

*In the name of Allah, The most Gracious, Ever Merciful*

**Response to Criticism on the Holy Quran**

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تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ \*

كَيْتَبُ فَصَّلَتْ آيَتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا يُقَوْمِ  
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

قُلْ لِّمَنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى  
أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ  
بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ  
ظَهِيرًا ﴿٨٩﴾

Respected Chairperson, Distinguished Guests and my most Revered Brothers and Sisters

It is my privilege to address you today on the subject of Response to Criticism on the Holy Quran.'

The verses of the Holy Quran which I have just recited succinctly describe its origin. They challenge all people

for all time who deny the divine origin of this formidable Scripture.

Allah the Exalted says:

*"This is a revelation from the Gracious, the Merciful".*

(41.3)

*"A Book, the verses of which have been expounded in detail — the Qur'an in clear, eloquent language — for a people who have knowledge" (41:4)*

*Say, "If mankind and the Jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another." (17.89)*

For those who understand, these verses are an inalienable truth. All those who have attempted to malign the Holy Qur'an have ultimately failed in their wretched endeavours. Although the pagan Arabs created malicious rumours about the Holy Qur'an as it was being revealed, their mischievous efforts were fruitless. During the lifetime of the Holy prophet (saw), the vast majority of Arabia accepted the Holy Quran as

the word of Allah also accepting the Holy Prophet (saw) as its source recipient.

Allah has declared that the Holy Qur'an is the highest teaching that was revealed to the crown and seal of the prophets, Muhammad (saw) and that no new scripture would be revealed after it.

The Holy Qur'an comprises teachings based on eternal truths incapable of being successfully assailed. It is the most comprehensive and exacting almanac of the future of all creation that mankind has ever witnessed.

The victory of the Holy Quran is therefore no surprise, so much so that, the Holy Qur'an is now one of the most widely read and sacredly held books that has ever existed.

## **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE HOLY QURAN**

Whether historical or contemporary, the challenges to the Holy Qur'an are in all cases superficial spasms which lack penetrative analysis. Flippant as they may be, the opponents of the Holy Qur'an have three main allegations:

1. the authenticity of the text of the Holy Quran;
2. the structure and style of its Chapters; and

3. their perception of some of its teachings.

Some argue that the Holy Quran is composed by the Holy Prophet (saw) of earlier Commentaries of the Talmud, and the Old Testament.

This is not true. Prophethood is bestowed upon men whom God has chosen because of their perfections. God makes them instruments through whom His message is revealed to the world.

The inspiration of a Prophet is directly through God. He owes nothing to anyone in this world.

The truth is that whenever the Holy Prophet (saw) received a revelation, he would ask for a scribe and dictate to him the text of the revelation he had received.

The Prophet is not a scholar who learns through books certain truths, nor one who learns from other human beings transmitting that learning.

Accordingly, the Holy Quran is not a collection of acquired knowledge but a pristine pure divine revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet of Islam (saw).

In support of its faithful transcription, a well-known historian, Theodor Noldeke (1836-1930) who won the prize of the French Academy for his history of the Holy Quran writes:

*"The efforts of European Scholars to prove the existence of later interpolations in the Holy Quran have failed."* (Enc. Britannica 9<sup>th</sup> Edn. – Quran)

### **The Structure and Style of the Holy Qur'an**

Some suggest that several verses of the Holy Quran have been abrogated. Many base such objections on a misguided understanding of the following verse in the Holy Quran:

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ  
مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا ۗ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ  
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾

*"Whatever Message We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than that or the like*

*thereof. Dost thou not know that Allah has the power to do all that He wills? (Ch. 2 v 107)"*

In fact the abrogation referred to above is of messages and commands contained in pre-Islamic Scriptures, not abrogation of any of the verses of the Holy Quran.

There is significant evidence to support this. In the Holy Quran, God has vouchsafed to Prophet Muhammad (saw):

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

(15: 10)

*"Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian" (Ch. 15 v 10)*

This was a grand and unique Prophecy. God expressly declared that the Holy Quran would receive His Guardianship for all time and the Holy Quran shall remain preserved in every way.

