who want Eiman)

أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ
يَتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَ
ذِكْرَى لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

“Ask them, is it not enough that through you, the Almighty has revealed this Code of Life for them? For the people who believe in its truthfulness, the Quran will point to the sources of nourishment and *Rahmat*, and serve as a reminder to them about the direction they should take at every crucial cross-road of life.”

4 Surah 68 Verse 9: (Disbelievers want Muhammad to compromise) وَذُوا أَوْلَادِهِمْ قَيْدَ هُنُونَ

These people have now adopted such tactics so that you may become exasperated with the accusations and agree to compromise with them. (In other words) “They want you to budge from your position. Then they will become soft and reach some compromise.” (This is exactly what is being promoted by persons forcing Taurat, Injeel and Zabur down people’s throats). However, you should never agree with them, because the truth is unchangeable. (Even if it shifts a little, truth becomes false and therefore it is a defeat). On the contrary, falsehood loses nothing, no matter what position it takes. If it is false, it will stay false. There is only one correct answer; and false answers can be in hundreds.

5 Surah 2 Verse 23ⓂIf not prepared clear arguments then Produce one Verse like those in The Qur’an)

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا
 فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ
 مِمَّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

“If after reviewing such persuasive arguments and clear evidence, you are still in doubt and perplexed about the truth of this Book (Code of life) which We have revealed to you through our *Rasool*, then there is a simple way to resolve this problem. Produce only one Surah like any Surah from this Book. If you cannot do this single-handedly, ask various thinkers in your society to co-operate with you in producing the like of just one Surah; accept this challenge to prove, if what you say is true.”

6. Surah 17 Verse 74 (Quran saved the Nabi AS)

وَلَوْلَا أَن يَتَّبِعْتَنكَ لَعَدَّ كَيْدَكَ تُرْكًا
 لَّهُمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿٧٤﴾

“Had you not adhered steadfastly to Our Laws, you might have leaned a little towards them” 68/9

7. Surah 10 Verse 38 (Challenge of Allah Repeated)

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ اخْتَرَاهُ ظُلْمًا فَاتُّوا بِسُورَةٍ
 مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مِمَّن اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِمَّن دُونِ
 اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

“Do they still say that the *Quran* is not from *Allah* but that the *Rasool* has fabricated it himself? Say to them: “If you think so then bring forth even a *Surah* like it and associate with you whosoever you wish besides *Allah* to do so, if you are truthful.”

B) A Little Glimpse of History in the Qur’an Also

8 Surah 10 Verse 39/40 (Knowledge, Results of Qur’anic Laws and History)

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيظُوا بِهِ وَعِلْمِهِمْ
 كَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَبُوءُ بِاللَّهِ وَرَبِّهِمْ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَرَبِّهِمْ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَرَبِّكَ أَعْلَمُ
 بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

(In principle, the contents of the *Quran* may be understood by the following means:

- i) Through human knowledge reaching such a point of advancement that it can comprehend its contents;
- ii) Through the results produced by a system based upon *Quranic* laws and values; and
- iii) Through **historical evidence showing** what kind of results were produced by various systems in the past.)

“These people do not resort to any of the above means but still go on discrediting the *Quran*. It is simply *Zulm* oppression. If they were to apply any of the above means, it is possible that at least some of them may come to believe. The rest will be those who are bent upon creating *Fas’ad*, corruption.”

After having presented all the challenges that the Nabi AS faced in propagating the Qur’an and Islam let’s now

look at Surah 10 Verse 39 wherein Allah uses the word **فَانظُرْ**, *Fanzur*, meaning loosely that , “**then see what was the consequence of the wrongdoers**” (the word “see” should be looked at very intently) this from its

root of **نَظَرَ** means (in the context of the above discussion): with the perfect and imperfect tenses *Nazara*; **يَنْظُرُ** *yanzuru*: to see with the eyes; to deliberate upon something; to assess; to give attention to. Ibn Faaris

too, says that it means to deliberate and to inspect. In the Qur’an derivatives of **نَظَرَ** have meaning that the reader may think is different but on reflection, it would be found that they all have a link to the root.