Even non-Muslims have accepted the truth of that prophecy.

More than 1200 years after its revelation, Sir William Muir (1819-1905), a world-renowned Orientalist, best

known for his scholarly work on Islam and Prophet Muhammad (saw), affirmed this Prophecy concluding-  
*"We may, upon the strongest presumption affirm that every verse of the Quran is the genuine and unaltered composition (The life of Muhammad xxviii)."*

This preservation was made possible due to the numerous safe-guards implemented by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw). In addition to having every verse transcribed and arranged in Chapters during his lifetime he personally taught and supervised the memorisation of the entire Holy Quran.

In this age, Allah continues to safeguard this book through His special people. He has sent His reformer, the Promised Messiah (as) to safeguard Islam from the wrongdoers who would mislead and misdirect by attempting to introduce alterations into the Holy Qur'an or bring replacements in its place. The failed publication of Furqan ul Haq is one such futile example where an American evangelical Christian church tried to create a new manuscript intermixed with portions of the Holy Qur'an. Needless to say, it was totally unsuccessful.



The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam believes that the word of God cannot be abrogated. The Promised Messiah (as) states –

*"The Holy Quran is that authentic, pure and final Word of God in which man has absolutely no involvement, not even to the extent of a dot or stroke. In all its contexts, in all its words and meaning, it is from Allah the Exalted in totality and no sect of Muslims has any excuse not to accept it as such. Its each and every word has an excellent order of continuation and succession. It is an immutable revelation that will always remain safe from any kind of change or interpolation."*

### **Structure and sequencing**

Critics allege that the structure and sequencing of the Holy Qur'an is haphazard and based on length – the longer Chapters in the beginning and the shorter ones towards the end.

Karen Armstrong alleges in her *book 'A History of God'* that after the demise of the Holy Prophet (saw) the

editors put the longest Chapters at the beginning and the shortest at the end" (A History of God pg. 140).

Of course Armstrong is quite wrong. Surah Al Shuara the second longest Chapter with 228 verses is positioned not at the front as Armstrong's logic would suggest, but at the 26<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Holy Quran.

Equally, why Al Fatiha, one of the shortest Chapters at just 7 verses, is the first Chapter of the Holy Quran?

It is obvious then, that sheer length was not the organising principle of Quranic Chapters. Neither were the editors, as Armstrong dubs them, responsible for their arrangement.

It is clear therefore that these allegations have no basis at all.

Addressing both the compilation and arrangement of the Holy Quran, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) writes:

*"It is sometimes asserted that the arrangement of the Chapters of the Quran is the work of Hadrat Osman (ra). This is not correct.*

*Both intrinsic and extrinsic evidence conclusively shows that the present arrangement of the Chapters and*

*verses of the Holy Quran was effected by the Holy Prophet (saw) himself under the guidance of divine revelation."*

## **CHALLENGES TO ITS TEACHINGS**

In recent years, there has been a renewed intensity in attacks on the Holy Quran with an objective of defaming Islam and challenging its teachings.

At a religious level, Christian, Jewish and Hindu scholars have sought to attack and defame the Holy Quran. Part of the reason for that must be that Islam fulfils the needs of the time and people are turning towards Islam after examining the teachings of the Holy Quran.

During the lifetime of the Promised Messiah (as), a Christian priest, Imaduddin wrote a book by the name of "Tauzeenul Aqwal" specifically criticizing and vilifying the Holy Qur'an.

The Promised Messiah in reply wrote the book, "*Noorul Haq*", in which he profoundly revealed the depth of The Holy Quran's inherent knowledge and distinguished teachings. The Promised Messiah (as) stated that:

*"God Almighty has raised me so that I expose to the world more buried treasures of the Holy Qur'an and purify and cleanse those buried treasures of the vicious muck of criticism heaped upon them by the opponents of Islam."*

Such unfounded vilification continues. On 20<sup>th</sup> March 2011, a Christian pastor in Gainesville, Florida, America, by the name of Terry Jones, put the Holy Quran on what he called "trial". He presided over this trial as a judge and appointed a jury comprising of 12 members. On receiving the 'guilty' verdict of the so called jury, he oversaw the burning of the Holy Quran. He repeated his devilish act again on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2012.