The above Verse 39 and the explanation of **فَانظُرْ** emphasizes that there is a requirements of the *M’umin* to study the people of the previous Scriptures and *Wahi* with the intention of really understanding where and why they had gone astray so that the followers of the Qur’an can substantially avoid those pitfalls although the Qur’an Guides us about it. One more Ayat will also help to understand further the requirement of the Qur’an, in:

9. Surah 30 Verse 9 (History and Investigation)

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا
 كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
 كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَنَارُوا الْأَرْضَ
 وَعَمَرُوهَا أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ
 رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
 لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

“If they do not want to reflect on the outer universe or their inner selves, then they should at least see what the historical landmarks prove. **If for this purpose they travel the world with their eyes open, they will see the end result of the nations which had also adopted a similar attitude.** Such nations were greater in strength and power. They tilled the soil and dug out the hidden treasures of nature; they populated it in greater numbers; and they had far more habitats than the ones being addressed now. Then their *Rusul* came to them with visible and clear Divine Laws. (Before you are told about what happened to them after that, it should be kept in mind that *Allah* the Almighty has never destroyed any nation unjustly, without any cogent reason.) The nations, in fact, commit *zulm*, oppression, on themselves and are thus destroyed.”

This Verse very clearly “commands” that one should travel the earth and study what has happened to those who had rejected the *Wahi* of Allah. For me this would mean the studying of history in its very many facets; books, biographies, archaeological findings, anthropology and of course the religious writings. In all instances, the Al Furqaan (yardstick or touchstone) would be the Book of Allah. It is not enough just to say the latter without making any attempts of doing the former. This would be hypocrisy.

For further erudition and research please also refer to the following Verses. I hope that we would not start looking for inner meanings and extensions rather than just following the simple understandings, which are straightforward.

Just a few examples have been used to illustrate that the Qur’an is

Tibyan – Explanation of all Facets

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةً وَدُشُرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

“And O Messenger AS! We have sent to you our Book (Qur’an), which explains all facets in great detail, and it is Guidance, Mercy and Good News, for those who are obedient.” Surah 16 Verse 89. “Explaining all facets” does not mean every science and technology, but the fact that if one follows the Guidance of the Qur’an, and uses one’s required intellect that Allah has bestowed mankind with, no science would be too onerous or difficult. This is one way of developing the latent faculties in man, referred to as bounty of Allah, or Ruhana.

We should also remember that the Qur’an has not given details, besides Guidance and Laws, about the different sciences, alluded to in Page 3 of Item 9 above; and this leads us to Surah 16 Verse 43:

Quran A Book of Guidance – Not History Anthropology Science etc –Ask Those who know

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوحِيَ
إِلَيْهِمْ فَسَأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

“Time and again, the unbelievers ask why a human being has been sent as a *Rasool*. Tell them, O *Rasool* that the *Rusul* sent before you were all human beings and endowed with revelation. If your opponents do not know this let them ask for corroboration from the *Ahl-ul-Kit’ab* (Surah 21 Verse 7 is almost word for word as Surah 16 Verse 43).” Without studying the ways of the Ahl-ul-Kitab how do we really get to grips with their devious ways and what they had done; once again, we do rely on the Qur’an. It is not surprising that this Verse is in Surah Nahl, The Bee, for to understand the workings of the bee, one needs to make very intensive investigations and research. And, of course, those who know are never like those who do not know:

Knowledge and Ignorance not same

هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ , and only men of understanding mind.

These references give other incidences of the “historical” requirements for a *M’umineen*, although directed to unbelievers.

- ☞ Sura 22 Ayah 46
- ☞ Sura 27 Ayah 69
- ☞ Sura 29 Ayah 20
- ☞ Sura 30 Ayah 42
- ☞ Sura 30 Ayah 9
- ☞ Sura 35 Ayah 44
- ☞ Sura 40 Ayah 21
- ☞ Sura 40 Ayah 82
- ☞ Sura 47 Ayah 10
- ☞ Sura 6 Ayah 11

A personal comment from me would be to ask that: If Allah has not forbidden the study of the Scriptures that were revealed and changed before the Qur’an, so that one can make comparisons with the accuracy of Quran and the changed historical scriptures (the above arguments present the contrary), then it becomes necessary for Believers to make the research and ensure the correctness of the Quran as it claims by itself. BUT DOING THIS RESEARCH IS FAR FROM FOLLOWING ITS COMMAND WHEN THE QURAN IS THE ULTIMATE SOURCE.

May Allah Guide us all. O Allah make us all approach the Qur’an with sincerity and humbleness, for it is not anyone’s private property, it is for the Guidance of Mankind, EVEN THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK TODAY.

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