He claimed that Islam is a religion of violence, bloodshed and terrorism. As I will go on to explain, nothing could be further from the truth.

Terry Jones is joined by Fay Weldon, an English author of the book 'Sacred Cows', Conor Cruise O'Brien, an Irish politician and historian and a Canadian Christian missionary called Don Richardson. Richardson quotes Ch.2: 179 in his book, "Secrets of the Qur'an"

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ  
فِي الْقَتْلِ ط

*"O ye who believe! Equitable retaliation in the matter of the slain is prescribed for you" (2: 179).*

He does so out of context, to create a false association between the Holy Qur'an and bloodshed.

In reality, this verse comprises a very important principle of civil law that is equality of man and necessity of handing out proportionate punishment to all offenders without distinction. That aligns fully with the modern day principle expounded in Dicey's Rule of Law.

Richardson further argues that Islam does not grant freedom of religion. He quotes another verse of the Holy Qur'an that is Ch.2:194

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ  
الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ ط

*"And fight them until there is no persecution and religion is professed only for Allah" (2:194).*

In doing so, again he misleads by stripping the reference of any existential, historical and textual context. In doing so he grossly misinforms readers. When the preceding and following verses are read, it becomes clear that Islam treats war only as a tool of self defense.

Secularists have also challenged the Holy Qur'an. Dutch parliamentarian and Islamophobe, Geert Wilders, is the author of *"Marked for Death; Islam's war against the West and Me"*, and producer of the widely condemned documentary *"Fitna"* which attempts to

paint the Holy Qur'an as a violent book which incites to evil. His principal criticism of Islam is similar to that of Terry Jones; that the Holy Qur'an incites to violence, extremism and aggression.

Wilders claims that the Holy Qur'an prescribes death as a punishment for apostasy. This is not true. Wilders fails to give a single verse in support of his patently false accusation, precisely because none exists- the Holy Qur'an addresses apostates

إِنْ اسْتَطَاعُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ  
 دِينِهِ قِيمَتُهُ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ  
 أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَأُولَئِكَ  
 أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١٨﴾

specifically saying:

*"And who so from among you turns back from his faith and dies while he is a disbeliever. It is they whose works shall be vain in this world and the next. These*

*are the inmates of the fire and therein shall they abide”*  
(2:218).

After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw), the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as) through his writings and discourses was the most vociferous defender of the Holy Qur’an that mankind has ever seen. He proved that all such allegations were not only baseless, but that the Holy Quran was far superior to every other Scripture.

He cogently demonstrated that the Holy Quran points out the deficiencies of previous Scriptures, and corrects all their shortcomings. He challenged the entire world to counter his arguments in defence of the Holy Quran.

In response to criticisms against the Holy Quran, His successors, the Khalifas of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community took up its defence with vigour and ultimately, tremendous success.

Hadrath Musleh Maud (ra) commenting on objections to the Holy Qur’an said,



*"to criticize is an easy exercise. Those who refuse to accept the truth, limit their attacks to such criticism and never present any solid arguments. They criticise the Holy Qur'an but never present any other teaching that could be compared to the one in the Holy Qur'an, let alone be superior to it."*

His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, in the most decisive terms obliterated the detractors allegations. Through comprehensive speeches, he challenged their rhetoric reiterating that Allah is the source of all knowledge, that Quranic teachings are beyond any reproach and that whilst enemies may try their utmost they can never create its equal. He also elucidated that Muslims should react to such disdainful enmity by peacefully presenting the beauties of the Holy Qur'an through their word and deed, so that the world itself condemns the perpetrators.

Let me now briefly address the responses to these criticisms. Underlying the objections raised by Imaduddin, Jones, Weldon, O'Brien and Richardson is

an unfounded perspective that Islam is a faith unsuited to the modern age. A faith that was established when there was no understanding of science or human rights. Their presumptions highlight their monumental lack of understanding of the Holy Quran, which is without doubt the most comprehensive human charter that ever has and ever will exist.

At this point, it is worth reiterating that Islam does not specifically belong to any geographical location. The Holy Qur'an declares that the east and the west both belong to God.

The Promised Messiah (as) says:

*"The Holy Quran aims at the reform of the whole world and is not addressed to any particular people but states plainly that it has been revealed for the benefit of the whole of mankind and that the reform of everyone is its purpose"* (Essence of Islam, vol.1, p471).

The Holy Qur'an therefore presents solutions not out of any resentment for the west, but out of love for humanity vouchsafing for mankind every human right.

The Holy Qur'an in its entirety teaches freedom of religion, conscience, peaceful coexistence of humanity,

racial and economic equality and recognizes human diversity.

The critics of Islam allege that the Holy Qur'an allows the use of force and coercion to convert others to Islam. This is another false allegation. The fact is that freedom of conscience and belief are amongst the basic principles of Islam. Compelling a person through coercion to accept a religion or to punish a person for leaving a religion is clearly forbidden.

Islam's concept of freedom of conscience and belief is perfectly compatible with, and I would argue, a precursor to an important charter of our time, The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Islam's compatibility with article 18 of the UDHR follows from the Quranic verse, "*there shall be no compulsion in religion and whoever rejects the faith his deeds have doubtless come to naught and in the hereafter he will be among the losers*" (2:257).

Underlying freedom of religion is Islam's guarantee of justice. In responses to those criticisms that Islam is

unjust, the Holy Qur'an further emphasizes the pivotal role of justice for all without any distinction. Everyone is answerable to Allah while dispensing justice.

Allah commands,

*"Do not let hostility towards a people incite a Muslim or a Muslim state to act unjustly towards them."*

Justice, even towards one's enemy, is a unique feature of Islam and the Holy Qur'an. Muslims are required to be just even in times of war, with self-defence being the only justification for war.

Those principles are precisely why The Holy Qur'an says that the killing of an innocent person is tantamount to killing all mankind. This is an injunction which is absolute and without exception.

The dreadful picture of Islam that is presented in the West by some, and the concept of Jihad that is practised by some in the Islamic world today have no basis in the Holy Quran. Neither do any such examples exist in the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam (saw).

The reality is that a number of violent extremists have created gross misunderstandings about Holy Quran. The fact is that in Chapter 25, verse 53 of Holy Quran Muslims are obligated to do Jihad by introducing through kind words and loving actions, the beautiful teachings of Islam.

In the context of the above stated verses to accuse the Holy Quran of encouraging warfare is false, unjust and tantamount to inflaming religious bigotry.

The worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim community rejects the radical view of Jihad. We categorically declare that there is no room for shedding blood in the name of religion. The appropriate response to written attacks on Islam is by the pen. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, wrote more than 80 books which was the true manifestation of Jihad by the pen.

In response to Wilders and others' criticisms, Islam does not prescribe punishment for apostasy. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly enjoins patience in the face of blasphemy. Blasphemy is condemned on moral and

ethical grounds but no physical punishment is prescribed in Islam.

Criticisms that the Holy Qur'an allegedly restricts freedom of speech and expression are false. The fourth Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) said:

*"Islam goes one step further than any other religion in granting man the freedom of speech and expression."*

The truth is that God grants the right of free speech to people of all faiths. How they choose to exercise this right can and will be judged by God alone.

In worldly matters, Islam enjoins obedience to those who are in authority.

God Almighty says in the Holy Quran -

*"Oh ye who believe, obey Allah and obey His messenger and those who are in authority among you"*  
(4:60).

Allah forbids anarchy of any kind, even that exercised in the name of reform.

Allah admonishes in Ch2 v.13 -

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِنْ  
لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

*"Beware, it is surely they who create disorder, but they do not perceive it."*

The Holy Qur'an is also very particular about the rights of all humans particularly the vulnerable and women.

1400 years after women's rights were vouchsafed in the Holy Quran, American Justice, Pierre Craibitts, has rightly observed,

*"Muhammad 1400 years ago assured the mothers, wives, and daughters of Islam a rank and dignity not yet generally assured to women by the laws of the west."*

The emancipation of women was very dear to the Holy Prophet's heart. A high profile western convert to

Islam, Yvonne Ridley, states that the Holy Quran is a "magna carta for women".

Many leading philosophers, scholars and academics express great admiration for the Holy Qur'an. German Philosopher, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, said -

*"gradually [the Holy Quran] attracts, it astonishes, and, in the end forces admiration."*

Professor Laura Vaccia Vaglieri explains,

*"The miracle of Islam par excellence is the Qur'an. This is a book which cannot be imitated. Each of its expressions is a comprehensive one, and its style is original."*

Bernard Shaw who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1925 said,

*"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in the highest esteem because of its wonderful vitality. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad, that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."*



John Burton writes in his book "*Collection of the Quran*"

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*"the text which has come down to us is in the form in which it was organised and approved by the Prophet."*

Sir William Muir writes:

*"there is probably in the world no other work which has remained 12 centuries with so pure a text."*

Dr Morris Buchaille writes in his book, '*The Bible, the Quran and Science*' -

*"Today's editions of the Quran are all faithful reproductions of the original copies. In the case of the Quran there are no instances of rewriting or corruption of the text over the course of time."*

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be upon him, writes about the Holy Quran,

*"Of all the revealed books which we find today, it is the Holy Quran whose claims of having been revealed from God is established on the strength of irrefutable arguments. The doctrines it propounds are so perfect*

*and well founded that they are entirely supported by powerful and irrefutable evidence."*

Our beloved Imam, Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Khalifatul Masih V (atba), May Allah be his Helper said in a recent Sermon:

*"We invite our adversaries to look at the teachings and contents of the Holy Quran attentively and discern its excellences with respect to its spiritual, moral and social guidance of mankind"* (Friday Sermon 29.02.2008).

The Holy Quran tells us that the people who have taken up to malign the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the Holy Quran will not escape the consequences and we have seen the fulfilment of this warning throughout history. The consequences are imminent if the behaviour is not changed; no false God will be able to save them when the time of consequences arrives.

The honour of the Holy Quran cannot be maintained by placing a price on heads or wrongful demonstrations. When these teachings become evident to the world, God's decree will manifest to be a mercy for believers and a balm for injured hearts.

Let us be clear, the Holy Qur'an is indeed the book that was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the seal of the prophets and has stayed unaltered. The attempts to alter it have neither succeeded in the past and nor will they succeed in the future for Allah has promised to safeguard it.

In the face of baseless criticism, evil and unfounded accusations and violent attacks against the Holy Quran, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a role model of peace responding to challenges against Islam and the Holy Quran through unbeatable logic, cogent argument and a global effort to propagate the true teachings of the Holy Quran.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community proliferates and elucidates the beauties of the Holy Qur'an, holding thousands of Holy Qur'an exhibitions and distributing copies of it for the world to see its light and glorious truth.

And why would we not? The Holy Qur'an offers the only way forward to peace and the resolution of mankind's problems. The Holy Qur'an is a source of tremendous

wisdom and a guarantee of the serene existence of mankind. It is a pathway to peace in this world and a conduit to the sweet fruits of the next. It is a book of perfection, a guide to all things and a source of admiration for all right thinking people. It is a book of unmatched qualities, irreplaceable wisdom and contains within it so many inherent beauties that millions upon millions of God's creation are besotted by it. May all of mankind have the honour and privilege of beholding even a morsel of its penetrative insights.

And may Allah enable us to suffuse our soul, our heart and our mind with its dazzling radiance and through our word and deed enable us to spread its effulgence to the corners of the world.

And my last words are, All Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds!