

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

CONTENTS

- LESSON 1: "Islam is the Qur'an alone"
- LESSON 2: "Obeying Allah and His Messenger"
- LESSON 3: "The good character of the Messenger"
- LESSON 4: "'Hadith' and 'sunnah' used in the Qur'an"
- LESSON 5: "How to perform salaah"
- LESSON 6: "Pillars"
- LESSON 7: "The Sunnah of Allah"
- LESSON 8: "The Messenger did not know the future"
- LESSON 9 "Wife-beating in 4:34"
- LESSON 10: "Sample answer to the "Combat kit against the 'Qur'an-Alone' Muslims""
- LESSON 11: "The qiblah is Mecca"
- LESSON 12: "Inheritance-incompetence"
- LESSON 13: "The punishment for theft"
- LESSON 14: Objections to a Shi'ite regarding "temporary marriage"
- LESSON 15: "Pre-pubescent marriage"
- LESSON 16: "Debates about Islam intending to conquer the world"
- LESSON 17: "An application of the Qur'an as constitution"
- LESSON 18: "Refutation to certain verses used against "Qur'an-alone" Muslims"
- LESSON 19: "Introduction to ahadith"
- LESSON 20: "The clear delivery"
- LESSON 21: "How to recognise and warn idol-worshippers"
- LESSON 22: "Take what the Messenger gives you"
- LESSON 23: "Abortion"
- LESSON 24: "Abrogation"
- LESSON 25: "Those with knowledge"
- LESSON 26: "Reliability of sahaba"
- LESSON 27: "Ma Malakat Aymanukum"
- LESSON 28: "40:70"
- LESSON 29: "The fundamentals of belief"
- LESSON 30: "Muhammad was literate"
- LESSON 31: "The Qur'an was compiled in the Messenger's lifetime"
- LESSON 32: "Women's dress and other issues"
- LESSON 33: "Punishment for fornication/adultery"
- LESSON 34: "Prohibition of music"
- LESSON 35: "Masturbation"
- LESSON 36: "Shi'ites and 33:33"
- LESSON 37: "War-spoils"
- LESSON 38: "Can men rape their wives?"
- LESSON 39: "The first debate question"
- LESSON 40: "Other types of Revelation"
- LESSON 41: "Ask those who know"
- LESSON 42: "Examples of example"
- LESSON 43: "Progressive souls"
- LESSON 44: "An unnecessary evil"
- LESSON 45: "Directed answers to some misguided questions"

The Qur'an is a Book of moral and spiritual guidance (e.g. 7:52, 17:9), similitudes/examples (e.g. 3:61, 17:89, 66:1-5),

narratives (e.g. 12:3), parables (e.g. 14:24) and real-time Revelations (e.g. 9:5, 33:59). All of these attributes contribute to the guiding quality of its Message.

All Revelation permanent to its addressees is included (e.g. 33:50). Where required, context is provided by the Qur'an itself.

"Say: What! Do you then bid me serve others than Allah, O ignorant men?"

Qur'an 39:64

Allah is sufficient for the believers (3:173, 4:45, 4:70, 4:79, 4:81, 4:132, 4:166, 4:171, 8:62, 8:64, 9:59, 9:129, 10:29, 13:43, 17:96, 29:52, 33:3, 33:39, 39:36, 39:38, 48:28, 65:3).

We serve Allah by following the Qur'an (3:79, 11:1-2)

As Muslims, we believe that the content of each hadith should be the basis on which they are judged (as examples). Currently, the "chain-of-transmission" is the thing.

Hadith-followers cannot produce a hadith or hadith-collection actually approved by Allah or the Prophet.

Have they personally met the scholars around Bukhari's era? As far as the "Science of Hadith" is concerned, how do you know that the sources saying other sources are reliable were themselves reliable? Failure to satisfy these challenges means they disobey 17:36:

"And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that."

Qur'an 17:36

As followers of Allah, people should bring absolute proof of any religious claim (2:111, 6:57, 8:42, 14:10, 21:24, 27:64, 28:75, 52:38). "Isnad" is not absolute proof.

"Isnad" consists of humans, and those whom we obey in matters of religion must be able to guide themselves to truth (10:35), and must control our sustenance (29:17). Whoever follows someone besides Allah as a source of religious law/guidance follows a lie (10:32-33, 31:30).

"This is the true narration."

Qur'an 3:62

The most major source of Sunni law (Abu Huraira or ahadith attributed to him) is unreliable.

Readers please be aware that you may not agree with everything in this document, but its prime purpose is to demonstrate that 1) the Qur'an says that only the Qur'an should be followed (as a religious source), and that 2)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Qur'an-alone” Islam is possible. Other things can be discussed at a later time.

INTRODUCTION

Non-Muslims must understand that the “Islam” of today is not Islam.

“Muslims” of today practice teachings besides the Qur'an, and thus disobey it.

Anyone who claims to be Muslim yet follows something besides the Qur'an cannot be Muslim.

What does the Qur'an say on this subject? It says:

“It (the Qur'an) is... a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe.” (12:111)

If it is a distinct explanation of all things, we need nothing else.

“Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear in the Book for men...” (2:159)

Religious guidance is in the Qur'an, and it is clear for all (also see 47:24-26).

From these two verses we see that nothing else is required. The Qur'an forbids it:

“These are the communications of Allah which We recite to you with truth; then in what hadith would they believe after Allah and His communications?” (45:6)

“Hadith” is the precise label that “Muslims” give to what they follow besides the Qur'an.

The Qur'an also says:

“What thing is the weightiest in testimony?” (6:19) “Allah has revealed the best hadith...” (39:23)

The Messenger was only a warner (35:23), warning of the consequences of certain behaviour compared to other behaviour. The Arabic Qur'an was revealed to the Messenger so that he could use it to warn people (6:19, 6:51, 7:2, 19:97, 20:113, 42:7). 38:70 confirms that everything revealed to the Prophet was a part of the warning.

He was not sent to explain it. He only delivered it and taught it (5:99), just as Allah taught it (55:1-2). It was Allah's duty to explain the guidance, not the Messenger's (16:9, 92:12).

Muslims are also expected to study, convey and teach it to those who wish to learn (2:44, 2:121, 3:79, 6:105, 6:156, 7:169, 34:44, 47:24, 68:37).

Insincere readers (and people who do not want to understand it) are diverted from the meaning of the Qur'an (7:146, 17:45-46, 18:57, 22:52, 41:44).

Muslims must follow the Qur'an alone (2:38, 2:63, 2:91, 2:120-121, 2:213, 2:176, 3:32, 3:73, 4:105, 5:3, 5:47-48, 5:99, 6:19, 6:114-115, 6:155-6:157, 7:3, 7:144-147, 7:169-171, 12:111, 17:9, 18:27, 20:113, 20:123-124, 20:133-134, 21:27, 21:45, 22:16, 22:54, 23:49, 23:73, 25:30, 28:49, 28:56, 33:1-2, 33:67, 34:6, 39:23, 39:41, 41:44, 45:6, 50:45, 98:1-8 etc.).

“Muslims” of today neither study it nor judge by it. They follow their traditions.

They say that the Messenger explained it, but God clarified it so that it explains itself (2:99, 3:118, 4:26, 4:176, 10:37, 20:114, 25:33, 75:19). Also see 2:159, 5:15-16, 6:105, 7:52, 7:174, 9:11, 11:1, 16:9, 17:12, 17:89, 18:54, 19:97, 26:193-195, 39:27-28, 42:13, 43:2-3, 44:2, 44:4, 57:17, 65:11.

“And certainly We have made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, but is there anyone who will mind?” (54:17)

54:22, 54:32 and 54:40 repeat these words. To enable us to take heed of the Qur'an, God has made it easy to remember.

Everyone was given the right to ponder over the Qur'an (23:68, 34:46, 38:29, 67:10).

One must accept the entirety of the Book in order to properly use it (3:119).

It is the responsibility of people who claim to believe in the Qur'an to agree on the most Islamic interpretation of ayat. Interpretations contained in the ahadith are merely examples, and we must dispense with them if there are more Qur'anic alternatives. After all, the ahadith were written and interpreted by humans.

Now, let us look at actual Islam:

1) War is only in self-defence and against oppression (2:190, 4:75, 22:39).

For those disturbed by 9:5 and 9:29, see 9:6, 9:13 and 9:30-36. Is it confined just to that time and place? How is it not?

(I have debated this issue, so those interested can see “Lesson 16” in the Manual.)

“Jizya” is derived from “jaza” which conveys “recompense”. It was a recompense for aggression.

Besides that, all taxes must be equitable (5:8).

2) The death-penalty for apostasy was never a part of Islam. Here is what the Qur'an actually says:

“There is no compulsion in the religion (Islam).” (2:256)

“The truth is from your Lord, so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve.” (18:29)

Free expression is allowed (7:87, 10:41, 10:99, 11:28, 39:39-40).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

3) Stoning to death for adultery is not in Islam.

The punishment for Muslim adulterers (male or female) is actually 100 hidings (24:2).

This is whether they were married or not, and it is only for Muslims (providing that non-Muslims make a special request beforehand) (4:15-16, 4:25, 5:42, 24:3, 24:6).

Therefore do not become Muslim and then commit fornication in front of four people (24:4).

4) Marriage must be consensual (2:232, 4:21) and be between two fully-matured people (compare 4:6 to 17:34).

Marriage is about love, respect and commitment (2:187, 2:226-227, 2:228, 2:231, 4:19, 4:34, 4:128, 30:21).

5) Women have equal rights and respect with men (2:238). Their testimonies are equal in all cases.

Women do not have to cover themselves beyond being modest (24:31). Men must also be modest (24:30).

There is no prohibition on fasting or visiting mosques for menstruating Muslim women.

6) Forced circumcision, forced beard-growing, forced medieval dress, honour-killing etc. are not in Islam.

7) Muslims can be friends with those who are friendly towards them (5:57, 60:8).

8) War-captives should be treated well and released when possible (2:177, 4:25, 4:36, 5:89, 16:71, 24:33, 47:4, 90:13).

9) Music is not forbidden in Islam (5:5, 5:87, 7:32, 16:116).

Lyrics should be inoffensive and music should not be excessively loud (3:104, 5:77, 14:24-26, 25:72, 31:19, 33:70, 49:11).

10) Islam is completely compatible with democracy (3:159, 13:11, 42:38, 58:11).

All of these teachings contradict what can be found in the traditions that "Muslims" of today adhere to.

They hope for death for apostasy, deadly blasphemy laws, women in black sacks, no free-expression, no music, death for homosexuals, stoning for adultery, unequal rights and screaming bearded mullahs as your conquerors.

When one starts moulding his or her pre-Islamic medieval traditions into religion, where does it stop?

It stops when people take a stand for what is right. As Muslims, we are standing up for what the religion actually says.

Whether you are Muslim or not, you can help us to end "Islamic" fanaticism and oppression once and for all.

As well as this, you can help us to make the world a better place. Please help spread this message.

LESSON 1: "Islam is the Qur'an Alone"

1) *Muslims follow only the Qur'an:*

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the Word of Allah.

Allah says those who reflect and those who are sure will follow nothing as a religious source except the Qur'an (45:2-6). This is because it is guidance (45:11).

The Qur'an is the best hadith, and Allah guides by it alone (17:9, 28:49, 39:23, 45:6). 35:35, 35:40 and 43:21 confirm that anyone who is to be followed must be followed only because they were given the Book. These people must also adhere to it (39:33). Scholars were not given the Book (also study 9:31).

Islam was completed and perfected by the Qur'an (5:3).

Therefore those who uphold anything else as an obligatory religious source are not Muslims.

2) *The role of the Prophet:*

Nothing was obligatory for the Messenger except delivering the Message (5:99, 16:35). It was Allah's duty to explain the guidance, not the Messenger's (16:9, 92:12).

The Messenger only followed what was revealed to him (2:170, 6:50, 6:106, 7:3, 7:203, 10:15, 10:109, 33:2, 46:9), thus we can reject ahadith and still be Muslims (2:23).

The Messenger was only a warner (35:23), warning of the consequences of certain behaviour compared to other behaviour.

The Arabic Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet so that he could use it to warn the people (6:19, 6:51, 7:2, 19:97, 20:113, 42:7). 38:70 confirms that everything revealed to the Prophet was a part of the warning.

Thus Islam is but the Qur'an and its teachings. The Messenger did not explain the Book, but he gave us the Book explaining all.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

3) *The Qur'an is clear, complete and fully-detailed for guidance:*

The Qur'an emphasises that its non-allegorical verses are clear (3:7). Also study 2:99, 2:159, 3:118, 4:26, 4:176, 5:15-16, 6:105, 7:52, 7:174, 9:11, 10:37, 11:1, 17:12, 17:89, 18:54, 19:97, 25:33, 26:193-195, 39:27-28, 42:13, 43:2-3, 44:2, 44:4, 57:17, 65:11.

The Qur'an is light for guidance (4:174-175, 42:52). Light does not need more light.

The Qur'an contains the complete guidance and makes it clear for all (2:159, 17:9, 34:6, 39:23, 47:24-26).

The Qur'an is already explained by Allah (4:26, 10:37, 18:54, 75:19). Also study 2:99, 2:159, 3:118, 4:176, 5:15-16, 6:105, 7:52, 7:174, 9:11, 11:1, 17:12, 19:97, 25:33, 26:193-195, 39:27-28, 42:13, 43:2-3, 44:2, 44:4, 57:17, 65:11.

Allah says that it is a distinct explanation of all things (12:111).

Muslims are expected to study, convey and teach it to those who wish to learn (2:44, 2:121, 3:79, 6:105, 6:156, 7:169, 34:44, 47:24, 68:37).

The People of the Book did not need a Prophet to help them judge by it (5:42-43). Also study 3:144 and ponder upon its implications.

Insincere readers (and people who do not want to understand it) are diverted from the meaning of the Qur'an (7:146, 17:45-46, 18:57, 22:52, 41:44).

Muslims must follow the Qur'an alone (2:38, 2:63, 2:91, 2:120-121, 2:213, 2:176, 3:32, 3:73, 4:105, 5:3, 5:47-48, 5:99, 6:19, 6:114-115, 6:155-6:157, 7:3, 7:144-147, 7:169-171, 12:111, 17:9, 18:27, 20:113, 20:123-124, 20:133-134, 21:27, 21:45, 22:16, 22:54, 23:49, 23:73, 25:30, 28:49, 28:56, 33:1-2, 33:67, 34:6, 39:23, 39:41, 41:44, 45:6, 50:45, 98:1-8 etc.).

Therefore the Qur'an is enough for our guidance, and needs no special explanation from humans.

4) *The wisdom (al-hikma):*

The wisdom (al hikma) comes from Allah through the Qur'an (17:39, 33:34, 36:2, 43:4, 43:63, 44:4, 54:5).

It is (in part) the ability to recognise truth and adhere to it (2:269, 19:12, 26:21, 26:83, 28:14, 31:2, 31:12, 38:20). See 17:22-38 for specific examples of the wisdom (17:39).

The wisdom is the "recipe" in the Book which when we study/follow, will make us wise. It describes the attributes/"nutrition" of the Book (including the stories) from which we can draw wisdom.

Isa was also taught the Book and the wisdom (3:48), but people were still expected to judge only by the Injeel (5:47).

"And keep to mind what is recited in your houses of the communications of Allah and the wisdom; surely Allah is Knower of subtleties, Aware." (33:34)

The only thing which is ever recited in the Book is the Qur'an (literally "recital"). 33:34 thus confirms that the wisdom is in the Qur'an, being the attributes/"nutrition" of the verses which when followed (somewhat like a recipe), will lead to wise conduct.

One obtains the wisdom by studying the Book. One cannot teach the Book without teaching the wisdom, too.

It also describes the attributes of those who are able to recognise and adhere to truth.

Wisdom is in the Qur'an, not necessarily in men's ahadith. That closes the issue.

5) *"The Book and the judgement/authority":*

Use of the word "and" does not mean there is a separateness (e.g. with "the balance" (42:17 and 57:25)). Rather it indicates that one is within the other.

3:79 says that the Messenger was given the Book and the judgement/authority. Denying this is denying His instructions, not "Qur'an + Sunna" (6:89).

It then says that we should serve Allah by studying and teaching the Book ourselves.

The verse states that although the Messenger is given the Book and the judgement/authority, we should not become devotees of the Messenger but rather of the Message delivered.

The judgement/authority (huk'ma) is what we are supposed to emulate and follow, thus it is the "wise choice".

God does not associate anyone in His huk'ma (18:26, 21:27).

The judgement/authority is in the Qur'an (5:43, 5:50, 6:57, 6:114, 13:37, 42:10, 76:24,).

Thus in order to know how to worship Allah, we must study and teach the Book ourselves (relying on nothing but the Word of Allah).

6) *Challenge*

Allah says that the Messenger only followed what was revealed to him (2:170, 6:50, 6:106, 7:3, 7:203, 10:15, 10:109, 33:2, 46:9).

The Messenger was only a warner (35:23).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

The Arabic Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet so that he could use it to warn the people (6:19, 7:2, 42:7). He could warn only with the Qur'an (50:45).

Nothing was obligatory for the Messenger except delivering the Message (5:99, 16:35). Therefore, nothing else was revealed for religion except the Qur'an.

2:23 says that if anyone is in doubt about the Revelation, they should produce something like it (with divine witnesses/associates).

2:24, 11:13, 17:88 and 52:34 say that this is impossible.

The criterion for believing something besides the Qur'an is that it is like the Qur'an.

Nothing is like the Qur'an, so Muslims cannot believe in anything as a source of law except the Qur'an.

Since ahadith are not preserved, are not verbatim (hence inauthentic), are not like the Qur'an and have only human witnesses, Muslims who adhere to them as obligatory are idol-worshippers.

The Qur'an would destroy the purpose of these verses except for being a clear explanation of religion (2:159, 12:111).

Otherwise Muslims would have to believe in a religion that failed to live up to its own challenge (100% of Sunnism comes from ahadith).

Obedying the Messenger in any way as a separate source of religion means doing this, hence he followed only the Qur'an (2:170, 6:50, 6:106, 7:3, 7:203, 10:15, 10:109, 33:2, 46:9).

Those who claim it is not enough for Islam must accept the challenge in 28:49.

Thus the Qur'an says that those who reflect and who are sure will follow nothing except the Qur'an (45:2-6).

The Qur'an is the best guidance (28:49), therefore those who wish to avoid Hell will follow it alone (77:50).

SUMMARY:

Sunnis claim there was dual Revelation. 2:23 says if we doubt what has been revealed, we must produce something like it. The Messenger only followed what was revealed to him (2:170, 6:50, 6:106, 7:3, 7:203, 10:15, 10:109, 33:2, 46:9). If Sunnis wish to claim that this includes non-Qur'anic Revelation (e.g. "Sunna"), then to be fair the challenge has to apply to that too. The ahadith can be forged, thus anything in the ahadith can be denied and that person will still be a Muslim.

Moreover, an associate to Allah must be called on as witness (2:23). Sunnis take "Muhammad" (scholars) as their associate. There must be a tangible witness, and "Qur'an-Alone" Muslims have the Qur'an as their witness.

This also proves that all permanent law-giving Revelation is arranged in Surat (supported by such verses as 4:105, 6:106 and 5:43-50), and 38:70 confirms that everything revealed to the Messenger was a part of the warning.

13:30, 18:27, 21:45 confirm that everything revealed to the Messenger (for the people) was recited.

7) Conclusion:

Each Muslim must judge by the Qur'an alone ((2:213, 3:23, 4:105, 5:47-48, 6:114)). This is why the Messenger's complaint in the Hereafter will be that people deserted the Qur'an (25:30).

Therefore Sunni and Shia sects are outside of Islam.

LESSON 2: "Obeying Allah and His Messenger"

1) "Allah and His Messenger" means the words of Allah as delivered by the Messenger:

9:1-3 says that an ultimatum is issued by "Allah and His Messenger".

This ultimatum is entirely from Allah since He does not consult the Messenger in His decisions (18:26, 21:27).

Likewise, 33:36 says that people have no choice once "Allah and His Messenger" have decided a matter.

24:48 tells us that "Allah and His Messenger" offer just one judgement between people.

24:49 adds "...if the truth be on their side, they come to him quickly..." confirming 8:20 (8:20 tells us that obeying "Allah and His Messenger" means heeding what the Messenger recites (of the Qur'an), and its consequences).

The Qur'an is the truth (2:40-42, 2:91, 2:119, 2:147, 2:176, 5:48, 10:32-33, 16:102, 29:68, 43:30-31). Anyone who follows another source of law besides Allah is following falsity (10:32-33, 31:30). Also study 39:2-3.

Study 4:12. Read the next verse. Now what does it tell you about obeying "Allah and His Messenger"?

72:23 confirms that "Allah and His Messenger" means "Allah and His Message". Also study 45:6 ("Allah and his ayat").*

The relationship between Author and Deliverer renders "Allah and His Messenger" "one" functioning "entity".

*"These are the ayat of Allah which We recite to you with truth; then in what hadith would they believe after Allah and His ayat?" (45:6)

Notice it says "Allah and his ayat". The ayat are His Message which is delivered via His Messenger. That is what "obey Allah and His Messenger" actually means. It may seem

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

redundant to say “obey Allah and His ayat”, but it means that when we obey His ayat we are obeying the one who supplied them.

- 2) *The Messenger had no religious authority beyond the delivery of the Message:*

6:114-115 states that the Qur'an is the only judgement we can follow, and that it is fully-detailed and complete in truth and justice.

Thus we should not obey any decision that contradicts the Qur'an.

Messengers are made community-leaders (2:124) (they are the first to receive the Message, thus literally they are leaders), but they must lead only according to the Message (21:27, 21:73).

When Messengers pass away, people must continue to govern by the Book alone (5:43-50).

During their lifetimes, Messengers are the chief experts of the Message because they are the first to learn it.

They advise people to follow it with them (19:36, 25:56-57, 34:46, 57:8), but people are expected to study and teach it themselves (2:44, 2:121, 3:79, 6:105, 6:156, 7:169, 34:44, 47:24, 68:37).

All situational/contextual decisions should be in keeping with the principles of the Qur'an (2:176, 4:59, 5:48, 6:114).

Past delivering the Message, Messengers had no more religious authority than anyone else (35:23).

They were not infallible (9:43, 17:93, 18:110, 33:37, 66:1, 80:1-10). This is why even they would be obeyed only in what was reasonable (60:12), and as temporary leaders would seek community consultation in decision-making (3:159).

Muslims are instructed to consult with each other in affairs (42:38).

If the Messenger had absolute power beyond the Qur'an, obeying “what is reasonable” and consultation are meaningless.

Situational matters of disagreement were referred to the Messengers as contextual leaders (4:65, 5:48), and these days they would be referred to authorities judging by the Qur'an (5:48).

Prophet Muhammad had helpers (3:159, 4:83), and if “those in authority” could not resolve a dispute, it would be referred to “Allah and His Messenger” (4:59).

4:59 shows us that “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger” does not refer to two separate sources (i.e. the second “obey” does not constitute separate obedience).

If it did, Islam would be authored by three different entities. The verse instructs: “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger AND those in authority.”

“Those in authority” are not scholars since they would be expected to obey “Allah and His Messenger” anyway.

They were contextual leaders (4:83).

“Those in authority” are being included in the statement that usually only reads “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger”.

Therefore “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger” means obeying the words of Allah delivered by the Messenger, as well as Qur'anic situational decisions made with community consultation (3:159, 42:38). These decisions are derived from the Qur'an, thus they are categorised as obeying the Message/Messenger.

If a parent tells a child: “Obey me and eat your food”, it does not mean that eating the food is separate from obeying the parent. If a parent tells a child: “Obey me and obey your teacher”, the child must obey the teacher in order to act and develop as the parent desires. If the teacher deviates from the curriculum/contract/policy which the parent approves, there will be a contradiction between the teacher and parent.

In addition, disagreements must be referred to “Allah and His Messenger”. It would be impractical to refer disagreements to two sources, thus as confirmed by 9:1-3, “Allah and His Messenger” means the words of Allah given via the Messenger.

BONUS QUESTION:

If “obey Allah and obey the Messenger” means two different sources, this creates a paradox since the Messenger only judged by the Qur'an (5:48, 6:114).

Thus all instances of obeying the Messenger must be according to the Qur'an. Sunnis will say that only the Messenger can explain it, so we have some questions for them to answer:

5:43-50 says that people who do not judge by the Books are kufr, so (again) Sunnis will say only the Prophet can explain it. In 5:42-43, the Qur'an says that the People of the Book do not have to refer to the Messenger to judge by their Book. It says they should not have to come to the Messenger when they have their own Scripture. They should judge by their own Book, but how can they do this if they need a Messenger?

Did the People of the Book have ahadith too? Why would the Qur'an question why they go to another source when they have the Book? It says that they should judge by the Book, not by ahadith. If they had to (pointlessly) judge by ahadith, would they not have to judge them by their Book? If the People of the Book themselves were to judge by their own Scripture, does this not prove that Messengers are not required to explain it? Does not 3:144 support our viewpoint?

- 3) *Following/obeying means adhering to a specific way of life, not minor details:*

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

24:54 tells believers to “obey Allah and obey the Messenger”, but then it says that if people do not, the Messenger’s only duty is to deliver the Message.

This confirms that “obeying the Messenger” means obeying the commandments of Islam, as well as contextual decisions which preserve them (e.g. not running away from war (4:80)).

Such commandments do not concern copying the Prophet past his duty as a Messenger and principled leader (3:79).

25:27 and 25:30 show that “taking a way with the Messenger” means adhering to the Qur’an.

According to 3:31-32 and 14:36, “following” is synonymous with “obeying” (3:31 is complemented by 9:24 which clarifies that loving “Allah and His Messenger” means loving Allah and His way of life (3:31). “Allah and His Messenger represents the “entity” resulting from the relationship between Allah and the Messenger (Allah delivers His words through the Messenger (9:1-3))).

14:35-36, 19:43-44 and 20:43 show that “following” and “obeying” the Messenger means departing from a life of idol-worship.

20:90 does not mean that Haroun was a separate source of law to Musa (20:93), just as Musa was not a separate source of law from Allah.

26:105-111 shows again that “following” is synonymous with “obeying”.

Here (26:108-109) the Messenger says that he requests no reward for giving the people something to follow, and Prophet Muhammad said the same when delivering the Qur’an (6:89-90, 12:104, 38:86, 42:23).

This confirms that giving the people something to follow and obey meant teaching them the Message.

“Be careful of Allah” = “Obey Allah”
“and obey me” = “Obey the Messenger”

Correspondingly, rejecting the Messenger actually means rejecting the Message (26:105), just as following the Messenger means obeying the Message (3:31-32).

73:16 demonstrates that disobeying the Messenger means disobeying the Message.

SUMMARY:

“Obeying” or “following” someone implies accepting or following their particular way of life (e.g. that prescribed in the Qur’an or the making of mischief), and not the particulars of religious practice once the Message itself is accepted. For example:

“My Lord! deliver me and my followers from what they do.”

Qur’an 26:169

Ayat 26:181-184 provide some specific aspects of the way of life prescribed by Allah.

Another example:

“So he incited his people to levity and they obeyed him: surely they were a transgressing people.”

Qur’an 43:54

4) Another View:

4:80 declares that those who obey the Messenger obey Allah.

Sunnis take this highly contextual verse as proof of their point.

Firstly, the Messenger believed in Allah’s words (7:157), thus swearing allegiance to the Messenger was swearing allegiance to Allah (48:10). It is thus obvious that “obeying the Messenger” means “obeying Allah”.

Unfortunately, this (and the Sunni explanation) leads to the conclusion that “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger” means: “Obey Allah and obey Allah”.

4:80 destroys the Sunni viewpoint that we obey the Qur’an by following Muhammad in things outside the Qur’an.

Allah is instructing us to obey the Qur’an by following the one who brings it.

Obeying the Messenger is actually obeying Allah, which is why it says: “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger”.

It means that when we obey Allah, we are automatically obeying the Messenger (and vice-versa).

Remember, “Messenger” means “someone delivering a Message”, not “Muhammad”.

The case of “Allah and His Messenger” meaning the words of Allah via the Messenger should make one realise that “obeying Allah and obeying the Messenger” means: “obeying Allah via obeying the Message (including contextual decisions derived from and thus a part of the Book)”.

It means: “Obey Allah Who orders you to obey the Messenger calling to the way of Allah (the Qur’an), or: “Obey Allah by obeying the Messenger who brings a different way of life and judges by it.”

The Qur’an is a Book of principles (e.g. 5:48, 6:114), thus Qur’anic situational decisions are a part of obeying Allah.

This explains why even those in authority (4:83) are included in “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority” (4:59).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

One is a part of the other (e.g. “the Book and the wisdom” (3:79), or “the Book and the balance” (42:17 and 57:25)).

Again, the case of “Allah and His Messenger” meaning the words of Allah via the Messenger should make one realise that “obeying Allah and obeying the Messenger” means “obeying Allah via obeying the Message (including contextual decisions)”.

So obey Allah Who prescribes Islam (hence “obey Allah”) and obey/make decisions which result from applying the principles of Islam in the Qur’an (“obey the Messenger or those in authority”).

Allah prescribes Islam, and we obey Him by obeying the Message. We obey the Message by obeying the Messenger and following Qur’anic principles (in all our decisions).

Obeying the Messenger was not the only possible means of obeying Allah (if Allah chose otherwise He could have spoken in different ways (42:51)). Thus “and obey the Messenger” is emphasis of more specific means of obeying Allah. This is explored in 7).

Obeying the Messenger means obeying Allah (4:80).

5) *Another View:*

“And keep up prayer and pay zakat and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you.” (24:56)

If obeying the Messenger meant learning from him exactly how ritualistic prayer should be or how much zakat was to be enforced for all time, these two commandments (prayer and zakat) would not need to be listed (Allah said He taught prayer in 2:198 and 2:239, before this verse. Zakat was also detailed in 2:219)). Rather, they are the same thing in that obeying the Messenger means obeying the Message which tells us how to be practicing Muslims. Prayer and zakat are detailed in the Qur’an, but there are obviously other precepts and principles in Islam. Prayer and zakat are being emphasised in this ayah.

The expression “keep up prayer and pay the zakat and obey the Messenger” is similar to the sweeping statement in 62:2. Reciting the Revelation, teaching the Book and purifying believers were the functions of the Messenger, but it was all accomplished via one delivery (5:99, 14:1). Similarly, keeping up prayer, paying zakat and obeying the Messenger are all under the umbrella of obeying the Qur’an (hence Allah). They are the attributes of it. In 98:5 we find that obeying Allah, keeping up prayer and paying zakat are the fundamentals, thus obeying the Messenger results from practicing such things.

The same expression is used in 9:71, although there it says “keep up prayer, pay zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger”. This shows that “obeying the Messenger” is no different to “obeying Allah and His Messenger (Message)”. Keeping up prayer and paying zakat amounts to obeying the Messenger and thus Allah, just as reciting the Qur’an and teaching it amounted to purifying believers.

“And they say: We believe in Allah and in the messenger and we obey; then a party of them turn back after this, and these are not believers.” (24:47)

The phrase “believe in Allah and in the Messenger” is synonymous with “obey Allah and obey the Messenger”.

Just because one believes in Allah and believes in the Messenger, one does not believe in two separate sources of religion (two Gods). The human who is the Messenger exists and requires no faith to believe in, so the Messengership which consists of Allah’s Qur’an is what requires belief.

Likewise, “obey Allah and obey the Messenger” means obey the Messenger via obeying the Qur’an. Thus, we obey Allah by obeying the Messenger.

One cannot believe in the Messenger of Allah without believing in Allah, and one cannot obey the Messenger without obeying Allah. If you obey Muhammad as a religious source (i.e. you take something besides the Qur’an as a religious source), you break the chain and you are obeying Muhammad without obeying Allah.

The ayat 4:61 and 5:104 declare that people should “come to what Allah has revealed and (come) to the Messenger”. As per 24:47, this does not imply “coming to” two different sources of religion. The Messenger only followed “what was revealed” (2:170, 6:50, 6:106, 7:3, 7:203, 10:15, 10:109, 33:2, 46:9), therefore this is another example of why “obey Allah and obey the Messenger” means “obey Allah by obeying the Messenger/Qur’anic decisions (see the “seven reasons”). The Messenger is the chief expert of the Qur’an (as he was the first to receive and memorise it), thus as well as coming to what one knows of the Message, one must consult the Messenger and accept future Revelation via him (16:1, 76:23-24) (as well as obey decisions directly derived from them (e.g. 5:42 where the Jews/Christians can “come to” the Messenger for Qur’anic judgements)).

4:62-63 confirms this example, showing the Messenger as a means by which people “come to” the Messenger by showing allegiance to Allah (e.g. by asking forgiveness). The same expression is used in 5:42 (which shows that people do not need a Messenger to judge by the Qur’an).

Also, logic tells us that “obey Allah and His Messenger” can also be expressed as “obey Allah and obey the Messenger”. The fact that “Allah and His Messenger” does not refer to two sources of religion (9:1-3) does not mean that “Allah and His Messenger” represents one entity. They are obviously separate (the Messenger is not God), and rather the expression is referring to the *relationship* between Allah and His Messenger (i.e. the fact that the words of Allah are being passed through the Messenger). Thus, “obey Allah and obey the Messenger” means we are obeying two “entities” through their single relationship (the Message passed from one through the other).

Finally, since “believe in Allah and in the Messenger” in 24:47 is synonymous with “obey Allah and obey the Messenger”, 24:48-49 confirms that the structure of the phrase “obey Allah and obey the Messenger” is not different in meaning to “Allah and His Messenger”. 24:48 tells us that

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Allah and His Messenger” offer just one judgement (Allah’s) between people.

24:49 adds “...if the truth be on their side, they come to him quickly...” confirming 8:20 (8:20 tells us that obeying “Allah and His Messenger” means listening to what the Messenger recites (of the Qur’an)).

After all, that is what hypocrites do. They say one thing (24:47), but do the opposite (24:48).

6) *Another View:*

It is said that we must obey the Messenger. Obeying the Messenger is obeying Allah (4:80, 7:157, 48:10), thus when we obey the Messenger we are obeying Allah (and hence the expression). Thus let us consult the Messenger’s words:

“Most surely it is the Word of an honoured messenger.” (81:19)

7) *Why say: “Obey the Messenger”? Why not: “Obey Allah”?:*

Combine the first six reason for “Reason 7”:

REASON 1: Allah gives us the Message via the Messenger, and the Messenger instructs us to obey it (19:36, 25:56-57, 34:46, 57:8).

REASON 2: The Messenger’s duty was to deliver the Qur’an, and believers were expected to help and therefore obey him (including in situational decisions). E.g. 7:157 and 22:40. Besides, Messengers are made community-leaders (2:124), but they must lead only according to the Message (21:27, 21:73). This is because they are the first to receive the Revelation, making them leaders and heralds by default. As Messengers gain more followers, they gain more enemies thus require strategic decisions and community organisation (which are all derived from and thus a part of the Message).

REASON 3: Some commandments begin with “Say:”, meaning that the Prophet is being told to give orders and thus must be obeyed.

REASON 4: People at the time did not have paperback Qur’ans, and thus they had to obey the Message by following the Messenger.

REASON 5: People had an incomplete Message, so had to be ready to receive more Revelation from the Messenger (16:1, 76:23-24). They had to know where the Revelation came from.

REASON 6: Allah’s words came via the Messenger, thus we have to obey His instructions “using” the Messenger. For instance, when we obey the Qur’an we are obeying “Allah and His Messenger” (45:6, 72:23, 81:19). If a parent tells a child: “Obey me and eat your food”*, it does not mean that eating the food is separate from obeying the parent. If a parent tells a child: “Obey me and obey your teacher”, the child must obey the teacher in order to act and develop as the parent desires. If the teacher deviates from the curriculum/contract/policy which the parent approves, there will be a contradiction between the teacher and parent.

Everything is obedient to Allah (30:21), but He instructs us to obey in a specific way. Allah can talk to us in several ways (42:51), thus He specifies the way in which we are to do it.

*In English, if I say “obey me and eat your food”, it means “do what I say (as a general statement) with the “and” acting as emphasis or specification. This is confirmed (for the Qur’an) by 3:50, 26:108-110, 26:126, 26:131, 26:144, 26:150, 26:163, 26:179, 43:63, 71:3 which state that the means of being careful of Allah is to obey the Messenger. Literally, obeying the Messenger is just a “part of” obeying Allah.

Further confirmation is provided in 20:90 where Haroun tells people: “follow me and obey my order.” People followed him by obeying his order. This did not mean following his hair-style etc., since he was only minding them for Musa (20:93). 3:31-32, 14:35-36, 26:105-111 confirm that “following” is synonymous with “obeying”. We obey Allah by adhering to the Messenger as a source of wisdom (e.g. an unbeliever “followed”/“adhered to” his desires (7:176)). Ultimately, it is God Who is being “followed” (7:3, 10:35). We obey/follow Him by obeying Messengers (who give commands from the Message).

REASON 7: 42:17 and 57:25 say that Allah sent down the Book and the balance. The Qur’an contains the truth, and it contains the balance (25:1).

The Messenger was given the “Book and the wisdom” (3:79). The Qur’an contains the wisdom (17:39, 33:34, 36:2, 43:4, 43:63, 54:5).

24:41 says that everything knows its prayer and glorification. Glorification is a part of prayer (17:108-111, 50:40).

4:162 says: “The knowledgeable among them and the believers believe in the Revelation...”. The believers are a “part” of those with knowledge (3:18, 13:43, 35:28, 58:11).

2:238 tells us to keep up the prayers, and the “middle prayer”. The “middle prayer” is a part of the prayers.

33:7 says that a covenant was made with the Prophets, and Muhammad, and Isa, and Nuh, and Ibrahim.

Each one was a Prophet.

3:3 declares that Allah revealed the Qur’an and that he revealed the Furqan. The Furqan is actually the Qur’an (25:1). Also see 21:48 which says the Prophets were given the Furqan, a light and a reminder (all of them are the Qur’an).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

In 26:108, Nuh tells his people to be careful of Allah and to obey him (Nuh). In the next verse, he says that he asks no reward for it (see 6:90, 12:104).

This means that serving Allah and obeying the Messenger means following the Message (also study 43:63-64).

24:54 says that we must "obey Allah and obey the Messenger".

Like 26:108, it means "follow the Message" (since it says nothing is incumbent on him except delivering the Message).

The balance is a part of the Qur'an. The wisdom is a part of the Qur'an. Glorification is a part of prayer.

Muhammad, Isa, Nuh and Ibrahim were all a "part" of the Prophets.

The Furqan is in the Qur'an.

Obeying Nuh or Isa was a part of serving Allah. Obeying the Messenger is a part of obeying Allah.

4:59 can thus be understood as: "Obey Allah by obeying the Messenger and those in authority. If there is a matter of dispute, refer it to Allah by referring it to the Messenger."

This explains how "Allah and His Messenger" can both deliver the ultimatum in 9:1-3.

"Allah and His Messenger" means the Messenger is a part of the process by which Allah reveals His will.

"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger" means obeying the Messenger is a part of obeying Allah.

There is no way to obey Allah except to obey the Messenger. Allah commands us to obey by obeying His Messenger. He provides emphasis using the "and".

If we "obey the Messenger" by taking him as a separate source of law besides the Qur'an, we break the chain and obey neither Allah nor His Messenger. Without the Qur'an, we cannot obey Allah.

This is why the Messenger was only a warner and commands us only to obey the Qur'an (19:36, 25:56-57, 34:46, 57:8).

The case of "Allah and His Messenger" meaning the words of Allah via the Messenger should make one realise that "obeying Allah and obeying the Messenger" means "obeying Allah via means of obeying the Message". The fact that the Qur'an uses "obey Allah and His Messenger" and "obey Allah and obey the Messenger" interchangeably is evidence of this. The Message is a Book of principles, thus it includes Qur'anic situational decisions (e.g. see 4:59, 5:48). From examples such as 21:48, we see that the word "and" provides emphasis on something that is a part of the other. Obeying the Messenger was not the only possible means of obeying Allah (if Allah chose otherwise He could have spoken in different ways (42:51)). Thus "and obey the Messenger" is emphasis of more specific means of obeying Allah (see "Reason 6").

SUMMARY:

The case of "Allah and His Messenger" meaning the words of Allah via the Messenger should make one realise that "obeying Allah and obeying the Messenger" means "obeying Allah via means of obeying the Message". The fact that the Qur'an uses "obey Allah and His Messenger" and "obey Allah and obey the Messenger" interchangeably is evidence of this. The Message is a Book of principles, thus it includes Qur'anic situational decisions (e.g. see 4:59, 5:48).

The only thing that the Messenger commands us to do as a matter of religious law is to take the way to Allah (19:36, 25:56-57, 34:46, 57:8). Following the Qur'an is the right path (2:176, 5:43-50, 6:19, 6:114-115, 6:126, 6:153-6:157, 7:184, 7:203, 10:57, 12:111, 16:35, 17:9, 18:27, 34:6, 39:23, 45:6, etc.).

"And (know) that this is my path, the right one therefore follow it, and follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His way; this He has enjoined you with that you may guard (against evil)."

Qur'an 6:153

"And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed; therefore follow it and guard (against evil) that mercy may be shown to you."

Qur'an 6:155

The only way to follow the straight path is to adhere to the Qur'an (6:126, 34:6, 39:28). The Messenger's way was to follow Allah's way (6:155), thus the Messenger's way was the Qur'an.

In the context, it is clear that the way of Allah is in the Qur'an. Therefore we obey the Messenger by following the Qur'an.

ADDENDUM

I have noticed an interesting thing about all the "obey Allah and obey the Messenger" verses. The first mention is 4:59 which clearly includes contextual decisions derived from the Message (as well as the Message itself) ("and those in authority"). The next ones are 5:92 and 24:54 which both support the understanding of 4:59 by saying only the delivery of the Message is obligatory (i.e. obey Allah and the bringer of Islam, but if you don't then you are disobeying the Message and its principles (not "the sunna")). 64:12 repeats their words.

Left is 47:33 which is explained by the verse before and the verse after it. Turning from Allah's way obviously means leaving the Qur'an, and opposing the Messenger obviously means opposing his efforts to spread and exercise Qur'anic values. Thus disobeying Allah and disobeying the Messenger means turning from Allah's way, not "Allah's way + sunna". Allah's way is the Qur'an (6:153-155, 34:6 etc.).

The very first use of this statement was in Sura 4, which came first of all Surat using "obey Allah and obey the

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Messenger" (chronologically, too). Each of these verses has its own tafsir.

33:66-67 also uses the statement from the perspective of disbelievers. If one wishes to ask why the unbelievers would say: "O would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!" (apart from being Allah's rendition of his own words!) rather than: "O would that we had obeyed Allah!", we should remember that the context of the Revelation revolves around 33:60-61. People there are misbehaving and not following the way of life which the Messenger is promoting. Just as one must obey the Message in order to obey Allah, the people there had to obey their own gods by obeying their "leaders and great men". These people were led astray from the correct way, which as we just mentioned is the Qur'an.

This further supports that "obey Allah and obey the Messenger" means obeying Allah by obeying the Message and upholding its values in every situation and decision.

LESSON 3: "The Good Character of the Messenger"

- 1) *"It is nothing but Revelation that is revealed."* (53:4):

53:2-4 states that the companion (the Messenger) is not deceived, makes no mistake nor speaks of his own desire.

To say this refers to everything that Prophet Muhammad as a person says would contradict the fallibility of the human he was.

Prophet Muhammad was fallibly human, like us (9:43, 17:93, 18:110, 33:37, 66:1, 80:1-10).

Messengers were repeatedly warned to stay upright (e.g. 6:150). If they were infallible, this would never be necessary.

Prophet Muhammad was capable of sinning (4:79).

Messengers did not know what would become of themselves (46:9), thus Muslims have no right to consider them infallible.

53:4 is comparable to 97:1. The "it" in 53:4 is the same as the "it" in 97:1 (referring to the Qur'an).

Therefore 53:2-4 refers to the attributes of the Revelation being recited (i.e. it is true, it guides correctly and it comes from Allah).

53:5 confirms this by stating that it is the teaching of God. The teaching of God is the Qur'an (55:1-2).

- 2) *The "good example" of the Messenger:*

33:18-20 describes the poor behaviour of hypocrites in a situation of conflict.

33:21 says a good example was set by the Messenger for those who hope in Allah and remember Him much.

33:22 describes the behaviour of true believers in the same situation.

33:23 contrasts Muslim behaviour to that of the hypocrites.

Therefore 33:21 refers to the good example of the Messenger in displaying courage and trust in Allah.

Demonstrating a good example for those who do a particular thing means setting a good example in doing that thing.

Precisely the same expression is used for Prophet Ibrahim (60:6) in another contextual situation (60:4-6).

60:6 does not mean we need ahadith of Prophet Ibrahim, thus 33:21 does not mean we need ahadith of Prophet Muhammad.

The "good example" comes from conduct conforming to the ideals detailed by the Qur'an.

For instance: Prophet Ibrahim's behaviour (9:114, 11:69, 11:75, 19:42-48).

- 3) *The "sublime morality" of the Messenger:*

68:4 declares that the Messenger conforms himself to sublime morality. 68:2 and 68:7 clarify that this means following the Qur'an.

If a person adheres to the Qur'an sincerely, Allah will guide him or her with it so that they too become upright (17:9, 34:6).

Only Allah can guide people from darkness to light (33:43, 39:23, 72:21).

LESSON 4: "Hadith' and 'sunna' used in the Qur'an"

- 1) *Hadith*

"Allah, there is no god but He-- He will most certainly gather you together on the resurrection day, there is no doubt in it; and who is more true in hadith than Allah?" (4:87)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Do they not consider the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and whatever things Allah has created, and that may be their doom shall have drawn nigh; what hadith would they then believe in after this?” (7:185)

“In their histories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a hadith which could be forged, but a verification of what is before it and a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe.” (12:111)

“And of men is he who takes instead frivolous ahadith to lead astray from Allah’s path without knowledge, and to take it for a mockery; these shall have an abasing chastisement.” (31:6)

“O you who believe! do not enter the houses of the Prophet unless permission is given to you for a meal, not waiting for its cooking being finished-- but when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken the food, then disperse-- not seeking a hadith; surely this gives the Prophet trouble, but he forbears from you, and Allah does not forbear from the truth. And when you ask of them any goods, ask of them from behind a curtain; this is purer for your hearts and (for) their hearts; and it does not behove you that you should give trouble to the Messenger of Allah, nor that you should marry his wives after him ever; surely this is grievous in the sight of Allah.” (33:53)

“Allah has revealed the best hadith, a book conformable in its various parts, repeating, whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah; this is Allah's guidance, He guides with it whom He pleases; and (as for) him whom Allah makes err, there is no guide for him.” (39:23)

“These are the communications of Allah which We recite to you with truth; then in what hadith would they believe after Allah and His communications?” (45:6)

“Then let them bring a hadith like it if they are truthful.” (52:34)

“Do you then hold this hadith in contempt?” (56:81)

“So leave Me and him who rejects this hadith; We will overtake them by degrees, from hence they perceive not.” (68:44)

“In what hadith, then, after it, will they believe?” (77:50)

“Has not there come to you the hadith of Musa?” (79:15)

“Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, that which is past shall be forgiven to them; and if they return, then what happened to the ancients (and their sunna (sunnatu)) has already passed.” (8:38)

“They do not believe in it, and indeed the way (sunnatu) of the former people has already passed.” (15:13)

“(This is our) sunnata with regard to those of Our messengers whom We sent before you, and you shall not find a change in Our course (lisunnatina).” (17:77)

“And nothing prevents men from believing when the guidance comes to them, and from asking forgiveness of their Lord, except that what happened (sunnatu) to the ancients should overtake them, or that the chastisement should come face to face with them.” (18:55)

“There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allah has ordained for him; such has been the sunna of Allah with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute.” (33:38)

“(In) behaving proudly in the land and in planning evil; and the evil plans shall not beset any save the authors of it. Then should they wait for aught except the sunna of the former people? For you shall not find any alteration in the sunna of Allah; and you shall not find any change in the course of Allah.” (35:43)

“But their belief was not going to profit them when they had seen Our punishment; (this is) Allah's sunna, which has indeed obtained in the matter of His servants, and there the unbelievers are lost.” (40:85)

“Such has been the sunna of Allah that has indeed run before, and you shall not find a change in Allah’s sunna.” (48:23)

LESSON 5: “How to Perform Salaat”

Prayer was already practiced (8:35, 96:10), so the basic concept would have been apparent or established (24:41). However, the Qur'an makes corrections and clarifications (teaching by example (17:89)).

1) *The reasons for salaat:*

REASON 1: Glorify Him (17:110-111)

2) *Sunna*

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

REASON 2: Remember Him (20:14)

REASON 3: Avoid indecency/ask forgiveness (3:17, 29:45)

Thus if one satisfies these functions following the details in the Qur'an, one will inshaAllah be fine.

What is not in the Qur'an is not obligatory, because Allah orders what He desires (5:1) and does not run out of words (18:109).

Takbir and "raff-al-yadain" are not anti-Qur'anic innovations as long as they are not held as obligatory.

2) "Pray as you have seen me praying":

Reported in Bukhari, this alleged saying was addressed to non-Muslims who had stayed with the Prophet, and were leaving.

This was not an order for Muslims to hold a ritualised standard of salaah. The fact that he told them when they were leaving means he never actually demonstrated during their stay.

The non-Muslims were also instructed to enjoin salaah and good deeds on their families.

They did not have Qur'ans of their own, and so Prophet Muhammad was at most telling them to make their salaah as per the Qur'an and not like the idolaters (8:35). A standardised view of salaah is only useful in congregation (especially back then), and even according to ahadith Imams should be followed in whatever manner they pray.

If we can perform salaah on horseback (when necessary) (2:239), there is no reason why we must perform a standardised ritual.

(7:55 says that we should call on Allah secretly. As a religious matter, it is no-one's business how we pray.)

The salaah of Sunni and Shia sects comes from a stitch-work of ahadith, and it still does not provide a watertight "structure".

For example a Hanafi mullah was unsure whether one could walk during salaah.

2:239 answers him and confirms that Allah taught Muslims salaah (also 2:198). No warner was sent to the Prophet's people before him (32:3) and the Qur'an is a detailed explanation of all things (12:111). Allah taught the Qur'an (55:1-2), thus the method detailed in the Qur'an is the true method.

If it were not taught in the Qur'an, the Message could not be from Allah (2:159, 12:111).

3) Preparation:

Make sure that you are in a fit state to know what you are saying (4:43).

Perform ablution (5:6), cleaning yourself if dirty. Hygiene is always preferable (2:222).

Though one would have to remove footwear for ablution anyway, it is worth emphasising that removal of footwear is advised (20:12).

Nevertheless, one should be nicely dressed (7:31) because clothes are to hide our shame (7:26).

Mosques (places of worship) are for Allah (72:18), and thus no other names or images should decorate the walls.

They should also be clean and well-maintained.

The qiblah is important (2:145) and we are instructed to face it wherever we may be (2:144, 2:149).

There is no more appropriate time to face the qiblah than when one is remembering and holding one's communion with Allah. The concept of a qiblah would have been well-known.

One may also face it during halal slaughter (since it is a dedication/devotion requiring mercy).

When standing, one should keep one's head upright (7:29).

4) Positions:

Stand (2:238, 3:39, 3:113, 4:102, 4:142, 25:64, 39:9).

Bow and prostrate (2:43, 3:43, 4:102, 9:112, 25:64).

The placement of hands on the knees whilst bowing is natural if one bows low enough.

One should prostrate with the forehead touching the ground (28:49).

The order of standing, bowing and prostrating is indicated (22:26).

We know that this refers to salaah since the "alternative" is presented in 8:35.

5) Core details:

When one is standing up and ready, he/she should begin to recite verses of the Qur'an (3:113, 18:27, 29:45, 73:20).

Recitation should be in a moderate tone (17:110).

One should seek refuge from Iblis/evil (16:98), and reciting Sura 114 fulfils this.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Sura 1 is oft-repeated, so it is important and I recite it next (15:87). Allah distinctly mentions this alongside the Qur'an, so it was obviously given to us to recite. The best time to recite it is during salah.

One may continue reciting verses, and if one does not recall much than simply glorifying Him may serve for now (17:110-111).

There is no strict specification of all that we say in prayer (17:110).

After this, one should bow whilst glorifying Him (e.g. 3:38, 17:111, 56:96, Sura 112).

Prostration is next, and the devotee should continue to glorify Allah (e.g. 17:107-109, 50:40, 87:1).

Multiple prostrations may be performed (17:107-109). The shahada should be offered (39:54).

IMPORTANT: Salaat is entirely for the remembrance, glorification and praise of Allah alone (6:162).

Mention of other names should wait until supplication (dua).

6) *Rakat and length:*

The Qur'an does not mention rakat, but they would be useful if one remembered little of it.

They lengthen the salaah so that one can remain in contact with Allah, although one could simply recite one long passage.

25:64 indicates that we can prostrate and stand as we deem fit.

I would generally pray seven rakat since there are seven heavens (at least) between the devotee and Allah. That is to say nothing of their actual length.

I may also change rakat each time I recite from a different Sura.

Salaat in congregation is at least (or at least equal to the length of) two rakat (4:102). The Prophet would perform an arbitrary number of rakat here, thus the number of rakat cannot be fixed.

It is of no concern as long as the purpose of salaah is sincerely fulfilled (4:142, 107:5).

Although Sunnis supposedly pray according to the ahadith, the ahadith portray the Prophet as praying for much longer than they do (e.g. 60-100 ayat).

We concluded that all details of prayer were in the Qur'an (2:198, 2:239).

4:102 says that we can shorten the salaah, and thus there must be a minimum time-length for prayer. After all, why would Allah set a time-limit on something good?

Allah states that the believers cannot keep count of the time spent in prayer, and so they should recite of the Qur'an what is easy (73:20).

This destroys Sunni ritual-lengths of salaah.

Allah says that during the night, people should keep praying until it becomes difficult.

According to 73:20, the Prophet and his followers already prayed for a part of the night.

They put a lot of effort into it, with no time limit having been declared (they had time to do this).

Allah then says that there are matters they might have to attend to (or they may be very tired).

It is obvious that the Muslims would already have prayed according to what was appropriate in the day.

No differentiation is made in the Qur'an between the night prayer and the others.

Thus all prayers are to be prayed according to what is easy (i.e. what is not difficult, and what is appropriate).

Allah also says that keeping up prayer is difficult except for those who truly believe (2:45).

No hardship has been placed on us in religion (22:78), and we are not burdened with more than we can bear (65:7).

Nevertheless, we should try our best (22:78). Sluggishness and unmindfulness are condemned (4:142, 107:15).

Prayer is a time during which we can ask His forgiveness (3:17).

73:20 also tells us to give Allah His due, and that the more good we do, the better.

1) *Conclusion:*

Between doing good and resting, we should pray as much as we can at the specified times.

“Surely, with difficulty is ease. With difficulty is surely ease. So when you are free, nominate, and make your Lord your exclusive object.”

Qur'an 94:5-8

7) *Salaat in congregation:*

Believers (men and women) are invited to a particular location once a week on every Juma (by consensus Friday) (62:9).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

If all people cannot fit in the same mosque, appropriate measures should be arranged.

The congregation occurs at a busy time of day (62:9-11) and thus it will be held at the earliest appropriate time (midday). The verse only says "when" (i.e. whenever) we are called, but given the time-frames for prayer elsewhere and the period in which people are expected to attend, we should select midday. It is evident the Muslims already conducted a congregation prayer on Friday, and this was encouraged in 62:9. 62:9 is basically an "example" (see Lesson 43) of choosing the remembrance of God over pursuing profit. It is not enforcing a congregation prayer.

The event should be announced by a call (62:9).

A designated person (man or woman) will stand at the front of the group and lead the prayer via recitation and action.

The other worshippers will follow the actions and listen to the recitation (4:102, 7:204, 17:111).

If pre-arranged, devotees may repeat or respond to certain phrases (17:108).

8) *Times for salaah:*

Fajr, maghrib and isha prayers are mandated in 11:114.

The zuhr prayer is specified in 17:78 and implied in 24:58 (one would change clothes and clean for ablution, or the prayer might be performed before this. Prayer times are actually time-frames, and "noon" in 24:58 could mean anytime around (before or after) noon).

The asr prayer is mentioned in 2:238 (equidistant between the other prayers).

20:130 and 39:17-18 provide confirmation of these prayer times.

For the complete reasoning, see below:

"And keep up prayer in two parts of the day and in the first hours of the night; surely good deeds take away evil deeds; this is a reminder to the mindful."

Qur'an 11:114

The above lists three prayers. The word "wa" (and) helps us to understand it as three prayers: the night prayer and two other prayers. The word "or" should have been used if it only referred to two prayers.

"O you who believe! let those whom your right hands possess and those of you who have not attained to puberty ask permission of you three times; before the morning prayer, and when you put off your clothes at midday in summer, and

after the prayer of the nightfall; these are three times of privacy for you; neither is it a sin for you nor for them besides these, some of you must go round about (waiting) upon others; thus does Allah make clear to you the communications, and Allah is Knowing, Wise."

Qur'an 24:58

This describes the dawn and night prayers. In this same verse we are told that midday is a time for changing clothes, listed in the context of two other prayers. Changing clothes implies ablution (although I won't say it states it specifically) and besides people would change their clothes before fajr prayer (i.e. Allah mandates that we should enter masjids well-dressed) such that there is no reason why people could not change their clothes before the midday prayer (the clothes might get dirty as people get sweaty etc.). The fact that it is a time of privacy makes it clear that it is a time for remembrance (associated strongly with salaah throughout the Qur'an). The "congregational" prayer is an exception, where we are expected to congregate (read on for more information regarding that prayer). There is also at least one prayer during the day, and the below ayah provides proof additional to 62:9-10:

"In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His name may be remembered in them; there glorify Him in the mornings and the evenings, Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about."

Qur'an 24:36-37

"Bear then patiently what they say, and glorify your Lord by the praising of Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and during hours of the night do also glorify (Him) and during the ends of the day, that you may be well pleased."

Qur'an 20:130

There is the dawn prayer ("before the rising of the sun") and the night prayer ("during parts of the night"). The afternoon prayer is implied ("before its setting"), and the sunset prayer ("during the ends of the day").

"Therefore glory be to Allah when you enter upon the time of the evening and when you enter upon the time of the morning. And to Him belongs praise in the heavens and the earth, and at nightfall and when you are at midday."

Qur'an 30:17-18

The above mentions three prayers (dawn, sunset and nightfall) plus midday.

"Attend constantly to prayers and to the middle prayer and stand up truly obedient to Allah."

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Qur'an 2:238

This is the "fifth" prayer, in between the other four. It is when the sun is midway down (equidistant from the rest). Since there is a prayer "before sunset" (2:130), its timeframe will be between when the sun is midway down and sunset. After all, it does not specify "after midday", but "before sunset".

"Salawaat" (the plural noun used in this ayah), must mean at least three prayers (plus/and the salaatulwustaa (the middle prayer)). Some people claim that a "middle prayer" would make no sense since why would it say attend constantly to prayers AND the middle prayer (since the "middle prayer" is already included in "the prayers")? Notice in many Qur'anic ayat that the use of the word "and" does not mean there is a complete separateness (e.g. with "the wisdom" (3:79), "the reminder" (21:48) and "the balance" (42:17, 57:25)). Furthermore, there is nothing to suggest that "salawaat" in 2:238 does not simply mean three of the prayers (e.g. 11:114) PLUS the middle prayer, or that the Qur'an was not simply reminding us of the "middle prayer" since it is not mentioned by name elsewhere. See the ayah 33:7 for very strong proof of this (since the same problem could be raised regarding the mentioning of Prophets). Regardless of what "salaatulwustaa" refers to, opponents of the five-prayer perspective must confront the same perceived problem.

Now moving on, it could be argued that "glorification" is not salaah, but then all the periods of glorification correspond to salaah times (e.g. dawn and night). Observe 17:25-26 below which corresponds to 11:114:

"And glorify the name of your Lord morning and evening. And during part of the night adore Him, and give glory to Him (a) long (part of the) night."

See also 73:20 for further correspondence between night-long glorification and salaah.

Furthermore, in 20:130 Muhammad is being told to patiently glorify Allah at the specific times. In 20:132 he is instructed to pass this onto other believers (e.g. his family):

"And enjoin prayer on your family, and steadily adhere to it; We do not ask you for subsistence; We do give you subsistence, and the (good) end is for guarding (against evil)."

Qur'an 20:132

The below ayah suggests remembrance is only different under certain circumstances:

"Then when you have finished the prayer, remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining; but when you are secure (from danger) keep up prayer; surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers."

Qur'an 4:103

Notice that the salaah is at fixed times.

The "congregational prayer" is during daytime:

"O you who believe! when the call is made for prayer on the day of congregation, then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off trading; that is better for you, if you know. But when the prayer is ended, then disperse abroad in the land and seek of Allah's grace, and remember Allah much, that you may be successful."

Qur'an 62:9-10

This supports the midday and middle prayers. Notice here that the remembrance of Allah is specified as prayer. Peruse 3:41:

"He said: My Lord! appoint a sign for me. Said He: Your sign is that you should not speak to men for three days except by signs; and remember your Lord much and glorify Him in the evening and the morning."

Qur'an 3:41

"Surely I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance."

Qur'an 20:14

"Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest, and Allah knows what you do."

Qur'an 29:45

"And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill, and let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life; and do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case is one in which due bounds are exceeded."

Qur'an 18:28

Note also that regarding the congregational prayer, it would be at midday since this is a specific time allocated as a time for glorification. It could be at 3pm but midday is more appropriate to this ayah because people have more opportunity to go abroad and conduct business whilst a society devoted to Allah would opt for the earlier time of congregation rather than the latter.

Besides, a salaah-time at midday is indicated:

"Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; surely the morning recitation is witnessed."

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Qur'an 17:78

Since four prayers have been established, the middle prayer implies that there are five. However, there is sufficient evidence to associate glorification with remembrance (as additional proof):

“In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His name may be remembered in them; there glorify Him in the mornings and the evenings, Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about.”

Qur'an 24:36-37

“Do you not see that Allah is He Whom do glorify all those who are in the heavens and the earth, and the (very) birds with expanded wings? He knows the prayer of each one and its glorification, and Allah is Cognizant of what they do.”

Qur'an 24:41

Some people claim that the “and” in 24:41 implies that salaah and glorification are separate. Notice in many Qur'anic ayat that the use of the word “and” does not mean there is a complete separateness (e.g. with “the wisdom” (3:79), “the reminder” (21:48) and “the balance” (42:17, 57:25)). The fact they are mentioned like this provides support for the view that they are the same. Besides, they are certainly the same in 17:107-108:

“Say: Believe in it or believe not; surely those who are given the knowledge before it fall down on their faces, making obeisance when it is recited to them. And they say: GLORY BE TO OUR LORD! most surely the promise of our Lord was to be fulfilled.”

“Therefore celebrate the praise of your Lord, and be of those who prostrate.”

Qur'an 15:98

“And glorify Him in the night and after the prostrations.”

Qur'an 50:40

Perhaps glorification is a separate pillar, but in light of the above it seems (to me) unlikely and illogical. Also consider that the Arabic word for “prayer” is “dua”, meaning that “salaah” does not actually mean “prayer” (see ayat 9:103, 33:56, 70:22, 74:43, 75:31-32, 107:4 and many others to understand that the word “salaah” can imply many things). A more accurate word may be “devotion” or “turning towards”, and glorification is most certainly devotion or “turning towards” (meaning that one should perform wudu before

commencing the “prayers”/glorifications at the prayer/glorification times specified by the Qur'an).

Finally, there is evidence in 17:78 that there are prayers between midday and nightfall:

“Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun ‘til the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; surely the morning recitation is witnessed.”

This describes keeping up prayers (together a pillar of Islam) from midday through to the darkness of the night (we cannot go further through the day than night). This includes the isha prayer as per 11:114. The remaining prayer (dawn) is therefore mentioned afterwards. If you want to say that this prayer means praying from when the sun touches the horizon to when it has disappeared, then this several minute (?) time-frame overlaps with a time-frame already specified in 20:130 (i.e. “before the setting of the sun”). You can say that this is in fact the “middle prayer”, but then there is at least one prayer during the day (24:36-37). This will then lead to the formulation of another asr prayer which can only be the one “before the setting of the sun” in 50:39 (since the setting of the sun means the disappearance of the sun). Thus 17:78 refers to the declining of the sun from its zenith (midday).

Note that the Qur'an often refers to all the prayers as one single pillar (e.g. 2:3).

It is true that we are told to remember Allah “standing, sitting and lying on our sides” (3:191), but surely that is in between the prayers since if we forget Allah then we will forget to pray (i.e. we remember Him on a conscious level (between salaah) and an active level (salaah)).

“Those who remember Allah 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 then from the chastisement of the fire...”

Qur'an 3:191

This conforms to 50:40 in which we are instructed to glorify Him after prostrations. To my understanding, the remembrance itself is kept up (re-established) via prayer. Also active “remembering” always (to my knowledge) involves a recital or imploring:

“And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud in the morning and the evening and be not of the heedless ones.”

Qur'an 7:205

This is strong evidence linking glorification and remembrance to salaah. Be not unmindful of prayer (107:5).

62:10 also establishes remembrance as a means to be successful, and hence it is an active function maintained by prayer.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Furthermore, 50:39-40 provides evidence that glorification is intertwined with salaah:

“Therefore be patient of what they say, and sing the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before the setting. And glorify Him in the night and after the prayers.”

Qur'an 50:39-40

In short, glorification is to be continued in between and after the specific times mentioned (i.e. salaah times). However, one should perform wudu before the obligatory glorifications defined by specific times.

We can compare this to the traditional times and find that we are identical. There is no restriction on praying and remembering Allah past this.

LESSON 6: “Pillars”

1) *Shahada*:

“There is no god but Allah, I believe in what He has revealed and I submit to the Lord of the Worlds.”

This is concluded from a cursory study of 2:131, 3:18, 3:20, 3:52-53, 10:90, 39:54 and 40:66.

2:285 and 9:74 indicate that Muslims should make intention to obey Allah.

Sunni/Shia sects imitate the hypocrites of 63:1, asserting what Allah already knows and what is unrelated to submission.

Allah already knows that Muhammad is the Messenger (33:40, 48:29, 63:1). Why does a declaration of submission to HIM need a particular Prophet's name? Moreover, Allah says that the hypocrites make this statement a shelter. If you read relevant ahadith, it is said that anyone who says the Sunni shahada (or even the first half) will automatically go to Heaven (even if they commit an ocean of misdeeds).

Sunnis say that 63:1 proves that people uttered their shahada. Unfortunately, 63:1 says that we can recognise the hypocrites by this statement. It does not say anyone else says it. Therefore, Sunnis twist 3:86 to mean their shahada, but bearing witness that the Messenger is true and bearing witness who that Messenger is are different things. If we bear witness that a Messenger is true, it means we believe the Message is true (Messengers cannot exist without the Message). This is included in the above shahada.

Moreover, “bearing witness” may simply mean being exposed to the irrefutable Message (i.e. the “clear arguments” also mentioned in 3:86). See 27:13-14

In spite of “Muslim” meaning “Submitter”, the Sunnis do not submit and thus go no further than Iblis.

They make intention to perform salaah, but this is not making intention to obey Allah.

2) *Zakat*:

2:219 says that Muslims should spend what they can afford on charity.

2:215 says that charity is for parents, relatives, orphans, the needy and wayfarers.

Under traditional “Islamic” law, zakat has been reduced to a state tax equivalent to 2.5% of one's income.

Tax is a function of society, so it is insufficient for Muslims to pay 2.5% to the government if they can afford to give more.

Muslims should perform their tax obligations and pay any surplus (after expenses) to charity.

People with low incomes should be given opportunity to pay what zakat they can.

Charity may include food etc. (6:141).

3) *Fasting*:

Fasting is fully-detailed in 2:183-187.

4) *Pilgrimage (Hajj)*:

Pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque is incumbent for all who can afford it (3:96-97).

The period of Hajj starts with the first new moon of the appointed months (2:189). Obviously if clouds hide the new moon, we should wait until a clearer night to “get back on track”. It is also observable that a synodic month consists of between 29 and 30 days.

The months of Hajj were well-known (2:197), like the sacred months (9:37).

There are twelve months; four of them are sacred (9:2, 9:36).

Dhul-Hijjah is the main month of Hajj, so it is sacred.

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Dhul-Qad'ah is taken from the word "qa'ada" which means "to sit". Fighting was forbidden during the sacred months (2:217).

The sacredness of Dhul-Qad'ah allows people to prepare and make the pilgrimage in safety.

The sacredness of Muharram ("sacred") allows people to journey homewards in safety.

Rajab conveys "respect", and this is considered a sacred month. I believe that Shawwal could be the sacred month instead, because the sacred months are implied to be consecutive (9:2-5) and would logically be the months in which people go to the Sacred Mosque (2:197). Shawwal is historically a month of Hajj, therefore I would opt for it over Safar (asking forgiveness if I err (see Lesson 43)). There is a proof that Safar could not be a sacred month, and I will mention it below.*

The question of sacred months is per se unimportant, since the Islamic code of conduct forbids unnecessary fighting. If we have to fight, then we would have to do so regardless of the month (2:194, 2:217).

The Qur'an hints that the months of Hajj are sacred (5:2, 5:97), and a hadith claims they are Shawwal, Dhul-Qad'ah and the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. One must make an educated choice, but performing it in Dhul-Qad'ah and the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah is 100% safe. I incline to Shawwal through to Dhul-Hijjah, but differing beliefs must be accommodated. It is unlikely that the hadith is true, since if the months were well-known we would not need a hadith to say it. This idea could also be used against Rajab being sacred. Since we lack truly reliable/conclusive information (thanks to "Muslim" scholars), we should pray for guidance and ask forgiveness if we err. For instance, I will treat Rajab as sacred based on the name and history, but since Shawwal is a month of Hajj I will also be careful in that month (2:197).

Further evidence in favour of Shawwal is that only two months can be "drawn away" before the end of the year (immediately after which is another sacred month). The plural "months" in 9:5 refers to three or more, therefore if it meant the four sacred months of every year, it would not make sense. 9:5 must refer to the three months of Dhul Qad'ah through to Muharram, meaning the subject changes between 9:2 and 9:5. This is not as likely given that 9:5 begins with "fa" (then).

*Muharram could not be a month of Hajj since it begins in a new year. The "well-known" months are obviously months of the year, not one segment of months independent of the calendar. For example, a person could perform Hajj in Muharram and then perform it again the same year (e.g. Dhul-Hijjah), but that defeats the purpose of performing it during well-known months *of the year*. The pilgrimage is annual (9:28) because there is no period of time with a proper name "Well-Known Months".

It could be argued that Muharram is the month of Sacrifice. Here are my thoughts:

Hajj is in months well-known, and it is obligatory in them. (2:197)

Hunting is forbidden in the well-known months. (5:1-2, 5:95)

Hunting is only allowed following the sacrifice. (5:2)

Therefore the sacrifice is a part of the Hajj, and in a well-known month.

If the sacrifice is a part of the Hajj, then it should be completed in the same year that the Hajj was begun. Otherwise we would have the first month of the year devoted to completing last year's Hajj. The "months well-known" are the months of the year in which Hajj is performed. Therefore Hajj is completed in months of the year - i.e. the year.

If the Qur'an says that Hajj is obligated on us in months well-known, it does not mean we perform the last part of a Hajj in the first part of the year and do another half in Shawwal-Dhul Hijjah. 2:197 says that THE Hajj is in months well-known, not parts of Hajj.

If we say that the months of Hajj are Dhul-Qad'ah-Muharram, then when we point out the months of Hajj on a calendar we must say: "Muharram is a month of Hajj, but it is actually for the last part of the previous year's Hajj, and the other months of Hajj do not allow us to complete it." In short, the calendar year does not have a complete Hajj.

Some rites are preferably performed *en masse* (2:198-199).

Umrah (2:158) can be performed in any month, and may be combined with the Hajj (2:196).

Prohibitions/measures of Hajj:

Hunting (5:1-2, 5:95)

Conflict (2:217)

Sexual intercourse, mischief and arguments (2:197)

If one cannot attend (2:196)

Rites of Hajj:

Animal offerings for a food supply (5:97, 22:36).

Circling the Kaaba whilst praising Him (2:125, 22:26, 22:29)

The Safa and Marwah (2:158)

Mount Arafat (2:198)

Summary:

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One should bring offerings when making the pilgrimage (2:196, 5:97).

If we are prevented from performing the pilgrimage (not by illness), we should send offerings along and not shave until they reach the destination. If we are prevented by an illness, we should compensate by fasting, alms-giving or sacrificing (details in 5:89). The sacrifices occur in the final month of Hajj (5:2, 5:97, 22:28).

Getting into a state of "Ihram" would be principally commendable (2:125, 2:222). This would include looking nice (7:31, 22:29)!

One will arrive at Mecca and circle the Kaaba as the people do (22:29). This is performed seven times as there are seven heavens.

Seven cycles are not obligatory according to the Qur'an, but it may have been an acceptably-established custom.

Allah did not specify any number, but if it were established then He did not order it to be changed (seven is not too big and not too small, and thus should be available).

(It is worthwhile here to note that the pilgrimage is basically a large prayer. We are given the opportunity to express our devotion to Allah and ask His forgiveness on a grander scale, but good deeds are actually what discern a good person from a bad one (23:103-104, 90:11-17, 99:6-8, 106:6-9). However, without prayer Allah will not help us to eliminate our misdeeds (25:77), and so we must balance them by ourselves. Good deeds bring us closer to Allah, and prayer/hajj without good deeds is impotent. One will not go to Hell simply for staying only two hours on Arafat or circling the Kaaba just once etc., but the more that we try (in deed and devotion), the further we become from our past misdeeds.)

One can then traverse the distance between the Safa and Marwah (2:158). This does not need to be done seven times.

At a later stage, pilgrims will continue to the plain of Arafat (2:198).

Having left the previous place in the morning, Muslims might spend at least the rest of daylight here ("Arafat" conveys "recognition", so one would remember Allah here).

The time that we spend at each stage is up to discretion, since Allah would have specified a minimum duration as he did in 2:203 (this was perhaps for practical reasons, as the pilgrimage may take a while whilst at least two days should be spent at Mecca).

We should give to Allah His due (see the "Rakat and length" section of "Lesson 5"). Therefore people should stay as long as they can, having no other obligation during the Hajj.

(See the prior note in parentheses. 17:78 tells us the ideal amount of praying we should theoretically do, and since pilgrims would have no other obligation, staying on Arafat from midday to sundown is appropriate.)

For this reason a true Muslim will be able to stay there at least as long as Sunnis do (from midday until sunset). Besides, the Hajj is preferably performed *en masse* (2:198-199) and thus a schedule would be organised.

Eventually one will depart (with the others when all agree) and arrive near "al-Mashar al-Haram".

This is perceived as the plain near Mecca, where people spend the night praying (2:198).

However, it is only a place *near* al-Mashar al-Haram, thus it more likely that the "holy monument" is the Sacred Mosque (in its surroundings).

It is the only place described as "sacred" concerning Hajj. However, staying at Muzdalifah would be acceptable as it would have been a pre-established custom.

The Qur'an only says that there is no blame on one for doing this step (2:198), but it is preferable.

2:199 instructs to move on from wherever (and whenever) the people move on from (to the Sacred Mosque), and to continue lauding Allah during numbered days (the sacrifice, visiting the Kaaba).

One must do this for a period of at least two days (2:199).

To see possible explanations of "the ten nights" in 89:2, see 7:142 and 20:103. In the context, it may be a reference to the "beginning and end" of a person's sojourn on Earth (ten days and nights are described as one in 20:103-104). 7:142 is also plausible (ten special nights granted at least to Prophet Musa). Please see 10:39 and 27:84. Common opinion is that it refers to ten nights of Ramadhan (including the "night of power" (97:1)). The "ten nights of Dhul Hijjah" notion was likely concocted from 89:2.

It should be noted again that in an ideal Qur'anic (Islamic) society, differing opinions concerning Hajj will be accommodated.

Afterthoughts:

Nowhere is it stated that circling the Kaaba must come before visiting Arafat. In fact, it would make sense to complete the pilgrimage by arriving at the Sacred Mosque.

Arriving at Mecca first would simply make one's "registration" and preparation easier (like a motel).

Since some rites are done *en masse*, there would ideally be a schedule arranged by organisers.

The point is a "pilgrimage to Mecca" which if performed in the sacred months (with full rites), will be complete.

Contrary to belief, Hajj is not about searching for stones, throwing stones or kissing stones.

Stoning is not recommended (11:91, 18:20, 19:46, 36:18). It is a misuse of time because remembrance is for Allah alone (6:162, 20:14).

The stoning tradition derives from a story about Prophet Ibrahim being tempted by the Devil, so it has nothing to do with actually serving Allah.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Hajj is about making a journey, and seeking Allah.

LESSON 7: "The Sunna of Allah"

1) Introduction:

The practical problem with sects is that they miss the point (by "sect" I imply a deliberate division).

The Sunni sect holds that those who do not uphold ahadith as obligatory are non-Muslims.

To justify, it brought verses taken out of context.

It attempted to prove that the "pillars" were incomprehensible without ahadith, but they were learnt in lessons 4 and 5.

As a last resort, it contends that those who do not follow ahadith are not making the right effort.

It therefore contradicts the reason for its existence.

If it does not label "Qur'an-Alone" as a diverted sect, ahadith are no longer mandatory.

If that is correct, there is no excuse as to why Islam is in its current state.

Sunnis justify themselves by believing in an invisible war on Islam, but the problem is their own.

They miss the point of Islam, so they cannot defend or fix it.

Sunnism (with Shi'ism) is an overweight institution which when it tries to move, trips on itself.

Let us see what it means to be Muslim:

2) *The Qur'an is a Book of principles (17:39) and examples (17:89).*

The Qur'an instructs us to do good (16:128).

We should debate nicely, even during disagreement (2:224, 2:263, 3:104, 3:119, 5:8, 5:77, 6:108, 7:87, 11:28, 14:24-26, 15:85, 16:125-126, 25:63, 25:72, 28:55, 33:70, 39:18, 39:39-40, 41:34, 42:13, 42:15, 43:89, 49:11).

We should nobly ignore insincere people (4:140, 6:68, 25:63, 28:55).

We should stand up for what is right and not allow injustice to triumph (2:143, 2:190, 4:75).

Muslims should exercise forgiveness (2:109, 2:263, 7:198-199, 15:85, 45:14).

It tells us to enjoin patience and compassion (90:17). We can perform no action without this in mind.

(e.g. we consider all factors and possibilities when deciding punishment.)

We should treat war-captives well and release them when possible (2:177, 4:25, 4:36, 5:89, 16:71, 24:33, 47:4, 90:13).

Allah loves mutual kindness between all people (60:8).

We should not judge people without knowledge (4:94, 49:11).

Insults are discouraged and should be justified (4:148, 6:108).

Allah enjoins hygiene and humility (2:222, 25:63, 33:35), so we apply this.

We should avoid indecency (6:151, 7:33, 29:45, 42:37).

We should be grateful to Allah (4:147) for all good things because they come from Him (4:79).

(If we remember this, we will be thankful for every day, every meal etc..)

We should eat only what is good (healthy), and what is supposed to be food (5:4).

Allah tells us to study the Qur'an ourselves (3:79) and to seek knowledge (10:39, 20:114, 27:82-84, 29:20).

We are told not to follow anything without real knowledge (17:36, 29:36).

(Therefore those who refer queries to others without also researching are falling short.)

As followers of Allah, people should bring absolute proof of any religious claim (2:111, 6:57, 8:42, 14:10, 21:24, 27:64, 28:75, 52:38).

("Isnad" is not absolute proof).

We must not be religiously immoderate (5:77).

No-one can compel another to follow a religion or restrict their rights because of religion (2:256).

The Qur'an allows freedom of expression (7:87, 10:41, 10:99, 11:28, 39:39-40).

We must not be selfish or deceptive (2:275, 25:67, 25:72, 57:23-24).

Wealth should not be hoarded or squandered on unnecessary things (2:215, 2:219).

Marriage must be consensual (2:232, 4:21).

Marriage is about love, respect and commitment (2:187, 2:226-227, 2:228, 2:231, 4:19, 4:34, 4:128, 30:21).

Laws and judgements should be equitable for all (5:8).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

(Some exceptions should be made by special request (e.g. adultery by non-Muslims) (5:42).)

We must never forget Allah (3:191).

3) Conclusion:

- If one practices these precepts and adheres to the Qur'an in its entirety, one will be a good Muslim (17:9).

- The entire notion of "Muhammad's Sunna" is redundant for those who can understand (3:79, 34:6).

- The point of Islam is to exercise these principles, not to fuss about rituals (2:177).

- It is no-one's concern how others practice religion. Allah knows who best-guided (17:84).

LESSON 8: "The Messenger did not know the future"

Some people cling to the alleged role of the Messenger as a foreteller of future events beyond the Qur'an. They do this to justify ahadith, but firstly it does not affect any argument about the Qur'an being enough, and secondly it represents a glaring contradiction to Islam:

"On the day when Allah will assemble the messengers, then say: What answer were you given? They shall say: We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things."

5:109

(Essentially he did not know what people would do once he passed. We can rule out prophecies of conquests (for example). This obviously occurs before 25:30, which takes place after the people are judged (25:23).)

"Say: I do not say to you, I have with me the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel; I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me. Say: Are the blind and the seeing one alike? Do you not then reflect?"

6:50

(Revelation was only the Qur'an (2:23, 2:63, 2:91, 2:176, 6:19, 6:114-115, 6:157, 7:144-147, 7:169-171, 12:111, 17:9, 17:88, 18:27, 20:123-124, 21:27, 21:45, 22:16, 22:54, 23:73, 28:56, 39:23, 45:6 etc.).)

"They ask you about the hour, when will be its taking place? Say: The knowledge of it is only with my Lord; none but He shall manifest it at its time; it will be momentous in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you but of a sudden. They ask you as if you were solicitous about it. Say: Its knowledge is only with Allah, but most people do not know. Say: I do not control any benefit or harm for my own soul except as Allah please; and had I known the unseen I would have had much of good and no evil would have touched me; I am nothing but a warner and the giver of good news to a people who believe."

7:187-188

(The Day of Judgement is sudden, and therefore there can be no "warning signs". Quite clearly he did not know the future, and he could not guide himself past following the Revelation. How then could we expect him to guide us?)

"Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is one Allah, therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join any one in the service of his Lord."

18:110

(If Prophet Muhammad is only a mortal like everyone else, then like everyone else he cannot tell the future.)

"Men ask you about the hour; say: The knowledge of it is only with Allah, and what will make you comprehend that the hour may be nigh."

33:63

(i.e. the Messenger did not actually know the signs of the End Times.)

"Say: I am not the first of the messengers, and I do not know what will be done with me or with you: I do not follow anything but that which is revealed to me, and I am nothing but a plain warner."

46:9

(The Messenger had no mission past delivering the Qur'an. He did not bring any other Revelation, and nor was he an explainer. This ayah rules out any ahadith describing "intercession" (and there is quite a number!). Any hadith where the plight of Messengers or people is described should henceforth be discarded, especially those describing Muslim conquests.)

"Do they then wait for aught but the hour that it should come to them all of a sudden? Now indeed the tokens of it have (already) come, but how shall they have their reminder when it comes on them?"

47:18

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

(The signs of the End Times had already occurred. 47:10 provides an idea of this:

“Have they not then journeyed in the land and seen how was the end of those before them: Allah brought down destruction upon them, and the unbelievers shall have the like of it.”

47:10.)

“This is of the announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to you.”

3:44

“On no account will Allah leave the believers in the condition which you are in until He separates the evil from the good; nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allah chooses of His messengers whom He pleases.”

3:179

“The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses and who is a messenger. Then surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him, so that He may know that they have truly proclaimed the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them and He records the number of all things.”

72:26-28

(These ayat clarify that the only part of the unseen that is revealed is the Message.)

Let us look at the purpose of the “Night Journey”:

“And nothing could have hindered Us that We should send signs except that the ancients rejected them; and We gave to Samood the she-camel-- a manifest sign-- but on her account they did injustice, and We do not send signs but to make (men) fear. And when We said to you: Surely your Lord encompasses men; and We did not make the vision which We showed you but a trial for men and the cursed tree in the Quran as well; and We cause them to fear, but it only adds to their great inordinacy.”

17:59-60

“And He revealed to His servant what He revealed. The heart was not untrue in (making him see) what he saw. What! do you then dispute with him as to what he saw? And certainly he saw him (perhaps Gabriel) in another descent, at the farthest lote-tree; near which is the garden, the place to be resorted to. When that which covers covered the lote-tree; the eye did not turn aside, nor did it exceed the limit. Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

53:10-18

Muhammad received a major sign (additional but complimentary to the Message) just as the previous Messengers did. He may have received more Qur'anic ayat (signs) whilst on this journey, but it is clear that the purpose here was to see Paradise (although barely visible). This is the trial for us: to see whether we care or believe.

To say he received knowledge of the future is contradictory to the prior ayat listed, and innovates on the purpose of these signs.

If he did receive extra-Qur'anic knowledge of the future, one must explain how this affects the “Qur'an-alone” position.

LESSON 9: “Wife-beating in 4:34”

“Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great.”

Qur'an 4:34

The problem comes from the word “idribuhunna” which has traditionally been translated as “beat them.” The root of this word is actually “DaRaBa”. If you look at any Arabic dictionary, you will find a long list of meanings ascribed to it. It has so many different meanings that we can find numerous uses in the Qur'an:

To travel, to get out: 3:156; 4:101; 38:44; 73:20; 2:273

To strike: 2:60,73; 7:160; 8:12; 20:77; 24:31; 26:63; 37:93; 47:4

To beat: 8:50; 47:27

To set up: 43:58; 57:13

To give (examples): 14:24,45; 16:75,76,112; 18:32,45; 24:35; 30:28,58; 36:78; 39:27,29; 43:17; 59:21; 66:10,11

To take away, to ignore: 43:5

To condemn: 2:61

To seal, to draw over: 18:11

To cover: 24:31

To explain: 13:17

Ayah 4:34 verse cannot be ordering husbands to beat their wives for a simple reason. If a man fears ill-conduct from his

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

wife, he is advised to do three things. Now if we take the instruction to “beat”, then a Muslim man must admonish his wife, leave her alone in her sleep-place and beat her all at once! Secondly, a husband’s wife will not be able to “obey” him (or rather “lay to rest his fears”) if he hospitalises her. If he does not “beat her” enough, then she will either laugh at him (enticing him to continue) or obviously go for a divorce. There is no threshold set.

The meanings of “going abroad from”, set them forth (e.g. as an example) or “set an example to” are compatible if we take these instructions with the others.

“...thus does Allah beat (yadribu) truth and falsehood...” (13:17)

“...thus does Allah set forth truth and falsehood...” (13:17)

Another example of the mistranslation of “DaRaBa” can be found in 38:44. Almost every translation injects a silly story to justify their rendering of the passage. Here is how Yusuf Ali translates the first portion of this ayah, which is about Job:

“And take in the hand a little grass, and strike therewith: and break not (the oath).” (38:44)

Yusuf Ali in the footnote narrates the following traditional story: “He (Job) must have said in his haste to the woman that he would beat her: he is asked now to correct her with only a wisp of grass, to show that he was gentle and humble as well as patient and constant.”

However, without assuming the existence of this strange, male-viewpointed story (which has no other reference in the Qur’an), we can translate the ayah henceforth:

“Take in your hand a bunch and set forth with it, and do not break your oath; surely We found him patient; most excellent the servant! Surely he was frequent in returning (to Allah).” (38:44)

(The “bunch” would most likely refer to servants as in “those whom your right hands possess” (4:3)).

One final example:

“O you who believe! when you go abroad (darabtum)in Allah’s way, make investigation, and do not say to anyone who offers you peace: You are not a believer. Do you seek goods of this world’s life! But with Allah there are abundant gains; you too were such before, then Allah conferred a benefit on you; therefore make investigation; surely Allah is aware of what you do.”

Qur’an 4:94

Note how in Sura 4 there is used “daraba” (4:34 and “darabtum” (4:94), which are derived from the same root.

The words are in the same Sura, indicating that “daraba” in 4:34 means to desert or leave since that is what its derived word conveys in 4:94.

In 2:128, Allah allows women similar rights to men. These rights would hardly be similar if men were allowed to beat their wives for disobedience.

Additionally, the word “Nushuz” (often translated as “opposition” in 4:34) has another meaning. If we study 4:34 carefully we will find a clue that leads us to translate that word as embracing a range of related ideas (from “flirting” to “engaging in an extramarital affair”). Indeed, it could be any word that reflects the range of potential disloyalties in marriage. The clue is the phrase before “Nushuz” which reads: “...they honour them according to God’s commandments, even when alone in their privacy.” This phrase emphasises the importance of loyalty in married life, and helps us to make better sense of what follows.

Interestingly, the same word “Nushuz” is used later in the same chapter (4:128). However it is used to describe the misbehaviour of husbands, and not wives. In one view, the traditional translation of “Nushuz”, that is, “opposition”, will not fit in either context. The understanding of “Nushuz” as marital disloyalty, in a variety of forms, is clearly appropriate for both 4:34 and 4:128.

“And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect.”

Qur’an 30:21

SUMMARY 1:

The Arabic word *idriboo* is commonly translated as hit/beat/strike. However the flaws with this understanding are as follows:

- The derivative *idriboo* is formed from one of the most multiple meaning and diversely used words (DaRaBa) in the Arabic language, and is used in several ways in The Qur’an itself.
- There is not one clear occurrence of this word meaning “beat” anywhere else in the Qur’an, and in almost all cases, this meaning is problematic or would not make sense.
- No Classical Arabic (the language the Qur’an is written in) dictionary gives the meaning of “beat” in a comparable example and none reference 4:34 at all.
- When the Qur’an uses this word to mean a literal/physical strike/hit, the preposition “bi” (with/by) is always used, but there is no such use in 4:34.
- This understanding causes internal contradictions within the Qur’an, and this is also probably why no commentator, past or present, uses the Qur’an itself to justify this view.
- There is no consensus amongst traditional commentators on the origin and interpretation of this verse, except on perhaps the basic points.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

- If “beat/strike” is chosen, it would cause inconsistencies amongst traditional Hadith narrations and Classical Arabic dictionaries, which show a variance in view.
- It contradicts the alleged reaction of prophet Muhammad to wife beating, in which he is reportedly to have found it unjust and said woman have the right to retaliate. The traditional story goes that he was over ruled by 4:34, apparently.

The evidence from the Qur'an suggests the correct meaning of the word in this case would be “cite” or “indicate” them to the authority, hence authority-involvement in 4:35. This also fits in with its usage elsewhere with direct objects. Another interpretation is to “set them forth” (i.e. separate from them).

SUMMARY 2:

Verse 4:34 can be understood as instructing to strike one's wife under a particular circumstance, or it can be understood as banishing/setting them forth through official channels (e.g. arbitration).

The more Qur'anically-consistent approach is the latter (but that is a separate topic), and even if Harry decided to go for the traditional one, he would have to embarrass himself:

Harry would have to explain why the Qur'an says to do three things all at once, these things being admonishment, separation in beds and striking. These would have to be as a preventative, since the verse says to only do it if they FEAR ill-conduct (maybe based on past experiences). Thus Harry would be asking his wife to provide proof that she was not being disobedient, or else beat the truth out of her.

Now physically striking one's wife based on unproved reasons runs counter to the need for proof (e.g. 24:4).

However, suspicion itself results in marital dissonance, which is why the ultimate penalty of setting them forth/citing them to authority works perfectly. 4:35 continues 4:34 by stating that if the HUSBAND does not take the appropriate action (i.e. citing his wife) of 4:34, SOMEONE ELSE should appoint an arbiter.

Just to clarify, if a husband intends to cite his wife to authority, he must of course let her know (admonish her), and separate from her (just like men must not have sex with their wives if they have intention to divorce).

Now if someone interprets 4:34 to mean “strike” the wife, this begs the question of how many times, and what if they do not obey? How can an outsider only FEAR separation if a man is abusing his wife? Surely the woman would have no reason to even WANT to remain with him (i.e. there will be a definite divorce, and not one to be feared!)

Thus a Muslim really has no choice but to reject “wife-beating”.

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LESSON 10: “Sample answer to the “Combat kit against the ‘Qur'an-Alone’ Muslims””

1) *How do you know how to pray using the Qur'an alone?*

Please study “Lesson 5”.

Can you prove that when Muhammad said “Pray as you have seen me praying” (assuming this is authentic) he did not mean the Qur'anic prayer as juxtaposed to that of the idolaters? Where is the hadith that says we have to pray with rakat? The context of the “pray as you have seen me praying” hadith was that he actually said this to non-Muslims who did not possess a Qur'an of their own. They had stayed with the Prophet for twenty or so days and they were leaving. It goes to show he had not already taught them. He told them to enjoin prayer on others and to do good deeds, too (i.e. follow the Qur'an and do not pray like idolaters). The prayer of the ahadith is stitch-work. Can you read the Qur'an and honestly deny that Allah does not define the purpose of salaah (17:110-111, 20:14, 29:45), and that the relevant instructions do not satisfy? Is it not true (from your sources) that Muhammad would recite sometimes 60-100 ayat, and that sometimes in his tahajjud he would pray 11 rakah and stay prostrated for long enough to recite 50 ayat? Is this not merely example in the same way that his ablution was example (he never actually said that method was mandatory)? The Qur'an says that he would remain standing for much of the night, so can you prove that rakat are actually relevant? To do this, can you explain 12:111 where Allah said that the Qur'an is a distinct explanation of all things (for our guidance (2:159))? If we can pray on horseback or on foot when in danger, does this not prove that salaah is actually about remembering Allah by standing, bowing and prostrating whilst glorifying/remembering Him? Are rakat not merely “extenders” for those who have not memorised much of the Qur'an? Is it not logical to begin a new rakah only when we recite a different Sura? Why cannot I perform seven rakat?

Is it not also true that Allah taught the Muslims how to pray (2:198, 2:239), and since no warner had come to these people before (32:3) the fully-detailed Qur'an (12:111) *must* contain all details?

Having said that, it is of course better to agree on a method for congregational salaah and thus there will inevitably be a “standard” or pre-arranged method. Can you prove that rituals beyond the Qur'anic salaah are obligatory? State the Sura and ayah number, with an explanation of 12:111, 45:6, 6:19 (as a start).

2) *How do you know how much Zakaah to pay using the Qur'an alone?*

“They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them there is a great sin and means of profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit. And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say: What you can spare. Thus does Allah make clear to you the communications, that you may ponder.”

Qur'an 2:219

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Ideally, it would be a progressive tax system (2.5% previously having been agreed upon for the average-individual). However, the tax would probably serve as a state tax on income and so Muslims should give any surplus (after their personal living expenses) to charity. This fulfils the Qur'anic injunction.

3) *Has not the Qur'an been passed to us from the same sources we received our authentic ahadith?*

Does this make them equal?

Unlike the Qur'an, less than a dozen scattered reports out of several thousand can be classified as possessing the evidence of the Qur'anic standard (four reliable witnesses (24:4 and 24:14)). As per the rules of the "Science of Hadith", each and every ayah of the Qur'an would have to be classified as "mutawatir bil lafz" (verbatim) and sahih.

When we compare this to the reports ascribed to the Prophet, we find that less than a dozen can be classified as such. That is to say, less than half a dozen will be mutawatir when we add bil lafz (verbatim) onto them.

The second flaw is that Allah explicitly took it upon Himself to preserve the Qur'an and not any other source of our deen. If this does not satisfy you, then your iman comes from ahadith and not the Qur'an. Let me explain:

If the Qur'an that we have was corrupted, then there was no Allah in the first place. Therefore the Prophet would not be a Prophet and everyone would be a liar. This would mean (again) that your ahadith are not worth following, though the Qur'an would still be a good book.

If the Qur'an is preserved and there is no Allah, then we still do not need to follow ahadith and the Qur'an is still a good book.

If the Qur'an is preserved and it was written by Allah, then Allah preserved it whilst not preserving the ahadith. We obey Allah by obeying the Message. The ahadith must be judged according to their content, classifying them as good or bad examples. This is a result of 3:79 where it says our knowledge and wisdom with regards to worshipping Allah must come from the Book, nowhere else.

Allah preserved the Qur'an, and thus to use your argument is to say that the companions had to be as good as God. If they were not, then (you say) the Qur'an is not worth following. Actually since they are not, the unpreserved ahadith and their interpretations are to be judged in the light of the Qur'an.

That aside, the Qur'an is more reliable anyway since it was actually taught by the Prophet. The ahadith were not. We have manuscripts of agreements/treaties at the time, but all the hadith-manuscripts by the companions mysteriously vanished. Once again you can produce no hadith-collection approved by Allah or the Prophet.

The third flaw is that if both were to be considered equal on any terms, why is it that the Qur'an was passed on to us verbatim by the same group of people (group because it was

not always the same players – important!) and yet the same group mysteriously had bouts of memory leaks whilst reporting the ahadith?

The fourth flaw is that there are no contradictions in the Qur'an and many in the hadith literature.

Fifthly, if one were to assume that the plan was to use the same people to preserve the Qur'an and ahadith, why did not the Messenger use Abu Hurairah, Anas ibn Malik, Abdullah ibn Umar or Aisha to write down the Qur'an? More than half of Bukhari's compilation consists of these four.

Sixthly, the Qur'an is a distinct explanation of all things for guidance (2:159, 12:111, 16:89). Can you provide a mutawatir hadith that contains something not in the Qur'an, and that I need for guidance?

Seventhly, why should we have to rely upon reports written down 150-200 years after the Prophet passed away? How do you know that Bukhari et.al. was trustworthy and then infallible? Does Allah not teach us that whoever accepts a lie as religious truth is a hypocrite?

"And who is more unjust than one who forges a lie against Allah, or gives the lie to the truth when it has come to him? Will not in hell be the abode of the unbelievers?"

29:68

The Qur'an is the truth (2:40-42, 2:91, 2:119, 2:147, 2:176, 5:48, 16:102). Whoever follows something else as a source of religious law/guidance follows a lie (10:32-33).

Muslims must follow the Qur'an alone (2:63, 2:91, 2:213, 2:176, 3:32, 3:73, 4:105, 5:3, 5:47-48, 5:99, 6:19, 6:114-115, 6:155-6:157, 7:3, 7:144-147, 7:169-171, 12:111, 17:9, 18:27, 20:123-124, 21:27, 21:45, 22:16, 22:54, 23:49, 23:73, 25:30, 28:49, 28:56, 33:1-2, 33:67, 39:23, 41:44, 45:6, 50:45 etc.).

Those who deny this must take up the challenge in 2:23, 11:13, 17:88 and 28:49. Besides, Muhammad only followed what was revealed to him (2:170, 6:50, 6:106, 7:3, 7:203, 10:15, 10:109, 33:2, 46:9), thus all Revelation should be assessable by its comparison to the Qur'an.

How then can you fear Allah by putting more faith in the scholars than in Him (9:31)?

"And from among those who are round about you of the dwellers of the desert there are hypocrites, and from among the people of Medina (also); they are stubborn in hypocrisy; you do not know them; We know them; We will chastise them twice then shall they be turned back to a grievous chastisement"

Qur'an 9:101

Did you meet all these scholars personally? If not, you are disobeying 17:36.

4) *Why would Allah preserve the Qur'an and not preserve*

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

the meaning?

Are you denying that the Qur'an is clear (3:7, 12:111, 15:1, 16:89, 2:159) and that the Messenger was but a warner (16:35, 35:23)?

5) *How much is the Jizyah that the People of the Book have to pay?*

As a follower of the Qur'an alone, I cannot agree that the jizya is anything more than a recompense. However, it has inevitably taken the form of a normal state tax which should be equal to/less than the state-tax "zakat" that the Muslims pay:

"O you who believe! Be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is aware of what you do."

5:8

"if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them, and if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allah loves those who judge equitably."

5:42

The "jizya" was actually a recompense to be paid by the People of the Book (paid for a certain amount of time as a tax) who fought against the Muslims. If it applied to everyone, the Qur'an would specify this. It applied only to those specific idolaters (of that time) and only to those who disregarded the entire concept of Allah and the Last Day (9:29). Their identity was explained in 9:30-36.

6) *Does the Qur'an say that cross-dressing is haram?*

"Say: Every one acts according to his manner; but your Lord best knows who is best guided in the path."

17:84

Firstly one must fulfil the basic dress-requirements of 24:30-31. Since the question would be very one-dimensional if you were referring to clothing (culture-relativity), I will assume that you mean: "Is it haram for a man to deliberately look like a woman, or vice-versa?"

A male is not like a female:

"So when she brought forth, she said: My Lord! Surely I have brought it forth a female-- and Allah knew best what she brought forth-- and the male is not like the female, and I have named it Marium, and I commend her and her offspring

into Thy protection from the accursed Shaitan."

3:36

Thus to deliberately intend to look like the opposite sex is illogical and against the logic of the Qur'an (which a Muslim would follow).

7) *The Qur'an says that men can beat up their wives. But we know from ahadith that this is a spiritual beating and not a harmful physical one. What is to stop a man from misinterpreting the Qur'an and beating the hell out of his wife?"*

Which ahadith are you reading? A spiritual beating hahahaha.

Please study "Lesson 8".

8) *Is it permissible for a man to look at a naked man?*

"Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do."

24:30

9) *Can I pray Salaah naked?*

"O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty and clothing that guards (against evil), that is the best. This is of the communications of Allah that they may be mindful."

7:26

"O children of Adam! attend to your embellishments at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant."

7:31

10) *How do we know the order of the alcohol revelations? Maybe the first of the Qur'anic revelations said it was haram and then the later ones came saying that it was okay except during prayer times. How do you know the order of its revelations by using the Quran alone?*

"They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them there is a great sin and means of profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit. And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say: What you can spare. Thus does Allah make clear to you the communications, that you may ponder."

2:219

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

We would take the ayah in the “perfecting” Sura (5:3) as the final one. 2:219 shows that there is no abrogation concerning alcohol. Revealed before 4:43 and 5:90-91, it clearly states that consuming alcohol is a sin. 4:43 merely mentions the conditions for prayer (state of mind, ablution etc.) whilst 5:90 declares that intoxicants are the work of Iblis. Why would Allah wait until 5:93 to say this? Did intoxicants only become the work of Iblis at that moment? No, 5:90-91 is a reminder for the inhabitants of Medina:

“O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the Shaitan’s work; shun it therefore that you may be successful. The Shaitan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you then desist?”

5:90-91

The words “Will you then desist?” confirms that it is a reminder. To a new ayah, 16:67 should not be considered an allowance for the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Rather, it states that alcohol AND goodly provision is obtained from the palm and grapes. One is that which is pure and wholesome food for us, and the other is that which turns into alcohol after it rots. It has been left to our choice to obtain pure, healthy food from this providence or to drink it as an intoxicating wine (exciting us and making us lose self-control). This also contains a hint as to the prohibition of wine.

Overall the order of the Revelations does not matter.

11) *It says in the Qur'an to shorten the prayer when you travel. How long do you have to travel? How short to cut the prayer?*

“And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten the prayer, if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress, surely the unbelievers are your open enemy.”

4:101

The shortening of salaah is only if you are in danger (or there is an emergency). You would shorten it according to the severity of the situation. I could ask the same question of hadithers – e.g. why only shorten it by rakat? Why not shorten it by reciting less? You could perform one rakah and recite enough to take the same time as seven rakat! The first question is ill-conceived whilst the answer to the second depends upon circumstances. You may ask the minimum time that should be spent on salaah, so study 94:5-8 and “Lesson 5”. It is between the person and Allah (not people and Sunnis), and obviously the longer that we spend (whilst it is appropriate), the better (see the relevant section in “Lesson 5”). Why would Allah impose a time-limit on something good? Generally I would pray seven rakat (or the general length thereof) to symbolise the effort of ascending “seven heavens” and reaching Paradise.

12) *In Surah 66:3, the Prophet told his wives that he knew because Allah had informed him about it. Show me a Qur'anic verse where Allah had informed the Prophet about it. You cannot. Does this not prove that there are revelations to Prophet Muhammad besides the Qur'an?*

According to basic Muslim belief, everything happens according Allah’s will. If something good happens we will thank Him. See 9:14:

“Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands...”

9:14

As you see, 66:3 does not necessarily mean that Allah literally spoke to Muhammad. Besides, it is an empty question for the reason that non-legislative “Revelation” was not always “the Qur’an” (10:87, 20:39).

13) *Surah 2:173 shows that Allah (swt) gave an order for the Muslims to change their Qibla from (Bayt Al Maqdis in Jerusalem) to the Kabah in Mecca. However, there is no Qur'anic verse that shows the first order that Allah gave to make the Qibla towards Jerusalem. Does this not prove that there are revelations to Prophet Muhammad besides the Qur'an?*

Firstly it is 2:143.

“The fools among the people will say: What has turned them from their qiblah which they had? Say: The East and the West belong only to Allah; He guides whom He likes to the right path.”

2:142

“And thus We have made you a medium (just) nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you; and We did not make the qiblah that which you formerly observed but that We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels, and this was surely hard except for those whom Allah has guided aright; and Allah will not make your faith to be fruitless; most surely Allah is Affectionate, Merciful to the people.”

2:143

“Indeed We see the turning of your face to heaven, so We shall surely turn you to a qiblah which you shall like; turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever you are, turn your face towards it, and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord; and Allah is not at all heedless of what they do.”

2:144

It is important to note that the sequence from 2:135 to 2:145

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

refers to Jews and Christians. From this we see it is logical to assume that the “fools” in 2:142 refers either to the Jews and/or Christians (who see that Allah has changed their qiblah) or to spectators who see that Allah has changed the qiblah of Muhammad and expects People of the Book to follow. The phrase “will say” in 2:142 suggests that they will complain after the impending announcement of 2:144.

2:143 is likewise a prelude to 2:144 in that it is preparing the Muslims for the commandment. “We have not made the qiblah that which you formerly observed but that...” indicates that Allah has designated a new qiblah but has yet to confirm it. This is similar to 5:3 where Allah says that He has “perfected the system” though there are still more rulings to come. The perfect verb “perfected” was used at the beginning of the Sura, and it applies to the forthcoming commandments or else it should have been mentioned at the end of the last. This is similar to fasting, where it is announced in 2:183 but not fully-explained until 2:187. According to 2:144 the qiblah which Muhammad had once observed was the Sacred Mosque, but it is evident that this was his choice (2:115, 2:144). This explains why the Sacred Mosque is a qiblah which he would like (2:144). It should be noted that “Indeed We see the turning of your face to heaven...” further indicates the freedom of choice which Muhammad enjoyed (though he had chosen another for strategic purposes).

“We did not make the qiblah...” in 2:143 could be read as “We have made the qiblah...” meaning that the new official qiblah (the Sacred Mosque) has been appointed as a test for believers. That is to say, Allah decided to appoint the qiblah so that He could expose the unbelievers. Obviously those who actually believed in Allah would have no trouble following a qiblah already followed by the People of the Book (who in theory follow the same God), thus the “former qiblah” would be Mecca. Note also that Jerusalem was the present qiblah at the time, so again it cannot be the “testing” qiblah referred to.

“...this was surely hard for the believers...” could be translated as “this is surely hard for the believers” because the Arabic word “kanat” is a perfect verb employed in the subjunctive mood.

For instance, perfect verbs are often used for past tense, but in 18:107 the same perfect verb is used in future tense. Perfect verbs can be used in the present and future tenses when included in hypothetical situations such as in 4:11 and 18:107 (19:5 is another example where context must decide how it is rendered).

E.g.:

صَعِبَ عَلَيْهِ الْأَمْرُ

sa”ub(a) “alay-h(i) (’a)l-’amr(u)
= (he/it) has been hard on him the matter (masc.)
Translation: the matter has been hard on him
This was the indicative mood.

صَعِبَ عَلَيْهِ الْأَمْرُ

sa”ub(a) “alay-h(i) (’a)l-’amr(u)
= (he/it) was hard on him the matter (masc.)
Translation: the matter would be hard on him
This is the subjunctive mood.

<http://arabic.tripod.com/Verbs11.htm>

Since 2:143 is talking of a commandment which has not come (2:144), the situation is as hypothetical as that in 4:11 or 18:107 (i.e. if people do not have enough faith, they will fail the test).

The phrase “will say” (an imperfect verb) in 2:142 confirms that the verse is talking of the future.

Thus, the test is ongoing and has not been decided since it has yet to be implemented, but the test itself is difficult such that believers will find it so. However, Allah will not let faith go unrewarded.

2:144 begins with the word “indeed” (qad) confirming that this ayah is the “peak” of the build-up. The actual commandment to follow the Sacred Mosque as the official and permanent qiblah begins the great test.

It seems that Muhammad formerly sometimes or always observed the Sacred Mosque as his qiblah, but at some stage (perhaps after his disassociation with Mecca) he integrated with the People of the Book and changed it to Jerusalem. Evidence for their qiblah can be found in the Bible (for instance I Kings 22-44, II Chronicles 6:18-21, II Chronicles 7:12, 20:9;18, Daniel 6:10-11 and Jonah 2:4;7;2). This would have been a wise strategic decision, although in 2:145 it is made clear that the People of the Book would have trouble accepting the new law.

Even if we accept the strange interpretation used in the question, one must ask what the point of the test was. If people (the ones at the time, assuming past tense) believed in Allah and the Messenger but then refused a non-Qur’anic command from the Messenger, what is to stop them realising their mistake after hearing 2:143-144 and repenting? What was the purpose of the purpose of the test? Obviously, the test was a test because of the *change* in qiblah, NOT because it was supposedly not in the Book. The Revelation in 2:143-144 would actually end the test, meaning that the command was never a permanent law-carrying Revelation (study the summary of “dual Revelation” in Lesson 1, Section 6 of the “Qur’an-alone Manual”). Allah never intended it to be permanent, so it was abrogated and not included in the Book.

Ayat such as 10:87 and 20:77 prove to us that commands like in 2:143 could be given external to the Message, but obviously they were never permanent (for those who ask how Musa knew how to pray then, read 28:14. 10:89 describes Allah accepting Musa’s supplication right after the verse, which is the main purpose of prayer (2:186). Ritual was quite obviously not important then, but anyone who has read the Qur’an will know that it does not describe all of what Allah said to the Prophets). It was just a way of separating the pure from the impure (8:37), and it cannot be stressed enough that it applied to the people of the time.

Moreover, it was not a test simply because it may not have been in the “Qur’an”, but rather because the *change* in the qiblah was difficult. Following the Messenger’s qiblah demonstrated that they would follow the Messenger (the authentic Message). The Messenger was only a warner (35:23), was given the Qur’an to warn with (6:19, 42:7), and his sole duty was to deliver the Message (5:99). This is why the test was not to see those who “followed Muhammad”.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Thus the purpose of the change was to see who would demonstrate their belief in the Message and their allegiance to the Messenger (7:157, 48:10). Our test in these times is to follow the latest qiblah (in the Qur'an).

Furthermore (assuming the Sunni interpretation is correct), any non-Qur'anic injunction to change the qiblah could never be a contradiction to the Qur'an. That is to say, any commandment outside of the Qur'an could never embellish or contradict the fully-detailed Qur'an (they all come from Allah). It may also be supposed that following the Messenger meant not opposing what was his developing *habit* of turning towards Jerusalem. 2:143 does not use the Arabic word for "appoint" (tadrifu (2:236)), but actually "make". The same word "make" (ja'alna) is used earlier in the ayah to describe how He made them a "middle nation". 9:14 is an example of how Allah can perform things "indirectly" using people, and the socio-political climate of Sura 2 explains why the qiblah is mentioned there and why the Messenger would choose it. We already know we are supposed to follow the Messenger. The Messenger believed in Allah's words (7:157), thus swearing allegiance to the Messenger was swearing allegiance to Allah (48:10). It is thus obvious that "following the Messenger" means "obeying Allah".

"Obeying" or "following" someone implies accepting or following their particular way of life (e.g. that prescribed in the Qur'an or the making of mischief), and not the particulars of religious practice once the Message itself is accepted. For example:

"My Lord! deliver me and my followers from what they do."

26:169

Ayat 26:181-184 provide some specific aspects of the way of life prescribed by Allah.

Another example:

"So he incited his people to levity and they obeyed him: surely they were a transgressing people."

43:54

Even with the Sunni interpretation, it is quite clear that following the Messenger regarding the qiblah is a part of following his political views and social strategies. (i.e. helping him to deliver the Message (7:157)). It has nothing to do with making laws outside of the Qur'an. If we were in a situation where a Messenger had arrived and had given some Revelation, then if we knew his purpose and wanted to follow him, we would accept his social strategies. The test was quite temporary (for those people), and again, all permanent wahi (Revelation) is in the Message (13:30, 18:27, 21:45, 38:70).

The test was a test of faith (2:143), and guidance comes from Allah through the Qur'an (17:9, 39:23). If it was a test of faith, it was not a test to see who followed Muhammad, but rather the Messenger who delivered the Message (hence who would follow the Message). People would not know or care if

Allah's Revelation was included as part of "the Qur'an". The point is that by "following the Messenger", they are demonstrating their faith in the value of the Message (i.e. they believe that the way of life is prescribed by Allah). If it were a socio-political decision, the believers would have a chance to show their belief even more and follow the qiblah. It was obvious in 2:142-145 that the hypocritical People of the Book would not help the Messenger if the qiblah was altered.

Finally (assuming the Sunni interpretation is correct), the commandment to turn to Jerusalem could easily have been an abrogated or forgotten verse (2:106, 16:101). No verse in the Qur'an abrogates another verse still present in the Qur'an. Regardless, it was still abrogated.

14) *The Qur'an is passed on to us by Mutawatir narrations. Mutawatir narrations are narrations by so many people that it is just impossible for all of them to get together and plot and lie. However, we have so many Mutawatir hadith (<http://hadith.al-islam.com/bayan/Index.asp?Lang=ENG&Type=3>) that teach things that are not in the Qur'an. How can you reject their authenticity with no objective evidence?*

It is ironic but you should not ask this question until you can prove that the Qur'an is not complete or fully-detailed. If you can do that then the "Qur'an-alone" Muslim might not need to continue. I browsed the first fifty on that site and found not one new teaching. I did come across the "law" of stoning adulterers to death, and that would lead to hellfire. There were also many examples of Muhammad describing the unseen, for which you must answer (see "Lesson 7").

In short the mutawatir ahadith provide us with non-verbatim fluff which has only ruined your religion and the world. The Qur'an actually is clear, complete and fully-detailed, but it is of course not enough for those who are hungry for their own dressy identity. My challenge to you is simply to provide me with something from the mutawatir ahadith (or ahadith in general) which a Muslim requires for salvation. If you succeed, you might then prove why you did not disprove Islam.

I cannot responsibly reply to your question without providing these references (just as a start):

<http://www.tolueislam.com/Parwez/mh/mh.htm>

"Hadith: A Re-Evaluation" by Kassim Ahmed

"Introduction to Hadith" by John Burton

"Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought" by Jonathan Brown

http://www.globalwebpost.com/farooqm/study_res/islam/fiqh/hallaq_hadith.html (focuses upon mutawatir ahadith)

The Qur'anic ayat you listed below have been addressed. Please download the "Qur'an-alone Commentary":

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

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Your remaining argument is the “prophecies” in the ahadith. “Lesson 7” provides some ayat where Muhammad clearly did not follow anything except the Qur’an, and neither did he have knowledge concerning WHEN the Hour would come (or OF the Hour itself). Let us not forget these:

“Say: I am not the first of the messengers, and I do not know what will be done with me or with you: I do not follow anything but that which is revealed to me, and I am nothing but a plain warner.”

46:9

(No future-telling there. This rules out any mutawatir ahadith describing “intercession” (and there is quite a number). Any hadith where the plight of Messengers or people is described should henceforth be discarded, especially those describing Muslim conquests.)

“They ask you about the hour, when will be its taking place? Say: The knowledge of it is only with my Lord; none but He shall manifest it at its time; it will be momentous in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you but of a sudden. They ask you as if you were solicitous about it. Say: Its knowledge is only with Allah, but most people do not know.”

7:187

(The Day of Judgement is sudden, and therefore there can be no “warning signs”.)

The ahadith provide vague prophecies which either came from the Book of Revelations or are so general that anything can “prove” them. For example, competing to build higher buildings is quite predictable since most or every leader in history was a megalomaniac (see Pharaoh’s monuments). Moreover, the theme was already there (“Tower of Babylon”), and even in the Qur’an it describes how Pharaoh wanted to build a tower to “witness God” (see also 7:137, 26:128 and 29:38). The time that this hadith was written was over two hundred years after the Prophet, and larger buildings were obviously being constructed during that time (all throughout the Muslim domain). It is also tempting to self-fulfil a prophecy when the opportunity arises. The same hadith also has Gabriel coming down in disguise to quiz the Messenger. Muhammad afterwards recognises him and said that he came down to “teach me their religion”. This finds no support in the Qur’an:

“And they say: Why has not an angel been sent down to him? And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided and then they would not have been respited.”

6:8

“Then, it may be that you will give up part of what is revealed to you and your breast will become straitened by it because they say: why has not a treasure been sent down upon him or an angel come with him? You are only a warner; and Allah is custodian over all things.”

11:12

The signs of the End Times had already happened:

“Do they then wait for aught but the hour that it should come to them all of a sudden? Now indeed the tokens of it have (already) come, but how shall they have their reminder when it comes on them?”

47:18

47:10 provides an idea of this:

“Have they not then journeyed in the land and seen how was the end of those before them: Allah brought down destruction upon them, and the unbelievers shall have the like of it.”

47:10

The first “prophecy” you provide is odd and has no references. It seems you are using hearsay to prove hearsay, so it needs no comment.

The second also has no references. We need more information than this, for instance who wrote the ahadith down and why Islam did not conquer all of these lands in Muhammad’s lifetime (since the key was “his”).

The third is another fairytale. The invasion of Egypt was a strategic action which Amr eventually persuaded Umar to take. The invasion lasted from 639-644, and Muhammad passed on in 632. So long as the mutawatir ahadith can contradict the Qur’an, there is no need to accept this.

The fourth prophecy is yet another prophecy simply because someone wrote it after the event. You admit that it is a prophecy only of the conquest of Persia and of the survival of Saraqa. Since we already had a “prophecy” about Persia, there is no reason why there should not be another one to “authenticate” it. It is an underhand tactic to say “This is a prophecy” without providing full scholarly details. You are using these to make some serious innovations to Islam, so you should reveal everything without hiding behind 1200 years of tradition. Also, I would not trust Shafi’i because he was the one who distorted the context of the Qur’anic verses to fit his preferences. Muslims have followed ever since.

For the fifth, you provide still more hearsay. I can give you another prophecy about India:

“The holy Prophet (pbuh) told Hazrat Abu Huraira (RA):

From the Umat there will be a rise of Battalions from Sindh (Indus) and Hind (Sub-continent). If I got opportunity to be

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

part of such a movement and if I martyred then it is good, if I returned alive I will be like free Abu Huraira who is freed from Hell by Allah."

Now according to this hadith there was no prophecy because of the "if" word. When placed alongside other ahadith, it becomes clear that this uprising has not occurred (as Jesus will emerge afterwards). I do not have to provide references of course. It should be recalled that these ahadith provided by Bassam Zawadi contradict 46:9 of the Qur'an.

Another one:

"The holy Prophet (pbuh) Told Hazrat Suban (RA):

Two groups in my Umma will be freed by Allah from hell fire, One which will conquer India and the other which will be with Hazrat Esa (AS)."

Contradicting 46:9.

The prophecy about the "fire" was (of course) recorded after the event. You would have readers believe that there was only an eruption over 600 years after the Prophet died, but you are dishonest:

"...the volcanic lava field of Harrat Rahat between Makkah and Al Madinah has experienced volcanism in historic times. The oldest lavas near Madinah are only about 2 million years old, and the youngest lavas (less than 6000 years old) resulted from 11 eruptions, with 2 historic eruptions in AD 641 and AD 1256. The 641 AD eruption resulted in a small line of cinder cones to the southwest of the city."

Taken from the "Saudi Geological Survey" site:

<http://www.sgs.org.sa/English/NaturalHazards/Pages/Volcanoes.aspx>

641 AD was nine years after the Prophet supposedly died, and well before hadithers emerged. Note that this is one of the two well-documented eruptions.

Your next weapon is the conquest of Constantinople. Here are some prophecies about that:

Abu Dawud, "Book 37, Number 4281:

Narrated Mu'adh ibn Jabal:

The Prophet (pbuh) said: The flourishing state of Jerusalem will be when Yathrib is in ruins, the ruined state of Yathrib will be when the great war comes, the outbreak of the great war will be at the conquest of Constantinople and the conquest of Constantinople when the Dajjal (Antichrist) comes forth. He (the Prophet) struck his thigh or his shoulder with his hand and said: This is as true as you are here or as you are sitting (meaning Mu'adh ibn Jabal).

Abu Dawud, Book 37, Number 4282:

Narrated Mu'adh ibn Jabal:

The Prophet (pbuh) said: The greatest war, the conquest of Constantinople and the coming forth of the Dajjal (Antichrist) will take place within a period of seven months.

Abu Dawud, Book 37, Number 4283:

Narrated Abdullah ibn Busr:

The Prophet (pbuh) said: The time between the great war and the conquest of the city (Constantinople) will be six years, and the Dajjal (Antichrist) will come forth in the seventh."

Constantinople was taken-over by Muslims in May 1453 AD. Yet the prophecy regarding Yathrib (Medina) being in ruins and Antichrist's advent to take place seven months after the conquest of Constantinople did not materialize. Based on the preceding traditions, the Antichrist was to appear in November 1453.

The hadith-writers also believed in a young Earth and that the Day of Judgement would occur shortly after Muhammad passed on:

"According to Ibn Humayd- Yahya b. Wadih- Yahya b. Ya'qub- Hammad- Sa'id b. Jubayr- Ibn Abbas: This world is one of the weeks of the other world - seven thousand years. Six thousand two hundred years have already passed. (The world) will surely experience hundreds of years, during which there will be no believer in the oneness of God there. Others said that the total extent of time is six thousand years." (Tabari, pp. 172-173)

Let us look at Sahih Muslim:

"Book 41, Number 7044:

This hadith has been reported by Sahl b. Sa'd that he heard Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: I and the Last Hour are (close to each other) like this (and he, in order to explain it) pointed (by joining his) forefinger, (one) next to the thumb and the middle finger (together).

Book 41, Number 7046:

Shu'ba reported: I heard Qatada and Abu Tayyab narrating that both of them heard Anas as narrating that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: I and the Last Hour have been sent like this, and Shu'ba drew his forefinger and middle finger near each other while narrating it.

Book 41, Number 7049:

Anas reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: I and the Last Hour have been sent like this and (he while doing it) joined the forefinger with the middle finger."

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Now according to Tabari's commentary, the world was less than 7000 years old. Moreover, there is a number of ahadith in Bukhari suggesting that the Hour was to occur just after Muhammad's death:

"Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 3, Number 116:

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar:

Once the Prophet led us in the 'Isha' prayer during the last days of his life and after finishing it (the prayer) (with Taslim) he said: "Do you realize (the importance of) this night? Nobody present on the surface of the earth tonight will be living after the completion of one hundred years from this night."

There is a wealth of such material, and I am sure that the hadith-writers made many more wrong guesses than right ones. Unless Bassam Zawadi wants to go through every hadith in detail, he should put up his white flag. We contend that the "Science of Ahadith" is but smoke and mirrors, and the evidence supports our view.

Supposing that even one of these prophecies was actually made by Muhammad, it would not prove anything except that maybe Allah revealed something extra during the "Night Journey". However, if he did make such prophecies it is unfortunate since Islam would make zero sense with many false prophecies having been made. That is Sunni Islam.

LESSON 11: "The qiblah is Mecca"

The Qur'an was written in Arabic, and Muhammad was an Arabian (41:44). "His people" were therefore Arabs.

He was an Arab and was turned to a qiblah (direction of salaah) that he would like (2:144). The Jews and Christians would NEVER agree to this qiblah (2:145).

We know the Arab Muslims settled near the Sacred Mosque (9:28). If the Sacred Mosque were in Jerusalem, there would be so many "idolaters" around that they could not be kept away from it (since it was their place!).

The Kaaba is referred to as the "sacred House" in 5:2 and other places. The Quraish (an Arabian tribe) were to serve the Lord of THIS House (106:3).

The Temple at Jerusalem was the qiblah for the People of the Book, and this was not shared by the Muslims (2:143-145). It is identified in 17:1, 17:4-7 and 17:60.

See evidence from the previous Books:

"...Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! Regard your servant's

prayer and his plea, O Lord my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today... Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place... When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, and then they pray towards this place, confess your name, and turn from their sin..." I Kings 8:22-44

The Location of Makkah

Makkah is at the intersection of latitude 21 to 25 degree north and longitude 39 to 49 degree east. It is set in a rugged landscape consisting mostly of solid granite, with rocks sometimes reaching 300 meters (1,000 feet) above sea-level.

Makkah is enclosed by the Valley of Abraham, which is surrounded by two nearby mountain ranges to the east, west and south. The northern range comprises the Al-Falaq and Qu'aqi'an mountains, while the southern range consists of Abu Hudaidah mountain to the west, Kuday to the south and Abu Qubais and Khindimah to the south-east.

There are three main entrances to Makkah: Al-Mu'allat (also known as Al-Hujûn), Al-Musfalah and Al-Shubaikah.

It is generally agreed that Al-Mu'allat includes all areas which are higher than the Haram and Al-Musfalah covers all areas that are lowers.

Ka'bah & Makkah in History

Edward Gibbon writes about the Ka'bah and its existence before the Christian era in his book:

"..... of blind mythology of barbarians - of the local deities, of the stars, the air, and the earth, of their sex or titles, their attributes or subordination. Each tribe, each family, each independent warrior, created and changed the rites and the object of this fantastic worship; but the nation, in every age, has bowed to the religion as well as to the language of Mecca. The genuine antiquity of Caaba ascends beyond the Christian era: in describing the coast of the Red sea the Greek historian Diodorus has remarked, between the Thamudites and the Sabeans, a famous temple, whose superior sanctity was revered by all the Arabians; the linen of silken veil, which is annually renewed by the Turkish emperor, was first offered by the Homerites, who reigned seven hundred years before the time of Mohammad."^[1]

Diodorus Siculus was a Greek historian of 1st century BC who wrote Bibliotheca Historica, a book describing various parts of the discovered world. The following lines are the English translation of Greek quoted by Gibbon from the book of Diodorus Siculus (Diodorus of Sicily) describing the 'temple' considered to be the holiest in the whole of Arabia.

And a temple has been set-up there, which is very holy and exceedingly revered by all Arabians.^[2]

It is interesting to know that Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria, mathematician and astronomer, flourishing about a century after Pliny, undertook to make an atlas of the habitable world. He was not a descriptive geographer, and his book was intended to be no more than a commentary on his maps.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

He enumerated some hundred and fourteen cities or villages in Arabia Felix.

For example, *Dumaetha*, placed by Ptolemy just outside the northern boundary of Arabia Felix, must be the mediaeval Arabian *Daumet*, which is today the chief village of the great oasis of Jauf. *Hejr*, famous in the “times of ignorance” as the seat of a kingdom, and now Medayin Salih, is Ptolemy’s *Egra*. His *Thaim* is *Teima*, now known for its inscriptions to have had temples and some sort of civilization as far back as 500 BC. It is the *Tema* of Job. In *Lathrippa*, placed inland from Iambia (Yambo), we recognize the *Iathrippa* of Stephan of Byzantium, the *Yathrib* of the early Arab traditions, now honoured as *El Medina*, the City of Cities.^[3]

Apart from this a place called **Macoraba** is also shown which is identified as **Mecca** (please refer to the map facing page 17 of reference [3]). G E von Grunebaum says:

Mecca is mentioned by Ptolemy, and the name he gives it allows us to identify it as a South Arabian foundation created around a sanctuary.^[4]

Makkah in the Scriptures

The Qur’an talks about **Bakkah** (the older name of Makkah) being the first house of worship appointed for mankind. It also addresses this place as **Umm ul-Qurā** i.e., Mother of the Settlements.

“Verily, the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at **Bakkah** (Makkah), full of blessing, and a guidance for Al-’Alamin (the mankind and jinns). In it are manifest signs (for example), the Maqam (place) of Ibrahim (Abraham); whosoever enters it, he attains security. And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka’bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses (for one’s conveyance, provision and residence); and whoever disbelieves [i.e. denies Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah), then he is a disbeliever of Allah], then Allah stands not in need of any of the ‘Alamin (mankind and jinns).”

Qur’an 3:96-97

The Bible also mentions about the valley of **Baca** in connection with the pilgrimage. Below is the quote from Psalms 84 (NIV):

*1 How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!
2 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
3 Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young-- a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God.
4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.
5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.
6 As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.
7 They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.
8 Hear my prayer, O LORD God Almighty; listen to me, O God of Jacob.
9 Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on your*

anointed one.

10 Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

12 O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.

The Qur’an obviously preferred “Bakkah” to draw the link between the two Books, although it used “Makkata” in 48:24.

If Baca is not Makkah, then consider this: The Psalms were revealed to David before the Temple was built by Solomon. There was no temple in Jerusalem during that time.

Solomon’s qiblah: I Kings 8:22-44

The Temple at Jerusalem is not the station of Abraham, as it is differentiated from the Sacred Mosque in 17:1.

The interpretation of the valley of **Baca** in the *The Jewish Encyclopedia* is quite interesting, though it does not provide a complete evidence and leaves the reader with a suggestion. Below is the full quote.

Baca, The Valley Of: *A valley mentioned in Psalms LXXXIV:7. Since it is there said that pilgrims transform the valley into a land of wells, an old translators gave to Baca, the meaning of a “valley of weeping”; but it signifies rather any valley lacking water. Support for this latter view is to be found in II Samuel V:23 et seq.; I Chronicles XIV:14 et seq., in which the plural form of the same word designates a tree similar to the balsam tree; and it was supposed that a dry valley could be named after this tree. Konig takes Baca from the Arabian Baka’a, and translates it “lack of streams”. The Psalmist apparently has in mind a particular valley whose natural condition led him to adopt its name.^[5]*

The translation of Arabian **Baka’a** as “lack of stream” seems to throw some light on the nature of the valley before the appearance of the stream of **Zam-Zam** near Ka’bah which was a dry place with no vegetation whatsoever.

The Anchor Bible Dictionary does not throw any light on it, albeit, there are some suggestions in it too like the *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. Below is the full quote.

“Baca, The Valley Of (PLACE): [Hebrew ‘emeq habakka’], The valley of Baca (Psalms 84:1) is either a historical place name or a symbolical expression for “deep sorrow”. The first part of Psalms 84:6 seems to mean that by “passing through the experience of deep sorrow, righteous ones can make it the source of life.” The Septuagint translated the phrase into Greek as “the valley of weeping”. The word ‘emeq “valley” has the root meaning of “deep”, so the expression may mean “deep sorrow”.

However, some have considered it as the “valley of the balsam tree” from the same word in plural form found in 2 Samuel 5:24. This is based on the assumption that **baka** may be a “gum-exuding [weeping] tree”. Another possibility is that the word **beka’im** (plural of **baka**) may mean “weeping wall-rocks” in the valley of Rephaim on whose tops David and his troops were waiting for the coming of the Philistine army passing through the valley below (2 Samuel 5:24). It seems safe to seek the meaning of **baka** in relation to the

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

dripping water, since we often find this word in the names related to rivers and wadis, such as Wadi al-Baka in the Sinaitic district and Baca on the wadi in the central Galilee area, W of Meroth. It is also possible to understand beka'im as the place of "weepings" of the Philistine army for their defeat by David. After all these considerations, the expression of "valley of baka" can best be taken as a symbolic expression "weeping" or "deep sorrow" which fits well in the context of Psalms 84:6."^[6]

The interpretation of the valley of **Baca** as a "the valley of weeping" makes sense because of the distress which Hagar^(P) underwent when she was left with Ishmael^(P) in the barren desert with no means of living.

The two interpretations of **Baca**, viz., "lack of stream" and "the valley of weeping" appears to fit in the context of pilgrimage to **Bakkah**, the older name of Makkah where the **Ka'bah** is situated. **Ka'bah** has been a place of reverence by all Arabians before the Christian era as we have seen earlier.

References

[1] Edward Gibbon (Introduction by Christopher Dawson), Gibbon's Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire, Volume V, Everyman's Library, London, pp. 223-224.

[2] Translated by C H Oldfather, Diodorus Of Sicily, Volume II, William Heinemann Ltd., London & Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MCMXXXV, p. 217.

[3] D G Hogarth, The Penetration Of Arabia, Alston Rivers Limited, London, 1905, p. 18.

[4] G E Von Grunebaum, Classical Islam: A History 600-1258, George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1970, p. 19.

[5] The Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume II, Funk & Wagnalls Company, MDCCCCII, p. 415.

[6] David Noel Freedman (Editor-in-Chief), The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Volume I, Doubleday, p. 566.

LESSON 12: "Inheritance-incompetence"

The following is a literal rendering of 4:11:

"Instructs you Allah concerning your children: for the male like portion the two females. But if there are women more (than) two, then for them two-thirds what he left. And if is one, then for her half. And for his parents, for each one of them a sixth of what left, if is for him a child. But if not for him is a child and inherit him his parents then for his mother one-third. And if are for him brothers and sister, then for his mother the sixth from after any will made or any debt."

4:11

The Qur'an distinctly says that the male child will receive the share of the two females, and that if there are more than two females they will receive 2/3 between them. This assumes absence of spouse, parents and siblings. If there are other beneficiaries, the children will receive the share of what is left in the aforementioned fractions.

Some examples ("X" = "the remainder"):

2 Daughters: 1/3X
1 Son: 2/3X (if multiple sons, the division applies to the overall male/female shares)
Wife: 1/8

3 Daughters: 2/3X
1 Son: 1/3X (if multiple sons, the division applies to the overall male/female shares)
Mother: 1/8
1 Sister: Only receives if there are no offspring

4 Daughters: X (i.e. 1-(1/8+1/3))
Wife: 1/8
Mother: 1/6
Father: 1/6

Wife: 1/4
Mother: 1/6X
Father: 2/3X
2 Brothers: 1/6X

From 4:176 we learn that a kalala can possess children. It is assumed and agreed upon that a kalala has no parents (especially since the siblings are already entitled to shares in the presence of parents). At the time of writing I assume a kalala can have a spouse, and thus that the siblings will receive also. Any excesses should be allocated to state-dispensing.

Some examples:

1 Son: 2/3X
2 Daughters: 1/3X
Wife: 1/8
2 Brothers and 1 Sister: 1/3

Wife: 1/4
3 Brothers 2/3X
1 Sister: 1/3X

QUESTION:

Bukhari and Muslim conclude that Muslims cannot inherit from their non-Muslim relatives, and vice-versa. What is your opinion?

ANSWER:

The issue only arises if the deceased fails to provide a bequest:

"Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives, according to usage, a duty (incumbent) upon those who guard

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

(against evil).”

Qur'an 2:180

“According to usage” means “in fairness”, and thus if a non-Muslim son wishes to spend it on alcohol etc. then most likely they will receive much less. I do not see how religion can be a concern, because it is intention to spend that counts. If we deny relatives inheritance due to religion, this violates 2:256. Since the Qur'an mandates discretion and judgement anyway, it would be fairer if the intentions/situations of beneficiaries were made clear (or in certain circumstances the expenditure of the bequest may be specified).

“The possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allah to inheritance, one with respect to another, than (other) believers, and (than) those who have fled (their homes), except that you do some good to your friends; this is written in the Book.”

Qur'an 33:6

From this verse we conclude that relatives receive the bequest (we could thus grant half-siblings etc. a share if there were no more immediate brethren*). However it is also apparent that morality plays a role in deciding if or what people will receive.

The inheritance laws in Sura 4 apply if no will is left or to the remainder unaddressed. Unlike in some ayat (e.g. 4:25), Allah makes no distinction between believers and the unbelievers. Thus we have no right to deviate from these commandments. Nevertheless, I would say that the Islamic state is under no *immediate* obligation to allow the non-Muslim relative a bequest. This is because Islam is a *deen* (system) wherein the adherents are subjected to distinct rights and responsibilities. Allowing non-Muslims Islamic privileges whilst exempting them from certain penalties would be an asymmetric practice. To avoid forcing Muslims to judge between them by the Qur'an, non-Muslims must be able to define their own rights and responsibilities, subject to review, such that peace and fairness are preserved:

“...if they come to you (seeking judgement), judge between them or turn aside from them, and if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allah loves those who judge equitably. And how do they make you a judge when they have the Taurat wherein is Allah's judgment?”

5:42-43

“Say: Every one acts according to his manner; but your Lord best knows who is best guided in the path.”

17:84

In the case of a Muslim passing away and a non-Muslim relative has a criminal record (or history of immorality), there

may be a number of legal procedures implemented to determine if and what he-or-she is to receive. The share may be passed to a nominated trustee to guard the money lest it be spent on wasteful or harmful ventures, or a “character/situation assessment” (considering also the person's preferences and intentions) may be undertaken with the witness of other relatives. This is solely for the sake of an efficient and fair distribution of wealth, though being recognised as “Muslim” does not necessarily make one a good person. Recall that this applies only if the non-Muslim has a criminal record or history of immorality, and therefore that Muslims with a criminal-record may be subject to a similar or less rigorous process. People should be encouraged to enact bequests before they pass.

This is a good place to expand:

Non-Muslims living in an Islamic society would have to request that they possess specific legal precepts, and to work under the supervision of authorities to establish a fair and compatible system.

Please note that under the supervision of an Islamic system, non-Muslim courts would operate in a similar manner although certain punishments (e.g. that for adultery) would be different (perhaps depending on circumstance). A person's background should be considered (4:25). Any crime committed by non-Muslims against Muslims would be the same as vice-versa, and ultimately “non-Muslim courts” would be a set of considerations based on differences in the emphasis on particular social-values (e.g. marriage (24:3)). Acts such as murder, stealing, rape etc. would be treated the same regardless of legal religious status.

This is in accordance with the Qur'anic principles of freedom-of-belief and equity.

*My general opinion on inheritance for half-siblings is the same as for grandparents and grandchildren etc.. If someone dies leaving full-siblings and half-siblings, the half-siblings should only receive if they were living in or were closely connected to the household of the deceased. If they were planning to leave and had no real dependency, it would be unfair on the full-siblings if they received.

LESSON 13: “The punishment for theft”

(Thanks to “Wakas”)

“And (as for) the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut their hands as a punishment for what they have earned, an exemplary punishment from Allah; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.” (5:38)

The Arabic word translated as “cut” in 5:38 is “iqtaa”, and it occurs fourteen other times in the same verb-form (QaTaA).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

With the exception of 59:5 and possibly 69:46, all other occurrences mean the non-physical or metaphorical action of “cutting off a relationship” or “ending” (2:27, 3:127, 6:45, 7:72, 8:7, 9:121, 13:25, 15:66, 22:15, 27:32, 29:29, 56:33).

The derivatives that are read in the second verb-form (QaTTaA) occur seventeen times. This form, which expresses intensity or frequency of the action, is used to mean physically cutting-off (5:33, 7:124, 20:71, 26:49, 13:31), metaphorically cutting-off (2:166, 6:94, 7:160, 7:167, 9:110, 47:15, 47:22, 21:93, 22:19, 23:53) as well as physically cutting/marking (12:31, 12:50). It is interesting to note that even though 12:31 uses the more intensive verb-form with both “cut” and “hands” together, it does not mean “cut off”. The less intensive form is employed in 5:38.

Secondly, the Arabic word for “hands” (aydi) is often used in the Qur’an in a metaphorical/metonymical manner (examples are 2:195, 2:237, 3:3, 3:73, 5:64, 6:93, 8:70, 9:29, 23:88, 28:47, 30:36, 38:45, 48:10, 48:24, 111:1), and often it has a meaning of “power”/“means”. It should also be noted that this word is in the Arabic plural meaning three or more hands, whilst only two people are referenced: the male and the female thief. Some have commented that this plural usage causes problems for the common interpretation of “hand-cutting”.

Therefore it is possible to understand the punishment for thieves in three alternative ways: (1) cutting off their hands, (2) cutting or marking their hands or (3) cutting their means to steal (or cutting their hands from committing the crime). It is up to the society to choose one of these meanings or a combination of them depending upon the severity of the crime and their ability to enforce the penalty.

However, it should be said that the only working example given by the Qur’an of theft and its punishment is in the story of Joseph, in which option 3 is done by detaining the one guilty of theft (12:73-75).

Furthermore, 12:79 makes it clear that Joseph (described in 6:84 as one of the guided and a good-doer) was acting in accordance with God’s law in detaining only the one guilty of theft.

Thus, one possible meaning of 5:38 is to apply it in the manner provided by Joseph’s example.

If lashings are given as punishment for proven adultery, the Qur’an states to not let pity/compassion prevent one from carrying them out (24:2). However, it says no such thing for the alleged hand-cutting verse though many would consider this punishment to be worse. This adds to the possibility that it should not be taken to mean “cutting”.

Lastly, whatever interpretation is chosen, it is important to keep in mind the recurring theme of equivalence in the Qur’an. Thus the punishment should be proportionate to the crime:

“And the recompense of evil is punishment like it, but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah; surely He does not love the unjust.” (42:40)

5:38 does state that the punishment is a *recompense for what they earned*, meaning the punishment should be committed only to the degree of the crime. A person’s hand/means may be cut for stealing something small, but any punishment should be as insignificant as the theft.

It is thus clear that to physically cut off the hand or hands of the thief is not the only possible understanding. Taking into account the law of equivalence, it would perhaps only be reserved for a significant theft which led to harming others (hence harming the perpetrator). If a Muslim in authority, like Joseph was, were to apply the punishment for theft, like Joseph did, then they would be following the example of one guided.

My personal recommendation would be to give the thief adequate chance to repent and make amends (as per 5:39). This way even if the government opted for “chopping-off the hand”, it would literally be the thief’s choice to suffer this punishment or reform and make amends.

A Muslim society cannot punish a hungry person for stealing food since letting a member of the society go hungry is a bigger crime than the act of stealing. Such a society would demonstrate the characteristics of a lack of appreciation (107:1-7, 89:17-20, 90:6-20). Considering theft solely as an individual crime and advocating the severest possible interpretation is neither fair nor consistent with the scripture. Moreover, the degree of repentance is a consideration when deciding penalties:

“But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms (himself), then surely Allah will turn to him (mercifully); surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

Qur’an 5:39

(The turning of Allah mercifully means that the punishment will not be inflicted since it is described as Allah’s punishment in 5:38).

The situation is conceptually similar to 4:15, where Muslims are instructed to keep women guilty of lesbianism in their homes “until death takes them” or “until Allah finds for them some other way”. Obviously this means: “for however long it takes before they are forgiven or married etc.”. The severest interpretation is subject to so many considerations that it would be virtually impossible for it to be appropriate.

SUMMARY:

The sensible approach is to give the thief adequate chance to repent and make amends (as per 5:39). This way even if the government opted for “chopping-off the hand”, it would literally be the thief’s choice to suffer this punishment or reform and make amends.

Unlike for adultery (24:2), compassion from the judge is not forbidden:

A Muslim society cannot punish a hungry person for stealing food since letting a member of the society go hungry is a bigger crime than the act of stealing. Such a society would demonstrate the characteristics of a lack of appreciation

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

(107:1-7, 89:17-20, 90:6-20). Considering theft solely as an individual crime and advocating the severest possible interpretation (all times) is neither fair nor consistent with the scripture. Moreover, the degree of repentance is a consideration when deciding penalties:

“But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms (himself), then surely Allah will turn to him (mercifully); surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (5:39)

(The “turning of God mercifully” means that the punishment will not be inflicted since it is described as “God’s punishment” in 5:38).

The situation is conceptually similar to 4:15, where Muslims are instructed to keep women guilty of lesbianism in their homes “until death takes them” or “until Allah finds for them some other way”. Obviously this means: “for however long it takes before they repent, are forgiven or married etc.”. The severest interpretation is subject to so many considerations that it would be virtually impossible for it to be appropriate.

Additionally, punishment should be equivalent to the crime (2:190, 5:8, 5:45, 5:77, 17:33, 42:40).

Thus, with the consideration that the offender can repent/reform, mitigating factors, the degree of the crime and compassionate discretion, the chopping of hands is a very unlikely verdict. The instruction is in the Qur’an as a warning and as a potential punishment. Since the law cannot be arbitrary (5:8), the state should make penalties for crimes very clear.

For example, the number of donuts needed to be stolen before hand-chopping becomes possible should be made clear. If a person steals the necessary quota, but repents/makes amends, there will be no hand-chopping.

LESSON 14: “Objections to a Shi’ite regarding “temporary marriage”

The Qur’an does not mention “mut’a” (temporary/pleasure marriage) and thus the fact that Shi’ite humans call marriage-for-sex “pleasure marriage” proves nothing.

If it is forbidden to use it for enjoyment, what is its purpose? 2:235 clearly allows males and females to talk to each other alone (nicely). They could go to the movies together. Besides, they can certainly be together with their parents, and so the only excuse for “temporary marriage” is a “sex contest”. Muslims often blame the West for relationship break-ups, but these “experiments” are no better.

Since mut’a is never mentioned in the Qur’an, one must derive it from 4:24. This verse only says that dowry should be paid after sex, and after the obligation (is paid) there is no blame for what is agreed on. This is mistaken as a license for free-divorce *after* sex. If they do not have sex and no dowry

was appointed, what is the point? That is just being alone together where if one pays enough, they can have sex. If dowry is prescribed but there is no sex, they only pay half which clearly means sex is *always* implicit in the “contract” of dowry.

Therefore, mut’a is pointless without sex. Without a dowry sex should not take place. Mut’a must therefore be for sex alone. Otherwise it is simply being alone together (2:235).

Next, you attempt to create another form of marriage. Using 4:24, this is impossible because the Qur’an says “then for what you enjoy *of it*” (the key word = “it” meaning what it was just talking about – proper marriage). You say that proper marriage becomes an official “Temporary Marriage” if after getting married officially and having sex, they decide to divorce. This is silly because it is clearly talking about “*it*” (proper marriage as per the entire verse 4:24).

There is thus only one type of marriage, the true and lawful type for which divorce is discouraged (2:226, 4:3, 4:35) and which is a firm covenant (4:21). You say that the firm covenant is made prior to sex, but clearly the firm covenant is for future love and care, because sex is only a part of “sealing” the firm covenant for *another* thing (their future lives).

The firm covenant is the marriage, because firstly marriage involves a promise (2:235) and secondly it involves a tie in writing (2:235).

Next, you say that what is “mutually agreed upon” refers to the longevity of marriage. This is an assumption which if true, merely means that if circumstances prefer, they can divorce. It is not a mandate to exploit loopholes and have fun.

4:24 says the payment of a dowry is obligatory where sex is involved. It could say that what is agreed on after this payment is confirmed is not blameable. Once he has paid it, they can renegotiate it if circumstances prefer. Examples of negotiating the dowry can be found in 2:237 and 4:3.

Consider: If “what you mutually agree of it from after the obligation” referred only to divorce, it would be a completely pointless statement because there are only two possibilities: they stay together, or they intend it to be temporary (and thus require divorce). If they intend to stay together, then *obviously* there is no blame. There is now only one possibility, and that is that it is intended to be temporary. Since this is the only option, why does the Qur’an say “for what you mutually agree of it from after the obligation” rather than “divorce”? There are so many possibilities for what could be agreed upon. They could agree to divorce when tired of having sex even if they have had a child together. If 4:24 does not refer to what is agreed regarding the dowry, then mutually agreeing to do this is certainly not blameable. Since this would contradict the necessity for common-sense, we cannot accept temporary marriage with the Qur’an alone. “Lesson 15” presents obvious evidence.

If “what you mutually agree of it” refers to what you agree of marriage, then temporary marriage is still not allowed because the agreement for divorce must be made after the dowry, not before. Otherwise, marriage would be purely based on performance in bed and thus would be pointless and un-Islamic. The *intention* to stay together should be there before.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Of course marriage can be useful (e.g. 4:3). However this is just in situations where their financial and other needs cannot be satisfied. If they did not wish to be married, people would help them to obtain some form of “welfare”. Marriage is a product of consent and wanting and *intending* to live together in a state of harmony. If discomfort in marriage is foreseeable, people will not marry. If unforeseen discomfort occurs, they may eventually separate.

LESSON 15: “Pre-pubescent marriage”

“And test the orphans until they attain the (*age of marriage*); then if you find in them *maturity of intellect*, make over to them their property, and do not consume it extravagantly and hastily, lest they attain to full age; and whoever is rich, let him abstain altogether, and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably; then when you make over to them their property, call witnesses in their presence; and Allah is enough as a Reckoner.” (4:6)

The age of marriage is after puberty ends and when the person is of sound judgement. The word “ashuddah” is derived from “shaheed” conveying “full strength”, and it is used in 6:152, 17:34, 22:5, 40:67 and 46:15 to describe a child who has developed to full strength (adulthood). Property must be given to the orphan when they are fully mature (e.g. 17:34), and this is equated to marriage in 4:6. Thus the age of marriage is average 16.

The average completion of puberty for a girl is apparently 17, but one would not consider marrying earlier than say 16. The person should technically reach their adult height first, and people can tell when one is mentally “mature” enough (they are past the emotional seesaw!). 4:6 obviously refers to attaining a specified age since the Arabic word “attain” is used elsewhere to mean “passing a certain amount of time”. Moreover, if the verse simply meant “marriage”, we would have to ask why someone without maturity of intellect was married.

Certain people claim that 65:4 allows pre-pubescent marriage:

“And (as for) those of your women who have despaired of menstruation, if you have a doubt, their prescribed time shall be three months, and of those too who have not had their courses; and (as for) the pregnant women, their prescribed time is that they lay down their burden; and whoever is careful of (his duty to) Allah He will make easy for him his affair.” (65:4)

This actually refers to the period that should pass between when a couple divorce and when they officially confirm it. The waiting-period is there in case the woman is pregnant. Now, the woman who no longer menstruates should still wait

three months. The woman who menstruates but has not done so in this particular period must wait for three months (menstruation is a monthly occurrence), anyway.

Menstruation occurs only if the woman is not pregnant.

According to 2:226, a couple should not have sex for four months before divorce. The subsequent three month waiting period ensures they have not. 2:228 instructs normally-menstruating women to wait three cycles, whilst 65:4 instructs those who believe they have reached menopause but for whom there is a reason to doubt (either that they cannot get pregnant or that they are not pregnant) and those who have “not menstruated” to wait three months. Obviously, immediately after divorce any women will have not menstruated, and thus they will wait three months (equivalent to three cycles whether they begin to menstruate or not). 65:4 is a clarification that 2:228 is not to be taken as “three cycles”, but ultimately as “three months”. Otherwise a woman who menstruated the first month but not the next (due to a non-pregnancy reason) would have to wait potentially longer than three months. 2:228, in describing the default position for women, confirms that all married women are those who have courses (i.e. menstruate). This establishes that pre-pubescent marriage did not occur and that it was never available as an Islamic option. 33:49 echoes what 2:228 actually says (i.e. that the purpose of waiting is to see if one is pregnant). 65:4 is clarification for women who have departed from the default position of all newly-married women (i.e. they have ceased menstruating either due to pregnancy or illness). Such women can wait months instead of cycles/periods.

A critic may claim that 4:3 mandates marriage with underage orphans, but it (that interpretation) would refer only to those specific circumstances (just as polygamy is only legal in those specific circumstances).

The more obvious response is that these disadvantaged orphans (having reached the age of full-strength such that they can receive their property (17:34)) are actually old enough to be married (hence 4:6). Orphans were not defined by age. This point is solidified in 4:127 where the female orphans (or again the orphans “of the women one wishes to marry”) are distinguished from the weaker children. The female orphans of marriageable age must receive their property, and the children must have their property spent only out of necessity (in a good way (17:34)).

A desperate critic will then say that 4:6 only applies to males, in which case only male children need to be good to their parents (46:15). It also means that only female orphans receive their property in 4:2, and this is logically unacceptable. The same word for “orphans” is used in the verses 4:2, 4:3 and 4:6 such that there is no reason to differentiate the male from the female.

LESSON 16: “Debates about Islam intending to conquer the world”

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

1) Does Islam Intend to Conquer the World (1)

The topic of the debate was “Islam Intends to Rule the World” and “Opponent 1” represented the “FOR” position whilst I represented the “AGAINST” position.

The four main Qur’anic verses which “Opponent 1” employed to support his viewpoint are:

“And fight with them until there is no more persecution and the system should be only for Allah; but if they desist, then surely Allah sees what they do.” (8:39)

“So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush, then if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free to them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (9:5)

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.” (9:33)

“Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.” (9:29)

I will deal with them in the order that they are presented.

REBUTTAL TO THE CLAIM ABOUT 8:39

“And fight with them until there is no more persecution and the religion should be only for Allah; but if they desist, then surely Allah sees what they do.” (8:39)

Though 8:39 is quite clearly in self-defence, “Opponent 1”’s claim is that it states that Muslims should fight against non-Muslims until all religion is for Allah. To further “support” his point he states that “desist” means “convert to Islam” because according to him talking against Islam is fighting Islam. There are two things to remember:

1) This verse was revealed in the context of people hindering Muslims from their sacred Masjid (place of worship) (8:34) both via physical (8:30) and financial means (8:36):

“And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they might confine you or slay you or drive you away; and they devised plans and Allah too had arranged a plan; and Allah is the best of planners.” (8:30)

“And what (excuse) have they that Allah should not chastise them while they hinder (men) from the Sacred Mosque and they are not (fit to be) guardians of it; its guardians are only those who guard (against evil), but most of them do not know.” (8:34)

“Surely those who disbelieve spend their wealth to hinder (people) from the way of Allah; so they shall spend it, then it shall be to them an intense regret, then they shall be overcome; and those who disbelieve shall be driven together to hell.” (8:36)

“Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, that which is past shall be forgiven to them; and if they return, then what happened to the ancients has already passed. And fight with them until there is no more persecution and religion should be only for Allah; but if they desist, then surely Allah sees what they do.” (8:38-39)

Therefore it must be concluded that “desist” means ceasing to inhibit Muslims from practicing their system/religion, and from attempting to dominate it.

2) 8:39 does not mention “all religion”, but simply mentions “the system (aldeen)”. This refers to the system of Islam (“religion” is “millati”). “Aldeen” is also used in some other verses:

“And fight with them until there is no persecution, and the religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.” (2:193)

(Predictably “Opponent 1” attempted to use this verse to support 8:39 after realising that “all religion” meant “the system”, although he seems to have made the same mistake once again.)

“...and they will not cease fighting with you until they turn you back from your system (deen), if they can; and whoever of you turns back from his system (deen)...” (2:217)

(If “deen” represents all systems/religions, how can one party turn another from it?)

“There is no compulsion in the system; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.” (2:256)

“Surely the (true) system of Allah is Islam, and those to whom the Book had been given did not show opposition but after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves; and whoever disbelieves in the communications of Allah then surely Allah is quick in reckoning.” (3:19)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“This is because they say: The fire shall not touch us but for a few days; and what they have forged deceives them in the matter of their system.” (3:24)

“And do not believe but in him who follows your system.” (3:73)

Etc. etc...

Therefore “aldeen” certainly refers to Islam (in both the verses 2:193 and 8:39). “Opponent 1” of course still says that he understands the verse properly.

REBUTTAL TO THE CLAIM ABOUT 9:5

“So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush, then if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free to them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (9:5)

Firstly it must be explained that the Qur'an as given today is not in its chronological order of revelation. Historically it is said that Sura (chapter) 9 was the second-last to be revealed, with Sura 5 before it. The reason I mention this is that verse 5:3 declares that all of the precepts in Islam have been detailed:

“This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your system, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your system and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a system...”

Further evidence that Sura 9 is not a permanent law-giving chapter is the absence of the “Bismillah” at the beginning (the Qur'an is a guidance and mercy (e.g. 16:103, but this is not the purpose of Sura 9 (9:1-3))).

An exception is 9:37 where Allah clarifies that the practice of arbitrarily adding months (on human whim) is prohibited.

“Opponent 1”'s claim of internal abrogation (whereby the Qur'an allegedly cancels and replaces its laws as circumstances change) is therefore invalidated even before I demonstrate that there is no contradiction between what is written in Sura 9 and the rest of the Qur'an. Since there is no contradiction, regardless of whether there is or there is not “abrogation” his claim does not affect my argument. His point is that 9:5 orders Muslims to fight and kill non-Muslims unless or until they convert to Islam. He of course claims that this verse abrogates other verses in the Qur'an which promote freedom of belief. However, let us examine the first verse of Sura 9 to see what time and place the entire segment refers to:

“(This is a declaration of) immunity by Allah and His Messenger towards those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement.” (9:1)

Already we can see that 9:5 applies only to the particular non-Muslims with whom the Muslims at the time had a treaty. Those with whom treaties had not been made (e.g. because they did not live in proximity to the Muslims) were of course exempt and this is why the targeted non-Muslims must also represent no liability (9:3) to the Muslims (i.e. the Muslims were not at that time and under those circumstances subject to the Islamic ruling of never initiating combat (the reasons will be discussed)). Let us narrow it down further:

“Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not failed you in anything and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfil their agreement to the end of their term; surely Allah loves those who are careful (of their duty).” (9:4)

So we can see that it applies only to the non-Muslims of that time and place who had broken treaties and aided the enemies of the Muslims.

“And if one of the idolaters seek protection from you, grant him protection till he hears the word of Allah, then make him attain his place of safety; this is because they are a people who do not know.” (9:6)

We can see that the non-Muslims who did not want to fight Muslims or those who did not agree with the animosity to Muslims of their fellow people were not to be harmed. “Opponent 1” says that this verse implies attempting to convert those who surrender, but this is illogical because firstly they are to be taken to a place of safety and not held captive (i.e. they do not have to be soldiers who fought against Muslims) and secondly the verse refutes his fantasy by stating that non-Muslims' ignorance of Islam is the reason for offering them its knowledge. Let us examine the verse 9:7:

“How can there be an agreement for the idolaters with Allah and with His Messenger; except those with whom you made an agreement at the Sacred Mosque? So as long as they are true to you, be true to them; surely Allah loves those who are careful (of their duty).” (9:7)

Once again Allah is re-emphasizing the importance of keeping to a treaty. We can also derive from this verse that the non-Muslims could make peace by participating in the making of treaties at the Sacred Mosque. The following verses show that the reason for these declarations is that the non-Muslims had attacked the Muslims first and could not be trusted:

“How (can it be)! while if they prevail against you, they would not pay regard in your case to ties of relationship, nor those of covenant; they please you with their mouths while

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

their hearts do not consent; and most of them are transgressors.” (9:8)

“They do not pay regard to ties of relationship nor those of covenant in the case of a believer; and these are they who go beyond the limits.” (9:10)

“What! will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and aimed at the expulsion of the Messenger, and they attacked you first; do you fear them? But Allah is most deserving that you should fear Him, if you are believers. Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and heal the hearts of a believing people and remove the rage of their hearts; and Allah turns (mercifully) to whom He pleases, and Allah is Knowing, Wise.” (9:13-15)

Therefore, to be the subject of 9:5, the non-Muslims had to fulfil these criteria of hostility towards Muslims. Note that from a Muslim perspective only Allah knew what was in the hearts of the non-Muslims during that time. Therefore if Allah said that they could not be trusted, then they could not be trusted. Sura 9 was revealed to clarify such things and to guide the Muslims through these dangerous times. For example, the declaration of immunity in 9:1 and 9:3 is (according to the state of the non-Muslims' hearts) an application of 47:35:

“And be not slack so as to cry for peace when you have the upper hand, and Allah is with you, and He will not bring your deeds to naught.” (47:35)

Remember also that the guilty non-Muslims did not have to convert to Islam (after all, the non-Muslims in 9:29 did not have to), but it was one of the few ways by which they could prove that they had truly repented (another would be to make a treaty at the Sacred Mosque or to pay the “jizya”). Verse 9:11 simply states that if they *do* establish Islamic practices (praying, paying of charity etc.) then they will be “brothers in faith”. Moreover, 4:75 tells us to fight oppression and so if the non-Muslims allowed or established Islamic practices in their society, that would suffice. 9:12 clarifies that if after converting they left the religion or system, they could only be fought if they openly attacked Islam:

“And if they break their oaths after their agreement and defame your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief-- surely their oaths are nothing-- so that they may desist.” (9:12)

This is against the source of the animosity and it does not have to be a physical fight since it is until they cease. Please note that verbal/symbolical aggression towards Islam/Muslims is to be met only with equal retaliation:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right

way. And if you take your turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you were afflicted; but if you are patient, it will certainly be best for those who are patient.” (16:125-126)

(Circumstances were of course slightly different for these particular untrustworthy folks.)

“Opponent 1” claims without proof that such verses have been abrogated by 9:5 and 9:29 (which will be addressed later), but all throughout the Qur'an fighting is only in retaliation:

“Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them.” (22:39)

Finally, given the context of the segment in question (9:1, 9:3, 9:4, 9:8-13), regardless of the policy dictated it is irrelevant to modern times since these days Muslims will not have a Sura revealed to them in similar circumstances (e.g. to tell them what is in particular non-Muslims' hearts). Muslims can only fight in retaliation according to the injury suffered, and that is only what is described in these verses. The rest was all up to Allah.

REBUTTAL TO THE CLAIM ABOUT 9:33

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.” (9:33)

I will skip directly confronting verse 9:29 now since 9:33 is an integral component of “Opponent 1”'s rationale for interpreting the verse in his (i.e. the traditional anti-Islamic) way.

Firstly the literal translation actually renders “cause it to prevail over all religions” as “manifest it above all systems” (that is, to “show it as superior to other religions and thus attract more followers”). Indeed, the correct path stands out clear from error:

“There is no compulsion in the system; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error...” (2:256)

Nevertheless, I will bear with the more confronting interpretation of the verse because this is the rendering in 61:8-9. Let us examine the verse in its context of 9:29-36:

“Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the Jizya in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.” (9:29)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“And the Jews say: Uzair is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; may Allah destroy them; how they are turned away!” (9:30)

“They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allah, and (also) the Messiah son of Mariam and they were enjoined that they should serve one Allah only, there is no god but He; far from His glory be what they set up (with Him).” (9:31)

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, and Allah will not consent save to perfect His light, though the unbelievers are averse.” (9:32)

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.” (9:33)

“O you who believe! most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely, and turn (them) from Allah’s way; and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah’s way, announce to them a painful chastisement.” (9:34)

“On the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it; this is what you hoarded up for yourselves, therefore taste what you hoarded.” (9:35)

“Surely the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah’s ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred; that is the right reckoning; therefore be not unjust to yourselves regarding them, and fight the polytheists all together as they fight you all together; and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil).” (9:36)

“Opponent 1” claims that 9:33 is a mandate for Muslims to make Islam conquer the world by spreading it by any means possible. If we read it properly, it becomes apparent that it is a response to 9:32 in which the Jews and Christians in this context are expressing aversion to Islam. “Opponent 1” declares overtly that 9:29 and 9:33 are directly linked, but to do so he must misread the verse. 9:33 states that Allah was the One who revealed the Qur’an to His Messenger to make it prevail over all other religions. First of all it is a standalone statement detailing what Allah has done and not what Muslims should do. Secondly the Qur’an is clearly stated to be the means by which Islam would prevail, and thus “Opponent 1” would have to prove that there *is* a statement in the Qur’an urging Muslims to convert (forcibly or by other means) non-Muslims to Islam. Having failed to demonstrate this using the verses 8:39 and 9:5, his case is left only with 9:29. Since 9:29 only concerns Jews and Christians of that time (not even Hindus or Buddhists of that time!), he will, of course, fail.

Here are some verses to clarify this:

“There is no compulsion in the system; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.” (2:256)

“Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you; to the believers (he is) compassionate, but if they turn back, say: Allah is sufficient for me, there is no god but He; on Him do I rely, and He is the Lord of mighty power.” (9:128-129)

(Notice that the above two verses are in Sura 9. Thus “Opponent 1” must now push abrogation as he does with the rest of the Qur’an.)

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way. And if you take your turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you were afflicted; but if you are patient, it will certainly be best for those who are patient.” (16:125-126)

“Say: Every one acts according to his manner; but your Lord best knows who is best guided in the path.” (17:84)

“And say: The truth is from your Lord, so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve...” (18:29)

“Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice.” (60:8)

(This is the basic law governing social relations between Muslims and non-Muslims).

Furthermore we must ask ourselves: “If “Opponent 1” is right, then how will the Qur’an help Muslims to forcibly convert non-Muslims when it would be easier to use the sword?” Does knowledge of knowing what is written in the Qur’an make fighting any easier? No, because the Qur’an would need only say “Convert/conquer all non-Muslims however you can!” to provide as much religious impetus/support as it could offer to assist this. The Qur’an will of course help Muslims to have the faith necessary to obey it, but then “Opponent 1” can find no verse mandating Muslims to fight against any people who did not fight Muslims and injure them first. Verse 9:29 is his “last stand”, and that will be dealt with shortly. From the evidence provided, the only rational explanation for verse 9:33 is that the revelation of the Qur’an itself will cause Islam to spread

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

regardless of whether Muslims force it or not (though anyone who forces it is not a Muslim). Thus the verse does indeed suggest that Islam will “dominate”, but only on the basis of the number of people who voluntarily convert and perhaps the presentation of the religion itself (as given via the Qur'an or its true adherents). The assertion that this verse was revealed specifically in context with 9:29 and not 9:32 is unfounded (not only due to the above explanation) because almost the exact same statements are found in Sura 61:

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths but Allah will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse. He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion, that He may make it prevail over the religions, all of them, though the polytheists may be averse.” (61:8-9)

REBUTTAL TO THE CLAIM ABOUT 9:29

“Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the Jizya in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.” (9:29)

The first thing to be noticed is that this verse is situated in the contextual Sura 9, and secondly it concerns only the “People of the Book” (Jews and Christians). Moreover, these Jews and Christians are only those who do not believe in God at all, or in the Last Day (the people of the Book believed in the Last Day (2:111), thus the actions of these are hostile). The context was provided in the rebuttal to 9:5 and 9:33, but let us examine the criteria as we did with 9:5:

The word “jizya” derives from the Arabic word “jaza” which conveys “recompense” or “punishment”. Variations of the word are employed throughout the Qur'an to mean “recompense” (6:93, 10:52, 27:90, 36:54, 53:41 and some others). Thus if we take the purely Qur'anic meaning of the word it is clear that the commandment to fight in 9:29 is in self-defence or retaliation for an injury inflicted (it may well be a payment to be made for treaty-terms broken (9:4)). Evidence for this is presented in 9:34 and 9:36 where the rabbis and monks were not only hoarding wealth and debarring people from practicing their religion (just as in 8:39), but also making war on Muslims:

“O you who believe! most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely, and hinder (them) from Allah's way; and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement.” (9:34)

“Surely the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah's ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred; that is the right reckoning; therefore be not unjust to yourselves regarding them, and fight the polytheists all together as they fight you

all together; and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil).” (9:36)

Therefore 9:29 is no different to any other verse commanding Muslims to fight oppression and aggression. The “jizya” is simply reparation in accordance with the injury inflicted on Muslims. It must be remembered that there are differences in religions and under no circumstances does the Qur'an acknowledge the validity of other religions as they are followed today. Nevertheless, the Qur'an encourages mutual tolerance and respect amongst people themselves:

“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.” (2:62)

“And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them two but in truth; and the hour is most surely coming, so turn away with kindly forgiveness.” (15:85)

“And surely We have honoured the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and the sea, and We have given them of the good things, and We have made them to excel by an appropriate excellence over most of those whom We have created.” (17:70)

(Humanity is one family.)

“Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice.” (60:8)

However, it does not end there. “Opponent 1” will of course divert discussion of Islam from the Qur'an alone and refer to the traditional (cultural) understanding of “jizya”. He has not attempted to justify the required assertion that the religion (laws and precepts) of Islam is ultimately derived from more than one scripture, and thus within this debate he has no basis to argue with the “Qur'an-alone” understanding of the word. It is not my purpose here to discuss “Shia” vs “Sunni” vs “Qur'aniyun” understandings of the Qur'an, and thus I will bear with the unsupported transformation of the word “jizya” into “tax for being non-Muslim in a Muslim state”. However, please consider the following verse:

“Say: I do not ask you aught in return (for the Message) except that he who will, may take the way to his Lord.” (25:57)

This shows that Muslims would not be rewarded by being exempt from normal state tax simply because they converted to Islam. Therefore the “jizya” must have served some purpose besides humiliating or labelling non-Muslims, and then the only separation between jizya as “state tax” and

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“recompense” would be its purpose. What was appropriate at the time was appropriate, and it would be un-Islamic to implement a tax based on religion and not on a practical and fair basis (it would break the “no compulsion in the system” rule, for a start). This will be discussed further shortly, but my thoughts are that “jizya” is ultimately a recompense for some justifiable reason or another. I am thus not disagreeing with the traditional understanding of the purpose of “jizya”, but merely the translation into “tax” without considering various factors.

As a side-note, those interested in the debate between traditional hadith-following Muslims and Qur'an-alone Muslims are advised firstly to read the Qur'an by paying attention to the meaning of each relevant verse and referring to both perspectives (the Qur'an-alone position represented by my commentary now over half-complete but covering all necessary arguments). Ultimately, the matter does not affect the topic of this debate.

To begin, I will present the new verse:

“Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.” (9:29)

The tax is generally understood as either material proof of non-Muslims' acceptance of subjection to the state and Islamic laws (this would be un-Qur'anic at least as an unjustified *standout* tax compared to the Sunni “zakat”) or a tax in return for protection or some practical purpose (it is easy to see how if Muslims considered non-Muslims to be “separate” and a burden to be carried, the tax would be implemented under all possible circumstances). Ultimately regardless of the rationale, it would have at least some practical purpose and be no different to any tax in modern times). If the Jews and Christians were not already living in the Muslim-controlled state (logical after reading verse 9:34 and considering the polytheists of 9:1-5), it is illogical that the Qur'an is telling Muslims to fight against the Jews and Christians who did not establish Muslim practices (including prohibiting what Allah and His Messenger prohibited (e.g. pork)) because living under their own social rules one could not expect them to be Islamic! That would mean attacking every non-Muslim state! However, the verse only specifies Jews and Christians making it terribly illogical that Muslims would be ordered to attack them simply for not upholding an Islamic society.

The first solution is that “jizya” means “recompense”, as discussed. The second is that (assuming “jizya” means “tax”) Muslims were being ordered to conquer the Jewish and Christian states because they had done something wrong (see the verses 9:34, 9:36 and 9:1-28). It might be noted too that “fight” in the verse does not necessarily mean a physical fight, and that the words “pay the tax in acknowledgement of superiority” could well convey a change in heart of the disbelievers and a voluntary conversion to Islam. This “fight” would be in response to the hostile attitude of the People of the Book in 9:30-36. In the second case (of Muslims being ordered to conquer) it would still be retaliatory and apparently necessary as per verse 9:36 (in which the

polytheists (as which the particular “People of the Book” are described) fight the Muslims all together). However, with “jizya” as “tax” it is unclear why the polytheists of 9:1-5 are not subjected to it also. After all, although 9:36 can refer to them alone, to the Jews and Christians alone or to them all together, the wording of 9:36 implies all of them. Converting to Islam, forging an alliance and paying the jizya were all ways by which the untrustworthy non-Muslims (9:8-13) could prove that they had repented.

In the much less likely scenario that the People of the Book were already living in the Islamic society, the jizya as “tax” would make sense and their refusal to pay it would be justification to “fight” them until they did (after all, each state must uphold its tax laws). The amount of tax to be paid would be state-determined and it would obviously have to be fair and reasonable. Jizya as “recompense” in this context is less likely but the meaning itself would explain its purpose.

In conclusion (ignoring 8:39 due to the emptiness of the claim made against it) Sura 9 is a Sura revealed for a particular context. It concerns entirely the defence of the religion in particular circumstances, and does not influence the precepts of the religion itself. To claim that Islam intends to conquer the world using this chapter is thus a futile and desperate attempt at justifying the critic's need to believe that Islam is unworthy of the thoughts which he or she is constantly and obsessively expressing. It has been said that “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing”, and this is certainly the case with “Opponent 1”. Below is shown a fatwa issued by the Sheikh Hâni al-Jubayr at the Jeddah Supreme Court, Saudi Arabia:

“QUESTION: Is it an obligation of an Islamic state to attack neighbouring non-Muslim states and collect “jizya” from them? Do we see this in the example of the rightly guided Caliphs who fought against the Roman and Persian Empires without any aggression initiating from them?”

ANSWER: If the non-Muslim country did not attack the Muslim one nor mobilize itself to prevent the practice and spread of Islam, nor transgress against mosques, nor work to oppress the Muslim people in their right to profess their faith and deny unbelief, then it is not for the Muslim country to attack that country. Jihad of a military nature is only permitted to help Muslims defend their religion and to remove oppression from the people.

The Persians and Romans did in fact aggress against Islam and attack the Muslims first. The Chosroe of Persia had gone so far as to order his commander in Yemen specifically to assassinate the Prophet (SAW). The Romans mobilized their forces to fight the Prophet (SAW), and the Muslims confronted them in the Battles of Mu'tah and Tabûk during the Prophet's (SAW) lifetime.”

Finally, Shaykh Sayyid Sabiq writes:

“As for fighting the Jews (People of the Book), they had conducted a peace pact with the Messenger after he migrated to Madinah. Soon afterwards, they betrayed the peace treaty and joined forces with the pagans and the hypocrites against

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Muslims. They also fought against Muslims during the Battle of A'hzab, then Allah revealed...(and he cites verse 9:29)".

(Sayyid Sabiq, Fiqhu as-Sunnah, Vol. 3, p. 80).

This is consistent with the conclusions above.

2) Does Islam Intend to Conquer the World (2)

"Opponent 1" possesses the inability to mind and consolidate his own points and must respond to every paragraph I write in order to give illusions of authenticity and "thoroughness". However, once more I will respond with a coherent and presentable statement which stands alone without needing to refer to the other's response in order to understand what the presentation is actually saying. The petty nature of my critic's response is demonstrated by his "correction" of my order for addressing the four verses discussed in Part I.

His first point is that the "Qur'an-alone" concept is an excuse for inventing my own meanings. He forgets that he had the opportunity to raise and support such a statement earlier, although his reason now is to highlight that the Qur'an "does not" provide the details for everything which was known at the time. For example, the meaning of the "jizya" would have been known but it is difficult to ascertain today beyond that it fulfilled some purpose regarding the aggressors in 9:29. He could make the same claim about the sacred months or the exact identity of Abu Lahab, but then the Qur'an does not teach us to understand Arabic because Allah knew what was known then. The Qur'an indeed is clear, complete and fully-detailed for our religious guidance, but it is a textbook for no other subject. Examples of its historical contextualisation have been demonstrated by the verses discussed in Part I of this article. If we desire clarity for deeper and ultimately less necessitous knowledge, we must consult the histories left by those who lived to bear the responsibility of the times. The historical nature of the Qur'an would be primarily responsible for the perceived necessity and hence enshrinement of the ahadith or "Prophetic Sunna" as a second source of religious law (as opposed to some history and contextual or technical interpretation). As a "Qur'an-alone" Muslim I accept no other material as my source of religious law besides the Qur'an, yet I recognise that the ahadith are a valuable source of history and clarification for context providing that there is no apparent contradiction with the Qur'an (i.e. there will be found authentic accounts and fabrications, good examples and bad examples). Those ahadith which are expressions of the spirit of the Qur'an are acceptable as good examples which people can follow if they wish. In this way I am partly "traditional" whilst recognising that Islam is indeed and ultimately derived from one obligatory source alone. I just remember that tradition is simply not religion.

It will be difficult to explain directly my opponent's points because his replies are in context of my previous arguments. I would have to list the relevant verses again as well as his response to explain exactly why they are flawed. Fortunately, the strength of his replies is self-explanatory and so I would ask "Opponent 1" to (instead of coming up with lame

excuses for his views as opposed to rebutting mine) answer "Yes" or "No" to a straight-forward question. This of course is primarily for the benefit of readers' judgement:

"Does my explanation of 8:39 in Part I of this article prove that it was instructing Muslims to fight the aggressors until they stopped fighting Muslims and inhibiting them from practicing a non-aggressive religion?"

"Opponent 1"'s response is this (neither grammar nor flow is corrected):

"Yes, non Muslims are inhibiting Muslims. As far as attempting to dominate it, I would more call it attempting to inhibit it's spread or practice in their land, if you do an actual historical investigation. But the funny part is that they did nothing different than what 80% of Muslims around the world do to other religions. They really don't allow very much propagation of any other religion besides Islam in Muslim dominated countries. So Islam must never be inhibited, and yet other religions must be inhibited in Muslim lands.

Islam is very aggressive in it's propagation, even when violence is not involved. and even today, that is the truth."

It is very easy for "Opponent 1" since he need only cast aspersions to be satisfied. The pith of the matter is that the context of 8:39 tells us that the non-Muslims were attacking Muslims and inhibiting them from the Sacred Mosque. How he relates this to the matter of church-building (as an umbrella term for what he describes) is through desperation to divert the discussion from what we are discussing.

"(They are) those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty." (22:40)

So as we can see (among many verses listed in Part I), Islam promotes "inter-faith harmony". This is precisely why Muslims are instructed to fight against those who fight them and those who oppress others, debarring them from freedom of belief/religious practice. A true Muslim has faith in Allah, and he or she accepts other Muslims as brothers/sisters in faith. Why should a real Muslim be insecure enough to be aggressive in offering the word of Allah? There is no basis for this, and once a Muslim society is established it is expected that the Muslims in power will ensure that the people are always free to practice Islam. The non-Muslims are free to practice and believe in their religion or creed, but regardless of whether the government is Islamic or not Muslims always carry a constitution unto themselves (the Qur'an). If it be the common will that a state be controlled by non-Muslims, then so be it. Muslims would have to make sure that they were able to practice their religion, and any deliberate obstacles imposed by non-Muslims would be

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

considered an offence. Regarding the propagation of other religions in an Islamic society, church-building etc. would require the consultation of the community. Regarding debate, there would be a time and place where people could have the opportunity to experience or participate in inter-faith dialogue (see 16:125). If non-Muslim propagation is becoming apparently overt or is “pushing the limits” such that it is bordering on a nuisance, Muslims could always employ the verse 16:126:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way. And if you take your turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you were afflicted; but if you are patient, it will certainly be best for those who are patient.” (16:125-126)

In this context it would mean telling people to move on. Without point or purpose, the noisy expression of a particular viewpoint is no different to intrusive advertising. If we are talking about people who love their religion and they are not Muslim, then firstly nothing is stopping them from practicing their faith, and secondly if people want to inquire about it then they will do so when they are ready to. If there were a point or a grievance to be addressed, then that could be dealt with, too. The Qur'an provides practical and straight-forward wisdom for all societies.

To the next point, “Opponent 1” provides an intriguing and otherworldly justification for correlating Islam (“the system” in 8:39) with “all religion”. He says:

“I think all religion and the system are the same thing. The belief system of religion itself must be for Allah. That's why so many translators translated it the way they did. You can't say all of Islam must be for Allah because if it's not for Allah, it isn't Islam. So all of Islam is always for Allah and anything else is not Islam. So you can't correct Islam, you can only bring people to it. So your twist attempt ends up making no sense.”

Aside from seeming slightly disturbed, “Opponent 1” begins his point which results in mine “making no sense” with the cute phrase “I think”. This means that my point makes no sense to him although the average reasonable person could understand my explanation of “aldeen” in Part I. He says “the system” refers to the “system of religion”... Let us use one of his favourite verses to teach him this lesson once more:

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the system of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all systems, though the polytheists may be averse.” (9:33)

In spite of the Qur'an clearly expressing the fact that there are many systems, “Opponent 1” claims that there is only one... and he calls that “Religion” (although “Opponent 1”'s religion is Tafsirianism (some more on that later)). Please see my list of verses using the words “the system” in Part I of this article. Verse 5:3 alone proves “Opponent 1” wrong, but

as usual he misses the obvious facts. My advice to him is to be satisfied with his opinions if he desires, but to keep them to himself. To close this point, the system “being all for Allah” quite clearly means all devotion should be to Allah alone by following His Way alone. Religion can be divided into sects and the sects can still be known as the religion, but they are not for Allah, are they?

Now “Opponent 1” writes:

“If all religion should be for Allah only, or all religious belief itself should only be for Allah, then they would be turning away from religion itself as Islam is actually the only valid religion and therefore the only religion. Again, this is why so many translators translated it that way. An invalid religion is not a religion. Religion itself should all be for Islam. You don't want to know the tafsir for this. It's a lot worse than what I'm saying.”

“Opponent 1” is making the same mistake yet again by mixing the words “the system” with “religion”. It has already been demonstrated that there is a plurality of systems, but there is according to the Qur'an only one valid one. That is a just part of Muslim belief. He refers to a tafsir, yet he does not present it. The tafsir is actually quite harmless and repeats only what the verse declares. Readers should note that “tafsir” conveys “interpretation” of the Qur'an. “Opponent 1” relies on them to support his own interpretations, but what they say is simply what anyone would see if they read the verses (each is presented in isolation to other verses and thus are not to be used for “Opponent 1”'s purpose). For example, in the debate he presented a tafsir of verse 9:33 which only referred to what I had already said: that Islam would be shown to be greater, and that is all.

“Opponent 1”'s response is weak and I could skip most of it since Part I has it covered. In truth I think that he shows many signs of being a compulsive psychopath (or else he would have given up before he looked silly). He continues to chirp his assertion that “system” means “all religion”, and that is enough to certify my thoughts. He is a dangerous person (we do not need fanatics when we have him!) and represents the specific mental condition of Islamophobia as shared by many on Faithfreedom.org.

Part I of this article demonstrated that there was no contradiction between Sura 9 and the rest of the Qur'an regarding the rules for warfare. However, “Opponent 1” thinks himself fit to dictate to Muslims about how they should run their religion. He is telling Muslims and the rest of the world that they should always be at war (that is why he is dangerous), yet there is no evidence in the Qur'an or ahadith to support him. He also says that defending the Qur'an is shameful. What is shameful is his warmongering though he will of course turn around and say that he is using truth and commonsense. The reader must be the judge here.

Here is what the Qur'an says in 9:1:

“(This is a declaration of) immunity by Allah and His Messenger towards those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement.” (9:1)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Opponent 1” applies his own tafsir:

“It refers to people who don't have a treaty and the 4 month grace period that they are allowed, where Muslims can't fight them, is about to expire.”

Really, “Opponent 1”? I thought the verse stated “...those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement. If there were no treaties, how then could they have broken them (9:4)? It does not mention the “grace period” being about to expire.

“Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not failed you in anything and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfil their agreement to the end of their term; surely Allah loves those who are careful (of their duty).” (9:4)

“Opponent 1” writes (without real rebuttal):

“Why does an instruction for all times have instructions about what to do in only one time and place? It's pretty odd because elsewhere the Quran also curses individual people of Muhammad's time who ridiculed Muhammad.”

The message of the Qur'an never changed since the Messenger Ibrahim, but then of course the historical context did. The Qur'an provides examples for guidance and instructs us on how to worship Allah, but it was also a guide to the believers of the time in that it would teach and instruct them in how to deal with different situations as they arose (it was a crucial time and partly why Muslims were instructed to follow and obey the Messenger). It always made this clear by providing reasons and qualifications (as discovered in Part I), some examples being 9:1, 9:13 and 9:36 which detail context. The Message was being revealed during these periods of time and thus it deals with the reality whilst accomplishing its purpose. This may sound strange to certain non-Muslims, but it is an undeniable fact that not every verse should be seen as “applicable for all time”. Other verses include the one concerning Abu Lahab and those which mention battles where Muslims are ordered to fight in self-defence. Obviously these are examples whereby Muslims can learn the importance of possessing and applying certain qualities (bravery, piety etc.) but then it is stupid and against commonsense to consider that we should take the verses themselves out of their context which is made clear.

“And certainly We have explained in this Quran every kind of example, and man is most of all given to contention.” (18:54)

This is also my attitude to ahadith, the majority of which were witnessed by one or two people and only written down about two centuries after the death of Muhammad. The majority of statements and actions recorded there would be taken out of context, especially since the ahadith unlike the Qur'an provide very little context for the very specific words and actions described.

Moving on, “Opponent 1” reiterates his weird interpretation of 9:6 which does not need a response.

“Opponent 1” explains:

“So the verses that followed 9:5 expound on why 9:5 is to be carried out, but, of course, the verses that follow 9:29 are NOT supposed to expound on why 9:29 is supposed to be carried out.”

The first portion is correct, but it is unclear how he arrives at the second. After all, Part I explained that verses 9:30-36 detailed the hostile attitude of the People of the Book, but it was also clearly explained that 9:33 could not logically mean what he said it did. Verse 9:33 was a response to 9:32, and even if it is in the context of 9:29 it still does not order Muslims to conquer or convert anyone (i.e. it is not a reason for 9:29, but a part of the description of the non-Muslims in that context). Please refer to Part I to understand the verse. As usual, playing dumb and casting aspersions is “Opponent 1”'s only answer. However, we should stay patient!

“Opponent 1” demonstrates his ability:

“If I said “from a non Muslim perspective,”, would that mean anything to you in this debate?? What does a Muslim or non Muslim perspective have to do with a debate that is supposed to be objective and seeking of the truth?? And if one side can't be objective, then what could ever be the point?? Debates are built on objectivity and objective rules.”

“Opponent 1” cannot comprehend some baby logic. He is attempting to explain why non-Muslims should be scared of Islam, but if Islam (i.e. the word of Allah which must be believed and accepted in order to be legitimately followed) commands Muslims to fight non-Muslims only under certain circumstances (i.e. when they are attacked by them) then the only possible way for non-Muslims to be scared of Islam is if non-Muslims believe the Islamophobes! In this instances I was stating that 9:5 was revealed in a specific context and though non-Muslims will not believe that Allah knew what was in the non-Muslims' hearts at the time (such that 9:5 was justified), Muslims will.....and as long as Muslims understand Islam non-Muslims need not worry since the Islamophobes are not actually Muslims!

Now, “Opponent 1” says:

“So parts of the Quran, the book for all times, are only an instruction for that particular time and place? Again, I asked this before. If it's only recounting what to do in a particular instance, then doesn't this belong in the hadiths??”

The contextual nature of the Qur'an was explained earlier, and whether one believes the Qur'an or not it does not change the obvious. The Message is for all time, but “Opponent 1” misunderstands the difference between the revelation of a strategy for dealing with the defence of religion (a strategy which is explained and justified such that

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

there is no contradiction between it and the rest of the Qur'an) and the principles or precepts of the religion itself.

"Muhamad bin Lyin" then asks:

"We apply 9:1 and 9:3 to 47:35??"

That is correct, but not before taking into consideration 9:4 and 9:7-13. Notice he goes to some effort to make my explanations sound incredible when actually they are very simple.

"Opponent 1" declares of verse 9:29:

"That was the Christians and Jews after the pagans had essentially been completely conquered, and had died or became Muslim, and Islam ruled the area because of it. You are lying by omission. Muhammad first conquered all the pagans, and then used their numbers to rule over the Christians and Jews. The Christians and Jews never really bought into his fraud. They were more educated than the pagans were."

Actually, according to his interpretation 9:29 is saying that the People of the Book must convert to Islam or pay the jizya, so there is essentially no difference between the verses 9:29 and 9:5. The Pagans did not have to convert to Islam nor remain Muslims as per the verses 9:6, 9:7 and 9:12. As I explained in Part I it was one of the few ways by which the untrustworthy non-Muslims could demonstrate that they had truly repented for attacking the Muslims (9:13). Also we learnt from 9:36 and history that the People of the Book and the Pagans had allied against the Muslims (see once again Part I). Even if nothing else were clear, the Qur'an is clear that 9:5 and 9:29 were in retaliation. Furthermore, the fact that the People of the Book were singled out demonstrates that the reason for fighting was definitely not because they were non-Muslim. After all, the only Pagans who were excluded from treaties were those who were untrustworthy according to the reasons given (9:8-13), and then only those who had broken treaties and acted aggressively (9:4). Non-Muslims who did not live around there or who had not met Muslims were obviously not going to be attacked since only those who had broken their treaties and acted aggressively were excluded from the protection of Allah's mandate of non-aggression (9:3-4).

"Opponent 1" says of 9:12:

"And if they break their oaths after their agreement and defame your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief-- surely their oaths are nothing-- so that they may desist." (9:12)

It only says defame it, not physically attack it. This gets back to my prior argument in the debate about how even speaking against Islam might as well be considered fighting it according to the Quran. Thank you."

It would be amusing if the only valid point that "Opponent 1" could make (since the rest are so far meaningless) was one that I helped him with. However, I explained in Part I that "fight" does not have to be physical and it is only against the source of the animosity. In the context of society the following verses are to be considered:

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way. And if you take your turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you were afflicted; but if you are patient, it will certainly be best for those who are patient." (16:125-126)

Bear in mind that even if it were as simple as "Opponent 1" dictates, 9:12 is still in the context (as explained) of Sura 9. It is therefore irrelevant to modern times. "Opponent 1" then goes on to say that "oppression" is when Muslims do not rule society. Unfortunately he cannot bring a single verse to support his claim.

"Opponent 1" argues:

"I would think that a very large percentage of Muslims would even say you are totally full of crap. The Quran is an instruction for all times, and for you to say that it has some instruction that only relate to one time and place causes a huge problem for many many Muslims. Although it is true that the Quran does also contain a specific curse against a person that didn't like Muhammad. What's that doing in the Quran?? So I suppose that's something you guys should fight out, because i already know that it's just further evidence that Muhammad used the Quran for himself."

It is funny because he must never have associated with Muslims (or a large percentage of Muslims tried to kill him!). "Opponent 1" is a media-fed baby who should step out of his cradle before too much rocking causes his diaper to fall off and reveals what is or is not underneath. He claims that the majority of Muslims in the world believe they should fight and conquer all non-Muslims. He is appealing not to logic and what is actually written in the Qur'an, but to a phantom majority as his argument. He was never worth debating except to show the stupidity (and the dangerous nature) of what he represents and to be used as a springboard for presenting points around which I would have had to base future articles.

"Opponent 1" vomits of verse 2:256:

"Said under a time of less power, abrogated later. You keep repeating it, but you can't show why it is not abrogated."

Just read Parts I and II. He also declares once again that the verses 9:30-35 "all involve reasons" as to why 9:29 should be carried out. They are certainly all reasons why the People of the Book fight the Muslims in 9:36! Furthermore, I explained that 9:29 did not have to mean a physical fight and that Muslims are to fight against them all together *just as* (i.e. just

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

like) they are being fought against. It is an inescapable fact that 9:29 is telling Muslims to fight against the People of the Book not because they are non-Muslims (or else the command would be to fight non-Muslims!) but because their hostile attitude in 9:30-35 meant that they were fighting Muslims in 9:36.

“Opponent 1” then launches an assault against my explanation of 9:33. Here is the verse:

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.” (9:33)

His fallacy is claiming that the Qur'an is the cause. No, the cause is described as “He” and not as “it”. Therefore the Qur'an is the means, and not the sword. “Opponent 1” can find no verse in the Qur'an commanding Muslims to conquer or convert all non-Muslims and societies. He refers to verse 9:14:

“Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and heal the hearts of a believing people.” (9:14)

Muslims already believe that whatever happens is by Allah's will:

“Say: Nothing will afflict us save what Allah has ordained for us; He is our Patron; and on Allah let the believers rely.” (9:51)

Now the verse says nothing about Allah aggressing against non-Muslims by using the swords of Muslims. In fact the Qur'an exhorts Muslims to obey Allah and adhere to the Qur'an or go astray, and the Qur'an mandates warfare only as a means of self-defence. It should be noted that 9:14 demonstrates that the non-Muslims had injured the Muslims in some way.

“Opponent 1” repeats the literal interpretation of 9:5 to show that it states the non-Muslims should convert to Islam. I never disagreed with that point, but he falls into the fallacy of using tafsir as his only argument by not realising that according to 9:6 and 9:7 (also 9:29) that converting was only one means of demonstrating true repentance. It does not say that they *have* to convert, but only that if they *do* then they are not to be harmed. Once more the context of verse 9:5 as explained renders it inapplicable to modern times.

“Opponent 1” informs me that I said that some non-Muslims cannot be trusted anymore. I never said that, but if I *did* then it would have meant that some could not be trusted to read the Qur'an properly. For example, I do not trust him in these matters and nor should anyone else. He is the one declaring that Muslims and non-Muslims should be perpetually at war, and therefore he is the one encouraging people to kill each other. I am “debating” an apparent psychopath. I once invited the members of Faithfreedom.org to support my cause (to help a proper understanding of the Qur'an to improve things),

but their egos were too huge and they would rather glory in the thought of conflict to feed their sicknesses. They accuse me of changing Islam and the Qur'an, but their attempts to prove it are as good as you can see here. Let us suppose that they *are* right and somehow all of my logic is in truth flawed. Would the Islamophobes (warmongers) be naïve enough about human psychology to suppose that Muslims would simply see things their (the warmongers') preferred way and give up their faith? They would not since even in the case of my being wrong there would still be a number of interpretations leading to a non-aggressive religion (as it stands, the Islamophobes fall flat before the truth). They (the warmongers) would still urge them to be violent since they see themselves as the true scholars of Islam and they think that the Muslims who do not want to convert or conquer the non-Muslim world are not real Muslims. Their attitude to my rationale suggests that having a violent Islam is more preferential to them than having a world with a peaceful Islam. They want Islam to be violent so that they can fight Muslims (i.e. sit in front of their televisions and watch others fight them). An Islamophobe who calls himself “Skynightblaze” said that he could not be bothered to read Part I and that I was a “burning example of why Islam is so dangerous”. How much perversion does it take before one can be labelled as twisted (I visited an atheist site yesterday critiquing the responsibility of religion as opposed to tradition for the plight of women in some countries, but at least they encouraged Muslims to show that the religion can be practiced better if tradition was the true culprit!)? They are not interested in peace. They do not realise that the majority of Muslims are actually peaceful because they can read the Qur'an, but the Islamophobes (warmongers) do not urge these Muslims to speak up to at least help the world (even if they really *did* believe in their non-psychopathic selves that Islam was aggressive). Instead they see the majority as the cause of the violence they see on T.V., and think that labelling them as fake Muslims will help. Their sickness is revealed by their aversion to the Muslims who *do* speak up against violence. The “real Islam” is not what they see on T.V., but Islamophobes are so brainwashed that their every breathing minute is devoted to the one thought of absolutely eradicating Islam. An Islamophobic pensioner in the U.K. admitted to me that this was what she intended. It is for this reason that Islamophobes absolutely hate Muslims who explain why Islam is not aggressive, and they go to any lengths (as shown here) to preserve their fantasies. However, one critic (during my stay) realised all of this, and left the forum.

On a new point, in Part I I made a statement concerning verse 9:33:

“The Qur'an will of course help Muslims to have the faith necessary to obey it, but then “Opponent 1” can find no verse mandating Muslims to fight against any people who did not fight Muslims and injure them first.”

“Opponent 1”'s response is this:

“Irrelevant to the conversation. The conversation is about what Muslims did after they got strong enough and started winning. They sought to conquer and rule.”

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

The conversation (and in fact the title of the debate and subsequent article) is about whether Islam intends to conquer the world. We already know that Islam became strong because people believed in it (it could not be done without the people's consent! Look at Egypt today!) and those who did not like that lost the wars they began. One day while they were strong Allah revealed Sura 9 according to the context explained, and He provided the reasons within. I do not see "Opponent 1"'s point here since the statement he responded to had a pretty clear purpose.

"Opponent 1" predictably responds to my comparison between 61:8-9 and 9:32-33 by claiming that they are both in the context of war. My purpose was to demonstrate 9:29 was not a special verse ordering Muslims to conquer non-Muslims simply because of 9:33. He displays verse 61:4:

"Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks as if they were a firm and compact wall." (61:4)

Notice that it says "in His way". Unless "Opponent 1" can bring a verse stating clearly that to fight in Allah's way is to fight aggressively against non-Muslims, his point does not stand. His "abrogation" theory will make no historical sense since Sura 61 is said to have come well before Sura 5 in which it states:

"Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabians and the Christians whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good-- they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve." (5:69)

"Opponent 1"'s automated response is that this refers to the Jews and Christians who practice Islam. This is odd because he once said that non-Muslims who practice Islam are Muslims, and that if you were a Muslim you could not be anything else. However, the verse only specifies that those who believe in Allah and who do good...as well as the pious Jews and Christians. After all, Allah will judge justly on the Day of Resurrection:

"And We will set up a just balance on the day of resurrection, so no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and though there be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, (yet) will We bring it, and sufficient are We to take account." (21:47)

What else does Sura 5 declare?

"For this reason did We prescribe to the children of Israel that whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men; and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men; and certainly Our messengers came to them with clear arguments, but even after that many of them certainly act extravagantly in the land." (5:32)

This verse is still applied (according to Muslim belief, all Messages were the same with small variations in prohibitions):

"And how do they make you a judge and they have the Taurat wherein is Allah's judgment? Yet they turn back after that, and these are not the believers." (5:43)

"(They are) listeners of a lie, devourers of what is forbidden; therefore if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them, and if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allah loves those who judge equitably." (5:42)

(If they are allowed to come to Muslims then clearly Muslims do not have to go to them to conquer them! Secondly, turning away does not convey "controlling".)

Sura 5 is sufficient proof that the statement in 9:33 has nothing to do with Muslims forcibly conquering or converting non-Muslims.

"Opponent 1" calls me "deceptive" for stating that Rabbis and monks were hoarding money rather than spending it in the way of Allah. Firstly it supports me more to say that they were spending it to inhibit Muslims, and secondly the Qur'an also mentions a punishment for their hoarding in verse 9:34:

"O you who believe! most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely, and turn (them) from Allah's way; and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement." (9:34)

"Opponent 1" is the liar, and he has no shame about it despite it being blatantly obvious he is wrong. Now alas comes his prime point: the jizya! It is unfortunate for him that I already agreed "jizya" could mean "tax" after considering several factors. This state-tax is a state-tax to be determined according to criteria since (of course) tax must serve a sustainable purpose and not exhaust the payer:

"(They are) listeners of a lie, devourers of what is forbidden; therefore if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them, and if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allah loves those who judge equitably." (5:42)

"Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice." (60:8)

"Therefore do remind, for you are only a reminder. You are not a controller over them." (88:21-22)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

That (it seems) is why according to the records the jizya was adjusted to suit the means of the citizen. It is in principle no way discrimination since Muslims must pay the zakat (obligatory charity) according to their means (or if we follow ahadith out of context instead of the Qur'an, it is 2.5% of income).

Now if we look at the Qur'an, we can see that the jizya is never mandated to be a compulsory religious tax imposed by the Muslims on non-Muslims. "Tax" in Arabic is actually "dhareeba". All that we can glean from the ahadith is that Muhammad imposed a "jizya" on his conquered enemies and other non-Muslim citizens during his time (perhaps as punishment and/or for protection that was necessary – or simply as a tax system). Now we must also bear in mind that the ahadith have their own context and doubtfulness whilst the Qur'an according to Muslim belief is clear, complete and fully-detailed. Whoever takes the ahadith out of context and declares "jizya" to mean "tax" must disregard the special circumstances detailed by the Qur'an. Scholars disagree on the meaning of the word but common opinions are that it means a "recompense" for something (e.g. necessary protection), and also a "substitute" (i.e. recompense). It is definitely not on the basis of belief because firstly that was not the Messenger's duty...

"And if Allah had pleased, they would not have set up others (with Him) and We have not appointed you a keeper over them, and you are not placed in charge of them." (6:107)

"But if they turn back, then on you devolves only the clear deliverance (of the message)." (16:82)

"Say: I do not ask you aught in return (for the Message) except that he who will, may take the way to his Lord." (25:57)

("Opponent 1" thinks it is odd that I use this verse in relation to jizya, but if we consider for just one moment it becomes clear that Muhammad is not asking for any special benefit which may be conferred to him by delivering the Message. An example would be the ability to impose tax on people who did *not* accept the Message.)

...and secondly verse 9:29 is not telling Muslims to impose the jizya on the People of Book because they are non-Muslim or else Allah would have commanded Muslims to convert or conquer all non-Muslims. "Opponent 1" claims that the Qur'an mentions "jizya" for the first time because of the "fact" that it was a practice already introduced, yet whatever was the necessary reason for jizya and whatever form it took (e.g. tax or payment) it was most certainly *not* based on religion but on circumstances specifically formulated in Sura 9. Remember from Part I:

"This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your system, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your system and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a system..." (5:3)

What is of primary concern here is that 9:29 regardless of anything is in retaliation (see verse 9:36). Even if the derived meaning of "tax" is the true meaning of "jizya", we know from the Qur'anic verses above that the tax must be equitable and fair. Since the jizya is not a part of Islamic policy outside of Sura 9, and since it was imposed in times of some uncertainty (suggesting that it was a sign of submission to state law as was required), the "jizya" must ultimately be considered payment either in return for damages caused (in which case it would be during a prescribed period or up to a certain amount) or a payment applicable to people who had committed certain actions and/or required certain protection or status. It may suffice to consider it an ordinary state tax to be differentiated from obligatory charity since non-Muslims need not practically be labelled as performing an Islamic duty (I noticed that "Opponent 1" accuses me of contradicting myself or back-flipping, but he does not seem to be much of a reader since he does not realise that I am actually discussing various possibilities. His chide implying that I am not a "real Muslim" will not work since if he attempted to debate against the Qur'an-alone perspective he would be no harder to deal with than a rodent without front teeth. He would also find that the majority of Muslims would agree with the principles that I am applying). In this day and age, the jizya would simply be a regular state tax that would have had to exist anyway.

For now, "Opponent 1" needs to recognise that traditional understandings of the Qur'an reflect individual interpretations/preferences (at a time of empire) thus do not necessarily derive from the source of Islam itself. Amina Wadud writes:

"To avoid potential relativism, there is continuity and permanence in the Qur'anic text itself as exemplified even through various readings by their points of convergence. However, in order for the Qur'an to achieve its objective to act as a catalyst affecting behavior in society, each social context must understand the fundamental and unchangeable principles of that text, and then implement them in their own unique reflection."

(Amina Wadud-Muhsin, *Qur'an and Woman* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn Bhd, 1992), 5)

Summing up, it is impossible for him (or anyone) to argue that the Qur'an implements jizya directly as "tax" and thus he must turn to tafsir written by people who have already accepted other individual interpretations of the word. Tafsir is completely useless to his case since what he brings only parrots what the verse is saying without referring to the rest of the Qur'an. Such interpretations are infected by ahadith the vast majority of which were written down over two centuries after Muhammad had died. Even if they are true, as I mentioned before we still cannot be sure of their deeper context. What was appropriate for the defence of the religion during that time had to be implemented, but the Qur'an itself lives on unchanged in Islamic belief.

"And no question do they bring to thee but We reveal to thee the truth and the best tafsir (thereof)." (25:33)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Now let us look at how smart ibn Kathir is. Islamophobes love scholars because they help them to hate Islam (love-hate):

“O you who believe! retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain, the free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female, but if any remission is made to any one by his (aggrieved) brother, then prosecution (for the bloodwit) should be made according to usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner; this is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy; so whoever exceeds the limit after this he shall have a painful chastisement.” (2:178)

Ibn Kathir in his tafsir asserts that this was abrogated by:

“And We prescribed to them in it (the Torah) that life is for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and (that there is) reprisal in wounds; but he who foregoes it, it shall be an expiation for him; and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the unjust.” (5:45)

How can something revealed in an earlier scripture abrogate something in a later one?

Also:

“I am writing this book as I hear from the narrators. If anything sounds absurd, I should not be blamed or held accountable. The responsibility of errors or blunders rests squarely on the shoulders of those who have narrated these stories to me.”

(al-Tabari, “The History of Nations and Kings”)

“Had Ibn Jareer Tabari not recorded the strange reports, I would never have done so.”

(Ibn Kathir, “Tafsir Ibn Kathir”)

“Three kinds of books are absolutely unfounded: Maghazi, Malahem and Tafsir.”

(Ibn Hanbal, reported by Allama Shibli Nomani, “Seeratin Nabi” p. 27)

...

It is not incumbent on me to discuss further the context of the formation of Islam (those who read about it may find that the “conquest” was quite peaceful with voluntary acceptance) since “Opponent 1” and his friends have been beaten by the Qur’an. They cannot prove Islam to be an aggressive religion, and this is why Islam lives. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to remember that moral relativism plays an important role in understanding that humans do not and have not lived in a topsy-turvy world where “world-peace” is not actually peace – but rather access to modern technology and a comfortable lifestyle in ignorance of deeper yet higher

yearnings...and at the expense of others. The Arabia of Muhammad’s context was a dangerous and divided arena where the achievement of order, justice and peace could not come to being without bloodshed and bravery. Therefore the Muslims of today will accept Muhammad as an accomplisher of a sacred duty. His purpose was to improve society and eliminate oppression based on power, competition and discrimination rather than the universal values necessary for fighting corruption:

“There is no compulsion in the system; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.” (2:256)

If this verse is abrogated, he should bring the verse that abrogates it explaining (using the Qur’an) how it is not in self-defence or retaliation. It has been explained many times that there exists no contradiction between the verses discussed in Part I and the rest of the Qur’an. It is also not difficult to take apart the verses he claims mandate internal abrogation.

“O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah’s sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do.” (4:135)

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way.” (16:125)

“And seek by means of what Allah has given you the future abode, and do not neglect your portion of this world, and do good (to others) as Allah has done good to you, and do not seek to make mischief in the land, surely Allah does not love the mischief-makers.” (28:77)

“And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best, except those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our Allah and your Allah is One, and to Him do we submit.” (29:46)

“And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend. And none are made to receive it but those who are patient, and none are made to receive it but those who have a mighty good fortune.” (41:34-35)

“Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice.” (60:8)

And then countless others. These are at the core of every great ideal, and it is why the Qur'an in truth is harmonious with all societies. However, in the circumstances of today we should be looking for improvement, and not for final conflict which can never be won. “Opponent 1” can use some ahadith to scorn Muslims (after all this was predicted in the Qur'an (6:112)), but then any Muslim can confront him with a much greater number of worthwhile examples from the same source. Just a minute sample:

“The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for a man who avoids quarrelling even if he were in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for a man who avoids lying even if he were joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good...”

Abu Dawood

“The believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best character and the best of you are those who are best to their wives.”

Tirmidhi

“Keep God in mind wherever you are; follow a wrong with a right that offsets it, and treat people courteously.”

Tirmidhi

“The world and all things in the world are precious but the most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman.”

Ahmed and Muslim

“My servants, I have made injustice forbidden to myself, and I have made it forbidden to you, so do not be unjust.”

Hadith Qudsy

“The Jewish Rabbi, ‘Abd Allah ibn Salam went to see the Prophet and to hear what he had to say. He narrated that the first sermon that the Prophet delivered in Medina was: “Oh Humanity, spread peace. Provide nourishment for people. Pray in the night when people are asleep and you will enter into Paradise in security and Peace.””

“God is compassionate and loves those who are compassionate. He is gentle and loves those who are gentle to others. Whoever is merciful to creatures, to him is God merciful. Whoever does good for people, to him will God do good. Whoever is generous to them, to him will God be generous. Whoever benefits the people, God will benefit him.”

(Each of these is consistent with the Qur'an aside from the first since the Qur'an never granted Muhammad the mandate to guarantee anyone anything. Of course I do not believe that these ahadith are true.)

Where then are the Islamophobes left? They should not start that game, because the Qur'an must be judge:

“Say: What thing is the weightiest in testimony? Say: Allah is witness between you and me; and this Qur'an has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches...”

Qur'an 6:19

Every person can choose to label Muhammad a conqueror or a Prophet, but the underlying issue is that Islam only spreads by voluntary conversion and that its ultimate ideal is the elimination of corruption and oppression such that the more powerful it becomes, the more contained will people's ability to take advantage of others (by all means) become. It in fact enshrines the ideal society that most people claim to desire (there is no such place as Utopia on Earth), but the actual exercising of these “noble ideals” becomes too strenuous for those who would rather use Islam as a punching-bag. If they actually allowed themselves to admit that they agree with the “nice” principals in the Qur'an, we could then start discussing similarities instead of differences. If they want to argue against Islam, that is fine but firstly they should state why the principles of Islam are inferior to their views (i.e. they would have to present their own thoughts on life!) and having outlined how Islam could improve they should do something about it and take advantage of the “nice” things in Islam that ultimately are the message of the Qur'an (if one reads it!). But no, they have no thoughts of their own and they label attempts to improve it as “deception” whilst ignoring a simple principle that the average person could understand: freedom of belief and allegiance. Everything takes its evolutionary cause, and to expect that people will simply “give up their faith” to appease a few opinions is simply stupid. People choose their beliefs and then they choose to live by them. It is no-one's business. Those who understand this and accept belief do not give a toss about attempts to “disprove” it using science etc., because ultimately religion is an ideal which *itself* is the beacon of the Divine. People all have their conceptions of God, and it is the following of the path and worship/celebration/appreciation of existence itself which makes religion and the believer inseparable. This is just plain, secure Faith which understands why it exists. The believer knows him/herself. That is why those who wage their own little war against Islam may as well wage a war against religious belief and human psychology itself, and why they are a detriment to and provocation of the situation seen today. They do not have to embrace the tides, just to help to clean up (if they are sincere). Sadly, their own standards are blurred. This is the way things are; I am neither promoting nor demoting it. As for other Muslims, the same message applies (this could continue in another article, and it is the point of this one).

Finally, “Opponent 1” thinks it was stupid to quote the judgement of a Sunni judge in Saudi Arabia:

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Are you serious?? This is the same person who would contradict you and explain why nobody must propagate any religion but Islam in Saudi Arabia. That was a really stupid choice.”

All the better.

3) Explaining the Explanation

Before I begin, I wish to remind that I am not claiming (nor am I denying!) the concept of “jizya” was corrupted by the early generations, but still I will keep an open mind about their practice being taken out of context by the later generations. If the jizya or the rate of jizya is unjustified, then it is not justified according to Allah. After all, following ahadith which tell us about the early generations living two centuries before the ahadith were written is *not* the same as following the early generations or what they were enjoined to follow! Besides, it is a standard of Muslim belief that the word of Allah (i.e. the Qur'an) is preserved, and then if *it were not* then inshaAllah one will not be blamed providing that the central message of the Qur'an is kept in mind and applied in all matters. This is precisely the point of Amina Wadud's statement that I featured in the article “Does Islam Intend to Conquer the World? (Part II)”.

Having written/read the articles “Does Islam Intend to Conquer the World” parts I and II, it would be an appropriate time to write/read the answer to the claim that verse 9:29 of the Qur'an is a standalone statement. “Skynightblaze” clings to this verse as a justification of his entire cause, but his assertion is but a simple and deliberate error:

“Supremely exalted is therefore Allah, the King, the Truth, and do not make haste with the Qur'an before its revelation is made complete to you and say: O my Lord! increase me in knowledge.”

Qur'an 20:114

“Do not move your tongue with it to make haste with it, Surely on Us (devolves) the collecting of it and the reciting of it. Therefore when We have recited it, follow its recitation. Again on Us (devolves) the explaining of it.”

Qur'an 75:16-19

“Skynightblaze” thinks that he can simply interpret a verse on its own whilst wilfully ignoring its explanation (complete) through verses 9:30-35. He thinks that 9:36 is contradictory to 9:29 (although he cites verse 25:57). Let us test this notion by emphasizing the key words:

“FIGHT those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.”

Qur'an 9:29

“Surely the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah's ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred; that is the right reckoning; therefore be not unjust to yourselves regarding them, and FIGHT the polytheists all together as they FIGHT you all together; and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil).”

Qur'an 9:36

Verses which serve as a basis for 9:29 and a compliment to 9:36 are:

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, and Allah will not consent save to perfect His light, though the unbelievers are averse.”

Qur'an 9:32

(So the Jews and Christians here have the motivation to fight the Muslims.)

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.”

Qur'an 9:33

(So as Islam spreads the Jews and Christians will become more and more averse.)

“O you who believe! most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely, and turn (them) from Allah's way; and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement.”

Qur'an 9:34

Islam prohibits greed, corruption and the hindering of people from Islam, thus the activities of the polytheists here will put them at odds with the Islamic way of life and incite them to prohibit Islamic practices (e.g. those described in 9:29).

“Surely the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah's ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred; that is the right

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

reckoning; therefore be not unjust to yourselves regarding them, and fight the polytheists all together as they fight you all together; and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil).”

Qur'an 9:36

According to this verse and according to history, some of the People of the Book had allied with the Pagans and were fighting and/or planning to fight Muslims whenever they could.

Is there still a contradiction after the explanation of 9:29? “Skynightblaze” could have made the exact same mistake with verse 5:51:

“O you who believe! do not take the Jews and the Christians for allies; they are allies of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for an ally, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.”

Qur'an 5:51

Firstly it refers to *the* (i.e. those of the particular time) Jews and *the* Christians rather than “Jews and Christians” for all time, and secondly we should once again follow the explanation:

“But you will see those in whose hearts is a disease hastening towards them, saying: We fear lest a calamity should befall us; but it may be that Allah will bring the victory or a punishment from Himself, so that they shall be regretting on account of what they hid in their souls.”

Qur'an 5:52

(Why would they hasten to join the Jews and Christians out of fear if the Jews and Christians referred to in 5:51 were not already hostile towards the Muslims?)

Thus the explanation is completed in 5:57:

“O you who believe! do not take for guardians *those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke*, from among those who were given the Book before you and the unbelievers; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah if you are believers.”

Qur'an 5:57

“Skynightblaze” suggests that there is a contradiction between verses 9:29 and 25:57 in that one is ordering payment of jizya if people do not convert to Islam whilst 25:57 suggests that the Muslims should ask for nothing nor accept any derived material benefit from being in possession of the Message itself. However, after considering the explanation of 9:29 above, we can see that the two verses are in separate contexts – one of which is where the non-

Muslims are declaring and demonstrating hostility towards the Muslims. Thus “Skynightblaze” has provided absolutely no proof that “jizya” was anything but a recompense (based on a “practical and fair basis”) from the Qur'an-alone. His suggestion of abrogation (which we would discuss “in due course of time”!) now dissolves. The fact of the matter for him is that because the jizya (assuming “tax”) applied to the People of the Book under the circumstances in the Qur'an, and because the jizya applied (according to ahadith) to non-Muslims in societies that accepted Islamic rule, the Qur'an is demanding payment from people in return for not converting and therefore abrogating verse 25:57:

“Say: I do not ask you aught in return except that he who will, may take the way to his Lord.”

Qur'an 25:57

It will be amusing to the reader familiar with part II of the article “Does Islam Intend to Conquer the World?” to note that “Opponent 1” declared this verse had nothing to do with the jizya (asking me what I was trying to pull!) such that the two concepts could not be related, and yet “Skynightblaze” agrees it *does* and *can* in order to suit his own point... This is where I must re-emphasise a point that I made in the article about a *standout* (i.e. disproportionate) tax on non-Muslims being un-Qur'anic. I also implied there was no evidence that the jizya was not simply the Islamic name for a tax which would already have existed as a part of societal function back in those times just as it exists functionally today. Although the Qur'an never mandates a special tax for non-Muslims, there is nothing to stop Muslims taking the name “jizya” from the Qur'an and applying it as a tax “compensating” for non-Muslims’ residence in society just as the zakat (the fake 2.5% tax version) would “compensate” for *Muslims*’ residence. For example, obeying a country’s laws is a “recompense” for enjoying the country’s freedoms. Regarding my alleged self-contradiction in saying that in the case of Muslims seeing non-Muslims as “separate” and a burden to Islamic society (“Skynightblaze” phrases it such that he seems confused and thinks that the jizya was to be imposed on the People of the Book because they were a burden, but according to the Qur'an it was proof of their submission after losing the war that they were fighting), well the “separation” justifies naming the tax “jizya” as opposed to “zakat” (it could be called anything besides “zakat” but it is more appealing to use a Qur'anic word!) and “burden” means no more a burden than anyone in any society who extracts benefits from the state. Anyone could say that “useful” people should not have to pay tax (or that the amount of tax to be paid depends on who/what you are), but in any case “tax” is an umbrella term describing a functional system of the state. Obedience to this system means that one is submitting to the society’s laws, and this is the purpose of the jizya as “compulsory tax” in verse 9:29. The Jews/Christians of 9:29 who did not pay the jizya would pay zakat (the fake Sunni version) because they had fulfilled the criteria of being Muslim (or at least appreciating Islam). If “Skynightblaze” wishes to argue that the jizya is a tax on non-Muslims simply because they are non-Muslim, that is fine but he should prove from scripture that this tax is unfair compared to the “zakat” (according to the Qur'an since 2.5% of income was simply the rate at that time). It should afterwards be demonstrated that the jizya tax as a *standout* payment is a necessity in modern times (since it is only

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

divinely mandated upon the People of the Book who were fighting Muslims, and then the ahadith only suggest that it was implemented during those times on Muhammad's request and in his context (Islam had become an empire-state)). The problem of what cause the money or material goods of jizya would be used for as opposed to what zakat is used for is answered by the following Qur'anic verse (among many others):

"They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever wealth you spend, it is for the parents and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, and whatever good you do, Allah surely knows it."

Qur'an 2:215

(Therefore for the betterment of society.)

Adopting "Skynightblaze"'s meaning of "jizya", the decision of how much to tax non-Muslims is not set in concrete and then the people in charge must be guided by a "practical and fair basis":

"Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought"

Qur'an 2:286

(True Muslims should emulate this in all matters.)

"O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do."

Qur'an 4:135

"O you who believe! most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely, and turn (them) from Allah's way; and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement,"

Qur'an 9:34

(It would be extremely stupid for true Muslims to emulate the doctors and monks in this verse!)

"And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean."

Qur'an 25:67

"And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is? (It is) the setting free of a slave, or the giving of food in a day of hunger to an orphan, having relationship, or to the poor man lying in the dust. Then he is of those who believe and charge one another to show patience, and charge one another to show compassion."

Qur'an 90:12-17

So quite obviously true Islam and true Muslims are meant to be *fair* and not do anything that is unwarranted! The people in charge will be those deemed "most in line" with the spirit of the Qur'an. We have already discussed the fact that there is "no compulsion in the religion", and this clearly must apply to financial matters.

"Skynightblaze" has a problem with imposing the jizya on people after war-booty has been taken from them. Firstly the fact that war-booty has been taken means that they lost a war with Muslims, and if they fought a war with Muslims then according to the Qur'an it would be because they fought and provoked the Muslims first. Thus the taking of war-booty is as justified as anywhere else in the Qur'an. The jizya is just a formality of their acceptance into society after the Muslims conquer their land. Its rate would obviously be adjusted according to conditions, and according to traditional law it need not be material but can be service of some form. Please remember that war-booty is only taken from definite aggressors:

"O you who believe! when you go to war in Allah's way, make investigation, and do not say to any one who offers you peace: You are not a believer. Do you seek goods of this world's life! But with Allah there are abundant gains; you too were such before, then Allah conferred a benefit on you; therefore make investigation; surely Allah is aware of what you do."

Qur'an 4:94

Besides, the people who had spoils taken from them because they were open aggressors would be "captives" for an indefinite term and thus would not have to pay jizya. As per verses 90:12-17, when captives are able to survive on their own (e.g. because they have relatives who can support them) then they would be freed from that status.

The final point made by "Skynightblaze" is the last flicker before the yawning dawn. He says that because the Qur'an does not praise any religion or beliefs besides Islam, anyone who is not Muslim is evil and fights Muslims. He cites verse 4:76:

"Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of the Shaitan. Fight therefore against the friends of the Shaitan; surely the strategy of the Shaitan is weak."

Qur'an 4:76

Interpreting "fight" as "physical fight", it is talking about when people fight and not when they are *not* fighting (we

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

would have to fight therefore when they are fighting!). Secondly it makes no sense to say that two sides are always fighting for their own cause and then ordering one side to fight the other because of that (they are already fighting, are they not?). "Fight" must therefore either mean a non-physical fight in which Muslims give as good as they receive, or a physical fight against the unbelievers who fight (i.e. they are fighting in the Shaitan's cause because they are fighting Muslims). This is confirmed by verse 4:71 which demonstrates that 4:76 is talking about *specific occasions when battles occur* and not about Muslims and non-Muslims in general:

"O you who believe! take your precaution, then go forth in detachments or go forth in a body."

Qur'an 4:71

The context continues clearly through to 4:75:

"And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men and the women and the children, (of) those who say: Our Lord! cause us to go forth from this town, whose people are oppressors, and give us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper."

Qur'an 4:75

before settling upon 4:76, as quoted.

Thus the unbelievers in this context are the oppressors who do not allow their citizens/subjects and the believers the freedom that they have caused them to desire.

P.S. A future concept I desire to explore (inshaAllah) is the fact that the Qur'an is adaptable to various circumstances according to the unchanging nature of its Message. The manner in which we obey and interpret the Message itself serves as a criterion for discerning the impure from the pure, the hypocrite from the true believer. Bringing the Qur'an and the whole Qur'an into consideration, Muslims cannot make a wrong move nor fall prey to the traps and interpretations which deliberately appeal to the weaknesses and fancies of those in whom there is carelessness or doubt. Such examples are the treatment of captives and women (mentioned due to some specific verses), as well as other issues of which only those who can understand the central purpose of the Message will have no doubt.

4) Picking up the Pieces

Another "article" that I wish to write concerns Islam as its own worst enemy. In his new book "My Departure from Heaven", German-Egyptian scientist and historian Hamad

Abdel-Samad (who already has a fatwa on him) predicts the imminent collapse of Islam due to its perceived inability to adapt to the modern era. He says that the Islamic world is ultimately a world of contradictions wherein Muslims consume modernity without embracing it (i.e. "modern" values like freedom and equality). This is (he says) due to a resentment of anything which does not (or does not seem to) fit into the social paradigm of Islam (whether it be because it questions the "Holy" nature of the institution or because of an Islamic inferiority complex). However, I am doubtful that it could collapse any more than it already has (it is simply the pile of debris left over after the explosion – itself being separated into smaller rubble called "sects"). After all, Islam itself can never die until all of the Qur'ans and ahadith manuscripts/paperbacks have been destroyed, and if everyone left the religion, what is to stop the psychological switches (including all of the components and necessities of faith) from flicking back?

In an afterthought to my previous article "Explaining the Explanation", I mentioned that the definite and unchanging Qur'anic Message meant that Islam was adaptable to every circumstance throughout time. Such a notion requires the "radical" assertion that the Qur'an is not a slave to ahadith, but that the ahadith are slaves to the Qur'an:

"To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that hath come to thee. To each among you have we prescribed a law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute."

Qur'an 4:58

In Islam, the Qur'an itself is the sole means by which Muslims are enjoined to conduct affairs. Muhammad did this, but it seems that Muslims have taken his instructions as community leader for Divine Revelation, and his paraphrasing of the Qur'an for another Qur'an (whether one agrees or disagrees with this statement, it is ultimately irrelevant to my point). The ahadith (responsible for the splintering of Islam) can be divided into those which serve particular sects, those which comply with the Qur'an and those which are silly, useless or contrary to the spirit of Islam. This is obvious simply by observing the three contradictory endings to the most "reliable" hadith, the Prophet Muhammad's last Sermon:

a) "I am leaving for you two things that you must uphold, the Qur'an and my Sunnah." (According to Muwatta 46/3).

This is for the Sunnites.

b) "I am leaving for you the Qur'an and my relatives (Ahl Al Bayt)." (According to Muslim 44/4, Nu 2408; Ibn Hanbal 4/366; Darimi 23/1, Nu 3319).

This is for the Shi'ites.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

c) "I am leaving for you the Qur'an; you shall uphold it."
(According to Muslim 15/19, Nu 1218; Ibn Majah 25/84, Nu 3074; Abu Dawud 11/56, Nu 1905).

What did the Messenger leave for us according to the best hadith, i.e., the Qur'an (6:19,114; 5:48-49; 12:111; 39:23 etc.)?

Bassam Zawadi's official refutation to the fact that enshrinement of ahadith has divided up Islam is simply as follows (three lines):

"This argument could easily be turned around and be used against the Quranites since they themselves are divided up. You have the Rashad Khalifa sect that believes that he was a Messenger of God and others who don't and they are both "Quran Only Muslims"."

He is saying that because the ahadith are not useful for figuring out what Islam is, neither is the Qur'an! He blames people's interpretation of ahadith for the division and thus acknowledges that "Qur'an-Alone Muslims" are as equal as the other sects (since he accuses "Qur'an-Alone Muslims" of misinterpreting the Qur'an). Therefore, if he labels "Qur'an-Alone Muslims" "non-Muslims" then he must also call Shi'ites "non-Muslims". This would make him even more of an idol-worshipper unless he could bring a promise from Allah that every hadith he enshrines is valid and mandated. The pithy response is to say that since Sunni Islam depends on a specific interpretation of the Qur'an and ahadith, it depends on the same human process as Shia "Islam" and "Qur'aniyun" Islam. They are all equally valid according to Zawadi's admission/claim that they are equally ineffective because of their humanness. Sunni "Islam" is thus man-made, and is not the true religion mandated by Allah. He claims to believe in the Qur'an, but he does not bother to follow it because he knows that his belief is simply his own making and his own choice (that is the point: we all follow our paths according to who we are, but the Qur'an puts a boundary against compelling others). Yet if a Sunni decided to make a different choice, he would expect that Sunni to be put to death. Here are his comments on death for apostasy:

"Now I have to admit, this is not a simple thing to understand. Most Muslims might not fully comprehend it. I doubt that most non-Muslims could understand it either, but that does not prove anything. The reason why the non-Muslim cannot understand the law of apostasy in Islam is because they do not believe Islam to be the true religion. Us Muslims know it. We do not merely believe it. We know it. These are God's laws that we are talking about here, this is not a joke. This is treason against God. People cannot understand that. But again, that is a logical fallacy. The idea of rejecting something just because you do not like it or agree with it means nothing. It proves nothing."

Why does Allah require people to punish people for "treason against Him"? What of:

"And say: The truth is from your Lord, so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve..."

Qur'an 18:29

?

This is why I call him an idol-worshipper. His attitude itself is sufficient, but we know that the Qur'an never mandates fighting or killing anyone who was neither fighting nor intending to kill someone first (there are even ahadith where Muhammad did not kill apostates). Imagine that someone managed to find death for apostasy in the Qur'an: it would still be a human interpretation and thus no more valid than that of the person who could find no such penalty. Thus, every Muslim must look at the actual *crux* of Islam:

"This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil). Those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them. And who believe in that which has been revealed to you and that which was revealed before you and they are sure of the hereafter."

Qur'an 2:2-4

"And the servants of the Beneficent Allah are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace. And they who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing, and they who say: O our Lord! turn away from us the punishment of hell, surely the punishment thereof is a lasting. Surely it is an evil abode and (evil) place to stay. And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean. And they who do not call upon another god with Allah and do not slay the soul, which Allah has forbidden except in the requirements of justice, and (who) do not commit fornication and he who does this shall find a requital of sin; the punishment shall be doubled to him on the day of resurrection, and he shall abide therein in abasement. Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever repents and does good, he surely turns to Allah a (goodly) turning. And they who do not bear witness to what is false, and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly. And they who, when reminded of the communications of their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind. And they who say: O our Lord! grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us guides to those who guard (against evil)."

Qur'an 25:63-74

"Then he is of those who believe and charge one another to show patience, and charge one another to show compassion."

Qur'an 90:17

"I swear by the time, most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good, and enjoy on each other truth, and enjoy on each other patience."

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Qur'an 104:1-3

So as we can see, Islam is not about building an institution to house our enormous egos! It is not for Muslims to judge others or each other, but simply to do one's best to follow the Qur'an, the whole Qur'an and nothing but the Qur'an (wherever it takes us!):

“Lo! you are they who will love them while they do not love you, and you believe in the Book (in) the whole of it; and when they meet you they say: We believe, and when they are alone, they bite the ends of their fingers in rage against you. Say: Die in your rage; surely Allah knows what is in the breasts.”

Qur'an 3:119

How can we follow all of it if we are splintering and abrogating its authority with ahadith?

“And say: Surely I am the plain warner, like as We sent down on the dividers: those who made the Qur'an into shreds. So, by your Lord, We would most certainly question them all as to what they did. Therefore declare openly what you are bidden and turn aside from the polytheists.”

Qur'an 15:89-94

Since we have eliminated compulsion in religion (of all forms) and determined that no-one has more right to judge or declare one interpretation more valid than another, I have no qualms with any Muslim following ahadith that do not impinge on the rights of others (even if according to *my* understanding an attitude which enshrines any ahadith as Divine Revelation is not Islamic). Those who do not label *me* “non-Muslim” are still brothers and sisters in faith such that we can discuss things amicably. This brings us back to the opening point about Islam consuming modern values but not exercising them (e.g. Muslims “living off the land of others”, but not integrating). How can Muslims expect others to be kind to them (this expectation is implied by the Qur'anic decree to fight aggressors) if they cannot return the favour to a tolerant society by permitting pluralism within both Islam and Islamic society?

A current example of a specific problem is the violence of mainstream “Muslims” against minority Ahmadi Muslims in Indonesia. In other words, bullying the weak is okay for them because they think that they are defending “Islam”. If there were only one true Muslim in the world, Islam would be complete. Muslims who have ever read the Qur'an will realise that:

“Say: My Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayer...”

Qur'an 25:77

“Say: Call upon those whom you assert besides Allah; they do not control the weight of an atom in the heavens or in the earth nor have they any partnership in either, nor does He need any among them to help Him.”

Qur'an 34:22

Islam is about the individual, and with it come certain responsibilities the failure of which can be compensated according to any specified punishment or by repentance. Whoever does not wish to live by that system will not be held responsible in this lifetime. Allah is fair, and so then must we be:

“Say: The provision of this world is short, and the hereafter is better for him who guards (against evil); and you shall not be wronged the husk of a date stone.”

Qur'an 4:77

“And We will set up a just balance on the day of resurrection, so no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and though there be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, (yet) will We bring it, and sufficient are We to take account.”

Qur'an 21:47

Every single Muslim on the face of the planet who actually cares about Islam should realise that since according to their beliefs the Message of the Qur'an is unchanged, it is not only the yolk in times of change but also the firm rope binding believers and anyone who believes in or understands its central tenets. If Islam is to reach its potential as a vehicle for exercising virtue, then Muslims all over must accept and embrace diversity and change because aversion (and the violence it causes) is akin to apathy in that the muscles of faith (charity, patience and compassion) are never exercised.

“Say: Every one acts according to his manner, but *your Lord* best knows who is best guided in the path.”

Qur'an 17:84

“Therefore hold fast to that which has been revealed to you; surely you are on the right path.”

Qur'an 43:43

Therefore, be satisfied with your own faith.

“Modesty does not come into anything without adorning it.”

The Prophet Muhammad (alleged)
(Tirmidhi #1253)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

5) Further Verses

“O Prophet! strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be hard against them; and their abode is hell; and evil is the resort.”

Qur'an 66:9

Sura 66 touches on family situations. An example is provided in 66:1-5, and the message is provided in 66:6. 66:7-8 describe how we should turn to Allah for forgiveness without making up excuses, but in 66:9 it is clear that not everyone will correct or acknowledge their misdeeds. These are the unbelievers and hypocrites described, the next three verses confirming that it addresses situations of family intrigue etc.. Notice the verse does not say to fight such people, but to strive hard against their intentions.

“O you who believe! fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you and let them find in you hardness; and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil).”

Qur'an 9:123

Sura 9 is divided into three segments (9:1-37, 9:38-72 and 9:73-129). Some say that chronologically the first one comes last, but it does not matter since they have the same message.

9:73 reads:

“O Prophet! strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be unyielding to them; and their abode is hell, and evil is the destination.”

As we see, this is almost the exact same instruction as in 9:123. If we read 9:74, it becomes clear that the unbelievers and hypocrites were those who plotted to do something that they failed to perform.

It is clear enough (from the consistent subject matter throughout the Sura) that the unbelievers in 9:123 are those described in 9:5 and 9:29.

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves...”

Qur'an 48:29

The Arabic uses “THE unbelievers”, meaning those of that situation (not unbelievers in general). For context, see 48:1, 48:24-25 and 48:27. These verses (examples) culminate in an instruction for Muslim to be firm against such behaviour (the same as in 66:9). It speaks directly to the people of the time (see Lesson 43).

Moreover, this is only if unbelievers fight with Muslims (48:22).

“If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease and the agitators in the city do not desist, We shall most certainly set you over them, then they shall not be your neighbours in it but for a little while.”

33:60

I cannot see 33:60 as anything but an application of 5:33. Folks who deliberately create civil discord will be dealt with accordingly (imprisonment etc. depending on the progress of their intentions). It is quite obvious that 33:60 is contextual (the city), thus the potential punishment prescribed for them would be according to the mischief they caused by not desisting. We must also assume from 33:59 (which addresses the Prophet personally) that these agitators are those who were capable of harassing the Muslim women (i.e. the people of that situation). In any situation we should judge according to what has been done, applying 5:33 if the people are deliberately inciting civil unrest based upon unsupported material. Rumours are rumours, but they are oftentimes accompanied by malicious intentions which will be fulfilled if given the opportunity (resulting in violence). Do you have a problem with selecting an appropriate punishment from a range of options?

“And the recompense of evil is punishment like it, but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah; surely He does not love the unjust.”

Qur'an 42:40

We must judge equitably regardless (5:8), so there would not be arbitrarily harsh punishments for smaller crimes.

Finally, if Allah “sets someone over” another, it would involve an explicit instruction. For instance, Allah “set the Muslims over” specified people in 9:5 and 9:29. As far as my understanding goes, humans have free will and anything we do is not a result of having Allah “set us over it” (in that active sense). Thus, I must assume that 33:60 is a threat to reveal an instruction for Muslims to fight the agitators. By the time this occurred, it would be justified. There was no change in the sunna of Allah, and all specific people of the specific time who rejected the Messengers *when they came* were “destroyed”.

LESSON 17: “An application of the Qur'an as constitution”

by Layth;

I do not endorse the labelling of “Peacemakers” on a geographical basis, but for interest, here it is.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

We, the people of Peaceland, hereby establish this Constitution in order to promote peace, freedom, justice, fairness, equality, security and happiness for all.[1]

ARTICLE I

This Constitution and its subsequent laws will supersede any existing Constitutions, treaties, agreements, legislations and/or laws.

This Constitution will take effect in all states, provinces and geographical areas in Peaceland which have been defined by treaties and international law.

All persons and legal entities within the republic are obligated to uphold this Constitution and its amendments at all times, until it is replaced in accordance with Article XIV.[2]

Lessons learned from history, knowledge extracted from human experience, nature and the Qur'an through deductive and inductive reasoning will be sources of guidance for all legislation and laws of the republic.[3]

Citizens are deemed those persons who are born in Peaceland or naturalized by law.

ARTICLE II

The citizens of this nation will be called Peacemakers.[4]

Peace within, peace with other nations and peace with nature is the ultimate ideal of this nation.[5]

Peace can only be attained and maintained by justice and liberty, and by individuals empowered with dignity, creativity, critical thinking and reliable information.

The government of Peaceland promotes total global peace. As an achievable step towards that goal, nations will be invited to join global cease-fire for 4 consecutive months, gradually extending global peace to 12 months as an ultimate goal.[6]

Wars are only for self-defence against military aggression or a party declaring an offensive war. Peaceful solutions for conflicts should be explored and exhausted before military engagements.

To reduce incentives for wars, private companies within Peaceland are prohibited from designing, manufacturing and selling weapons. Mercenary activities by citizens of Peaceland in any part of the World are prohibited. The government will neither sell nor donate weapons to any other nation, and Peacemakers should not make a profit out of weapons or war.

The Rule of Law, justice and peace are above any other affiliation.[7]

ARTICLE III

The freedoms and rights of Peacemakers are not limited to the ones provided in this Constitution. The following freedoms and rights are available to every adult person in the republic regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, and religious or political affiliations. Such freedoms and rights may not be suspended, diluted, limited, obstructed, or regulated (with regards to content) excepting the last six rights. These may be suspended or limited by law for justice and public safety.

Freedom of Speech and Activism

Every person has the right to free speech, freedom of the media, free assembly and peaceful protest.[8]

In order to prevent media with loudspeakers from manufacturing consent for the policies designed by special interest, the diversity of media including print, radio, television, Internet, electronic channels and others will be promoted and facilitated by law.

In order to prevent unnecessary auto-censorship, public officials and figures are not protected against slander and libel with the exception of objective falsehoods.

With the exception of print-media, one month before presidential elections all cable, electronic and media-using satellites and radio frequencies will be required to allocate one hour everyday during their prime-time period to political debates. The same allocation of hours is required for local media (excluding print) until two weeks before local elections. Candidates collecting the signatures of a minimum 2% of voters from their districts will be eligible to participate in these public debates for equal time. Fairness and opportunity to discuss all popular and unpopular ideas in public is imperative for a government of people, by people, for people.

Freedom of Faith and Heresy

All persons have the right to hold any faith and adhere to any religion they may see fit. This freedom of faith allows the establishment of temples, mosques, synagogues, churches, schools, foundations and any other constructs and associations used for such a purpose. Similarly, all persons have the right to avoid holding any faith or adhering to any religion. The freedom of atheism and heretic ideas allows the establishment of foundations, organizations, clubs, schools, and any other constructs and associations used for their purpose.[9]

Right against Unjustified Discrimination

All persons are to be granted equal rights and opportunities irrespective of their race, gender, color, national origin, wealth, faith or political affiliation.[10]

Right to Seek Justice

All persons and legal entities have the right, without obstruction or delay, to demand justice against any wrongdoing or crime that befalls them. To reduce the time and the cost of seeking justice, establishment of unofficial local arbitration and reconciliation centers administered by suitable volunteers should be encouraged and facilitated by the local government.[11]

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Right to Information

Citizens have the right to petition for the release of government information on specific issues. Government records must be publicly available on creation. Exceptions may be defined by the legislature on the basis of national security and privacy, but will be subject to judicial review.

Right to Clean Air, Water and Land

Citizens have rights to clean air, water, land, and environmental protection. The government shall promote economic development that is sustainable with minimum environmental impact, and with maximum utilization of renewable energy.

Freedom of Movement

All persons may travel freely throughout the public lands of the republic and exit and/or enter its borders in a legal manner, without hindrance or delay. Such rights extend to include the movement of goods.[12]

Right to Privacy

All persons have the right to privacy and to freedom from spying, eavesdropping, trespassing, entering homes without the permission of the owner, obtaining and/or sharing information that has a reasonable expectation of privacy.[13] This right may not be suspended except during exigent circumstances or a judicial warrant based on probable cause. There is no right allowing people to hide their face in public.

Right to Trade and Possess Wealth

The accumulation and the transfer of wealth by individuals and legal entities may be regulated.[14]

Natural resources are the property of all citizens as a whole, and all income from their extraction will be used on public projects and institutions. To create and maintain a healthy competition in vital sectors such as healthcare, pharmaceuticals and education, public and non-profit organizations will be encouraged to compete against private companies and vice versa.

Markets such as the trading of human organs, gambling, interest or usury on money and goods burrowed for personal needs, manufacturing and sale of alcohol, cigarettes or drugs and prostitution (which exploit the desperation/weakness of individuals or groups and cause extreme harm for the traders or for the society are considered "noxious markets", and are prohibited or strictly regulated by law. The sale and/or consumption of alcohol, cigarette, and drugs are also strictly regulated. As long as they do not pose risk for public safety and security, they are not prohibited for adults. Advertisement and promotion of prohibited or strictly regulated products and services is also prohibited or strictly regulated by law.[15]

In order to prevent wealth monopolization in the hands of a few, anti-trust laws and proportional taxation of wealth and inheritance will be employed. Intellectual property of citizens may be protected through patent laws for no more than nineteen years.[16]

Right to Welfare

All citizens have the right to security in their person and property, food, primary health care, education and equal employment opportunities within the ability of the republic.[17]

ARTICLE IV

The legislative powers of the republic shall be vested in an elected National Congress representative of the people, conducting its duty in accordance to the Constitution via open discussion and consultation in all matters.[18]

State and local governments can pass laws that reflect cultural, religious, social, economic, and other concerns and interests, providing they do not violate the Constitution, international treaties, or laws of federal government.

To protect the government from corruptive influences of corporate and special interests, financial transactions and associations with lobbyists of the members of Congress will be monitored. A monitoring committee, three times the number of Congress members, will be elected through a televised live lottery-drawing from identification numbers of all adult citizens, excluding those with mental or felony records. Within a month of the lottery election, the elected Congress members will select 1/3 of the winning numbers after public examination and hearings. Each member of the National Congress will be randomly assigned to these citizen-monitors, ten Congress members for each monitor, thereby allowing independent and multiple sources of scrutiny. Citizen-monitors will have authority to subpoena and track all the financial transactions and deals of the elected Congress members, and will be required by law to share the financial records with the public every four months. In cases of suspicious transactions, following the approval of four assigned monitors, the Congressmen suspected of abusing public trust will be charged and scheduled for an impeachment-hearing by Congress within a month. Any citizen who provides evidence for a quid-pro-quo illegal financial transaction or hiring of a former member of Congress will have a standing in court. After initial investigation and discovery of probable cause, a qui tam litigation should be initiated in lower courts against the former member of Congress.

Any individual or group wishing to hold a private meeting with public officials will be required by law to donate to a cause which is peaceful and necessary, such as food-supply, housing and health care for the needy. The public official should have no affiliation with or financial benefit from the charitable organization receiving such donation.[19]

Members of the National Congress and monitoring committee will be paid no less than the national median salary, and this payment should not exceed five times of the same. The term of monitors will end with the election of the new National Congress, and monitors cannot serve for more than one term.

Elections will be based upon districts, whereby each district is defined as an independent area with a minimum citizen-population of 1% of the total population of the republic.

Areas that have populations below 1% of the population will have their number added to the nearest geographical area until that number reaches or exceeds 1%. Seats for the

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

National Congress will be allotted on the basis of a minimum of one seat for every district, with districts having populations of multiples of 1% being allotted one extra seat for each exceeding multiple.

To prevent duopoly, ballots will be designed to allow preferential voting such that voters can rank candidates in order of their preference.

Persons eligible for the National Congress will be citizens, male or female, forty years of age or older, of sound mind and character and who are residents of the district they are elected from.[20]

Eligible voters will be those male and female citizens who have reached the age of eighteen or older, and who are present within the borders of the republic at the time of voting.

Considering the vital role of informed voters in a democratic society, it is a duty of the federal and local governments to promote and facilitate debates in town hall meetings including every running candidate in the districts. To promote public participation in political debates, any voter in the district that participated in one of the town hall gatherings for a minimum of three hours should receive a one-time payment of a full day's wage, no less than the minimum wage prescribed by law.

Seats of the National Congress will be granted to those nominees who achieve a majority vote from the district where they reside. Votes in single member districts will be made on the basis of alternative voting, whilst votes in multiple member districts will be made on the basis of single transferable voting.

The National Congress members, unless re-elected, will serve one term of five years beginning on the first day of the first month of the new year.

Elections will be concluded ninety days prior to the closing of the existing National Congress members' term of office to ensure a smooth transition and handover of duties and responsibilities.

In cases of death or resignation, a new National Congress member will be elected from the same district to serve the remaining term of the departed National Congress member.

Each National Congress member carries one vote with Congress decisions becoming law based upon simple majority or more votes on the issue(s).

The National Congress is provided the following powers:

- The power to make, review, amend and repeal laws in accordance with the principles of justice.[21]
- The power to employ policies and strategies necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of the republic.[22]
- The power to appoint and/or renew a president and his/her ministers for a term totaling five years.[23]
- The power to prematurely conclude the term of the president or any of his/her ministers.[24]
- The power to regulate citizen-naturalization requirements and criteria.[25]
- The power to appropriate payment and compensation schemes for every level of government, including the

National Congress.[26]

- The power to stipulate taxation for individuals and corporations, on condition that such taxation does not exceed 20% .[27]
- The power to establish benchmarks for weights, measures, time-keeping and minimum wages within the republic.[28]
- The power to coin money as legal tender on condition that such money is coined in gold or silver or backed by gold or silver.[29]
- The power to lend and/or borrow money, interest-free, on behalf of the republic.[30]
- The power to lease public lands for the purposes of development and betterment.[31]
- The power to preserve and protect wildlife and natural ecological balance.[32]
- The power to allocate funds and approve budgets for every government agency.[33]
- The power to call for audits on any branch/department/agency of government.[34]
- The power to initiate (locally and/or abroad) legal proceedings and claims on behalf of the republic.[35]
- The power to enter into treaties and/or agreements with foreign nations/peoples.[36]
- The power to establish a military for land, sea and air.[37]
- The power to declare drafts such that the sacrifice and pain of defending the country is spread across every segment of the population.[38]
- The power to establish a security-force for the protection of people and their rights within the republic.[39]
- The power to mediate, via peaceful means, an end to armed conflict between foreign nations.[40]
- The power to aid and/or assist oppressed people in foreign nations by granting them asylum and/or negotiating on their behalf, on condition that they have requested such help.[41]
- The power to provide humanitarian aid and/or assistance for crisis-relief of any foreign nation and/or people in need.[42]
- The power to declare war and appropriate a war cabinet if the republic is under physical and/or economic attack, and/or if its security and/or citizens are under imminent and recognizable threat of attack.[43]
- The power to call for public drafting in defense of the republic and its lands if it is attacked or is under an imminent and recognizable threat of attack.[44]

The National Congress will elect a speaker from amongst the National Congress members to regulate the proceedings of its assemblies.

The National Congress will assemble, at a minimum of every ninety days for a length of three days to discuss legislation and/or appropriation and/or any matters that concern the well-being of the republic and its citizens. The National Congress may vote to shorten or extend the length of such assembly based on specific requirements.

The National Congress may be called for assembly at any other time during the year at the request, submitted to the speaker, of at least 1/3 of the total count of National Congress members. Such announcements for assembly must be broadcast publicly and clearly, and presented in writing to all National Congress members.

During times of war or danger, the National Congress may be excluded from physical assembly and decisions may be conducted by way of obtaining signatures from the respective Congress members to meet the 2/3 or more required votes.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

ARTICLE V

The executive powers of the Republic of Peaceland will be vested in a president appointed by the National Congress.[45]

The president will be responsible for the selection of his/her cabinet of ministers to be presented for approval by the National Congress.

The president will be responsible for carrying out the approved policies and strategies of the National Congress.

The president will be responsible for administration and management of all branches of government, setting rules and regulations necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of branches and budget preparation.

The president will be responsible for the planning, budgeting and execution of all public projects encompassing factories, farms, roads, power, exploration, mining, drilling, refinement, water-treatment, transportation, mail-delivery, sewage-treatment, public offices/buildings, libraries, schools, hospitals, social-services and any other construct or activity required for the service of the public or the betterment of life for people in the republic.

The president will be responsible for regulation of all private sector activities/projects encompassing manufacturing, mining, energy, agriculture, trade, services, construction, transport, travel, education, medical, technology, charities and any other activity or construct that is legitimately requested by people in the republic.

The president will represent the republic before foreign dignitaries/nations and may engage in negotiations/discussions which relate to the republic that are not binding, except with the ratification of the National Congress.

The president will present a detailed report of his/ her activities prior to each scheduled National Congress assembly. The president will make himself/herself present at scheduled National Congress assemblies, and He/she is also required to attend, at the request of the Congress speaker, non-scheduled sessions in order to give a briefing on the state of the republic, as well as to address any questions/clarifications concerning Congress members.

ARTICLE VI

The judicial powers of the republic will be vested in an independent High Court and subsequent lower courts. The High Court will have judicial review over the laws passed by national and local legislators in accordance with the Constitution.[46]

The High Court will be comprised of twelve justices who will be appointed by the National Congress, and who will hold office as long as they maintain integrity, proper conduct, and attendance of duty. The full term of High Court justices is nineteen years, ending with the expiration of a new Constitution. A justice cannot be appointed to the High Court twice.

The High Court will have the responsibility of appointing Federal Court judges, presiding over cases of treason and presiding over legal proceedings and/or impeachment

charges made against the president, cabinet ministers and/or any National Congress member(s).

The High Court will hold original jurisdiction over cases between states or cases between state and federal government.

The High Court will have the final say in matters of appeal from lower courts.

The decisions of the High Court are binding based upon a 2/3 or more vote.[47]

The salary of a justice will be equal to the salary of a member of Congress.

ARTICLE VII

All persons under accusation of a specific crime, where the accusation is supported by a court warrant, will have their Constitutional rights as outlined in Article III temporarily suspended and replaced with the following rights:

Right to Presumption of Innocence

All persons accused are considered innocent until proven guilty. The burden of proof falls upon the accuser. No detainee may be held for longer than 24 hours unless a court order for further detainment is obtained based on the assessment of credible evidence concerning the charges brought forth. No detainee may be subjected to physical or psychological torture, humiliation, forcing of confession or any other form of physical or psychological harm or abuse. If the court finds the accused innocent of the charges brought forth, no further legal proceedings or accusations on the same case may be presented.[48]

Right to a Fair and Speedy Trial

All persons accused of a crime have the right to a fair trial free of prejudice, influence or external factors that may cause injustices to occur. The accused also has the right to be tried quickly without unnecessary delay.[49]

Right to an Attorney

All persons accused of a crime will have the right to be represented through a specialized attorney if they so choose. If an attorney cannot be arranged or afforded by the accused, then it is the responsibility of the republic to provide an attorney at no expense for the accused.[50]

Legality versus Morality

All immoral acts are not necessarily illegal, and all illegal acts are not necessarily immoral. Acts that harm others should be made illegal by law, but acts that have trivial impact or no harm to the society may not be made illegal. The government acting in the name of society will have interest in passing laws to protect and foster the physical and mental health and integrity of its members, the family unit and children, the society, the international peace and the ecological system.

Punishment Proportional to the Crime

The court is responsible for ensuring that all punishments and rulings decreed by its judges are proportional to the nature of

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

the crime committed. Therefore, excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unreasonable punishments inflicted.[51]

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is illegal unless it does not inflict permanent injury/scarring or extreme pain upon the body, and its primary function is public shaming.[52]

Right of Confrontation

Any person accused of crime has the right to face his/her accusers.[53]

Right to Appeal

All persons have the right to appeal a ruling that is found to be against them by requesting that a new trial be set with a different presiding judge. An appeal may only be carried out once unless it can be proven through credible evidence that both trials did not display fairness or a full analysis of the facts. In this case the High Court will preside over the matter, its judgment superseding all other judgments.[54]

ARTICLE VIII

Government will be funded by revenue generated from the legal sale of natural public resources and revenue generated by government through services and/or taxation.

ARTICLE IX

All branches of the government of Peaceland will operate with complete transparency and openness. Records must be made public, and all meetings of the National Congress will be deliberated to an open audience.[55]

The only exception to the requirement of transparency will be matters that are deemed critical to the security of the republic and/or the general well-being of its citizens. In such cases, the records of deliberations of any kind may be concealed from the public for a maximum period of 1 year, to be extended only with the approval of the High Court for a maximum period not exceeding ten years.[56]

ARTICLE X

Government officials, government employees and elected National Congress members will not hold any other position or title while serving in government or the National Congress.

All government officials, government employees, and elected National Congress members will be obligated to take the Oath of the Republic before commencing duties:

Oath of the Republic:

"I [name of person to be placed here] solemnly swear before God and before the witness of the citizens of this republic to uphold the role of [position to be placed here] to the best of my abilities and to protect the integrity of the Constitution and the republic. I swear to live my life according to the laws and regulations of the republic and to uphold the highest moral character. I swear to work in the best interest of the republic and to consistently strive to improve life for its

citizens. I swear never to abuse my position or authority in any way, shape or form for personal gain. I swear never to carry favor for any person, group or entity beyond what is fair and just. I swear to stand for and to promote the laws of peace, justice and equality wherever I may be. I have placed God as a witness over this oath of mine, and may He have mercy on my person and guide me to always do what is right."[57]

The breaking of this oath will be the basis for legal proceedings and/or impeachment. An agnostic, atheist or heretic may replace the word God with "my conscience and citizenship duties."

ARTICLE XI

With the exception of declarations of war made by the National Congress, no branch of government or person from within the republic may directly or indirectly finance, sponsor or engage in the destabilization or undermining of any country or nation by way of design and/or by way of covert or otherwise armed operations.[58]

ARTICLE XII

Government will encourage and support the pursuit of creativity, arts, sciences, exploration, technical innovation, community work, philanthropy and good work ethics within the republic.[59]

To promote good citizenship through role-models, Congress will establish annual awards to be presented by the president and Congressional leaders in an annual televised event. The awards should distinguish and reward five citizens and five non-citizens in each of the following categories: Artists, Athletes, Authors, Blue-collar workers, Educators, Entrepreneurs, Freedom-fighters, Good Samaritans, Inventors, Parents, Peacemakers, Philanthropists, Public employees, Scientists, Students, and Teens.[60]

Government will also ensure that intellectual rights are protected from infringement and unauthorized duplication.[61]

ARTICLE XIII

Peace City will be designated as the permanent capitol for the republic. The language of the majority will be the official language of the republic.[62]

ARTICLE XIV

The dimensions of Peaceland's flag will be in the golden ratio, representing our respect for nature. A human fetus is located in the centre of nineteen hexagons atop a black background, respectively representing (to some) an emphasis on intellectual and spiritual qualities of humanity and the importance of human life and integrity, the nineteen rules of deduction installed in our brains by our Creator and the mystery, unity and providence in our common and specific origins: the Big Bang and a mother's womb. The hexagons represent honeycomb and numerous lessons from bees encompassing work ethics, community work, efficiency, unity against aggressors et cetera... The grey background represents wisdom and justice; the green color stands for our respect for the environment and ecological system, while the orange color represents joy and optimism. The hundred-and-

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

fourteen stars represent the number of stable elements in our universe, (to some) the chapters of the Qur'an, God's attribute the Compassionate, and our progressive values and aspirations.

- [1] Qur'an 16:90-91
- [2] Qur'an 48:10
- [3] Qur'an 17:36; 4:174; 8:42; 10:100; 11:17; 74:30-31; 35:28; 4:162; 9:122; 22:54; 27:40; 29:44,49
- [4] Qur'an 22:78
- [5] Qur'an 2:62; 2:135-136, 208
- [6] Qur'an 2:217; 5:07; 9:2; 8:61; 2:208
- [7] Qur'an 8:72; 16:91,92
- [8] Qur'an 71:5-9
- [9] Qur'an 10:99, 18:29, 88:21-22; 2:256
- [10] Qur'an 49:13; 5:8; 3:195; 4:124; 16:97
- [11] Qur'an 4:148, 42:39
- [12] Qur'an 29:56
- [13] Qur'an 24:27-29, 49:12
- [14] Qur'an 3:14
- [15] Qur'an 2:275; 5:90; 3:130;
- [16] Qur'an 59:7; 2:215
- [17] Qur'an 30:38, 59:7
- [18] Qur'an 42:38; 5:12
- [19] Qur'an 58:12-13
- [20] Qur'an 46:15, 49:13
- [21] Qur'an 4:58
- [22] Qur'an 12:47-49
- [23] Qur'an 4:59
- [24] Qur'an 58:11
- [25] Qur'an 60:10
- [26] Qur'an 28:27
- [27] Qur'an 8:41
- [28] Qur'an 6:152, 7:85
- [29] Qur'an 9:34
- [30] Qur'an 2:275, 2:282
- [31] Qur'an 7:74
- [32] Qur'an 5:1-2, 30:41
- [33] Qur'an 17:27-29
- [34] Qur'an 17:36
- [35] Qur'an 42:39
- [36] Qur'an 8:72
- [37] Qur'an 8:60; 9:36,122
- [38] Qur'an 9:41
- [39] Qur'an 22:41
- [40] Qur'an 49:9-10
- [41] Qur'an 4:75, 8:72
- [42] Qur'an 2:177
- [43] Qur'an 2:190-193
- [44] Qur'an 8:65, 9:41
- [45] Qur'an 27:32
- [46] Qur'an 4:58
- [47] Qur'an 42:38
- [48] Qur'an 10:68, 24:11, 49:12
- [49] Qur'an 4:58
- [50] Qur'an 26:12-14
- [51] Qur'an 16:126
- [52] Qur'an 24:1-18, 5:38; 13:4; 2:166; 6:94; 7:160; 7:167; 9:110; 47:15; 47:22; 21:93; 22:19; 23:53; 12:31; 12:50; 5:33; 7:124; 20:71; 26:49; 13:31
- [53] Qur'an 49:12
- [54] Qur'an 21:78-79
- [55] Qur'an 58:9-10
- [56] Qur'an 58:9
- [57] Qur'an 48:10
- [58] Qur'an 2:11-12, 2:204-205, 38:28

- [59] Qur'an 27:40, 34:13, 55:33
- [60] Qur'an 16:90; 2:177, 3:92; 5:2; 57:9; 25:63-6; 31:18; 23:1-11
- [61] Qur'an 3:188
- [62] Qur'an 17:9, 5:48
- [63] Qur'an 11:88

Lesson 18: "Refutation to certain verses used against "Qur'an-alone" Muslims"

2:151

Messengers come to recite the Message and to teach the Book (e.g. help people to remember and record it). Allah taught the Qur'an (55:1-2) and we are expected to as well (2:121, 3:79). The wisdom (al hikma) comes from Allah through the Qur'an (17:39, 33:34, 36:2, 43:4, 43:63, 44:4, 54:5). It is (in part) the ability to recognise truth and to adhere to it (2:269, 19:12, 26:21, 26:83, 28:14, 31:2, 31:12, 38:20). See also 17:22-38 for specific examples of wisdom. Use of the word "and" does not mean that there is a complete separateness (e.g. with "the balance" (42:17, 57:25)). Rather it indicates that one is within the other (e.g. 21:48). Finally, the delivery of religious practices (as passed from Ibrahim) will purify believers (e.g. when Muhammad took alms from those who had acknowledged their wrongdoings (9:103 (also see 92:18))). Allah intends to purify Muslims with the Message (5:6).

In simple terms, Muhammad recites the verses of the Qur'an. He does not do it just once since people will not always remember it. He recites it for those who will listen. These people will learn it by listening, hence Muhammad will be teaching the book. The wisdom is inside the book (44:4), so one teaches the wisdom with the book. Following it will purify the person (5:6, 33:33, 34:6 etc.).

Muhammad's people did not know the book because they never had a messenger (32:3).

As in the instance of 2:151, The Qur'an breaks rules of grammar because it is emphasising. For example:

"And certainly We gave to Musa and Haroun the Furqan and a light and a reminder for those who would guard (against evil)." (21:48)

The Qur'an is the light (4:174-175, 42:52).
The Qur'an is the reminder (6:90 etc.).

SUMMARY

Let's break it down. Muhammad had multiple functions, but he achieved them through one responsibility.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications...

Muhammad's responsibility was to recite the Qur'an.

...and purifies you...

Muhammad purifies his people by bringing a new way of life. This new way of life enjoins conduct with purifies them. For instance, when Muhammad took alms from those who had acknowledged their wrongdoings (9:103):

“Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby...” (9:103)

This is because giving alms purifies one's soul:

“Who gives away his wealth, purifying himself.” (92:18)

The Islamic way of life purifies people, thus Allah purifies people with the message:

“Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you...” (5:6)

“Those are they for whom Allah does not desire that He should purify their hearts.” (5:41)

“Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you...” (33:33)

...and teaches you the Book and the wisdom...

Obviously people cannot be purified without wisdom. When Muhammad recited the Qur'an, he was also teaching people the book and its wisdom. He was teaching them what he had been taught:

“The Lord of Mighty Power has taught him.” (53:5)

“The Beneficent Allah taught the Qur'an.” (55:1-2)

For example, reciting a nursery rhyme to children is the same as teaching it.

“And certainly We know that they say: Only a mortal teaches him.” (16:103)

The above verse is clear proof the reciting is teaching.

Now as for the wisdom (al hikma), it comes from Allah through the Qur'an (17:39, 33:34, 36:2, 43:4, 43:63, 44:4, 54:5).

We know that ALL of the wisdom is in the Qur'an because Isa was also taught the Book and the wisdom (3:48), but people were still expected to judge only by the Injeel (5:47).

“Therein EVERY WISE AFFAIR is made distinct.” (44:4)

The wisdom is the “recipe” in the Book which when one studies/follow, will make them wise. It describes the attributes/“nutrition” of the Book (including the stories) from which one can draw wisdom.

It is distinct from the Book in the same way that recipes are distinct from a recipe book.

“And keep to mind what is recited in your houses of the communications of Allah and the wisdom; surely Allah is Knower of subtleties, Aware.” (33:34)

The only thing which is ever recited in the Book is the Qur'an (literally “recital”). 33:34 thus confirms that the wisdom is in the Qur'an, being the attributes/“nutrition” of the verses which when followed (somewhat like a recipe), will lead to wise conduct.

Therefore one obtains the wisdom by studying the Book. One cannot teach the Book without teaching the wisdom, too.

Muhammad could not teach the Book without reciting it, and he could not teach it without teaching the wisdom, too.

...and teaches you that which you did not know.

Muhammad could not teach the book and the wisdom without reciting it. He could not teach the book and the wisdom without teaching something they did not know.

For example, suppose Billy Bob Bean is teaching clueless kids. He wants to teach them the Qur'an, but he will not be able to tell them anything without teaching them something they did not know (since they do not know anything).

An attribute of the book and the wisdom was that people did not know it.

“Allah has revealed to you the Book and the wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know.” (4:113)

“Say: Who revealed the Book which Musa brought, a light and a guidance to men, which you make into scattered writings which you show while you conceal much? And you were taught what you did not know, (neither) you nor your fathers.” (6:91)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Therefore in teaching the book and the wisdom, Muhammad was also teaching what they did not know (the book):

“You did not know what the Book was.” (42:52)

This is confirmed by 62:2, which expresses this phrase differently. It indicates that “teaching what they did not know” was the correcting-attribute of Muhammad’s mission, i.e. bringing them out of ignorance.

Indeed, the word “and” implies that all these duties are separate things. This is because they are separate functions/attributes of the one duty.

For example, in 6:91 we saw that the Qur’an was a light. Because it was a light, it was guidance. Similarly, because Muhammad taught the book and the wisdom, he taught them what they did not know.

“And certainly We gave to Musa and Haroun the Furqan and a light and a reminder for those who would guard (against evil).” (21:48)

The Qur’an is the light (4:174-175, 42:52).
The Qur’an is the reminder (6:90 etc.).

Reciting the verses, teaching the book and the wisdom, purifying people and teaching what they did not know were all attributes of one duty (delivering the Qur’an).

“Nothing is on the messenger except the conveyance.” (5:99)

There is no additional explanation of what is being conveyed.

7:157

Allah informs of what is right and wrong (allowed and forbidden). Messengers enjoin it on their peoples by delivering and following the Message (also see 2:60-61). So do the believers (3:113-114) (therefore this comes only from the Qur’an).

33:6

The Messenger is like a father to the believers because he teaches and leads by example (5:48), and the decisions/instructions that come via him from Allah are more correct and important than any personal preferences. It is like

the responsibility of an adult supervisor towards children: their entire situation is in his or her hands, and they should follow the one with knowledge (of the Qur’an). However, he is not really their father (33:40) any more than his wives are their mothers (33:4). This cannot be used to support claims of infallibility because Muhammad’s wives, although they are “mothers”, also commit errors (66:1-5). Also, the “closeness” of blood ties does not make people infallible with respect to each other. To complete the interpretation, we could say that Muhammad and his wives are sincere to the Muslims.

49:1-3

49:1 says to not be forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger. The best way to avoid this is to follow the verbatim words of Allah through the Messenger. After all, Allah is always in our presence so it simply means to follow the Message carefully. 49:3 is in context of 49:1-10 where people were misbehaving, shouting and being impatient. Prophets judge by the Qur’an only (5:44, 6:114).

33:46

You say that The Prophet could guide people. You say the Prophet is like the Qur’an (4:174-175, 42:52). This is not true.

For example, just because we teach the Book (3:79), it does not mean Allah did not teach it (55:1-2).

Likewise, if we judge by the Qur’an (5:48), we are taking Allah as judge (6:114).

10:35 confirms this, terminating any contention that we must follow the Messenger as a separate source.

The Messenger had no power to guide (10:35, 28:56). Yet humans can still “guide” on Allah’s behalf through the Qur’an (7:181)!

The Messenger as a human could not give light; he could only deliver the light that was the Qur’an. You contradict 10:35 and 28:56, thus your allegation must be dropped.

4:64-4:65

Messengers were sent for a specific purpose, and this was to deliver the Message (5:99, 12:109, 16:35). Allah does not change His way/sunna (6:24, 6:115, 10:64, 17:77, 18:27, 30:30, 33:62, 48:15, 48:23, 67:3-4).

The Messenger leads his people to a new way of life (19:36, 25:56-57, 34:46, 57:8), and Allah bestowed upon him the authority to do so.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

This is like intercession, where one may intercede ONLY with His permission (2:255).

Even then, it is actually only Allah interceding (39:44). It is an identical principle with “being obeyed” in 4:64.

Even when the Messenger is judging between people, it is actually Allah Who is the judge (6:114).

Finally, the Messenger was only a warner (7:184, 35:23), thus nothing is religiously authoritative beyond the Arabic Qur'an with which he warned (6:19, 42:7).

The following is a response to the allegation against 4:65:

Firstly it is obvious that it refers to situational disputes between hypocrites, and not to a universal precept of obeying Muhammad's personal “sunna”.

Compare it to 5:48. If 4:65 requires Muhammad's “ahadith”, then why would not 4:64 require ahadith of every other Messenger?

Therefore as per 4:65, Messengers must make certain decisions when necessary (i.e. during matters of disagreement).

When the final decision is made (in keeping with the Qur'an and the way of Allah), it should be adhered to.

Consultation may be required (3:159, 4:59, 60:12), and is recommended (3:159, 42:38).

It should be noted that the Prophet being a “judge” does not mean he makes the law.

For example, just because we teach the Book (3:79), it does not mean Allah did not teach it (55:1-2).

Likewise, if we judge by the Qur'an (5:48), we are taking Allah as judge (6:114).

10:35 confirms this, terminating any contention that we must follow the Messenger as a separate source.

The Messenger had no power to guide (10:35, 28:56). Yet humans can still “guide” on Allah's behalf through the Qur'an (7:181)!

Let us look at 4:66:

In the context of the previous verses, the decisions (prescriptions) of the Messenger are intermingled with the will of Allah.

This is because the Prophet judged by the Qur'an alone (5:44-49).

4:83

Merely confirms that the Messenger was a community leader, like the other Messengers. Messengers are made community-

leaders (2:124), but they must lead only according to the Message (21:27, 21:73).

Besides, referring to others in charge confirms that this ayah has nothing to do with another source of religion.

4:105

“(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed.”

Qur'an 2:213

The Messenger does not simply read the Book and make new laws from it (just like that!). The law is the Qur'an. All people are expected to learn it, teach it and judge by it (3:79, 5:43-50). The Qur'an is the good news (2:97) and the warning (25:1).

4:115

1) What does acting hostilely to the Messenger have to do with “sunnah”?

2) Where in the Qur'an does “believers” actually mean “sahaba”? Are you saying only his companions can be Muslims?

3) What were the only things Muslims are commanded to do, and what was the Messenger only (27:91-92)?

4) What is the actual way of the believers, and what was it being compared to (4:114)?

“Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me, being certain. And glory be to Allah; I am not one of the polytheists.” (12:108)

12:109 further clarifies that people follow this “way” via Revelation.

25:27-30 tells us that the way of the Messenger as the Qur'an.

We can find a similar expression in verse 47:33 (see “Addendum in Section 7 of Lesson 2). This shows that the way of Allah is actually the way of believers (i.e. what they follow).

4:170

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“And they say: We believe in Allah and in the messenger and we obey; then a party of them turn back after this, and these are not believers. And when they are called to Allah and His Messenger that he may judge between them, lo! a party of them turn aside. And if the truth be on their side, they come to him quickly, obedient.”

Qur'an 24:47-49

We must believe in Allah, His Messengers (because the Books come through Messengers), the angels and the Last Day (see 4:136). It would be illogical to say that “believing in the Messenger” meant believing in another source of religious law when Messengers only act according to the Message (5:43-50, 21:27) (there is also only one judgement here, not two). It would also be illogical to say that you believe in a Messenger if you do not adhere to the Message! The placement of the words “we obey” means that they obey after believing in Allah and His Messenger (thus demonstrating that His Messenger is delivering the commandments of the Message and that (as a Messenger) he represents Allah's will). The fact that the truth may not be on their side proves that orders and judgements come from the Qur'an (since the Qur'an is the truth (2:40-42, 2:91, 2:119, 2:147, 2:176, 5:48, 16:102)).

5:81

See the rebuttal of 4:170. Please explain how believing that the Prophet was a Prophet/Messenger means obeying other than what was revealed to him (8:41). The only reason he was a Prophet was because there was Revelation given to him, and when we believe in that we must also believe in Allah and the fact that Muhammad was a Prophet. If we start believing in Muhammad as a human rather than a Prophet/Messenger, we take a mortal master. All permanent Revelation is in the Qur'an. We must believe that the Prophet received Revelation, but we must also believe in what he says (i.e. the mandate of Allah passed through him).

24:50

Why would people fear that BOTH Allah and His Messenger would act against them unless “Allah and His Messenger” meant the will of Allah as passed through the Messenger (i.e. the Qur'an)?

24:51

It is impossible for “Allah and His Messenger” to refer to two source of law when there is only one judgement mandated.

69:44-46

Refers to forging the Qur'an.

7:62

The good advice is the reminder and examples are in 7:69, 7:73-79 and 7:85-93. 11:84-88 provides a list of examples.

“And if I intend to give you good advice, my advice will not profit you if Allah intended that He should leave you to go astray; He is your Lord, and to Him shall you be returned. Or do they say: He has forged it? Say: If I have forged it, on me is my guilt, and I am clear of that of which you are guilty.”

11:34-35

The good advice is to follow the ordinance of God. Messengers cannot guide people; only God can guide people (He does this through the Message). The good advice must be in the Message or else they would not say “He has forged it!”

7:79 confirms these arguments.

The “good advice” is effectively “the wisdom” (al hikma), since in delivering the Message the Messenger also “purifies” (see notes for 62:2). In doing one thing he automatically performs other things.

Lesson 19: “Introduction to ahadith”

Ahadith have a number of uses:

- supporting the teaching of a particular sect against others (such as what nullifies ablution or which seafood is prohibited);
- flattering or justifying the authority and practices of a particular king against dissidents (such as *Mahdy* and *Dajjal*);
- promoting the interest of particular tribes or families (such as favouring the Quraysh tribe or Muhammad's family);
- justifying sexual abuse and misogyny (such as Aisha's age; barring women from leading *Sala* prayers);
- justify violence, oppression and tyranny (such as torturing members of the *Urayna* and *Uqayla* tribes, massacring the Jewish population in Medina and assassinating a female poet for her critical poems);

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

- exhorting more rituals and “righteousness” (such as *nawafil* prayers);
- validating superstitions (such as magic and idolising the black stone near the *Kaaba*);
- prohibiting certain things and actions (such as prohibiting drawing animal and human figures, playing musical instruments and chess);
- importing Jewish and Christian beliefs and practices (such as execution by stoning, circumcision, head scarf, hermitism and rosary);
- resurrecting pre-Islamic beliefs and practices common among Meccans (such as intercession, slavery, tribalism and misogyny);
- pleasing crowds with stories (such as the story of *Miraj* (ascension to Heaven) and bargaining for prayers);
- idolizing Muhammad and claiming his superiority over other messengers (such as numerous miracles, including splitting moon);
- defending *hadith* fabrications against monotheists (such as condemning people who find the Qur'an alone sufficient);
- advertising products of a particular farm (such as the benefits of dates grown in a town called *Ajwa*).

Hadith-followers believe that following ahadith is obligatory for Muslims.

Hadith-followers must prove that ahadith are actually from the Prophet and Allah (i.e. a part of Deen). Allah instructs:

“And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that.”

Qur'an 17:36

Thus without absolute certainty, we cannot follow ahadith as obligatory sources of religion. The Qur'an alone is the truth (2:91, 2:119, 2:144, 2:146-147, 2:176, 6:19, 10:32-33, 16:102, 35:31, 39:23, 45:6).

“And most of them do not follow (anything) but conjecture; surely conjecture will not avail aught against the truth; surely Allah is cognizant of what they do. And this Qur'an is not such as could be forged by those besides Allah, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a clear explanation of the book. There is no doubt in it, from the Lord of the worlds.”

10:36-37

Allah promised to preserve the Qur'an (15:9, 41:42, 75:17), but nothing else. The only mission of the Messenger was to convey the Message (5:99, 5:67). A part of conveying the Message was making sure that people could memorise and access it, thus he taught the Qur'an just as Allah taught it (55:1-2). In turn, Muslims are expected to teach it to each other (3:79).

Being alive at the time, the Messenger was able to personally dictate the Qur'an to his followers and ensure that thousands could commit it to memory. According to sources, the Messenger stated that he had delivered all Revelations to the believers.

It is not recorded that the Messenger took such care with ahadith. Since they were not written down and compiled into book form for some centuries after his death, it is clear that the Messenger could not verify what Sunnites and Shi'ites adhere to today.

Abi Saïd al Khudri reported that the Prophet said:

““Do not write down anything from me except the Qur'an. Whoever writes down anything other than the Qur'an must erase it. Narrate (from me) what you hear to others; there is no harm in that. But if anyone attributes a lie to me, he should prepare his seat in Hellfire.””

This is reported seven times in three different collections, with just minor variations in wording.

There are some ahadith to be found where the Prophet permitted the writing of unspecified material, but it should be kept in mind that the circumstances were vague and that the people were *permitted*, not *instructed*.

Thus as a retort to the abovementioned hadith, scholars say that the original prohibition was for the sake of keeping traditions separate from the Qur'an.

The Prophet could have specified this by ordering that all ahadith be labelled as such, or that the Qur'an and ahadith be kept separate.

Some then retort that there was a shortage of writing material.

Again, this could have been specified and it does not explain why the writing material was to be destroyed.

They then explain that the rest of the hadith states that it is permissible to narrate. This is no surprise because the Messenger followed only the Qur'an. He could not force people to not talk about him, but the hadith quite clearly forbids ahadith becoming a competing source of religion. Narrating to others was offered as an alternative for his eager audience, but the Messenger never said that it was mandatory. The words “there is no harm in that” confirm that it is an optional alternative, and that only the truth (for example his Qur'anic conduct) was to be mentioned. In short, the enshrinement of ahadith by Sunnites and Shi'ites is impeached by their own sources. Mixing ahadith with religion is the same as physically mixing them with the Book.

There are other ahadith where the Messenger praises the passing on of a “tradition”, but it is never compulsory and the reason is given (that someone else may understand it better). In short, the passing on of Qur'anic narrations for discussion was allowed.

Several ahadith reported on the authority of Zayd state that the Prophet never lifted the writing-prohibition. The

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

situations in which he says this vary, but the idea is consistent.

ibn Hanbal's version:

"Zayd ibn Thabit (the Prophet's personal aide and scribe) was visiting the house of Mu'awiya (thirty years after the Prophet's demise) and was narrating to the Caliph a story about the Prophet. The Caliph, who became much impressed with the story, suddenly asked his scribe to record the story. Zayd then cautioned the Caliph thus: "The holy Prophet has forbidden us from writing down anything from his ahadith.""

(also Sahih Muslim, Book 42, Number 7147)

In the Musnad of Imam Ahmad we find the disciples narrating:

"Whatever utterances we heard from the Prophet we noted down in writing. One day it happened that the Messenger appeared and asked us about the subject of our writings. We replied that whatsoever we hear from his lips we transform it into writing. To this he said:

"What! – are you compiling another book along with the book of Allah?" (meaning in other words that this cannot be possible). He then commanded us to keep Allah's words pure and that we not amalgamate them with any kind of ambiguities. So we made a bonfire of our notes and parables in an open field."

(Quoted from "Tudween e Hadith", p.249).

Also:

"Shaddad bin Ma'qil and I entered on ibn 'Abbas. Shaddad bin Ma'qil asked him: "Did the Prophet leave anything (besides the Qur'an)?" He said: "He did not leave anything except what is between the bindings (of the Qur'an)." Then we visited Muhammad bin Al-Hanafiyya and asked of him (the same question). He said: "The Prophet did not leave anything except what is between the bindings (of the Qur'an)."

Bukhari, Volume 6, Book 61, Number 537: Narrated by 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Rufai'

The attitude of the "four Caliphs" supports the conclusions of above. Following the death of the Prophet, they did everything possible to prevent the spread of ahadith whilst having the opportunity to collect all that they wished. With proper supervision, such an action could have provided a much more sound compilation than what there is today, but the surprise does not last when we realise that ahadith were never meant to be written down.

"Abu Bakr gathered the public after the death of the Prophet and addressed them thus: "You are transmitting conflicting ahadith that clash with the words of the Prophet. The persons to follow you will be in a worse predicament. Transmit no

ahadith from the Prophet. Speak to those who would like you to transmit ahadith in this way: "Behold! God's book is with us, abide by what has been made lawful for you therein and avoid what has been prohibited.""

Zahabi, Tezkiratul Huffaz.

Imam Zahabi quotes another parable of the Messenger's wife, Aisha, recording:

"The wife of the Messenger mentions that her father (Hazrat Abu Bakr) had collected the ahadith of the Messenger which were five hundred in number. She says:

"One night I noticed that my father was restless in bed and was very perturbed. I asked him if he was in some bodily pain or whether or not his condition was due to any bad news that he might have heard. He did not answer my question. In the morning he asked me to bring him the collection of ahadith and he made a bonfire of them all."

(Quoted in "Tudween e Hadith", p.285-88)

As far as Hazrat Omar's caliphate is concerned, Allama ibn Abdulbur has mentioned him in his famous book "Jama e Biyaan ul ilm", wherein he records:

"Omar wanted to compile the sayings and parables of the Messenger. He asked the companions of the Messenger to grant him a decree, to which they faithfully conceded.

Yet in spite of the companions' consent, Omar was not convinced. For one whole month Hazrat Omar performed Istekhara. One morning when Allah calmed his body and mind and he was able to concentrate on the issue at hand, he talked to his people about his decision to compile the ahadith. Then he declared: "I thought about the generations that have passed before us, who wrote books and adhered to those books so strongly that they forgot the Book of Allah. I swear by Allah, I will not let the word of Allah be amalgamated with other words."

(Quoted in "Tadween e Hadith", page 394)

This was decided as the Messenger had ordered every companion to dictate nothing besides the Qur'an. Omar did not finish the matter here. He not only prohibited and banned the collection of ahadith, he went a step further and, as is written in Tubqaat ibn Sa'ad:

"During Hazrat Omar's caliphate the ahadith were in abundance. He reacted by putting the people under oath that whatever ahadith the people had in their possession they would bring to him. As commanded, the public submitted whatever they possessed. He then ordered a public bonfire of ahadith."

(Vol.5, p.141)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

This was the third incident of igniting hadith-collections (the first ignition took place when the Messenger commanded it. The second instance was when Hazrat Abu Bakr did the same with his own collection, and the third was when Hazrat Omar took all the collections from the people under oath and publicly ignited them). Each incident was in the capital city. Of what happened afterwards we get a glimpse in Hafiz ibn Abdulbur's Jama e Biyaan, wherein he states:

“Though Omar ibn Khattaab first expressed his desire to compile the ahadith, it dawned upon him later that it would not be appropriate. He thus sent a circular in the districts and cantonments to destroy whatever ahadith anybody was in possession of.”

(“Tadween e Hadith”, Vol.1, page 400)

He writes further and gives us a detailed account of how elaborate and precautionary measures were taken for the compilation of the Qur'an. If the government wanted, what could possibly have come in the way of adopting the same policy towards the compilation of the ahadith? He states that the government of that time had a specific purpose in mind by rejecting ahadith.

Furthermore, according to Qaza bin Qa'ab:

“When Caliph Omar sent us to Iraq, he emphatically drummed it into our heads that Iraq was a place where sounds of the Qur'an echo like wild bees, and that we must exercise extreme precaution so as not to distract people's minds with all kinds of ahadith.”

“It was asked of Abu Huraira if he remembered during Hazrat Omar's caliphate stating the ahadith in the same way he was doing now. He responded that if he had done so, Hazrat Omar would have physically scolded him.”

It has also come down to us that Hazrat OmarR had imprisoned Hazrat Abdullah bin Ma'soodR, Abu DurdaR and Abu Ma'sood AnsariR for illegally possessing ahadith.

This was the situation at the time of the Messenger and his companions.

Further ahadith which suggest that ahadith were not actually a part of Islam (contradicting blatantly Sunni ahadith):

“Narrated by ibn Abbas: When Allah's Apostle was on his death-bed and in the house there were some people among whom was Umar bin Al-Khattab, the Prophet said: “Come, let me write for you a statement after which you will not go astray.” Umar said: “The Prophet is seriously ill and you have the Qur'an; so the Book of Allah is enough for us.” The people present in the house differed and quarrelled. Some said “Go near so that the Prophet may write for you a statement after which you will not go astray,” while the others said as Umar said. When they caused a hue and cry before the Prophet, Allah's Apostle said, “Go away!” Narrated Ubaidullah: ibn Abbas used to say: “It was very

unfortunate that Allah's Apostle was prevented from writing that statement for them because of their disagreement and noise.”

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 70, Number 573

“Narrated ibn Abbas: Thursday! And how great that Thursday was! The ailment of Allah's Apostle became worse (on Thursday) and he said: “Fetch me something so that I may write to you something after which you will never go astray.” The people (present there) differed in this matter, and it was not right to differ before a prophet. Some said, “What is wrong with him? (Do you think) he is delirious (seriously ill)? Ask him (to understand his state).” So they went to the Prophet and asked him again. The Prophet said, “Leave me, for my present state is better than what you call me for.” Then he ordered them to do three things. He said, “Turn the pagans out of the Arabian Peninsula; respect and give gifts to the foreign delegations as you have seen me dealing with them.” (Said bin Jubair, the sub-narrator said that ibn Abbas kept quiet as rewards the third order, or he said, “I forgot it.”)

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 59, Number 716

“Narrated Ubaidullah bin Abdullah: ibn Abbas said: “When Allah's Apostle was on his deathbed and there were some men in the house, he said: “Come near, I will write for you something after which you will not go astray.” Some of them (i.e. his companions) said, “Allah's Apostle is seriously ill and you have the (Holy) Qur'an. Allah's Book is sufficient for us.” So the people in the house differed and started disputing. Some of them said: “Give him writing material so that he may write for you something after which you will not go astray.” while the others said the other way round. So when their talk and differences increased, Allah's Apostle said: “Get up.” ibn Abbas used to say: “No doubt, it was very unfortunate (a great disaster) that Allah's Apostle was prevented from writing for them that writing because of their differences and noise.”

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 59, Number 717

“Narrated Said bin Jubair: That he heard ibn Abbas saying, “Thursday! And you know not what Thursday is? After that ibn Abbas wept till the stones on the ground were soaked with his tears. On that I asked ibn Abbas, “What is (about) Thursday?” He said, “When the condition (i.e. health) of Allah's Apostle deteriorated, he said: “Bring me a bone of scapula, so that I may write something for you after which you will never go astray.” The people differed in their opinions although it was improper to differ in front of a prophet. They said: “What is wrong with him? Do you think he is delirious? Ask him (to understand).” The Prophet replied: “Leave me as I am in a better state than what you are asking me to do.” Then the Prophet ordered them to do three things saying: “Turn out all the pagans from the Arabian Peninsula, show respect to all foreign delegates by giving them gifts as I used to do.” The sub-narrator added, “The third order was something beneficial which either ibn Abbas did not mention or he mentioned but I forgot.”

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 53, Number 393

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“In the evening the Prophet got up and glorified Allah as He deserved and then said, “Why do some people impose conditions which are not present in Allah’s Book? Whoever imposes such a condition as is not in Allah’s laws, then that condition is invalid even if he imposes one hundred conditions, for Allah’s conditions are more binding and reliable.””

(Bukhari Book #34, Hadith #364)

“Allah’s Apostle ascended the pulpit and said, “What about those people who stipulate conditions which are not in Allah’s laws? Whoever stipulates such conditions as are not in Allah’s laws, then those conditions are invalid even if he stipulated a hundred such conditions.””

(Bukhari Book #50, Hadith #893)

A hadith which sunnis accept (e.g. Ibn Hajar (in Isaba) and Ibn Abdu'l-Bar (in Isti'ab)) quote from Abu Huraira that the Prophet said, *“There are many who misquote me, and one who misrepresents me has his abode in Hell. When a hadith is reported to you on my behalf, you should put it before the Holy Qur'an.”*

Another hadith acknowledged by both sects, narrated by Imam Fakhru'd-Din Razi in his Tafsir Kabir, Volume II, page 271, reports that the Prophet said, *“When a hadith from me is reported to you, put it before the Book of Allah. If it agrees with the Holy Qur'an, accept it. Otherwise, reject it.”*

In this day and age it would take years to assemble a reliable and accurate biography. In Bukhari’s time there were no computers, yet he managed to assess countless people without leaving any evidence of research. The Persian Imams “rubber-stamped” each other’s preferences (or simply included their own without takings such time).

The majority of ahadith only appeared in the time of the successors (and the successors to the successors) of the Companions. The “tabi’in” are the generations after the Companions of the Prophet, some 70-120 years later. The “tabi tabi’in” are the successors of the successors, their time being 130-190 years following that of the Prophet.

Thus the majority of ahadith arose about 100-200 years after the Prophet. However accurate the methodology of “isnad” was, the scholars only started talking about it 150-200 years following the deaths of the last “tabi tabi’in”. This means that when the research to establish the isnad was initiated, none of the Companions, the succeeding generation or the generation after was able to provide any kind of guidance or rebuttal.

Thus, the authenticity of the statements cannot be vouched for at all.

Even students of elementary psychology would know that a message of fifteen words will get distorted in passing through about five messengers. Remember that ahadith contain thousands of detailed and complex narrations, covering

things from ablution to jurisprudence. These narrations passed through hundreds of narrators spread out over thousands of miles of desert, spanning two or three hundred years.

All this at a time when news travelled at the speed of a camel’s gait, recorded on pieces of leather or bone or scrolls, in a land without abundance of paper or scribes for written record.

It is unlikely that the hadith-writers could have been very accurate, even if they were sincere. A camel-journey from Mecca to Damascus might take a month or two; in fact any journey between the major populated areas of the time was lengthy.

It is therefore unlikely that the hadith-writers verified the thousands of details personally. It stands to reason that they relied upon story-telling to fill in the blanks.

Scholars invented the concept of “tadil” of the Companions which mandates that they (the Companions) were protected from committing any error when recalling or narrating the Prophet’s “traditions”. This is refuted by the many contradictions, inconsistencies and memory-lapses of hadith-narrators.

Thus the “Science of Ahadith” is hearsay and conjecture, prohibited by 6:122-116 and 10:37-38 of the Qur’an.

Bukhari is reported to have sifted through more than 600,000 ahadith, and presented only 7,275 in his “authentic” collection. A quick calculation will show that these figures are impossible for a human-being to achieve. If, on average, each hadith consists of three sentences (in truth many run into paragraphs), Bukhari would have had to collect, study, investigate, evaluate and record over 1.8 million sentences during a period of 40 years. This is the equivalent of researching (which includes the long camel-journeys to-and-fro across the desert) and attesting to the authenticity of over three hundred books, each equivalent to the thickness and complexity of the Qur’an, in 40 years.

Compare this to the 6346 verses revealed to the Prophet over 23 years. According to another source, ibn Hanbal reported that there were over 700,000 authentic ahadith. If this were correct, then working for 23 years at a pace of 18 hours a day, seven days a week, the Prophet would have had to produce one hadith about every 13 minutes.

Reliance upon “isnad” alone is thus unacceptable. Ahadith should be evaluated using their content and logic, and any hadith with an “authentic” isnad yet illogical content should be wholly rejected.

The weakness of ahadith can be considered from three aspects:

- 1) Contradiction to the Qur’an.
- 2) Contradiction to history, known scientific facts or common sense.
- 3) Contradiction to other ahadith.

Under this selection process, most ahadith in all collections would be rejected.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Persian Imams, their original collection and categorisation as "sahih":

Bukhari: Found 600,000, selected 2762.
Muslim: Found 300,000, selected 4348.
Trimzi: Found 500,000, selected 3115.
Abu Dawood: Found 500,000, selected 4800.
Ibn Maja: Found 400,000, selected 4000.
Nisai: Found 200,000, selected 4321.

Some suspicious personalities (see 9:101):

1. Wakidi - A Magian historian.
2. ibn Ishaq - A Jew and pro-Majoosi Historian (Imam, Malik 2nd Fiqa Imam declared him a Kafir & said his books "Seera" are a heap of lies).
3. All hadith-Imams from Persia may have been hidden Zoroastrians. These include Bukhari, Muslim, Trimzi, Abu Dawood, ibn Kaja and Nisaayee.
4. Amar bin Aaas - A hypocrite?
5. ibn Hisham - A Magian student/apprentice of ibn Ishaq.
6. Wahab bin Monaba - A hypocrite (who fabricated a hadith along with Ka'ab Al-Ahbar & Abu Huraira that Jesus went up alive and will come again. They copied this story from the Pauline Christians. However, in the oldest manuscripts of Bibles (3rd century), no trace of his ascension is to be found (this story was apparently added later).
7. Hamam bin Monabba - A hypocrite?
8. Ka'ab Al-Ahbar - Ring-leader of the hypocrites? He was a Jewish Rabai from Yaman, who apparently accepted Islam in order to harm it. He was also the mastermind for the murder plan of the 2nd Caliph: Umar bin Khattab.
9. ibn Abbas and Amar bin are suspicious because they were students of Ka'ab Al-Ahbar.
10. Abu Hurraira - A machine who apparently produced over 5000 ahadith in just 2 years. He was an ex-Yamni Jew and was a student of K'a'ab Al-Ahbar.
- 11- Imam Tabri - A Magian Zoroastrian with two different paternal identities.
- 12- Shuab Zuhri and Yaqoob Kileeni - collected lies in Al-Kaafi, and were Sabaite pro-Parsi Shi'ites.

Lesson 20: "The clear delivery"

The verses identified were used to attempt to prove that we need ahadith for complete clarity of the Qur'an:

11:1

The suggestion is that God perfects/establishes/makes decisive His verses, and then has them explained in detail ("Sunna").

Firstly it is not "Sunna" because God does the detailing by His own words (6:55, 6:97-98, 6:119, 6:126, 7:32, 7:52, 7:174, 9:11, 10:5, 10:24, 13:2, 17:12, 30:28, 41:3, 41:44, 86:13).

This is why the Qur'an is a detailed explanation (6:114, 6:154, 7:145, 10:37, 12:111).

11:1 declares that the verses are from God, perfected/made decisive and MOREOVER explained in detail. That is to say, God made them decisive in purpose and intent, explaining them to us by their presentation in the Qur'an (accompanied by parables, examples etc.).

22:52 declares that no Messenger recited except that the Shaitan "threw" into it. God perfected/made decisive His verses to the righteous (22:53), thus literally the Messenger recited, the Shaitan cast aspersions but then the righteous understood it.

Insincere readers (and people who do not want to understand it) are diverted from the meaning of the Qur'an (7:146, 17:45-46, 18:57, 41:44).

For example, a decisive chapter is revealed (47:20), but those in whose hearts is disease follow their desires. They use misleading speech, giving opposite meanings to things (2:9, 9:125, 24:49-50, 33:12, 47:29-30). They also look to put their own meanings on things (2:26, 74:31).

14:4

14:4 says that the Messenger was sent with the language of his people so that he might make clear for them.

33:46 says that the Messenger is a light-giving torch.

Thus the Messenger makes clear by delivering the light that is the Qur'an (7:157, 21:48, 31:20, 42:52, 65:11).

We can use the word "explain" too. 14:4 would simply be saying that the Messenger explains things because the Qur'an is itself the explanation (25:33). E.g. just because the Messenger judges (4:65), it does not mean Allah is not in fact the judge (6:114). Just because the Messenger teaches the Book (62:2), it does not mean that Allah did not teach it (55:1-2). We must teach it too (3:79).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

43:29

16:35

16:35 says nothing is incumbent on the Messenger except a clear conveyance. A Sunni or an Islamophobe will take the word "clear" to mean "explanation via Sunna".

Obviously this relates back to the fact that the Messenger is a light-giving torch (33:46). See my response to 14:4.

This argument also applies to 44:13.

Firstly, Allah revealed the Message via a Messenger He chose. The task of the Messenger is to convey the Message (5:99). It does not say "clear" in that verse.

The means by which Allah instructs the Messenger to deliver the Message is by a proclamation (5:99) to all the people (24:28, 42:7). The proclamation is not just to one person, and neither is it a whisper. It is not a case of "Chinese Whispers" where one person tells another and then that person informs another.

16:44

False assumption.

Since Allah sent him as a conveyor to all the people, since he did not mumble, since it is in a language that people understood (14:4) and since the Book itself makes its message clear (25:33), the proclamation is by default clear. Thus the job of the Messenger was certainly a clear delivery. The clarity was a part-and-parcel of the "service" of Allah in sending the Message with the Messenger. If Allah had simply revealed the Book by burying it in the sand so that someone might eventually find it, the Message would not be delivered clearly.

"And when Allah made a covenant with those who were given the Book: You shall certainly make it known to men and you shall not hide it; but they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it; so evil is that which they buy."

3:187

The word for "make it known" (make clear) is "litubayyena". This is similar to the word used for "make clear" in 16:44:

The Messenger had to deliver, and his doing it made it a clear delivery.

"With clear arguments and scriptures; and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect."

Moreover, an explanation of the Book after it is delivered and a clear deliverance are not the same thing.

However, some scholars opted the irrelevant and alternate meaning for the word in 16:44 by claiming that it means "explain". If the Qur'an is a Message clarified by Allah (4:26, 75:19), it is impossible for someone to claim that ayah 44 of Sura 16 instructs Muhammad to explain it. He was only a plain warner (7:184). Usage of the word in 2:160, 3:187 and 5:19 indicate that the intended meaning is "make clear", not "explain".

(This response applies to 16:82, 24:54, 29:18)

41:44

"With clear arguments and scriptures; and We have revealed to you the Reminder that YOU may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect."

16:44

This refers to clarification by way of delivering it in a language that they understand. This is an example of the explanation above, where the Message is certainly delivered but certainly not clearly!

The Qur'an here is described as clear and thus does not need to be explained by Muhammad. His sole duty was to proclaim the Message (5:99, 16:35). Moreover, why would Allah give the Messenger a Book so that he could explain the Book? Why not just give him the explanation without the Book? Obviously it means that the Messenger received the Revelation personally, and that HE would make it clear ("explain" the Message/point of the Qur'an) to people by proclaiming the Message (5:99). 16:64 actually confirms that

It relates back to 14:4 such that we should now understand that the "clear delivery" refers to a delivery of the Message via a proclamation in a language that the people can understand.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

the Qur'an itself is the explanation.

Even if we want to use the word "explain" in 16:44, then it is just like the Messenger teaching the Book (62:2). Allah actually taught it (55:1-2), and in turn we are instructed to teach it to others (3:79). Likewise, if we judge by the Qur'an (5:48), we are taking Allah as judge (6:114). The Messenger had no power to guide (10:35, 28:56), yet humans can still "guide" on Allah's behalf through the Qur'an (7:181).

It is an identical principle with "explaining the Revelation" in 16:44/64. Allah explained it (75:19) and He made it clear (2:159). The Book itself makes things clear, and for this reason the Messenger also makes things clear (44:13). 44:14 confirms the "explanation" as the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is clear and explains itself (4:26, 10:37, 20:114, 25:33, 75:19).

Remember that "explain" is not a good term since Allah did not give Muhammad the Book so that he could simply explain the Book. Otherwise it would be saying that the Messenger could not explain the Book without the Book, in which case Allah would have simply given Muhammad the explanation of the Book to deliver (without the Qur'an). The Qur'an is actually the explanation of the Book (10:37). He was to make it clear to ALL people (16:44, 24:28, 42:7), and there were definitely no "sunna" classes in front of all people.

We must accept the conclusion derived from 3:187. Moreover, the delivery is "clear" (16:35), thus the delivery makes it clear.

It should be noted that "clear" may not always imply "easy to understand at first glance". It may be "manifest"/"obvious"/"apparent" in that it is "obviously" from God (for example). In 12:1, 15:1 etc. the Book is described as "clear"/"manifest", and the Messenger made it so to the people by a clear/manifest delivery (16:35).

SUMMARY:

The Qur'an is bayyan (12:1). Its content is bayyan to those who receive it (29:49). The Messenger's duty was a bayyan (mubin) delivery (16:35), and thus he made the bayyan ayat (16:44) bayyan to the people by proclaiming it.

ADDENDUM

Why did God send a Messenger? To deliver a Message (16:35, 5:99, 6:19, 42:7).

If it were sent as a book, someone would still have to advocate the Qur'anic way of life and be a "Messenger" anyway. This "Messenger" would have to study the complete Qur'an before commencing the mission. God could have revealed the entire Book to him, as He did with Moses (7:145), but in the contextual climate of the time it was God's decree that he reveal it in portions (17:106). This was so its Message could be gradually implemented upon those who would follow. Revealing it to a Messenger was the most direct and practical means.

16:64

"And We have not revealed to you the Book except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe."

Qur'an 16:64

Now the Qur'an was obviously not revealed so that Muhammad could explain to people what they differed about in the Qur'an. Nor was it revealed so that Muhammad could explain it (the Qur'an)...rather the explanation would be revealed, and that is what the Qur'an is (2:213, 12:111, 25:33, 27:76, 75:19 (clarification comes from Allah into the studier's mind (via complete reading (20:114))).

The Messenger was a light-giving torch (33:46), and the Qur'an is the light (7:157, 21:48, 31:20, 42:52).

Likewise, the Qur'an makes clear about what people differ in (2:213, 27:76), and thus does the Messenger by delivering the Qur'an that was revealed to him.

Lesson 21: "How to recognise and warn idol-worshippers"

"When the hypocrites come to you, they say: We bear witness that you are most surely Allah's Messenger; and Allah knows that you are most surely His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are surely liars. They make their oaths a shelter, and thus turn away from Allah's way; surely evil is that which they do. That is because they believe, then disbelieve, so a seal is set upon their hearts so that they do not understand. And when you see them, their persons will please you, and if they speak, you will listen to their speech; (they are) as if they were big pieces of wood clad with garments; they think every cry to be against them. They are the enemy, therefore beware of them; may Allah destroy them, whence are they turned back?" (63:1-4)

"These are they of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts; therefore turn aside from them and admonish them, and speak to them effectual words concerning themselves." (4:63)

"The hypocrites fear lest a chapter should be sent down to them telling them plainly of what is in their hearts. Say: God on mocking, surely Allah will bring forth what you fear." (9:64)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Or do those in whose hearts is a disease think that Allah will not bring forth their spite? And if We please We would have made you know them so that you would certainly have recognized them by their marks and most certainly you can recognize them by the intent of (their) speech; and Allah knows your deeds.” (47:29-30)

“Nay! We cast the truth against the falsehood, so that it breaks its head, and lo! it vanishes; and woe to you for what you describe!” (21:18)

“Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book has been given? They believe in idols and false deities and say of those who disbelieve: These are better guided in the path than those who believe.” (4:51)

“And when you recite the Qur'an, We place between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden barrier; and We have placed coverings on their hearts and a heaviness in their ears lest they understand it, and when you mention your Lord in the Qur'an alone, they turn their backs in aversion.” (17:45-46)

“And they serve besides Allah that for which He has not sent any authority, and that of which they have no knowledge; and for the unjust there shall be no helper. And when Our clear communications are recited to them you will find denial on the faces of those who disbelieve; they almost spring upon those who recite to them Our communications.” (22:71-72)

“And he said: You have only taken for yourselves idols besides Allah as a mark of friendship between you in this world's life, then on the resurrection day some of you shall deny others, and some of you shall curse others, and your abode is the fire, and you shall not have any helpers.” (29:25)

“Or, have We sent down upon them an authority so that it speaks of that which they associate with Him?” (30:35)

“And if We had pleased, We would certainly have exalted him thereby; but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire, so his parable is as the parable of the dog; if you attack him he lolls out his tongue; and if you leave him alone he lolls out his tongue; this is the parable of the people who reject Our communications; therefore relate the narrative that they may reflect.” (7:176)

“And of men is he who takes instead frivolous ahadith to lead astray from Allah's path without knowledge, and to take it for a mockery; these shall have an abasing chastisement.” (31:6)

“Thus did We make for every prophet an enemy, the Shaitans from among men and jinn, some of them suggesting to others varnished falsehood to deceive, and that the hearts of those who do not believe in the hereafter may incline to it and that

they may be well pleased with it and that they may earn what they are going to earn. Had your Lord pleased they would not have done it, therefore disregard and that which they forge. Shall I then seek a judge other than Allah? And He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) FULLY-DETAILED; and the word of your Lord has been accomplished truly and justly; there is none who can change His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing. And if you obey most of those in the earth, they will lead you astray from Allah's way; they follow but conjecture and they only lie.” (6:112-116)

“And there are among them uneducated people who know not the Book but only lies, and they do but conjecture.” (2:78)

“And most of them do not follow (anything) but conjecture; surely conjecture will not avail aught against the truth; surely Allah is cognizant of what they do. And this Qur'an is not such as could be forged by those besides Allah, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a clear explanation of the book. There is no doubt in it, from the Lord of the worlds.” (10:36-37)

“And when Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the hereafter shrink, and when those besides Him are mentioned, lo! they are joyful.” (39:45)

“And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others (with Him).” (12:106)

“Is not Allah sufficient for His servant? And they seek to frighten you with those besides Him.” (39:36)

“Surely We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, therefore serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience. Now, surely, sincere obedience is due to Allah and those who take guardians besides Him, (saying): “We do not serve them save that they may make us nearer to Allah, surely Allah will judge between them in that in which they differ; surely Allah does not guide him aright who is a liar, ungrateful.” (39:2-3)

“Say: What! Do you then bid me serve others than Allah, O ignorant men?” (39:64)

“Say: Surely my Lord utters the truth, the great Knower of the unseen. Say: The truth has come, and the falsehood shall vanish and shall not come back.” (34:49)

“And when one of them is given news of that of which he sets up as a likeness for the Beneficent Allah, his face becomes black and he is full of rage. What! that which is made in ornaments and which in contention is unable to make plain speech!” (43:17-18)

(Scholars are actually mortal, as was the Messenger.)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“And We do not send messengers but as givers of good news and warning, and those who disbelieve make a false contention that they may render null thereby the truth, and they take My communications and that with which they are warned for a mockery.” (18:56)

“Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say: By Allah, our Lord, we were not polytheists!” (6:23)

“That is because when Allah alone was called upon, you disbelieved, and when associates were given to Him, you believed; so judgment belongs to Allah, the High, the Great.” (40:12)

“This is because Allah has revealed the Book with the truth; and surely those who go against the Book are in a great opposition.” (2:176)

“Or have We given them a book before it so that they hold fast to it? Nay! they say: We found our fathers on a course, and surely we are guided by their footsteps.” (43:21-22)

“Say: Have you considered what you call upon besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth, or have they a share in the heavens? Bring me a book before this or traces of knowledge, if you are truthful.” (46:4)

“They altered the words from their places and they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of.” (5:13)

“They alter the words from their places, saying: If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, be cautious.” (5:41)

“The likeness of those who were charged with the Taurat, then they did not observe it, is as the likeness of the ass bearing books.” (62:5)

“Say: Who revealed the Book which Musa brought, a light and a guidance to men, which you make into scattered writings which you show while you conceal much? And you were taught what you did not know, (neither) you nor your fathers. Say: Allah then leave them sporting in their vain discourses.” (6:91)

“And say: Surely I am the plain warner, like as We sent down on the dividers, those who made the Quran into shreds. So, by your Lord, We would most certainly question them all as to what they did.” (15:89-93)

“And there does not come to them any communication of the communications of their Lord but they turn aside from it. So they have indeed rejected the truth when it came to them; therefore the truth of what they mocked at will shine upon them.” (6:4-5)

“And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of the Beneficent Allah, We appoint for him a Shaitan, so he becomes his associate. And most surely they turn them away from the path, and they think that they are guided aright. ... Rather We will certainly show you that which We have promised them; for surely We are the possessors of full power over them. Therefore hold fast to that which has been revealed to you; surely you are on the right path. And most surely it is a reminder for you and your people, and you shall soon be questioned.” (43:36-44)

“And they shall say: O our Lord! surely we obeyed our leaders and our great men, so they led us astray from the path.” (33:67)

“Certainly We have brought you the truth, but most of you are averse to the truth.” (43:78)

“Or have they taken guardians besides Him? But Allah is the Guardian, and He gives life to the dead, and He has power over all things.” (42:9)

“Or have they associates who prescribed for them a religion that Allah does not sanction?” (42:21)

“And when Our clear communications are recited to them you will find denial on the faces of those who disbelieve; they almost spring upon those who recite to them Our communications.” (22:72)

“What! shall We then make (that is, treat) those who submit as the guilty? What has happened to you? How do you judge? Or have you a book wherein you read, that you have surely therein what you choose? Or have you received from Us an agreement confirmed by an oath extending to the day of resurrection that you shall surely have what you demand?” (68:35-39)

“Allah will blot out the falsehood and confirm the truth WITH HIS WORDS.” (42:24)

“And they did not become divided until after knowledge had come to them out of envy among themselves; and had not a word gone forth from your Lord till an appointed term, certainly judgment would have been given between them; and those who were made to inherit the Book after them are most surely in disquieting doubt concerning it.” (42:13)

“And in whatever thing you disagree, the judgment thereof is Allah's; that is Allah, my Lord, on Him do I rely and to Him do I turn time after time.” (43:10)

“And thus did We reveal to you an inspired book by Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor (what) the faith (was), but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

We please of Our servants; and most surely you show the way to the right path.” (42:53)

“Work in your place, surely I am a worker, so you will come to know.” (39:39)

“Say: It is a message of importance, you are turning aside from it. I had no knowledge of the exalted chiefs when they contended. Naught is revealed to me save that I am a plain warner.” (39:64-66)

“And Allah will show the truth to be the truth by His words, though the guilty are averse.” (10:82)

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.” (9:33)

Lesson 22: “Take what the Messenger gives you”

“Whatever Allah has restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the Messenger, and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you, and whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil).”

Qur'an 59:7

As we can see, the spoils are restored to the Messenger (by the decree of Allah) so that he can distribute it according His will (the verdict is that it is to be distributed amongst the needy, those who helped the Messenger etc. (59:8-9). A specific amount of 4/5 was prescribed for the believers in 8:41).

For this reason they were ordered to take what he gave them and forsake what he withheld (according to Allah's criterion/verdict by which he decided (i.e. abided)).

In effect, whatever is left after the criteria have been satisfied is what the believers must take. This is an example of the Messenger judging by the Qur'an (5:43-50) and the community-leaders are expected to do this too. Remember also that there would be much haram material in war-booty (8:69), and that the Messenger is expected to use his judgement in matters too variable to include entirely in the Qur'an (e.g. 24:62). See also 4:94 where everyone is supposed to use judgement

These days “the Messenger” would be the state judging by

the Qur'an. Study 24:62:

“Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a momentous affair they go not away until they have asked his permission; surely they who ask your permission are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger; so when they ask your permission for some affair of theirs, give permission to whom you please of them and ask forgiveness for them from Allah; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

Qur'an 24:62

The Messenger is expected to use his judgment in circumstances too variable to include entirely in the Qur'an. These matters have nothing to do with ahadith, and are also too variable to include in the non-existent sunna. An example is in 24:63:

“Do not hold the Messenger's calling (you) among you to be like your calling one to the other; Allah indeed knows those who steal away from among you, concealing themselves; therefore let those beware who go against his order lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement.”

Qur'an 24:63

In momentous affairs (e.g. meetings), the Messenger's command is very important.

Lesson 23: “Abortion”

I am not a proponent of abortion except in the case of rape or incest etc., but in such an instance the Qur'an seems to answer us:

“And We have enjoined on man doing of good to his parents; with trouble did his mother bear him and with trouble did she bring him forth; and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months.”

Qur'an 46:15

So the pregnancy plus nursing is 30 months.

“And the mothers should suckle their children for two whole years for him who desires to make complete the time of suckling.”

Qur'an 2:233

So the time during which a woman is (according to the book) bearing a human is 6 months (30-24 = 6).

We know that a normal pregnancy period is approximately 9 months. Therefore judging religiously from the Qur'an, Muslims will deem that a woman is only carrying a “soul-bearing human” after 3 months of pregnancy (9-6).

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

This corresponds with the 3 month waiting period of women in 2:228 and 65:4. Following this period "it is not lawful that they should conceal what Allah has created in their wombs," (2:228). Another practical aspect of this is that it allows men and women to reconcile if (for example) the wife is pregnant. Reconciliation is not compulsory, thus abortion will be permissible in that time-period.

Abortion would never have been an advisable voluntary act in medieval times, thus regardless of all things its justification would have depended on rape etc..

"And do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We give them sustenance and yourselves (too); surely to kill them is a great wrong."

Qur'an 17:31

In Arabic, "walada" means "to give birth" while "walad" means "one who is born". 17:31 seems to refer to those who are already born, but even if it does not the conclusion above suggests that a child is not a child until after 3 months of pregnancy.

Lesson 24: "Abrogation"

"Whatever communications We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?"

Qur'an 2:106

From ayah 2:85, there can be no ayat present (in the Qur'an) which abrogate other ayat present. Ayah 1 of Sura 11 indicates that the ayat are made decisive and are explained in detail. Ayah 82 of Sura 4 states that if the Qur'an were not from Allah there would be found in it many discrepancies (contradictions). Ayah 64 of Sura 10 indicates that "there is no changing the words of Allah", and therefore anyone who claims that one verse abrogates another verse is putting his or her opinion above Allah (contradicting 49:1).

No hadith can be found where the Prophet actually confirms internal abrogation.

The word "ayah" can have four meanings: "miracle" (17:101), "example" (25:37), "sign" (19:10) or "verse" (38:29). In 2:106 the word "ayah" cannot mean "verse" (within the Book) for these reasons:

1) The words "cause to be forgotten" cannot be compatible (and nor can "abrogate") if the word "ayah" in this verse means a verse in the Qur'an. How can a verse in the Qur'an be forgotten? For even if the verse was invalidated by another (as it is claimed) it will still be a part of the Qur'an and thus could never be forgotten. Nor would that be abrogation of the ayah, but merely the abrogation of law. "Ayat" means "signs" which literally means "signs" (e.g.

signs of divinity). It does not actually mean "verse".

2) The words "We bring one better than it or like it" would be meaningless if the word "ayah" in this verse meant a Qur'anic verse. It would make no sense for Allah to invalidate one verse and then replace it with one that is like it (because a verse which contradicts another verse is not like the original) or better than it since the Word of Allah has been "accomplished truly and justly" (6:115).

3) If the word "ayah" in 2:106 means "miracle", "example" or "sign", then all the words of the verse could make perfect sense. "We bring one better than it or like it" is in line with the nature of miracles from Allah: Allah replaces a previous miracle with its equal or one that is greater than it. Consider this:

"And certainly We sent Musa with Our communications to Firon and his chiefs, so he said: Surely I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds. But when he came to them with Our signs, lo! they laughed at them. And We did not show them a sign but it was greater than its like, and We overtook them with chastisement that they may turn."

Qur'an 43:46-48

Finally, when placed in context with 2:105, 2:106 appears to be talking about "miracles", "favours" or even entire scriptures and not ayat within the Qur'an itself.

"Those who disbelieve from among the followers of the Book do not like, nor do the polytheists, that the good should be sent down to you from your Lord, and Allah chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy, and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace. Whatever communications We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?"

Qur'an 105-106

Another ayah used to justify "abrogation" is 13:39:

"Allah makes to pass away and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book."

Qur'an 13:39

Examine it in its context:

"And thus have We revealed it, a true judgment in Arabic, and if you follow their low desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you shall not have against Allah any guardian or a protector. And certainly We sent Messengers before you and gave them wives and children, and it is not in (the power of) a Messenger to bring a sign except by Allah's permission; for every term there is an appointment. Allah makes to pass away and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book."

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Qur'an 13:37-39

It just states that Allah establishes what He pleases, and with him is the mother/source/backbone of the Book. Allah authors the Book (the Qur'an) and blots out what He wishes (of the previous Messengers' Messages (13:38)). The word is "eliminate" or "blot out", thus it does not refer to a verse that remains in the Qur'an. If the Qur'an is a true judgement (13:37), how then could it be decisive if some verses abrogated others? Furthermore, how can the "basis of the Book" (3:7, 13:39) be a basis if it changes within itself?

"...it is not in (the power of) ANY messenger to bring a sign except by Allah's permission; FOR EVERY TERM THERE IS AN APPOINTMENT."

Qur'an 13:38

It is referencing every scripture ("any Messenger"), and not just the Qur'an. If it refers to any scripture then why would it be talking about individual verses (laws) within scriptures that are no longer relevant (in and of themselves since the Qur'an has since them been revealed)? It is not logical since Muslims would not care about "abrogation" in the Bible and nor would Christians care about it in the Qur'an. Allah is making a valid point that He establishes things for appointed terms (e.g. 30:8), and that He has always done this. There is no relevance to individual Qur'anic verses abrogating Qur'anic verses (i.e. things inside one term abrogating things within that same term). Finally, it does not refer specifically to ayat but to things (including signs) in general.

Yet a third ayah used to justify "abrogation" is 16:101:

"And when We change (one) communication for (another) communication, and Allah knows best what He reveals, they say: You are only a forger. Nay, most of them do not know."

Qur'an 16:101

The substitution spoken of here is concerned with one of two possible things:

- The substitution of a scripture in place of previous ones.
- The substitution of an ayah or legislation within a scripture with another in a subsequent scripture.

We know that more than one scripture has been seen through history:

"And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires (to turn away) from the truth that has come to you; for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way, and if Allah had pleased He would have made you (all) a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds; to Allah is your return, of all (of you), so He will let you know that in which you differed."

Qur'an 5:48

We also know that the second meaning is true. For example we are told in 2:187 that sexual intercourse between married couples during the nights of the fasting month was made lawful, while it was prohibited previously. Another example is in 6:145-146 (especially relevant for this argument).

The evidence for this meaning is given within the same ayah (16:101):

"You are only a forger."

Now here we must stop and ask: who is likely to tell the Messenger "You are only a forger", and why? For sure it cannot be his followers (they would not say that). It could be those who do not believe in him, i.e. the followers of the previous scriptures who feared that their scripture was in danger of being "abrogated". Jews and Christians would not care if some verses of the Qur'an abrogated other verses of the Qur'an. The matter is laid to rest by 16:102 (placing it in context):

"Say: The Holy spirit has revealed it from your Lord with the truth, that it may establish those who believe and as a guidance and good news for those who submit."

What is the guidance and good news (2:97, 2:2:13, 2:119, 4:165, 5:21, 6:48, 7:188, 11:2, 12:96, 16:89, 17:8, 17:105, 18:2, 18:56, 19:97, 27:2, 33:45, 34:28, 35:24, 41:4, 42:23, 46:12, 48:8)? Also see 25:4 and 26:5.

It could be the Pagans who say this, but just like the people who jeered when the qiblah was changed, it is because the Muslims were not following the rulings of previous scriptures. It makes no difference whether it is the People of the Book or Pagans, because it is the replacement of scripture which in their eyes made Islam look incompatible and weak. Moreover, the Pagans call him a forger when referring to their fathers' faith:

"And when Our clear communications are recited to them, they say: This is naught but a man who desires to turn you away from that which your fathers worshipped. And they say: This is naught but a lie that is forged. And those who disbelieve say of the truth when it comes to them: This is only clear enchantment."

Qur'an 34:43

"Their messengers said: Is there doubt about Allah, the Maker of the heavens and the earth? He invites you to forgive you your faults and to respite you till an appointed term. They said: You are nothing but mortals like us; you wish to turn us away from what our fathers used to worship; bring us therefore some clear authority."

Qur'an 14:10

"And when it is said to them, Believe in what Allah has revealed, they say: We believe in that which was revealed to us; and they deny what is besides that, while it is the truth

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

verifying that which they have. Say: Why then did you kill Allah's Prophets before if you were indeed believers?"

Qur'an 2:91

(It need not be Pagans, as we can see.)

"There comes not to them a new reminder from their Lord but they hear it while they sport... Nay! say they: Medleys of dreams; nay! he has forged it; nay! he is a poet; so let him bring to us a sign as the former (prophets) were sent (with)."

Qur'an 21:2-5

Why would Allah reveal an abrogating ayah when contradictions are signs that it is not from Allah (4:82)? 16:103 makes it still more illogical that it would be referring to an internally abrogating ayah. For instance, what is it about an *abrogating* ayah that makes them point to a particular source (a person who does not speak Arabic)? Did they only point to this source when the internally-abrogating ayah came down? Clearly it is the content of the Qur'an that makes them doubt it, not the fact that there is "abrogation".

Ayat 2:185, 4:82, 5:3, 11:1, 17:82, 36:2 and 39:28 describe attributes of the Qur'an which the doctrine of "abrogation" challenges.

2:284/286 are often portrayed as an example of abrogation:

"Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought..."

Qur'an 2:286

2:284 says that thoughts and/or intentions will be considered by Allah. This is no surprise because lying is a sin. Saying you are a Muslim when you do not believe is lying. If we read 2:283, the verse is actually referring to someone who conceals a testimony (or will). That is to say, if you deceive people, then whether you inform them or not you will be held to account. However, one must acknowledge the sin and try to correct it if one is to repent.

We are a product of our thoughts, and any negative or dirty thought will incline us to negative or dirty things. Just because we are angry it does not mean that violence becomes legal. Just because we think dirty thoughts does not mean we can fornicate:

"Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest, and Allah knows what you do."

Qur'an 29:45

Though we will be inclined by our thoughts, our faith will call us to recognise what is right and to seek refuge from and thus forgiveness for them. See the rest of 2:286:

"...Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake; Our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us, Our Lord do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us, Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people."

Qur'an 2:286

We seek forgiveness for low thoughts by recognising that they are bad and banishing them (or else they will brood and lead us astray), and if we commit an actual error, then we must seek forgiveness.

In summary, 2:284 says we should not deceive people and if we have low thoughts then obviously we should banish them. 2:286 says that the actions (which are a result of bad thoughts/intentions) will be considered in judgement. The latter verse is simply a complement or clarification for those who misunderstand 2:284.

The ayat 2:234 and 2:240 are also excitedly cited:

"And (as for) those of you who die and leave wives behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten days; then when they have fully attained their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a lawful manner; and Allah is aware of what you do."

Qur'an 2:234

"And those of you who die and leave wives behind, (make) a bequest in favour of their wives of maintenance for a year without turning (them) out, then if they themselves go away, there is no blame on you for what they do of lawful deeds by themselves, and Allah is Mighty, Wise."

Qur'an 2:240

2:240 in reality refers to the relatives of the deceased maintaining the widow for a year. The widow is looked after for a year if she wishes.

2:234 says that the widow must not marry for at least four months, and it is implied that the relatives will be responsible for her welfare. In short, the widow must remain around for at least four months, but she will be looked after for a year if she desires.

4:15 is obviously not abrogated by 24:2 because we read 4:25.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Lesson 25: "Those with knowledge"

"Nay! these are clear communications in the breasts of those who are granted knowledge; and none deny Our communications except the unjust."

Qur'an 29:49

One could just say that the knowledge is clear to those who digest it. Those with knowledge are people who ponder (2:121, 16:12, 16:67, 47:24). Those who do not ponder it are described in 25:73, and 10:89 makes clear the difference between those with knowledge and those without (as does 35:28). Knowledge is not about classical Arabic etc., but rather a good heart and mind (3:18, 58:11).

The knowledge comes with the Qur'an (2:120, 2:145, 3:18-20, 7:52, 10:93, 13:37-39 and 19:43). However, Shia doctrine will declare that this ayah proves only those "with knowledge" can really understand the Qur'an. Let us look at the ayah 3:7:

"He it is Who has revealed the Book to you; some of its verses are decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are allegorical; then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation. but none knows its interpretation except Allah, and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord; and none do mind except those having understanding."

Qur'an 3:7

It has been established that those which are clear are easily identified, or else those without understanding could not pick the allegorical ayat and attempt to twist them! Therefore all of the basic rulings and precepts are clear. Note that 3:7 does not actually say that those "firmly rooted in knowledge" have knowledge of the allegorical ayat (note that neither does it say these ayat are impossible to understand with research and reflection). Rather it says that those with knowledge will believe in the Qur'an, and this point is repeated in ayat such as 29:49.

"But the firm in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and those who keep up prayers and those who give the poor-rate and the believers in Allah and the last day, these it is whom We will give a mighty reward."

Qur'an 4:162

This ayah establishes a link between "those with knowledge" and "the believers", implying that to be a believer you do not have to be grounded in *extra-Qur'anic* knowledge. There is no difference between these people; those with knowledge have reflected deeply on creation before exposure to the

Qur'an (e.g. 35:28) (or after), and thus they are ready to accept it. The believers have done this too (or they are doing it) (3:18, 13:43, 35:28). For example, Musa was granted knowledge before he was granted the Message:

"And when he attained his maturity and became full grown, We granted him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward those who do good."

Qur'an 28:14

This did not prevent him committing an error in the next ayah, but he recognised what was a bad deed (attributed to Iblis). As we can see, possessing knowledge has nothing to do with knowing the "best way" to worship and so on (although following the Qur'an is the best way!). It is simply knowledge which may have been inspired by Allah (e.g. 12:68) or which may have been concluded by intuition (perhaps based on remnants of knowledge from the days of previous Messages). Since we know that the Qur'an contains whatever knowledge some people knew, it is more probable that those with knowledge will "recognise" and/or accept the Message:

"Say: Believe in it or believe not; surely those who are given the knowledge before it fall down on their faces, making obeisance when it is recited to them."

Qur'an 17:107

"And that those who have been given the knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord, so they may believe in it and their hearts may be lowly before it; and most surely Allah is the Guide of those who believe into a right path."

Qur'an 22:54

"And those to whom the knowledge has been given see that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, that is the truth, and it guides into the path of the Mighty, the Praised."

Qur'an 34:6

Compare to 30:29. Again, those with knowledge are those who ponder (16:12, 16:67).

Moreover, 29:49 only says that those who are granted knowledge (contained within the Qur'an) will receive clear ayat in their hearts. This includes everyone:

"So when Our clear signs came to them, they said: This is clear enchantment. And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their soul had been convinced of them..."

Qur'an 27:13-14

The ayat are clear and they are to be taken into the heart, but only the "wrongdoers" ultimately reject them:

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“And the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it...”

Qur'an 91:7-8

“So that He may make what the Shaitan casts a trial for those in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are hard; and most surely the unjust are in a great opposition...”

Qur'an 22:53

The Qur'an is clear to everyone, but a disease in our hearts can lead to rejection. The point to be taken from this is that the Qur'an contains at least all of the knowledge of those referred to in 3:7, 29:49 and others. The knowledge has nothing to do with interpreting the Qur'an such that we must digress from it to Shia ahadith. The non-allegorical ayat were already clear to all souls (2:185, 5:15-16, 5:19, 7:52, 15:1, 12:111, 26:2, 27:1 etc.) and the Qur'an already contained the knowledge (2:120, 2:145, 3:18-20, 7:52, 10:93, 13:37-39, 19:43 etc.). Only those who listen and reflect will appreciate it (30:21-24). If the Shi'ites are correct, the Qur'an is not in itself enough to make someone fear Allah (35:28). This would contradict the ayah 20:113. Ayat 31:31-32 give examples of attributes leading to acceptance or to rejection, and knowledge is just one of these.

Moreover, the necessary wisdom (3:79) is in the Qur'an although it is possible to possess it without having received the actual Book (2:269, 19:12, 26:21, 26:83, 28:14, 31:2, 31:12, 38:20).

Also:

<http://www.quranicpath.com/sunnishia/ulama.html>

Lesson 26: “Reliability of sahaba”

Qur'an 9:100:

This has nothing to do with their understanding of the religion. It is about adhering to the religion. The verse states that the foremost who fled their homes in the way of Allah would be rewarded. This is because they did good, which is what we should follow them in. They passed a huge test involving going against the regime (idol-worshippers just follow humans, remember. They lack individual fortitude). Thus we do not follow them in everything, but only in good (i.e. what the Qur'an tells us to do). They were of course not infallible, but Allah forgives those who do good. Thus if they happened to make mistakes, they were ultimately forgiven.

Who are you to say firstly which hadith is right, and then which one is Qur'anic? Only by studying the Qur'an deeply can you see it, and by that time you will not need ahadith.

9:101 should be read alongside this verse. Ahadith labelled with “Abu Huraira” are suspect (i.e. the most major source for Sunnis).

Qur'an 59:8:

Says that those who helped Allah and His Apostle were truthful folks. This is obvious because they were following truth, and it is also obvious that Allah does not need help. It refers to assisting the way of life given by Allah through the Prophet.

59:9-10 refers to people's attitude towards such believers.

48:18 says that Allah was pleased with some people for a specific thing that they did.

They will ask if you think that you are right whilst Muslims have been wrong for 1400 years. Say that such has been the case with Christians, and they could have used that argument against the Messenger.

Ahadith record the burning of ahadith by the Caliphs (all four). Shafi's “Kitab Jima'al-Ilm” describes a conversation between Shafi and a “Qur'an-alone” Muslim 150-200 years A.H.. This confirms the necessity and status of ahadith was never established until it was forced upon the populous.

It was Shafi who introduced/successfully promulgated the “al-hikma”, “obey the Messenger” and “take what the Messenger gives you...” arguments. Thus one person debating the entire Sunni populous is synonymous with one person debating one other person.

Lesson 27: “Ma Malakat Aymanukum”

Adultery/fornication is not allowed (4:15-16, 5:5, 17:32, 24:2-3, 24:30, 25:68). However, those whom your oaths of care possess are valid for (consensual) sex.

War-captives should be treated well and released when possible (2:177, 4:25, 4:36, 5:89, 16:71, 24:33, 47:4, 90:13).

“Ma Malakat Aymanukum” translates to “what your oaths (of care) possess”. In the Qur'an, it refers to prisoners-of-war.

It is pre-supposed that sexual prisoners-of-war are females of marriageable age (e.g. 4:3). Group-sex with them would be prohibited since they would be exposing themselves to each other, thereby violating the restrictions between carer and captive.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Women can also possess MMA, but the Qur'an often addresses males exclusively (e.g. 4:19-25) thus for reasons of health/pregnancy they would not be allowed to have sex with them. Men are maintainers of women (4:34) and have superior authority, therefore men can decide who gets MMA and to what degree. Moreover, men are the fighters and thus they would take them.

Here are the verses pertaining to them:

“And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two and three or four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then only one or what your oaths possess; this is more proper, that you may not deviate from the right course.” (4:3)

“O Prophet! surely We have made lawful to you your wives whom you have given their dowries, and those whom your right hand possesses out of those Allah has given to you, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and the daughters of your paternal aunts, and the daughters of your maternal uncles and the daughters of your maternal aunts who fled with you; and a believing woman if she gave herself to the Prophet, if the Prophet desired to marry her-- specially for you, not for the (rest of) believers; We know what We have ordained for them concerning their wives and those whom their oaths possess so that no blame may attach to you; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (33:50)

“It is not allowed to you to take women afterwards, nor that you should change them for other wives, though their beauty be pleasing to you, except what your oaths possess. Allah is Watchful over all things.” (33:52)

“Except before their mates or those whom their oaths possess, for they surely are not blameable.” (23:6)

“Except in the case of their wives or those whom their oaths possess-- for these surely are not to be blamed.” (70:30)

“And whoever among you has not within his power ample means to marry free believing women, then (he may marry) of those whom your oaths possess from among your believing maidens; and Allah knows best your faith: you are (sprung) the one from the other; so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours; and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency, they shall suffer half the punishment which is (inflicted) upon free women. This is for him among you who fears falling into evil; and that you abstain is better for you, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (4:25)

“And let those who do not find the means to marry refrain (from doing so) until Allah makes them free from want out of His grace. And (as for) those who ask for a writing from among those whom your oaths possess, give them the writing if you know any good in them, and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has given you; and do not compel your

slave girls to prostitution, when they desire to keep chaste, in order to seek the frail good of this world's life; and whoever compels them, then surely after their compulsion Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (24:33)

“And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their oaths possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful.” (24:31)

“There is no blame on them in respect of their fathers, nor their brothers, nor their brothers' sons, nor their sisters' sons nor their own women, nor of what their oaths possess; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is a witness of all things.” (33:55)

“O you who believe! let those whom your oaths possess and those of you who have not attained to puberty ask permission of you three times; before the morning prayer, and when you put off your clothes at midday in summer, and after the prayer of the nightfall; these are three times of privacy for you; neither is it a sin for you nor for them besides these, some of you must go round about (waiting) upon others; thus does Allah make clear to you the communications, and Allah is Knowing, Wise.” (24:58)

“And serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbour of (your) kin and the alien neighbour, and the companion in a journey and the wayfarer and those whom your oaths possess; surely Allah does not love him who is proud, boastful.” (4:36)

“And Allah has made some of you excel others in the means of subsistence, so those who are made to excel do not give away their sustenance to those whom their oaths possess so that they should be equal therein; is it then the favour of Allah which they deny?” (16:71)

“He sets forth to you a parable relating to yourselves: Have you among those whom your oaths possess partners in what We have given you for sustenance, so that with respect to it you are alike; you fear them as you fear each other? Thus do We make the communications distinct for a people who understand.” (30:28)

“And all married women except those whom your oaths possess; (this is) Allah's ordinance to you, and lawful for you are (all women) besides those, provided that you seek (them) with your property, taking (them) in marriage not committing

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

fornication. Then as to those whom you profit by, give them their dowries as appointed; and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree after what is appointed; surely Allah is Knowing, Wise.” (4:24)

NOTE ON POLYGAMY

Polygamy is restricted to wartime situations where there are orphans who cannot be adequately cared for outside marriage (i.e. there may be more women than men). Muslim men may marry up to four if necessary, but the Qur'an predicts that this will result in marital dissonance (4:129). Thus it is neither encouraged nor considered as socially palatable. Only under similar conditions would an Islamic society permit it.

Women cannot commit polygamy:

“(Forbidden to you are) all married women...” (4:24)

This is because men are considered “bread-winners” (4:34).

However, as per 33:52, people may be in sexual relationships with their spouse and any number of their MMA (at the same time).

Lesson 28: 40:70

This verse is sometimes used to attempt to prove there is something besides the Qur'an.

“Those who reject the Book and that with which We have sent Our Messenger; but they shall soon come to know.”

Qur'an 40:70

Let us study the possibilities:

“Have you not considered those who are given a portion of the Book? They are invited to the Book of Allah that it might decide between them, then a part of them turn back and they withdraw.”

Qur'an 3:23

The “Master Book” in 23:62-63 contains the Qur'an, which is but a portion. Thus it is possible that 40:70 refers to rejecting the “Master Book” (as happens in 23:62-63) as well as the portion that the Messenger is sent with.

“The chief of those who behaved proudly among his people said to those who were considered weak, to those who believed from among them: Do you know that Salih is sent by his Lord? They said: Surely we are believers in what he has been sent with.”

Qur'an 7:75

“And if they call you a liar, so did those before them indeed call (their messengers) liars; their messengers had come to them with clear arguments, and with scriptures, and with the illuminating Book.”

Qur'an 35:25

Messengers are sent with the Book and all the wisdom, remembrance and advice/criteria which come with it (e.g. 42:17, 57:25). Study “Reason 7” in “Lesson 2”, Section 7.

“And if there is a party of you who believe in that with which am sent, and another party who do not believe, then wait patiently until Allah judges between us; and He is the best of the Judges.”

Qur'an 7:87

“Has not the account reached you of those before you, of the people of Nuh and Ad and Samood, and those after them? None knows them but Allah. Their messengers come to them with clear arguments, but they thrust their hands into their mouths and said: Surely we deny that with which you are sent, and most surely we are in serious doubt as to that to which you invite us.”

Qur'an 14:9

Messengers are sent with the Book and all of the wisdom, remembrance and advice/criteria which come with it (e.g. clear arguments, narratives etc.). Study “Reason 7” in “Lesson 2”, Section 7.

“And We do not lay on any soul a burden except to the extent of its ability, and with Us is a Book which speaks the truth, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. Nay, their hearts are in overwhelming ignorance with respect to it and they have besides this other deeds which they do.”

Qur'an 23:62-63

This is the “Master Book” which the unbelievers reject in 40:70. Our conclusion is painfully obvious since the Messenger was sent with the Qur'an, therefore what the Messenger was sent with was not separate from the Message.

Lesson 29: “The fundamentals of belief”

Readers may wish to follow this up with Lessons 44-46.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

This is a brief and objective look (for “outsiders”) at the nature of Islam. It is perhaps a “definition of Light through the shade of human sight”. It of course only represents my understanding (and could be expanded), and I hope it helps to “humanise” and thus “familiarise” people with each other. The prime purpose is to encourage people to stand up for what is better, and regardless of their beliefs (if any), to fight for what is right.

In order to believe that a scripture is “Divine”, one must either already believe in God, or be open to Him.

One does not need absolute proof of God, because there can be no individual concept of Him without the human’s own existence. That is to say, God can only ever be a human conception, the “human-God” relationship (as far as the human is concerned) requiring existence of the human.

God is “perceived” by the human, therefore God “comes from” the human. He is “a part” of the mind or psychology, as much as anything is a part of the personality. He is essentially the “definite Unknown”, religion being the manner of connecting.

Past a certain point of probability, religion is (as I described) an extension of the human personality. If someone follows it, it is because he or she *intends* to. This intention should be the result of recognising factors (for instance values) which a person recognises as “good” (having already done so or not). This is one way of describing how religion always exists in people (the other being the nature of the “human-God” relationship). Its potential is forever there, even when it is dormant.

The “Book” (the religion) is simply the form that it takes. It is the manifestation of “what cannot be expressed or represented”. The belief or religious *experience* does not need the “Book” (per se).

The “Book” gives a manifestation to (or awakens) a “commitment”. This acts as a buffer against irrelevant or empty distractions, allowing better definition or true utilisation of human potential.

The “Book” guides us to the “star” or “Ideal” to which the person walks *voluntarily*. In this sense, the Path is what matters, not the supposed destination.

The path can be anything, which is where the “signs” along the way come in. The path of human conscience is united under the concept of “goodness”, but differentiations will occur in the way that people confront their *conceptions* of these qualities.*

For example, an atheist may give charity simply because it feels like the right thing to do. A religious person will do so as a religious value, but they only joined the religion because they agreed with its values. He/she sees “goodness” as “the right path”, whereas the atheist sees it as the “right action”. The religious person holds the concept of “Destination” as an ideal, but it is actually the Path (and only the Path) which matters.

A path without a destination will never end, but a destination without a path is non-existent. One cannot be without the other, but for as long as we are alive, the destination must always be a destination.

It is the unobtainable Ideal, that star in the great reflection of our souls. It is to the religious person what “righteousness” is to the non-religious. There is little difference except one holds to the transcendent ideal of “purpose through path”, believing or acknowledging the “right” and “wrong” directions.

In short, the objectivity of morality is an instinctive tool rather than an instinct, a means to an end rather than an “experience” in time.

Having established “the ideal of the Divine”, the person will be faced with the “anti-Ideal”. This is negativity whether it be in thought, word or action, and like “goodness” it can be recognised by its effect on individuals and wider society.

Negativity derives from the same source (the conscience), and thus is as important in our daily lives as “righteousness”. It helps to guide us just as pain keeps us from harm, but it will not welcome us should we stray.

“Objective goodness” gives rise to “objective badness”, and negative actions will be perceived as seeking to turn one from the direction (path) of the Ideal. The religious or spiritual person acknowledges preconceived accountability or responsibility for this, just as “anti-ideals” such as regret or remorse punish (e.g. if you killed the person that you loved, there would be a fire in the heart).

“Belief” is simply “acknowledgement”, and it does not pertain to dogmatism. All ideas, beliefs and decisions are derived from “principles”, and hence are essentially similar.

What is important is not the belief or interpretation, but the principles behind them. Humanism is the marriage between reason and progressive thinking.

*People interact with “good” and “bad” in various ways. Some may live in episodic oscillation between them (e.g. a devout atheist), whilst others will actively counter “badness” with “goodness” (e.g. concepts of karma). Others will do this whilst engaging in forms of prayer or meditation to address unconscious and unacknowledged (past or future) negativity (it is essentially a still more active/conscious approach to karma). This will often be buried deep inside the self, waiting to manifest or re-emerge.

The spiritually-free person will generally believe that their method is the best (in all respects for them according to their values) whilst acknowledging there are other ways.

Praying without committing good deeds is like pursuing a rainbow (the destination to which they are not travelling), whilst good deeds without prayer are a person’s choice.

In an Islamic context, prayer, pilgrimage and avoidance of certain things complement/comprise the best path according to the Muslim’s belief.

“Surely this Qur’an guides to that which is MOST upright.”

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Qur'an 17:9

Pilgrimage is basically a large prayer, so I include it when I mention "prayer".

Here are the reasons for prayer in an Islamic context:

- 1) Glorify and remember Him (17:110-111, 20:14)
- 2) Avoid indecency/ask forgiveness (3:17, 29:45)

However, if we examine 21:47, 23:102-103, 42:40, 90:11-17, 99:7-8 and 101:6-9, it becomes clear that "good deeds" are what matter. Prayer is a means of "cancelling" the negativity of misdeeds, but the only way to raise the level of "positivity" is by committing good deeds.

It should be noted that prayer is "obligatory" in order to follow the "best guidance", missing it meaning that misdeeds will not be cancelled for that time.

"Say: My Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayer."

Qur'an 25:77

"Whoever follows the right way, it is for his own soul and whoever errs, he errs only to its detriment."

Qur'an 39:41

You cannot make up for a "missed prayer" (the ritual is not what counts), but you can make up for the effect of that missed prayer.

There is a common statement that to be a "Muslim" one must believe in God, His angels, the Books, the Messenger and the Last Day:

As stated at the beginning, in order to acknowledge such activities as beneficial, one must already have a concept of "God". It starts as the "Ideal", the potential of human nature. For example, the Qur'an makes a distinction between those who believe (based on their own inferences) and those who do not believe yet do good deeds:

"The dwellers of the desert say: "We believe." Say: You do not believe but say "We submit"; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts; and if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish aught of your deeds; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; they are the truthful ones."

Qur'an 49:14-15

In short, if you recognise the Qur'anic way of life as "better" rather than "worse" for society as a whole, then according to the Qur'an you should follow (obey) its precepts. However, that is only between the person and God.

Adhering to the general principles of the Qur'an will mean that you are developing "positivity" regardless of whether you pray. Now let us see:

"Most surely you will taste the painful punishment. And you shall not be rewarded except what you did. Save the servants of Allah, the purified ones. For them is a known sustenance, fruits, and they shall be highly honoured."

Qur'an 37:38-42

"Whoever does an evil, he shall not be recompensed but the like of it, and whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, these shall enter the garden, in which they shall be given sustenance without measure."

Qur'an 40:40

Unbelievers will be repaid for what they do. Since an unbeliever is not committed to following the Qur'an (the path of righteousness), he/she is more likely to commit misdeeds amongst the good ones. There is thus no guarantee that unbelievers who do good deeds will fare as favourably in the balance (21:47), primarily because they may not be as mindful (38:70). On the other hand, believers who do good deeds will be much more likely to receive a "known sustenance".

The principles of the Qur'an are consistent with many religions and "precepts of conscience":

"And the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it."

Qur'an 91:7-8

However, a deliberate willingness to avoid prayer will render one an "unbeliever" or "hypocrite" according to the Qur'an. To believe in God one must actively acknowledge what is "better" and "worse", and live according to that. This includes accepting that constant prayer (for the specified reasons and based upon established notions of God) is advisable. Someone who accepts the Qur'an is someone who recognises it (i.e. they see it) as the best way.

I want to emphasise that this is a completely psychological and closed system, based on individual experience and not the views or coercions of others. Just like God, the Qur'an is important to the person because of the person, not because of others. One should never say: "You are a hypocrite because the Qur'an says so"; one should say: "You are a hypocrite according to what you say and what you do". Likewise, one should not say: "You are a non-Muslim because of my understanding of the Qur'an", but rather: "You are a non-Muslim since you say you are or are actively hostile to doing good".

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Having acknowledged the non-descript “God” and adopted a set of values by which to live (in this example the Qur’an), the great “anti-Ideal” will exhort one to acknowledge the concept of accountability (this may occur before the Book). After all, there is no meaning to light without darkness. Just as “God” represents the most high and noble ideals of love, compassion justice, mercy etc., the “sum of all negativity” is represented by complete separation from them (in this example we call it “Hell”). There is no point in seeking a destination unless there is a difference between “here and there”.

Like Heaven, Hell must stay an intellectual concept rather than something that can be studied. Based on an established recognition and conscious, committed desire of God, Hell becomes something of which we are spiritually aware:

“And they who say: O our Lord! turn away from us the punishment of hell, surely the punishment thereof is inseparable. Surely it is an evil abode.”

Qur’an 25:65

Thus belief in the “Last Day” will be established.

Since the Qur’an is a Message, one cannot accept it without believing in the Messenger and the embodiment by which it was “transmitted” (angels). The nature of angels is not a concern, but their importance lies in the fact that they are a means by which God “inspires” or controls. That is to imply, everything is a product of God. Clouds bring lightning, but the lighting is a “product of God”. We (perhaps!) cannot recognise angels, but since we believe in God, we believe that He can create and use them. We believe in “angels” but we know nothing of them except allegories. At this point we read 3:7:

“He it is Who has revealed the Book to you; some of its verses are decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are allegorical.”

Angels exist as much as the word “angels”, and we believe in them as long as we believe in God’s ability to inspire (since they are how He does it).

Belief is based on one’s way of life, not absolute interpretations. For example, Iblis (the Devil) is described as an unbeliever even though he had just talked to God (38:74).

In sum, the process thus follows:

- 1) Through conscience, the person develops a heightened sense of “better” and “worse”.
- 2) The person turns towards the “Ideal” representing the potential of all human goodness/selfless pleasure.
- 3) The person acknowledges the “anti-Ideal” and how it gives meaning to the light.

- 4) The person develops/adopts a set of values meant to guide them along the best path (using reason and progressiveness together).
- 5) The person believes in God’s ability to influence, inspire and ultimately enact Good.
- 6) Modification of views based upon irrefutable data, keeping in mind the origin and the purpose of belief, thus the concepts of “better” and “worse”, “right” and “wrong”.

Lesson 30: “Muhammad was literate”

Verse 7:158 states that Muhammad was a gentile:

“So you shall believe in God and His messenger, the gentile (ummy) prophet.”

The Arabic word “ummy” refers to people who are not Jewish or Christian. The meaning of this word, which occurs six times in the Qur’an, has been changed to “one who cannot read or write”. This deliberate manipulation by Muslim scholars has become widely accepted as the true meaning of the word. For example, Yusuf Ali, in his translation, follows this pattern: “...So believe in God and His Apostle, the unlettered Prophet...” Marmaduke Pickthall’s translation reflects the same manipulation: “... So believe in Allah and His messenger, the prophet who can neither read nor write...”.

Anyone can easily understand that “ummy” does not mean an illiterate person by reflecting upon 3:20 below:

“And say to those who received the scripture, as well as those who did not receive any scripture (ummyeen)...”

In this verse the word “ummy” describes idol-worshippers. It is obvious that “ummy” does not mean illiterate because it has been used as the antonym of the people of the scripture. If the verse was “...And say to those literate and illiterate...”, then the traditional translations of “ummy” would be correct. According to the verse 3:20 the people of the Arab peninsula were two main groups:

1. The people of the scripture, i.e., the Jews and Christians.
2. Gentiles, who were neither Jewish nor Christian.

If the people who were neither Jews nor Christians were called “ummyeen” (3:20, 3:75), the meaning of “ummy” becomes clear. As a matter of fact, the verse 3:75 clearly explains its meaning as “gentile”.

Mecca was the cultural centre for the Arabs in the 7th century. Poetry competitions were being held there. It is a historical fact that Meccans were not familiar with the Bible,

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

thus they were gentiles. Therefore the verse 62:2 describes Meccan people by the word “ummyeen”:

“He is the One who sent to the gentiles (ummyeen) a messenger from among them, to recite to them His revelations, purify them, and teach them the scripture and wisdom. Before this, they had gone far astray.”

Qur'an 62:2

The Qur'an does not classify the people of the Arab peninsula as “literate” and “illiterate”, as Muslim scholars claim. Allah classifies the people as people of the book (Jews and Christians) and gentiles. The second classification is the correct one, and the Qur'an supports it.

The disbelievers claimed that Muhammad was quoting verses from the Old and New Testaments (25:5; 68:15). The verse below responds to their accusation and gives the answer:

“You did not read any previous scriptures, nor did you write them with your hand. In that case, the objectors would have had reason to harbour doubts.”

Qur'an 29:48

This verse tells us that Muhammad did not read nor write previous scriptures. The word “min qablihi” (previous) suggests Muhammad read and wrote the final scripture.

Here are the reasons and proofs for the fact that Muhammad was a literate gentile:

- To magnify the miraculous aspect of the Quran, religious people thought that the story of illiteracy would be more alluring.

- The producer of the illiteracy story found it easy to change the meaning of “ummy”, which in the Qur'an consistently means “gentile” (2:78; 3:20; 3:75; 62:2). 2:78-79 proves that “ummy” refers to those who are uneducated in the Book (i.e. are gentiles) because they can write with their own hands (2:79).

- The Arabs of the 7th century were using letters as numbers. This alphabetical numbering system is called “Abjed”, and the merchants of those days had to know the letters of the alphabet in order to record their accounts. If Muhammad was a successful international merchant, he most probably knew this numbering system. The Arabs no longer used the “Abjed” system in the 9th century when they adopted “Arabic numbers” from India.

- If you write the first verse of the first revelation with “Basmalah”, you will realise that Muhammad was literate. There is a difference in spelling of the word “bism” in the beginning of the “Basmalah” and in the first verse of chapter 96. Is it reasonable for an illiterate to dictate two different spellings of the same word which is pronounced the same anyway?

- The traditional history books accept that Muhammad dictated the Qur'an and controlled its recording. Even if we accept that Muhammad did not know how to read or write before, we cannot claim that he preserved his illiteracy during 23 years whilst dictating the Qur'an.

- The first revelation was “Read” and the first five verses of that revelation encourage reading and writing (96:1-5). The second revelation was “The pen” (68:1). Did Muhammad insist on disobeying the instruction “Read” by remaining illiterate? Was Muhammad encouraging his followers to read and write? If so, why did he prohibit himself? How do we explain this strange attitude? Finally, how can an illiterate man ensure the accuracy of a scribe?

Lesson 31: “The Qur'an was compiled in the Messenger's lifetime”

For the sake of conversation (by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan)

The very first injunction given to the Prophet – “Read in the name of your Lord who created” - stresses the importance of knowledge (96:1). And the last words of revelation pertain to the life hereafter (2:281).

The Qur'an was revealed over a period of twenty-three years and was written down in its entirety during the Prophet's lifetime, although the verses were not gathered together in one volume at that time (Al-Katani, V.2, p.384).

For the first twenty-three years the Prophet himself was the fountainhead of Qur'anic learning. Then he appointed certain of his followers to convey the message of the Qur'an after him. These were men who, having memorized the entire Qur'anic text with complete accuracy, were fully competent to impart its teachings. During the caliphate of Umar Faruq, the second caliph of Islam, a man who had come from Kufa to Madina told the caliph that there was someone in Kufa who was teaching the scriptures from memory. At this Caliph Umar was enraged. But when he found out that the person was none other than Abdullah ibn Masood, he regained his composure, (Istiaab, Vol. I, p. 377) the reason being that Abdullah ibn Masood was one of those appointed by the Prophet himself to perform this service. Other more prominent scholars of the Qur'an were as follows: Usman, Ali, Ubayy ibn Kaab, Zayd ibn Thabit, Ibn Masood, Abu Darda, Abu Moosa Ashari, Salim Maula Abi Huzayfa.

However, these Muslims, who had been assigned this task, could not survive forever. Undoubtedly, they were going to leave the world one by one, and then there would be the risk of the Qur'an falling into the hands of less responsible, less knowledgeable people, who might not preserve it intact and who would almost certainly differ as to its true meaning. There was even the danger of its being entirely lost to posterity. With the death of 700 of the Prophet's Companions in the Battle of Yamamah in 12 A.H., this danger began to loom large.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

It has been recorded in the annals of history that “when Salim Maula Abi Huzayfa was martyred, Umar felt the danger of the Qur’an being destroyed and came to Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, to discuss this” (Fathul Bari, v. 9, p. 5). Salim was one of the few surviving companions who had been selected by the Prophet himself to spread the teachings of the Qur’an. The solution suggested by Umar to Abu Bakr was to preserve the Qur’an by making a formal compilation of it in written form.

As has been established, the Prophet always arranged for each passage of the Qur’an to be recorded in writing as soon as it was revealed. This *kitab* (writing down on paper) was so meticulous a procedure that after verse 95 of chapter 4 had been revealed, and the words “except those who are disabled” were revealed again as an addition to the same verse, it was arranged that this phrase—according to Imam Malik—be written at the same moment by the transcriber (Durr Mansoor, Vol. 2, p.203).

It was customary for the Prophet to ask the transcriber to read out the verses after writing them down. According to Zayd ibn Thabit, if any part was missed out in the writing, he would correct it and only after this written work was fully completed would the Prophet allow the propagation of those verses (Majmauz Zawaid, vol.I, p. 60).

The number of transcribers who worked at different times is put at forty-two. According to Ibn Abdul Bar, Hanzala ibn Rabi was the chief transcriber. He was asked to remain in the company of the Prophet at all times (Aqd Al-Farid, v. 4, p. 114), a fool-proof arrangement whereby a number of the companions possessed passages of the Qur’an in written form by the time of the Prophet’s death. A sizeable number, four of whom are worth mentioning: Abu Darda, Muaz ibn Jabal, Zayd ibn Thabit and Abu Zayd even possessed the complete Qur’an in its present arrangement.

It has been established from “authentic” traditions that the angel Gabriel, who conveyed the revelations of God to the Prophet, himself arranged these verses: each year during the month of Ramadan, Gabriel would come to the Prophet and recite before him all the Qur’anic verses revealed up till that time in the order in which they exist today, after which the Prophet would repeat the verses in exactly the same order. This dual process has been termed al-Irza, “mutual presentation”, in the books of hadith.

It has also been established that in the last year of the Prophet’s life, when the revelations had been completed, Gabriel came to the Prophet and recited the entire Qur’an in the existing order twice, and similarly the Prophet also recited to Gabriel the entire Qur’an twice. This final presentation is called al-Arz al-Akhirah in the books of hadith (Fathul Bari, p. 659-663).

When by the help of Gabriel the Qur’an was fully and systematically arranged, the Prophet recited it to his companions on different occasions in the order with which we are familiar today. The Qur’an was thus preserved in its pristine form in the memories of tens of thousands of the companions during the Prophet’s lifetime.

The preservation of the Qur’an passed through three stages: transcription, compilation and collection. In the first stage, as soon as a chapter or a verse was revealed, it was committed

to writing. The following items are mentioned in books as examples of the writing materials used:

Riqa’a—Thin leather piece

Likhaf—Thin slates of white stone

Katf—The round bone of the shoulder of the camel

‘Asib—The wide part of the root of the date branch.

In the hadith, the second stage of this process is referred to as “compilation.” That is, first the verses were written down at the time of revelation. Then, when one chapter was completed, the whole chapter (often it took several revelations to complete one chapter) was written in compiled form, i.e. arranged in proper order on *riqa’a* (leather). Such copies of the compiled Qur’an (complete or incomplete) were in the possession of a large number of people during the lifetime of the Prophet. We have the well-known incident of Umar who beat his own sister and brother-in-law mercilessly for having accepted Islam. Finally, when his anger had subsided, he asked them to show him the book they were reading from. His sister replied that he could not touch it in a state of impurity and only after he had bathed himself did his sister give him the book (Ibn Hisham).

The third stage of this process is termed “Collection” that is, writing down the entire Qur’an together in one volume. The form of the bound volume consisting of pages of the same size was not prevalent in the Prophet’s time. According to a narration recorded by Bukhari, only four companions Ubayy ibn Kaab, Muadh ibn Jabal, Abu Zayd, and Zayd ibn Thabit had the entire Qur’an put together during the life of the Prophet. In *Kanz al Ummal*, referring to Muhammad, Ibn Kab Al-Qurzi gives us the names of five such collectors of the complete Qur’an. However, the status of their collections was that of a personal possession. The official version was produced under the direction of the caliph Abu Bakr, who had it bound after arranging for all the verses to be written on square papers of the same size. Imam Malik has also recorded (citing as his source, Shahab Zahri, who had learned it from Salim, son of Abdullah ibn Umar,) that Zayd ibn Thabit wrote down all the verses of the Qur’an on al-Qaratis (papers of the same size) at the command of Abu Bakr. This volume was called *Raba’a* (square) (Itqan, v. 1, pp. 84-85).

It is said that during the caliphate of Umar Faruq there were more than one hundred thousand copies of the Qur’an in circulation in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, etc.

In later times the written Qur’an became the main source of Islamic learning. But one danger was still lurking. In sacred books even very minor differences can become a source of great controversy. It was feared that if people wrote the Qur’an on their own, differences in transcribing (*kitab*) e.g. writing “eether” for ‘either’ and in recitation would create widespread dissension and there would be no way of putting an end to it. For instance, just one word in the first chapter of the Qur’an was written in different ways according to the pronunciation of different dialects: *maalik-e-yaumuddin*, *malik-e-yaumuddin* and *maleek-e-yaumuddin*, etc.; with the passing of time and changes in the style of writing, the differences in the manuscript would have become a source of great contention. Therefore, on the advice of Umar, Abu Bakr decided to have an authentic copy of the Qur’an prepared under state patronage and thus put an end forever to the possibility of phonetic differences obscuring the true meaning of the text.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

For this purpose Zayd ibn Thabit was the most competent, as he was the *katib* of the Prophet. Zayd and Ubayy ibn Kaab both had joined in the “last recitation” having heard the Qur'an directly from the Prophet in the order still extant today. Not only had they memorized the entire Qur'an, but they also possessed the whole text in written form. The first caliph commanded them to collect all the available parts of the scriptures and to compile them (Bukhari). After this decision had been taken, Umar made an announcement in the Mosque that whoever had any piece of writing from the Qur'an should bring it and hand it over to Zayd.

During the first caliphate, the Qur'an not only existed in written form on the bark of date palms, stones, leather, etc, but was also preserved in the memory of the companions. The Qur'an, when made into a book, was arranged in the order memorized by the companions, and the verses have been preserved in that same order right up to the present day.

Zayd ibn Thabit's work was more a process of collection than of compilation. That is, the scattered bits and pieces of the Qur'an in written form were collected by him, not just to be assembled and bound in one volume, but to be used to verify the authenticity of the Qur'an as memorized and passed on in oral tradition by countless individuals. Once this exact correspondence between the oral and written forms of the Qur'an had been established beyond any reasonable doubt, Zayd proceeded to put the verses of the Qur'an down on paper in their correct order.

Harith Muhasibi writes in his book, *Fahm As-Sunan*, that the transcription of the Qur'an was nothing new, because the Prophet himself had arranged for it to be written down. But it was written separately on Riq'a, Likhaf, Katf, 'Asib, etc. All the materials on which the Qur'an was written were available in the Prophet's house, but had not been put in any special order. What the collector did was assemble all these parts and then bind them together so that no part was destroyed (*Al-Itqan*, v. 1, p. 40).

This elaborate arrangement of the Qur'an was made so that there should not be even the minutest discrepancy vis-à-vis the original revelation. If this extraordinary care had not been taken, differences would have resulted from the slightest lapse in memorizing and transcription. For instance, when Umar recited this verse to Zayd ibn Thabit, “As for those who led the way, the first of the *Muhajirs* and the *Ansar*, those who nobly followed them,” Zayd said, that he remembered this verse with *waw*, that is, with “and” after *Ansar*. So the investigation started, and finally the other memorizers of the Qur'an came and confirmed that the opinion of Zayd was right. So in the volume the verse was written with the addition of “and”.

In former times, when the accepted way of disseminating the subject matter of a book was to memorise it, then recite it, it was quite exceptional that the Qur'an should have been preserved in writing as well as memorized. This was like having a “double checking” system, whereby memory plus written words and written words plus memory could be constantly compared for verification.

After Zayd ibn Thabit had prepared the entire Qur'an and bound it in the form of a book, all other materials collected from different companions, for the purpose of checking and rechecking, were all burnt. Now this volume was handed over to the caliph. After Abu Bakr's death it remained with

Umar, the second caliph. After the death of Caliph Umar it remained in the custody of Hafsa, daughter of Umar and wife of the Prophet.

During the caliphate of Uthman, Islam had spread far and wide, and the number of Muslims was legion. Moreover, the companions who taught the Qur'an had gone to different countries that had come within the fold of Islam. For instance, the Syrians learned the Qur'an from Ubayy ibn Kaab, the Kufans (the inhabitants of Kufa, a city in Iraq) learned the Qur'an from Abdullah ibn Masood and the Iraqis in general from Abu Musa Ash'ari. However, due to differences in accent and styles of writing, controversies again began cropping up. People even called one another heretics owing to such differences.

Ibn Abi Daud writes in his book, *Al-Masahif*, quoting Yazid ibn Muawiyah Nakhai, that once when Huzayfa ibn Al-Yaman was present in the mosque of Kufa, he found a group reciting the Qur'an. One of them recited a certain verse and said: “This is the way of recitation of Abdullah ibn Masood.” Another recited it with a different accent and said that was how Abu Musa Al-Ashari recited it. Huzayfa, enraged on hearing this, stood up and admonished this group: “Those before you (people of the book) differed just like this. By God, I will go riding to the leader of the believers, Uthman, the third caliph.”

Huzayfa was a military officer posted in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and had just come back from doing battle. But when he reached Madina, and witnessed the scene in the Prophet's mosque, instead of going straight home, he went directly to the third caliph and addressed him thus: “O Leader of the believers! Take care of the people, before they fall victim to the differences regarding the book of God just as the Jews and the Christians did.”

During the caliphate of Uthman there entered the fold of Islam peoples whose mother tongue was not Arabic, and who were not able to speak the language with the proper accent and pronunciation. Even the various Arab tribes themselves had different accents and pronunciation. Hence the variations in the recitation of the Qur'an. The result was that the Qur'an, too, began to be written according to varying pronunciations. Ibn Qutayba writes that the Bani Huzayl tribe used to pronounce ‘*hatta*’ as ‘*atta*’. Since Ibn Masood belonged to this tribe, its members saw no reason to deviate from this pronunciation. Such differences in recitation came to be reflected in the transcription of the Qur'an, this being only one of many such examples. Given this state of affairs, Uthman, as advised by Huzayfa ibn Yaman, had copies made of the volume prepared by Abu Bakr, then sent one copy each to all cities. This task was again entrusted to Zayd ibn Thabit Ansari, who was provided with eleven people to assist him. As per the order of the third caliph, the committee wrote down the Qur'an in accordance with the spelling of the Quraysh, so that it should conform to the accent (*lehja*) of the Prophet of Islam. Caliph Uthman subsequently ordered that all other copies of the Qur'an, which people had written on their own, should be handed over to the government. These were all then burnt by his order.

By this method, all the copies of the Qur'an were made uniform as far as writing was concerned. However, taking natural differences into consideration—since all the people were not able to pronounce the Qur'an uniformly—permission was given for the Qur'an to be recited with seven

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

different pronunciations and accents. The collection prepared by Abu Bakr was done one year after the death of the Prophet. The copies ordered by Uthman were produced fifteen years after the Prophet's death.

These copies of the Qur'an, made with extraordinary care and precision, were passed on from generation to generation until the age of the press dawned. Many printing presses were then established in the Muslim world, where the beautiful calligraphy of the scriptures was reproduced after its content had been certified by memorizers of the Qur'an. Thus, once again, with the help of the memorized versions and written texts, correct, authentic copies were prepared; then with the publication of these copies on a large scale, the Qur'an spread all over the world.

It is an irrefutable fact acknowledged by the orientalisks, that any copy of the Qur'an found in any part of the world at any time will be exactly the same as that handed down to the Muslims by the Prophet in his last days, arranged in the form still extant today.

More evidence:

A report informs us that when people came to Madina to learn about Islam, they were provided with "copies of the chapters of the Qur'an, to read and learn them by heart". [Hamidullah, M.: Sahifa Hammam ibn Munabbih, Paris, 1979, p. 64.]

Further evidence for the existence of the Qur'an as a written document during the lifetime of the Prophet comes from the following account:

'Abd Allah b. Abu Bakr b. Hazm reported: The book written by the apostle of Allah for 'Amr b. Hazm contained also this: that no man should touch the Qur'an without ablution.' [Muwatta', No. 462.]

Malik said: And no one should carry the mushaf by its strap, nor on a pillow, unless he is clean. And even if this be allowed to carry it in its cover, it is not disliked, if there is not in the two hands which carry it, something polluting the mushaf, but it is disliked for the one who carries it, and he is not clean, in honour to the Qur'an and respect to it. Malik said: The best I heard about this is the verse, "None shall touch it but those who are clean" (56: 79).' [Muwatta', Arabic, p. 204.]

The commentary to the muwatta' explains that the book referred to as written by the Prophet (which means of course written upon his instruction) was sent with some Muslims for instruction in Islam of the people of Yemen. [Muwatta', Arabic, p. 204.]

In fact the Qur'anic verse 56: 79, read in context, clearly explains that the Qur'an is available to those who receive instruction by revelation, in the form of a book or a piece of writing:

'... this is indeed a Qur'an most honourable, in a book (kitab) well-guarded, which none shall touch but those who are clean: a revelation from the Lord of the worlds' (56: 77-80).

The same fact, i.e. that the Qur'an did exist as a written document in the lifetime of the Prophet is proved by the following ahadith:

From Ibn 'Umar: ... 'The messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: "Do not take the Qur'an on a journey with you, for I am afraid lest it should fall into the hands of the enemy". [Muslim, III, No. 4609, also 4607, 4608; Bukhari, IV, No. 233.]

The correctness of the assumption that the reference is to a written document is supported by one of the transmitters: Ayyub (i. e. one of the narrators in the chain of transmission of this report) said: The enemy may seize it and may quarrel with you over it. [Muslim, III, No. 4609.]

Furthermore, the chapter-heading used by Bukhan for the section, (which usually contains additional information,) explains:

Ibn Umar said: No doubt the Prophet and his Companions travelled in the land of the enemy and they knew the Qur'an then.' [i.e. they knew that the Qur'an was carried - as a scripture - by the Muslims. Bukhan, IV, p. 146, Ch. 129.]

Lesson 32: "Women's dress and other issues"

1) Women's dress:

"And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their covers over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful."

Qur'an 24:31

Basic, common-sense modesty. Since women can pray in mosques with men, their clothing should be adequate to avoid suggestiveness in the prostration position.

Faces do not need to be concealed. If they did, the Qur'an would not have needed to specify that Muhammad's wives talk from behind a "screen" (33:53).

Hair does not need to be covered, because hair is common to both males and females (meaning it is already shown). People will say that skin is common, but clothing was sent down to cover shame (7:26). Hair is not described as shameful. Moreover, if women at the time were already wearing the headscarf, they would not have needed to be told to put their garments about their chest (24:31, 33:59). Allah

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

orders what He desires (5:1), and He does not run out of words (18:109).

2) *Funeral Prayers*

“And never offer prayer for any one of them who dies and do not stand by his grave; surely they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger and they shall die in transgression.”

Qur'an 9:84

Funerals were obviously performed before Islam, so they are not actually a part of the religion (i.e. you can't make a certain-style ceremony Islamically obligatory). We must use our discretion in making funerals appropriate.

Salah is only for Allah (6:162) and hence we cannot devote an actual prayer (at the specified times) to a deceased person. In this case “salah” refers to a “blessing” or “support” (e.g. 33:56) of the departed soul.

Both males and females may attend the ceremony where Qur'anic passages (or a dua such as al-Fatiha) can be read out. Since people were evidently buried, this is the primary means of laying the body to rest. To be safe, this practice should be upheld at all possible times (although dead people are described as dust in 13:5).

“Then He causes him to die, then assigns to him a grave.”

Qur'an 20:21

If we wish to show utmost respect to the dead (17:23-24, 19:14, 42:23), we should wash the body (Allah likes cleanliness (2:222)). Besides, if someone were dirty when they died, we would wash them anyway.

3) *Anal sex*

The best approach is to begin by looking at the purpose of sex and working backwards. Humans start as children. Children are needed to continue the species. The child should be brought up in a safe and conducive environment. Family is the best means. Family depends on parents and children. Children depend upon parents. Parents depend on the ability to reproduce. This depends on desire, and the process will only work with man and woman.

Wives are described as a “tilthe” (2:223), and this in no way conveys a sex object. Sex is to be enjoyed (2:187), but anal-sex is an imitation of homosexuality and more importantly not what the body is meant for. There is no purpose in practicing it, and it is highly inadvisable. “Consensual abuse” is a term which comes to my mind.

If Islam is to create the “best” society, decisions should be made according to their necessity and effects on society. This may also work on an individual level.

4) *Marriage*

Following similar logic to funerals, it would be a ceremony with an official document (2:237). There should be a sufficient proof (e.g. signatures) with at least two witnesses (2:282, 4:6).

Recite (examples): 2:187, 3:81, 4:24, 5:5, 12:66, 24:32, 25:54, 30:21, 22:7, 51:58, 64:4.

Marriage is a legal contract with a pledge before God.

Lesson 33: “Punishment for fornication/adultery”

Although (as usual) “Muslims” do it anyway, stoning to death for adultery is not in Islam.

The punishment for Muslim adulterers (male or female) is actually 100 hidings:

“As for the fornicatress/adulteress and the fornicator/adulterer, flog each of them a hundred stripes.”

Qur'an 24:2

This of course seems like a barbaric and medieval practice. However, the reason there is a punishment is because Islam places great emphasis on the family-life. Moreover, four reliable witnesses are required:

“And those who accuse free women then do not bring four witnesses, flog them eighty stripes.”

Qur'an 24:4

Although we are in the age of DNA, four reliable witnesses would be required before an investigation occurred (excepting rape).

In addition, the punishment is applicable only to Muslims:

“The fornicator/adulterer shall not marry any but a fornicatress/adulteress or idolatress, and (as for) the fornicatress/adulteress, none shall marry her but a fornicator/adulterer or an idolater; and it is forbidden to the believers.”

Qur'an 24:3

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

We can see that fornicators/adulterers are distinguished from non-Muslims. A non-Muslim who commits fornication/adultery may marry a Muslim who has committed it, or a non-Muslim (who may or may not commit it regularly). Muslims cannot marry idolaters otherwise, thus the fornicators/adulterers have to be Muslim (it would not distinguish if they were not).

4:25 says that Muslim women who were originally non-Muslim (but converted during captivity) may be married. It then says that if they commit indecency (after marriage), their punishment is a half of what it is for the other women (due to their background). If a non-Muslim commits it, obviously the punishment will be zero (disregarding fines for exposure etc.).

Finally, although the Qur'an does not distinguish fornicators/adulterers on the basis of religion in 24:2, neither does it do so in 24:6:

“And (as for) those who accuse their wives and have no witnesses except themselves, the evidence of one of these (should be taken) four times, bearing Allah to witness that he is most surely of the truthful ones.”

Qur'an 24:6

This confirms that 24:2 is referring to Muslims, because non-Muslims cannot bear witness to Allah.

It is true that a Muslim society is encouraged to judge equitably (5:8), thus non-Muslims should ensure (by special request) that penalties (if any) are different in this case. For example, becoming a Muslim is like taking on a “contract”. This “contract” includes the condition in 24:2. A non-Muslim does not take this condition, thus they are not bound by it. They have their own system/culture/beliefs, thus Muslims cannot force an explicitly divine law on them. Muslims are expected to prevent people from harming each other, thus with consultation an appropriate punishment (if any) should be arranged in each individual case.

“If they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them, and if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way; and if you judge, judge between them with equity.”

Qur'an 5:42

As we can see, people of different cultures/beliefs may adhere to their own “divine” laws inasmuch as it does not harm others. They will be exempt only from the explicit laws (mentioned in the Qur'an) such as hidings for adultery, whereas all other principally-derived rulings will be universal.

Although the Qur'an says that it is fully-detailed (6:114, 16:89 etc.), many Muslims deny this. They say that the ruling in 24:2 only applies to unmarried people, and that married people must be stoned to death.

Firstly, we saw in 4:25 that certain married women would get half the punishment of other women. One cannot be stoned

half to death. Secondly, it was seen in 24:6 that married people can accuse each other. Since the punishment was provided in 24:2, there is no case for stoning.

Only idol-worshippers stone people (11:91, 18:20, 19:46, 36:18).

Note that the Arabic word for “fornication”/“adultery” in 24:2 is also used in 60:12 (showing that it applies to unmarried people too).

All in all, do not become Muslim with the intention of committing fornication/adultery.

Lesson 34: “Prohibition of music”

(This is a response to YouTuber “MuslimVlogGuy. He attacked this statement:

Music is not forbidden in Islam (5:5, 5:87, 7:32, 16:116).

Lyrics should be inoffensive and music should not be excessively loud (3:104, 5:77, 14:24-26, 25:72, 31:19, 33:70, 49:11).

My response will make his relevant points apparent.)

The point of those verses is that you cannot make prohibitions which are not in the Book. Music is definitely allowed if it does not violate Qur'anic principles (e.g. those in 3:104). The point (of this statement) was not to twist the meaning of verses to refer to a precise subject, but to show how we must use our brains before we can use the Qur'an.

At 1:25 and 1:48, you say that we can interpret it any way. However, we do not need to refer it to anyone when we were just given the references there. If you study those clear verses (along with the rest of the Qur'an), the person will understand.

5:5 expresses the principle that “good things” are permitted. The meaning of “good” can be learnt by referring to the other verses, the rest of the Qur'an and common-sense. After all, the general principle is telling enough.

You then quote 5:87 and 7:32 which again state that we cannot make prohibitions not in the Qur'an.

31:6 uses the word “ahadith” (not “tales”), and secondly the addition “without knowledge” confirms that it is not referring to music. Music is never worshipped or held as religious truth, so its content cannot be used to confuse those “without

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

knowledge". It is referring to stories such as those in 6:112 (varnished falsehoods like the ahadith you use to get your opinions on verses like these). Moreover, music does not require singing, so my point still remains. If there is music, and a person sings, as long as it conforms to Qur'anic principles, it is fine.

Again, the false stories (ahadith) in 31:6 are an alternative to guidance, and they themselves lead from Allah's path. It is not the "singing" of the stories, but actually their content which matters.

53:59 talks about amusing oneself. It does not prohibit any specific amusement. Obviously futile amusements are implied here, but an amusement need not be futile (e.g. celebratory or inspirational music). Even study music is good (for example).

Is not dancing good exercise? Surely one can use commonsense to avoid being too risqué, and this itself is good mental disciplinary practice.

You may be unable to comprehend the point that it is the EFFECTS of music which tell us if it is good or bad. If it makes you forget yourself, then of course it is "not good". If it motivates you in positive things, that is good. People can do what they want, but a person's mind, heart and choices will determine their path.

If someone likes "Iron Maiden", then the lyrics should still technically not promote mindless violence and it should not be played too loud. A person can listen to it, but I can't see any subjectivity in its influence. A Muslim would not normally produce random heavy-metal like that, because it is loud in a live concert and OBJECTIVELY distracts one's mindset. A Muslim should never need to "let their hair down" in such a fashion. However, in celebrations, in meditation (contemplation) and study, music can be beneficial. Listening to music when you can do other things is obviously a waste of time, just like watching Tally-Tubbies or anything. If you can do better things, go for the better. But then there are times when music can enhance the outcome of one's thoughts or actions.

No-one ever said I wanted to invite people to Islam with musical instruments. All I said was that music is not prohibited within its "principle-paradigm". We are supposed to JUDGE by the Book (5:43-50, 6:114 etc.).

I included 5:77 to warn you against making prohibitions not in the Qur'an (i.e. exceeding the limits). The word "vain" is not in the Arabic. You follow the desires of the previous peoples by rewriting the Qur'an, prohibiting the same things as them, stoning, death for apostasy and circumcision etc. etc. all in the name of abrogation, "explanation", dissatisfaction with God alone and your "oral tradition".

To 14:24:

Now the parable is a parable about good words. Are you saying it is impossible to speak a positive word if it is not in the Book? Once again, a song with good words is good!

Your new excuse for prohibiting music/songs is the danger of subliminal messaging! Again, if a person reads the Qur'an and absorbs it, the very intention of listening to music (while studying etc.) will keep one aware.

Lesson 35: "Masturbation"

"This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil)."

Qur'an 2:2

We should guard everything about ourselves (including our thoughts since they lead to temptation). Whoever guards their thoughts will automatically avoid it until (if) absolutely necessary. We should not look for excuses (loopholes). 24:30 confirms that it is obligatory to guard our thoughts (especially about others):

"Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do."

Qur'an 24:30

If we have to cast down our looks, then thinking these thoughts defeats the purpose (i.e. we must avoid temptation in all ways, and not simply act upon it). It is not simply to be taken literally (e.g. see 9:71). Furthermore, what is the point of women covering themselves (24:31) if everyone is permitted to think dirty thoughts (and tempt themselves) besides? Is reading erotic fiction advisable (the key word is "advisable") even though not specifically mentioned? Examine this:

"Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest, and Allah knows what you do."

Qur'an 29:45

So do we need more evidence?

"...and do not draw nigh to indecencies, those of them which are apparent and those which are concealed."

Qur'an 6:151

We should not even think about these things because impure thoughts (though concealed) lead to impure impulses. If then we fall to temptation, we should ask forgiveness (2:286). Just because our thoughts and associated actions are concealed, it does not mean we are not accountable for intentions:

"...and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account according to it."

Qur'an 2:284

Indecent thoughts are actually indecencies, and we should be

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

remembering Allah instead (3:191). If one absolutely feels that they need to release, they should ask for forgiveness before and after (2:286).

“Say: My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed...”

Qur'an 7:33

See the notes for 6:151.

“And go not nigh to fornication; surely it is an indecency and an evil way.”

Qur'an 17:32

Thinking about fornication in conjunction with the act is inclining towards it. Enjoying the act is welcoming the lure of the same (fulfilment of) temptations which fornication offers.

“And who guard their private parts...”

Qur'an 23:5

Performing it is not keeping chaste or abstaining from sexual acts. However, 23:5 is permitted with regards to spouses or ma malakat aymanukum (see Lesson 28). Note performing the act whilst thinking about one's spouse is not excepted (see 23:7) If the act were permissible, it might have been included here. After all, committing indecent acts with wives or ma malakat aymanukum is allowed, but not committing indecent acts with oneself!

“O you who believe! do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan, and whoever follows the footsteps of the Shaitan, then surely he bids the doing of indecency and evil; and were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure, but Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.”

Qur'an 24:21

The devil desires you to think lewd thoughts and to enjoy them:

“Shaitan threatens you with poverty and enjoins on you immorality, and Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.”

Qur'an 2:268

Thus even if we feel absolutely compelled (i.e. “justified”), we should ask forgiveness from God. The fact that we should seek forgiveness obviously means the act is inadvisable (un-Islamic).

“Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do.”

Qur'an 24:30

Impure thoughts naturally invite to impure impulses. In this context, thinking of anyone but one's spouse (as far as my understanding goes) is not guarding one's inner modesty as a servant of God. It should be noted that 23:5 does not give an exception for performing the act whilst thinking about one's spouse (hence it is completely haram in traditional schools). It should also be considered that ideally sexual pleasure is mutual pleasure (2:187), and so in God's mandate it may be more respectful for sex (certainly) and sexual fantasies to remain mutual (hence “casting down our looks”). Finally, there is the fact that committing indecent acts with oneself (assessable by the nature of it being so if another did it to us) is not made permissible like it is with spouses and ma malakat aymanukum.

“And let those who do not find the means to marry keep chaste until Allah makes them free from want out of His grace.”

Qur'an 24:33

There is no link here between marriage and nikah, and because chastity is demanded except before spouses and ma malakat aymanukum, anything outside of this is prohibited or inadvisable. The act is not simply an act; it is a thought, a compulsion with the thought, an intention and an action that could have been prevented by distracting oneself (e.g. guarding and remembering God). Now even if we feign a “pure mind”, it is not like a muscle that needs to be massaged and secondly it is an indecent act simply performed on ourselves by ourselves. This suggests that sexual acts should be mutual with the specified people.

“Surely Allah will make those who believe and do good enter gardens beneath which rivers flow; and those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as the beasts eat, and the fire is their abode.”

Qur'an 47:12

Giving in to temptation is the way of disbelief, therefore one should guard one's thoughts (2:2, 24:30). Stress is not an excuse (1:5). One can of course enjoy family time between praying, working and being upright. In all cases, the right choice will be obvious to true believers (2:256-267).

“So whatever thing you are given, that is only a provision of this world's life, and what is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and rely on their Lord. And those who shun the great sins, and the indecencies, and whenever they are angry they forgive.”

Qur'an 42:36-37

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

These ayat say that remembering God is more beneficial than giving in to temptation. It is advisable to avoid the act because this is in accordance of the ideals of true Muslims. Allowing oneself to think about indecencies is not shunning them. We are only human, but that is partly why we must remember Him standing, sitting and lying (3:191). It gives us the greatest chance to develop ourselves, and "harmless pleasure" is not an excuse because the devil makes foul deeds (and the thoughts that go with them) seem fair (e.g. 2:212, 3:14, 8:48 and 10:12). Describing the act as equal to any game or sport (as a diversion) is addressed by the fact that it draws closer to indecency than they (and it is an indecent act), and so just as we would not eat unusual animals that are not normally hunted before "usual" meats (i.e. we would not eat dog before chicken if we could avoid it - see 5:3-4 for the emphasis on eating what we normally hunt), we will not perform this act when there is a range of alternatives (e.g. 2:148). Masturbation is an indecency by oneself on oneself (obviously by the fact it would be if a stranger did it on one) regardless of one's state of mind.

"Then he is of those who believe and charge one another to show patience, and charge one another to show compassion."

Qur'an 90:17

Muslims should tell each other to be patient (e.g. against temptation). See also Sura 103.

In short, though there is no earthly punishment (in a private instance), it is not advisable and thus you should not do it if you can help it (e.g. by praying to remember God and finding other diversions). There are perhaps grounds to consider it haram, but that is neither here nor there.

Lesson 36: Shi'ites and 33:33

"And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying."

Qur'an 33:33

God intends to keep uncleanness away from the "people of the House" by advising them to follow the Message. The commandment in 33:33 is no different to 24:51, but God is emphasising this to the wives due to their special status (33:31, 33:32). However, just because Allah God invites someone to guidance it does not mean they are predestined to

take it (thus there are warnings in 33:31-32). This fact is made obvious by 66:1-5, and so the Shi'ites claim that Muhammad's spouses are not in fact included in the "purification". Women are humans too, and therefore there is no reason to exclude them since it is intuitively and contextually obvious that they are included. If we accept for some odd, male-viewpointed reason that they are not included, there is still nothing to suggest that this purification is different to that of anyone else who accepts God's invitation to guidance:

"And when We made the House a pilgrimage for men and a (place of) security, and: Appoint for yourselves a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrahim. And We enjoined Ibrahim and Ismail saying: Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves."

Qur'an 2:125

How did Ibrahim and Ismail purify the House? Obviously, by making it a place of worship for One God (2:126-128). However, it has not since been always pure (8:33-35) and thus there is no reason to suppose that "purification of the people of the House" means anything except adhering to the Message (i.e. it is nothing supernaturally "final"). How long did it take for everyone to be purified, and thus from which date did the Shia ahadith become reliable? How can mere humans recognise a purified person? Do we have a right to say that considering even Messengers did not know if their SINS would be forgiven (26:82)?

"Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."

Qur'an 2:129

The delivery of religious practices (as passed down from Ibrahim will purify believers (e.g. when Muhammad took alms from those who had acknowledged their wrongdoings (9:103 or 92:18).

"...and He loves those who purify themselves."

Qur'an 2:222

See 35:18. People purify themselves by following the Message. The Message is a guidance and good news, and it is an invitation. God intends to guide those who possess the attributes which will allow them to accept the Message (patience, reflection etc.), but people have the free-will to develop or ignore these qualities (God guides with the Qur'an (39:23)). Again, there is nothing supernaturally "final" about being purified except that inshaAllah you will find Paradise. The Message is all that is required, attested by 38:46:

"Surely We purified them by a pure quality, the keeping in

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

mind of the (final) abode.”

Remembering the Last Day will make one mindful. The ayah 35:18 confirms that people purify themselves only for their own good, and so there is no “limited set” of “purified individuals” to whom we must turn in order to follow the Qur’an. The same concepts can be applied to 7:82, 87:14-15 and 91:9. Ayah 9:108 suggests those who “love that they should be purified” are in fact purifying themselves by following the Message. This is why God DESIRES to purify those who heed. Those who purify themselves are purified by God, and likewise even the pure must still guard against evil. Again, 24:21 declares that Iblis attempts to lead people astray, and that without God’s mercy no-one would have been purified. The Qur’an is described as a guidance and mercy in many places (e.g. 6:157 and 16:89).

The next ayah:

“And when the angels said: O Marium! surely Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the world.”

Qur’an 3:42

Mariam was purified in the sense that she was at that time the most worthy of all women to give birth to Isa. The ayat 3:36-37 confirm that she was raised well by God’s leave. The point to be taken is that “purification” refers to good behaviour and forgiveness of sins, and the only way to do this is to follow the Message (or if one has no Message, then to be just and aware etc.).

“And when Allah said: O Isa, I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the day of resurrection; then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed.”

Qur’an 3:55

“Purification” here means a separation from the disbelievers and their society. Those who follow the Message will be raised highly.

“(As for) those who take a small price for the covenant of Allah and their own oaths-- surely they shall have no portion in the hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look upon them on the day of resurrection nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement.”

Qur’an 3:77

Purification here concerns the forgiveness for and removal of iniquities. No-one is sinless (see 16:61), but if we strive with right effort, then inshaAllah we will find His forgiveness. I think that ultimately this is what “purification” means (see 33:71). Sura 37 contains many instances of the phrase “purified ones”, and in each of these, “purification through

forgiveness and sincerely following the Message” is a compatible meaning.

“And mention Musa in the Book; surely he was one purified, and he was a messenger, a prophet.”

Qur’an 19:51

Musa is described as purified, and yet he was not without sin (28:15). This is because he obtained forgiveness.

“Then say: Have you (a desire) to purify yourself? And I will guide you to your Lord so that you should fear.”

Qur’an 79:18-19

Like 38:46, this confirms that remembering the Last Day will make one mindful enough to follow the Message (leading to right effort and hopefully forgiveness for sins).

“He frowned and turned (his) back, because there came to him the blind man. And what would make you know that he would purify himself, or become reminded so that the reminder should profit him?”

Qur’an 80:1-4

This was yet another mistake by Muhammad attributed to an unknown person by the Shi’ites. People purify themselves by following the Message, and that is the sole intention of God’s delivery.

“In honoured books, exalted, purified.”

Qur’an 80:13-14

The books are pure because they guide to the right path and are free from manmade corruption.

This is a lot of work to discredit the assumption that Muhammad’s wives are not human, but what is done is done and thus I will conclude with these points:

“O you who believe! when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles; and if you are under an obligation to perform a total ablution, then wash (yourselves) and if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy, or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth and wipe your faces and your hands therewith, Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may be grateful.”

Qur’an 5:6

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

This is absolute proof that the phrase in 33:33 has nothing to do with making the “people of the House” infallible. It simply means what was deduced above.

33:34-35 confirms further by describing how the purification in 33:33 will actually occur. It also states that all women are included.

Lesson 37: “War-spoils”

8:41 informs us that a fifth of the spoils goes to the state (to distribute faithfully (3:161) amongst those who need or deserve it). The state initially takes control of the war-spoils (8:1) so that it can distribute accordingly (59:7). Although soldiers are entitled to four-fifths, the state may decide what that actually consists of.

Fighting is only in self-defence (2:190, 22:39), thus war-spoils should be taken only from those who initiated or supported hostilities against Muslims. Investigation will be required (4:94). Recall that Iblis was also an unbeliever (38:74), although he had knowledge. It follows that good people without knowledge will not be the subject of hostility.

For instance, if aggressors and Muslims fight on a battlefield, the victorious side may take the war-spoils and captives available. If a town was knowingly supporting the aggressors, the Muslims can legitimately advance and capture the town (taking it under their temporary or permanent jurisdiction). Good people there will be treated fairly.

War-captives can be taken only following a serious victorious war (8:67).

War-captives should be treated well and released when possible (2:177, 4:25, 4:36, 5:89, 16:71, 24:33, 47:4, 90:13).

Lesson 38: “Can men rape their wives?”

“They (wives) are an apparel for you and you (husbands) are an apparel for them.”

Qur'an 2:187

“And they (wives) have rights similar to those against them in a just manner.”

Qur'an 2:228

“And when you divorce women and they reach their prescribed time, then either retain them in good fellowship or set them free with liberality, and do not retain them for injury.”

Qur'an 2:231

“O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should take women as heritage against (their) will, and do not straiten them in order that you may take part of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifest indecency, and treat them kindly.”

Qur'an 4:19

“And if a woman fears ill-usage or desertion on the part of her husband, there is no blame on them, if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better.”

Qur'an 4:128

“And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion.”

Qur'an 30:21

Let us look at a “problematic” verse:

“Your wives are a tilth for you, so go into your tilth when you like, and do good beforehand for yourselves, and be careful of Allah.”

Qur'an 2:223

Wisdom of “tilth” (commentary by Yusuf Ali):

“Sex is not a thing to be ashamed of, or to be treated lightly, or to be indulged to the excess. It is as solemn a fact as any in life. It is compared to as husbandman’s tilth; it is a serious affair to him; he sows the seed in order to reap the harvest. But he chooses his own time and mode of cultivation. He does not sow out of season nor cultivate in a manner which will injure or exhaust the soil. He is wise and considerate and does not run riot. Coming from the simile to human beings, every kind of mutual consideration is required, but above all, we must remember that even in these matters there is a spiritual aspect. We must never forget our souls, and that we are responsible to Allah.”

Men cannot “go into” their wives during prayer or fasting etc., and thus “whenever you like” means whenever is appropriate. Moreover, a man should do good deeds before doing so.

The word “tilth” also confirms that it is actually talking about sex. “Go into” obviously implies intercourse, and this means sex. Sex requires consent from the two parties, and it is different to rape. Thus a man may go into his wife whenever, but “go into” means having “consensual sex”. The verse concludes by saying “and be careful of Allah”, meaning we must be careful of the rest of the Qur'an.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Marriage would result in quick divorce if a man abused his wife.

Lesson 39: "The first debate question"

My claim is that the Qur'an prohibits ahadith as sources of law. They are examples which can be assessed by their harmony with the Book. I have in mind several verses to prove my claim, and thus I wish Sunnis to explain why they think they are Muslims.

"Surely this Qur'an guides* to that which is most upright and gives good news to the believers who do good that they shall have a great reward."

Qur'an 17:9

"Do they not then reflect on the Qur'an? Nay, on the hearts there are locks. Surely (as for) those who return on their backs after that guidance has become manifest to them, the Shaitan has made it a light matter to them; and He gives them respite. That is because they say to those who hate what Allah has revealed: We will obey you in some of the affairs; and Allah knows their secrets."

Qur'an 47:24-26

"Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear in the Book for men, these it is whom Allah shall curse, and those who curse shall curse them (too)."

Qur'an 2:159

(The guidance is complete in the Qur'an, and it is clear.)

"And upon Allah it rests to show the right way, and there are some deviating (ways); and if He please He would certainly guide you all aright."

Qur'an 16:9

"Surely Ours is it to show the way."

Qur'an 92:12

"Allah has revealed the best hadith, a book conformable in its various parts, repeating, whereat do shudder the skins of

those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah; this is Allah's guidance, He guides with it whom He pleases; and (as for) him whom Allah makes err, there is no guide for him."

Qur'an 39:23 (also study 5:16 and 6:88)

(Because the guidance is in the Qur'an, and because the Qur'an guides to what is most upright, when Allah guides He does it with the Qur'an alone.)

"These are the ayat of Allah which We recite to you with truth; then in what hadith would they believe after Allah and His ayat?"

Qur'an 45:6

(Allah says those who reflect and those who are sure will follow nothing as a religious source except the Qur'an (45:2-6). This is because it is guidance (45:11).)

"It is not meet for a mortal that Allah should give him the Book and the wisdom and prophethood, then he should say to men: Be my servants rather than Allah's; but rather (he would say): Be worshippers of the Lord because of your teaching the Book and your studying."

Qur'an 3:79

"(They are) listeners of a lie, devourers of what is forbidden; therefore if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them, and if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allah loves those who judge equitably. And how do they make you a judge and they have the Taurat wherein is Allah's judgment? Yet they turn back after that, and these are not the believers."

Qur'an 5:42-43

(All our knowledge of how to worship Allah comes from the Qur'an. We do not need a Messenger to help us judge by it.)

"Shall I then seek a judge other than Allah? And He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) fully-detailed; and those whom We have given the Book know that it is revealed by your Lord with truth, therefore you should not be of the disputers."

Qur'an 6:114

(The Messengers only judge by the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is fully-detailed for judgement.)

"And on the day when We will raise up in every people a witness against them from among themselves, and bring you as a witness against these-- and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything, and a guidance and

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

mercy and good news for those who submit.”

Qur'an 16:89

(The Qur'an explains everything for our guidance.)

“This is because Allah has revealed the Book with the truth; and surely those who go against the Book are in a great opposition.”

Qur'an 2:176

(The Qur'an as we have it can never be contradicted or abrogated.)

“And the Messenger cries out: O my Lord! surely my people have treated this Qur'an as a forsaken thing!”

Qur'an 25:30

From this small selection of verses, I conclude that the Qur'an prohibits any other source of obligatory law. All examples and opinions should be put before the Qur'an.

According to the above, the beliefs/doctrines of Sunnis are incorrect and they are not practicing Islam.

*Guidance includes the practice of Islam (2:198, 2:239, 4:26).

Lesson 40: “Other types of Revelation”

The Qur'an is a Book of moral and spiritual guidance (e.g. 7:52, 17:9), similitudes/examples (e.g. 3:61, 17:89, 66:1-5), narratives (e.g. 12:3), parables (e.g. 14:24) and real-time Revelations (e.g. 9:5, 33:59). All of these attributes contribute to the guiding quality of its Message.

Not all Revelation is instructive. Allah repeats/diversifies/emphasises His ayat to express concepts in different ways (7:58).

All Revelation permanent to its addresses is included (e.g. 33:50). Some is in “real-time” and specifically for some people, while the rest is guidance applicable to all. Where required, context is provided by the Qur'an itself.

Hadith-followers offer examples of where non-Qur'anic Revelation may have been issued. They assume that this proves verses such as 6:114, 39:23 and 45:6 false, adding two and two but getting five.

EXAMPLE 1

2:143

The argument is that there is no Qur'anic verse telling the Muslims to face Jerusalem.

RESPONSE

This was discussed in Lesson 10.

2:143, if interpreted in the strange Sunni way, is obviously an (abrogated) example to see who valued social and political ties more than following the way of life as delivered in the Qur'an. It doesn't actually matter which direction one faces (2:115, 2:177, 2:142), and those who valued ritual/communal ties (with the People of the Book) more than helping the Messenger were exposed (i.e. when it changed to Mecca).

EXAMPLE 2

2:187

The argument is that having sex on the night of Ramadhan was previously unlawful, but that nowhere in the Qur'an did it say that.

RESPONSE

Indeed, 2:187 says it is now lawful to have sex on the night of the fasts. These fasts are the ones in Ramadhan, but the prohibition was for all previous fasts (2:183), not those in Ramadhan. Fasting would not have occurred in Ramadhan because there was no Qur'an, and Allah only decreed fasting at the time of 2:187. Obviously people used to have sex on the night of fasts (prior to Islam), and according to Allah this was haram (regardless of whether people knew or not).

EXAMPLE 3

3:123-126

The argument is that Allah promised to send angels to the believers, but this Revelation is nowhere in the Qur'an.

RESPONSE:

This promise is detailed in 8:43.

EXAMPLE 4

8:7

The argument is there is no verse in the Qur'an giving God's promise.

RESPONSE

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Same as example 3. The number of angels varied with the number of enemies (e.g. 3:124-25). The purpose of the dream was to ease the believers' hearts (8:43), and this was also the purpose of the promise (8:10). Allah may have mentioned a thousand, three thousand and five thousand in one dream, or over multiple dreams. Given the common purpose of the dream and promise, it is likely this happened all in one night. Besides, God promised to send a thousand angels "one after another", i.e. He would send a thousand angels as a unit and then some more.

It should be noted that any Revelation external to the Qur'an is nothing new. Ayat such as 10:87 and 20:77 prove that commands can be given external to the Message. This always occurs in a situation of need or to set an example (it can be called "interactive Revelation"). All permanent law-binding (directed to all believers) Revelation is in the Qur'an.

EXAMPLE 5

66:3

The argument is that there is no verse in the Qur'an informing the Messenger of his wives' activities.

RESPONSE

According to basic Muslim belief, everything happens according to Allah's will. If something good happens we will thank Him. See 9:14:

"Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands..."

Qur'an 9:14

As we see, 66:3 does not necessarily mean that Allah literally spoke to Muhammad. As mentioned in the last example, any interactive Revelation is for the purpose of example (in this case the lesson is in 66:6).

EXAMPLE 6

59:5

The argument is that there is no verse in the Qur'an allowing the toppling of trees.

RESPONSE

This questionable act is precisely why it is mentioned in 59:5 as being by God's leave. He forgave it or he made them do it (59:2).

EXAMPLE 7

33:37

The argument is that the Prophet concealed/knew something which Allah would later reveal.

RESPONSE

It is possible that the Prophet was concealing his feelings for Zayd's wife. If he did in fact know that Zayd would divorce, then this knowledge would have been given to him as due preparation. For example, 33:37 makes it clear that Allah caused Muhammad to marry Zayd's wife as a reassurance for the other Muslims (who might wish to marry the divorced wives of their adopted sons). Thus this could be "interactive Revelation" with the purpose of easing Muslims out of an old tradition. The Prophet was reluctant to marry her for social reasons, so Allah prepared him to be the instrument of change.

33:37-38 highlights the importance of avoiding prohibitions not in the Qur'an.

EXAMPLE 8

48:15

The argument is that Allah previously stated that the hypocrites would not follow the Messenger in battle. This is not found in the Qur'an.

RESPONSE

Hypocrites are described as those who will turn back (2:16, 2:145, 3:167, 4:61, 4:143, 7:193, 9:101, 33:13, 33:18-20, 48:16, 63:1, 63:7). They barter the next life for this one (2:16, 2:86, 2:200) just like the ones in 48:15 who wanted worldly gains.

Since the verse is talking about the future, it is possible that the phrase "thus did Allah say before" is a part of what the Prophet is being told to say (see Yusuf Ali's translation). Besides, 49:14 warns of false "dwellers of the desert" (Sura 49 is traditionally said to have been revealed before Sura 48).

EXAMPLE 9

75:19

The argument is that Allah not only taught the Qur'an to Muhammad, but afterwards he would explain it (sunna).

RESPONSE

The word used for "explain" (bayan) is best translated as "make clear".

"Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death; indeed, We have made the communications clear (bayyan) to you that you may understand."

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Qur'an 57:17

We can already see that Allah accomplished the clarification. Not only this, but the Qur'an was made easy to remember:

“And certainly We have made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, but is there anyone who will mind?”

Qur'an 54:17

That was exactly the occasion of Revelation. The Messenger was making haste with it to clarify it for himself.

The ayat are made clear to those who study it:

“Nay! these are clear (bayyan) communications in the breasts of those who are granted knowledge; and none deny Our communications except the unjust.”

Qur'an 29:49

Those with knowledge are those who digest and ponder upon it (2:121, 16:12, 16:67, 47:24). Those who do not ponder it are described in 25:73, and 10:89 makes clear the difference between those with knowledge and those without (as does 35:28). Knowledge is not about classical Arabic etc., but rather a good heart and mind (3:18, 58:11).

The knowledge comes with the Book (2:120, 2:145, 3:18-20, 7:52, 10:93, 13:37-39, 19:43).

Allah “recited” the Qur'an (e.g. 3:58), and made it clear and easy to remember in our hearts. 75:19 refers to the recitation to the Prophet who received it first before passing it on (16:44)).

Lesson 41: “Ask those who know”

Before I address the topic, I will mention that some Sunnis say that Messengers had to have the “sunna” because they did not always have the Message. They mean that before receiving the Message, would-be prophets had to have a special “wisdom” or “sunna”.

The wisdom (al hikma) comes from Allah through the Qur'an (17:39, 33:34, 36:2, 43:4, 43:63, 44:4, 54:5).

It is (in part) the ability to recognise truth and adhere to it (2:269, 19:12, 26:21, 26:83, 28:14, 31:2, 31:12, 38:20). See 17:22-38 for specific examples of the wisdom (17:39).

The wisdom is the “recipe” in the Book which when we study/follow, will make us wise. It describes the

attributes/“nutrition” of the Book (including the stories) from which we can draw wisdom.

People could be granted wisdom before the Message, but the Qur'an contains all of that and more.

“And when he attained his maturity and became full grown, We granted him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward those who do good.”

Qur'an 28:14

This did not prevent him (Musa) committing an error in the next ayah, but he recognised what was a bad deed (attributed to Iblis). As we can see, possessing knowledge has nothing to do with knowing the “best way” to worship and so on (although following the Qur'an is the best way!). It is simply knowledge which may have been inspired by God (e.g. 12:68) or which may have been concluded by intuition (perhaps based on remnants of knowledge from the days of previous Messages, or observation). Since we know that the Qur'an contains whatever knowledge some people knew, it is more likely that those with knowledge will “recognise” and/or accept the Message (e.g. 17:107).

Prior to the Qur'an, Muhammad did not know the precepts of Islam (11:49, 42:52). If Muhammad knew the “sunna”, he could have taught them that which they did not know (2:151, 4:113, 6:91).

If “sunna” is an explanation of the Qur'an, it would be odd to have an explanation of something that one did not know.

Finally, humans have a sense of right and wrong (30:30, 91:8), thus it is not surprising that God chose sensitive/aware individuals to be Messengers. They would reach a set standard (e.g. 2:124), and God would teach them with various experiences (e.g. 18:66-82).

“There did not believe before them any town which We destroyed, will they then believe? And We did not send before you any but men to whom We sent revelation, so ask the people of the reminder if you do not.”

Qur'an 21:6-7

The context makes it obvious that it refers to people who had knowledge of the previous Messages. This means the “people of the Book”, referred to here as the “people of the reminder” because it is reminding about something in the past. There were reminders before (21:2, 21:48, 26:5, 40:53-54).

The particle “fa” (translated as “so”) confirms that asking the “people of the reminder” refers to asking those who had knowledge of previous Messages.

The Qur'an is the reminder (e.g. 15:6, 15:10, 36:10).

The point is that “asking specific people” is not per se a part of the religion. The principle is the same here:

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Indeed there have been examples before you; therefore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejecters.” (3:137)

Lesson 42: “Examples of example”

This manual is no replacement for individual study or for “3D thinking” (especially in debates). There is always a new way of saying something (e.g. answering someone’s questions about Sura 105), and we can keep documenting it, but the people themselves must be “one with their machinery”. Otherwise they will never have the confidence to really “go forward”. This applies to things beyond religious studies, to society in general. People must have the “sense of direction” to know what they are looking for, thus to “be” the path and the way and to sense what is logical and to see less obvious ways. If people focussed and developed that, distractions/false desires and interpretations would have no choice but to fall away.

Following are explanations of the relevance of Surat 105, 111 and 112. Sunnis often ask when and why such chapters were revealed, so this lesson is a demonstration of seeing the Qur’an for what it actually is.

SURA 105

The Qur’an is a Book of moral and spiritual guidance (e.g. 7:52, 17:9), similitudes/examples (e.g. 3:61, 17:89, 66:1-5), narratives (e.g. 12:3), parables (e.g. 14:24) and real-time Revelations (e.g. 9:5, 33:59). All of these attributes contribute to the guiding quality of its Message.

All Revelation permanent to its addresses is included (e.g. 33:50). Where required, context is provided by the Qur’an itself.

Sura 105 is an example of God’s power. This is confirmed by the fact it actually describes what happened. Although having other evidence of this event would make the example more potent, it is obvious that the Qur’an does not go into detail because 1) it is about God’s power and 2) humans would naturally want to correlate the description with actual events. Ibn Ishaq is probably not the best source of tafsir here.

“Do you not see how Allah has created the seven heavens, one above another...” (71:15)

Obviously a person with only the Qur’an could not see “seven heavens”, just as a person with only the Qur’an cannot confirm the background of Sura 105 beyond example. We are expected to seek knowledge to confirm things, but the important point is the example being painted.

SURA 111

Again, knowing the exact identity of Abu Lahab and his actions would make the example more effective. However, readers would be expected to confirm any details if they so desired, thus the importance of this surah lies in the demonstration of the powerlessness of humans (as opposed to God’s power in Sura 105). Abu Lahab (and his wife) obviously fell into the category of requiring forgiveness for sins, but would not be forgiven since they would not repent.

God forgives those who repent (8:38, 25:70, 85:10-11 etc.), thus in this way it is a prophecy. The point of the chapter is that the wealth and deeds of a human will not save him or her if he or she earns God’s displeasure. It thus also serves as a warning to others.

SURA 112

The Qur’an is a Book of moral and spiritual guidance (e.g. 7:52, 17:9), similitudes/examples (e.g. 3:61, 17:89, 66:1-5), narratives (e.g. 12:3), parables (e.g. 14:24) and real-time Revelations (e.g. 9:5, 33:59). All of these attributes contribute to the guiding quality of its Message.

All Revelation permanent to its addresses is included (e.g. 33:50). Where required, context is provided by the Qur’an itself. Sura 112 is an emphasis on the oneness of Allah. It is something we can recite in prayer and it is an applicable Message to all people.

Not all verses in the Qur’an are instructive. They may be non-instructive and apply to all (even for the sake of some), because God repeats/diversifies ayat:

“Thus do We repeat/diversify the communications for a people who give thanks.”
Qur’an 7:58

Moreover, not everything revealed applies to everyone for all times and places. Specific instructions were given to the Prophet (33:50), for example. All permanent law-binding Revelation addressed to everyone is in the Book, and this is consistent with its purpose. Sura 112 may have been revealed to specific people, but it is something applicable to everyone. The message of God’s oneness is being repeated/presented in a variant way. The Qur’an is guidance, and whatever it says will not contradict its Message or its purpose. Not every verse is a part of the instruction, but the Message is in the Book. If we follow its instructions and take heed of the instructive and non-instructive wisdom, we will be Muslims.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Lesson 43: "Progressive souls"

"This is because Allah has never changed a favour which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition; and because Allah is Hearing, Knowing."

Qur'an 8:53

"But why were there not among the generations before you some possessing intelligence, who would have forbidden the making of mischief in the earth, except a few of those whom We delivered from among them? And those who were unjust went after what they are made to enjoy of plenty, and they were guilty. And it did not beseem your Lord to have destroyed the towns tyrannously, while their people acted well."

Qur'an 11:116-117

"Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition."

Qur'an 13:11

It is a warning, for those among you who wish to progress or remain behind.

Qur'an 74:36-37

Part 1: Introduction

I have debated many Sunnis and seen many different arguments. Sunnis are repeating their arguments (a large portion of which includes insults), thus it is time for "Qur'an-alone" Muslims to focus on a broader goal.

It is obvious that Sunnism is not based on any belief in/concept of God, but on a love of the communal institution embodying the ego. It is closed to anything threatening it (e.g. logic), will let in only those who contribute to, maintain or polish it, and thus will not let anyone leave once they enter (e.g. death for apostasy). Aggression, belligerence and herd-thinking are the secrets of Sunnism's survival.

Our progress thus far presents the world with an opportunity, a signal and a catalyst for change.

A principle of Islam is that God will not change a people's condition until they change themselves (Qur'an 13:11). Muslims and non-Muslims all know there is no room for apathy if we are "reaching for the Light". Let us face it: conflict feeds off the weaknesses of both combatants (e.g. anger, egotism etc.). The only way to lead is by example, and this means focussing on improving ourselves rather than denigrating others.

Sunnism is irrelevant. Let it argue with those it will, but our cause has nothing to do with it. Sunnis are the figures who thought a wave was attempting to sweep them away, so they screamed and shouted and cursed, but the wave did not stop

once it engulfed them. There was a shoreline more important for this wave.

If the world aims for something better, regardless of creed, darkness and oppression will be swept asunder. We should not become preoccupied with the faults and antics of those who oppose progress. This only wastes our time.

We must work on replacing and repelling evil with good (Qur'an 13:22). For this reason I ask people to ask themselves: "What is better? If I am human, I can recognise what is right and wrong. Why am I afraid to recognise it? And why am I afraid to fight for it? If I can imagine what is best, what is better than striving for it?"

We have a chance to walk the path to what is truly in our hearts. This is the opportunity of Life, and is what will make us Awake. We are alive and we are here – everything else is There. This life is just the path. Whatever we believe, we leave a trail, and it goes somewhere.

The heart is always travelling, and it bears the unalterable book we must understand. We are what is in our hearts, and if we understand that, we will know the irrefutable truth. There are many ways to do good, yet there is but one concept and one intention. Our purpose is common, thus we are united.

Those who are awake will feel the urge. It cannot be eclipsed, and it burns like a distant star inside our souls. Those asleep are of no concern. They are shadows dancing along the path, and they travel with us.

The path is to God, however you perceive Him, however you imagine Him. God must be our own belief, thus the path must be our own, of our own reason, perception and humanity.

Let us reflect upon this one truth, working for what is better and leaving behind what is worse.

Division, sectarianism and oppression are born of ego. It tries to make the external a part of it, but it is like a bubble, rising with the rest.

Let us work together to address the suffering that it causes, and strengthen the heartbeat of Humanity.

Part 2: Twin Principles

1) "God must be our own belief, thus the path must be our own, of our own reason, perception and humanity."

This is the heart of the matter. If your belief in God only comes from what other people tell you or want you to believe, it is not real belief. Sunnism, for example, can never be a real religion since it depends on accepting human opinions. Sunnism is Sunnism (i.e. it exists), but if it tries to be the real (compulsory) Islam, it will always be disappointed. If I have to accept something as part of my religion/spirituality, and it means accepting a human opinion (however "scholarly"), it ceases to be my belief and becomes something else. It is the main problem of indoctrination. People accept things as absolute Truth without them even being their own thoughts or perceptions. They will be

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

unresponsive to logic or anything else which threatens their conditioning/programming.

Now if your belief is actually only faith in human opinion etc., how can you say it is “your” belief? You can say that someone is trustworthy as a matter-of-fact, but that is not the point. The point is that religion/spirituality must be a personal choice/experience. We die alone, and we are each responsible for our own soul. If we want to get closer to God, we cannot “tag along” on the back of another soul because that is not being responsible. Even if you follow a correct opinion, it is the very fact you put “faith” in that opinion which is the problem (i.e. you may have scored well in one area, but that was because you copied. It had nothing to do “with you”).

Now I am not going to say that my personal choice or experience is absolutely right, or that anyone else’s is wrong. However, I will say that someone who follows their own perception and uses their brain actually has a path. People who follow *any* proposal relying upon human opinion do not have their own path. If I accept the Qur’an as my source of religion, I do so because of my previous study. Obviously I will change my opinion if presented with adequate reason to. Sunnism is automatically disqualified since it knowingly relies on faith in human opinion.

God is God and humanity is humanity, and they can never mix to MAKE religion. Only on a personal level is there an interaction, since each person only has one soul (or consciousness for others). Where there are humans influencing humans towards absolutism, the path begins to criss-cross and go everywhere (except to God). This is why Sunnism has nothing to do with God, and why there is nothing Godly about it. If I ask anyone to prove without doubt a single hadith (authenticity and authority), and they cannot, I prove that it is not a part of religion.

Religion must be a product of individual perception and reason. Everything that is a part of religion must come from the mind and heart. External human opinion (no matter how “scholarly”) is never individual experience, thus it is irreligious. Faith is for God, for what is better and worse according to human minds and hearts. It is not for humans, or their opinions.

2) “The path is to God, however you perceive Him, however you imagine Him.”

This means that no matter what we believe as “truth”, we are subject to Truth. It does not mean imagining Him as looking like this or that, but rather the system He has initiated (i.e. what will happen to us and the cosmos etc.).

Part 3: A Fight of Light and Darkness

This is an invitation to atheists/agnostics, Buddhists, Hindus, Taoists, Bah’ais, Jews, Christians, Muslims and all people.

It is for anyone with a vision, a conception or hope.

While we walk this plain called Life, we bring with us shadows. These shadows are shaped by our position. If we stand below the Light without anything in between, our

shadow will be complete. If we try to hide from the Light, the distortion/absence of our shadow will expose us.

The more sincere we are, the more we walk the path, the further on the plain we go. Each has their own shadow, each is human and each walks below the same Truth as the others.

We cannot stand in each other’s way, because it “distorts” the Light that reaches us, and hence our shadows. Our shadows are but shadows of ourselves, but they tell us the direction we face, and the path we “are on”. The aim is to “reach” the Light and bear no shadow (a sundial at Noon).

We should never have to fight our way to the Light, since it is only we who can put things between.

Light does not fight shadow or darkness; it simply replaces it.

This is the parable that I invite us to embrace. We walk under one Truth, upon different paths, but we have a common goal and intention.

This is to progress towards God.

We recognise truth by our shadows: their individuality, reality and humanity. Each shadow is the shadow of one person, one soul and one consciousness. We are responsible for our own souls, and thus the path must be our own journey, our own perceptions and our own experience.

Letting a single person lead us on our own quest, relying on opinion rather than completing the path ourselves is to follow something besides what we are seeking, to mix our faith and individual responsibility with one more shadow.

There is no Truth in such an instance, since there is no belief in Truth. It is not faith and it is not religion.

It is the shadow that walks in shadow, blind and invisible, non-existent. It will not reach the Light, because it found its light.

The aim of religion is to purify, and it is the purification of one’s own soul. One who does not purify oneself with one’s own efforts, intellect and faith in God has no religion.

However, people need to work together to purify the collective effort of humanity. We are working towards a common ideal, and under this great Truth, it is our duty to “fight” conflict by replacing its causes. We must start with ourselves, based on our own reasons for being religious in the first place.

If these reasons stem from one’s own consciousness, perceptions and conclusions, not placing faith in other shadows, he/she will face the Light with their own soul. That which requires an intermediary cannot be Truth.

After this, the very motive of religion will become pure, and like light it will replace darkness without a fight.

We must acknowledge that there is no compulsion in religion, because that is not religion.

Whether we are atheist, agnostic or whatever, we all have a view or conception of an ideal.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

We must walk our own paths whether we call it "religion" or not, and our truths are subject to Truth. A part of this common Truth is being a good person, being your own person and thus following the Path of your own knowledge and faith.

Intention counts, so let us do our best inwardly thus collectively.

Faith in human opinion is never faith, so let us drop our faith in human labels and do what we must without distraction.

Let us wake up to a new Dawn.

Part 4: An Argument of Sand

The Sunni says: "If you deny ahadith, you deny the Qur'an because they come from the same people."

Firstly, the primary hadith-collectors discarded over 99% of their original collection. Secondly, they could not have undertaken sufficient research using camels and dead people. Thirdly (and consequently), there is no evidence of their biographical research. Fourthly, it wouldn't matter because the Qur'an says we must follow only the Qur'an. Fifthly, hadith-chains are by definition broken because the beginning does not meet the end (thus the "science of hadith" does not meet its own criterion). Sixthly, there is the most important point:

Religion is based on one's own responsibility and acceptance.

"Say: If you see that it is from God, and you disbelieve it, who is in greater error...?"

Qur'an 41:52

Faith is about what you see, not what another human (whoever) sees or says. Nowhere does the Qur'an appeal to reliability of humans in assessing its value.

"And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand, for then would the falsifiers doubt. Nay! these are signs clear in the breasts of those who are granted knowledge."

Qur'an 29:4

The reception of the Qur'an is its own test. The word "nay" rejects the notion that people should look for external excuses (e.g. the Messenger's personal activities) to reject the Book. The notion of looking to human reliability is thus refuted.

"And they say: Why are not signs sent down upon him from his Lord? Say: The signs are only with God, and I am just a plain warner."

Qur'an 29:50

Any reason to accept the Qur'an will come from God.

"Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book which is recited to them?"

Qur'an 29:51

Again, the reception of the Qur'an is its own test. Comparing the information in the Qur'an with one's knowledge/perception is the accepted method:

"We will soon show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it becomes quite clear to them that it is the truth."

Qur'an 41:53

We must rely on our own knowledge/perceptions of our environment, as well as what we recognise as truth (e.g. morality) within ourselves.

"Do they not then reflect on the Qur'an? Nay, on the hearts there are locks."

Qur'an 47:24

"Say: O my Lord! increase me in knowledge."

Qur'an 20:114

Religion must be an isnad (transmission-chain) consisting only of the individual and God. Placing faith in anything except the word of God and one's intellect, experience and conclusions is the opposite of what the Qur'an tells us to do.

"In what hadith would they believe after God and His ayat?"

Qur'an 45:6

"And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that."

Qur'an 17:36

To say that we are required to seek religious knowledge from other humans is to set up intermediaries. Intermediaries require faith in humans, which is impossible in a religion. It ceases to be "Religion", becoming "cult".

The Sunni declares that to reject ahadith is to reject God's word. Ahadith characters, narrators and recorders are not God; that they are written by the same people is an unproven assumption. The Sunni has religious faith in this unproven assumption, and then the nature of such ahadith must be

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

proven (i.e. Qur'anic or un-Qur'anic). Did not the Prophet oversee the recording?

If the Qur'an were recorded accurately, it follows that as a Message to all (24:28, 42:7) it was widely distributed to many. If someone assumes (without logic or evidence) that it was not recorded accurately, there can certainly be no Sunni religion for that person. It just makes the sources of ahadith more unreliable. If the Qur'an were widely distributed, it follows that it was passed on by many and rendered difficult/impossible to change (confirmed by early manuscripts).

The Sunni argument is irrelevant, since God guaranteed the preservation of the Qur'an (15:9, 41:42). If the Sunni questions this, he/she questions the Qur'an. Without adequate logic or evidence, this is an isolated matter which can in no way validate "sunna". A person can never provide 100% proof of God, and likewise a person can never provide 100% proof that the Qur'an is preserved. It is based upon an individual's evaluation, especially given the absence of *disproof*.

"Qur'an-alone" Muslims accept the Qur'an based on the Qur'an and individual perception and knowledge. The Sunni accepts the Qur'an based on individual faith in scholars, recorders, narrators, hearsay and human opinion and action. The Sunni believes in God only because other people instruct him/her to. This God is the God of Sunnism, which is built from human hearsay, opinion and desire.

The God of Sunnism exists because of scholars, and thus scholars are the Sunni God. Sunnis must decide whether they accept the Qur'an (and thus verses 15:9 and 41:42), then reject Sunnism either way.

You cannot confirm something better with something weaker.

Part 5: All Progress is to God

We have established that Religion must be an isnad (transmission-chain) consisting only of God and the individual. Acknowledgement of God must be of the person's own intellect and experiences. Likewise, the Path must be the person's own journey.

Each person has a right to believe whatever they wish. For example, a person has the earthly right to deem which Qur'anic verse they deem true. Ideas should be able to be explained (e.g. the rulings of Sunni scholars should be explainable and traceable by average people using the Qur'an), but human explanation and opinion is not proof. Something that is known to be a human conception cannot be held as religious Truth (to "conceive" is to initiate without adequate logic or evidence).

God knows if an idea is sensible or sincere; humans can only judge humans by their actions.

I will oppose any action that trespasses my human moral code. Individual development/"translation"/"decoding" of this code allows one to "see" their path stretching into the distance. There is a "right" (better) direction and a "wrong"

(worse) direction, thus one's sense of "right" and "wrong" defines the path that one sees.

The most objective standard is how an activity affects society at large. For example, inequality and disproportionate punishments (e.g. stoning for adultery) force humans to see others as less than what they are, and prevent misdeeds from healing. Religion must be progressive on a social and individual scale, as well as rational (a product of individual knowledge/perception explainable by all). This is because Religion is about becoming close to God, requiring a "positive" or progressive force in all areas of life.

Negative actions which exceed the crime (their cause) deviate from the Path. The ability to act with equity and moderation comes from knowing the real value of something.

After considering these points, my path would be very similar no matter what I believed. That is to say, my path would always aim for the same vicinity (although I have accepted the path of the Qur'an). Thus far (according to my knowledge and perception), the path of the Qur'an is the best and most direct path towards God. Remember, a path (e.g. the path of the Qur'an) is not "guidance" because it teaches us what we already know (e.g. what is "good")...rather it is "guidance" due to what it leads to.

As a preamble to Part 5, I would like to finish with a note on "diversity". Many people worry about having the "correct interpretation" (e.g. of how many times one should pray each day). Since Religion is between the individual and God, no-one can claim the "right" interpretation. There is for the individual the "best interpretation" (which should of course be based on valid, explainable reasons). A truly sincere and objective investigation using all available avenues of enquiry should result in a "correct" interpretation. Since knowledge is limited, the person should not enforce his/her interpretation, but simply offer it and say that it is for them the best/most comprehensive solution.

One should never say: "God is on my side." One should say: "I am on God's side." This is a microcosm of the religious debate.

There is no "right" or "wrong" as long as one is sincere and uses knowledge/understanding with all possible avenues of enquiry. The main motive/principle is "positivity"/progress (opting for the good/better decision in any situation). To "conquer" the Path, one must "be" the Path and embody the "ideas of the Ideal" (charity, mercy etc.).

For these reasons, "Qur'an-alone" Muslims are united not only amongst themselves, but also in spheres of human idealism, rationality and progress.

All progress is to God, however you see Him.

Part 6: Never-Ending Road

"Progress" does not mean reaching the destination. It means moving in the right direction. Moving in the right direction does not mean "doing the right thing" (e.g. first time). It means studying/seeking and intending to do the right thing.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Sincere people with differences (e.g. on details in religion) are people at different stages of the same path. This is why religious people cannot call agnostics/students/seekers “disbelievers”. In effect, any human who is seeking truth or who is attempting to be a good person is on the same path as the Muslim, the progressive or any other seeker.

A person may be a Hindu, a Muslim etc., yet still seeking the truth. That is because (in this life) the quest for God is never-ending. The Hindu, Muslim etc. will be what they are based on their current understanding. One should not be afraid of investigating Truth, since it does not set (Qur'an 6:76-78). Once again, we are all united under one concept and intention.

“Religious scriptures” are not God. This means that if someone believes a book is God's word, he/she had to already believe in God, or at least be open to Him. One's prior wisdom/perceptions/beliefs/knowledge may be recognised in the book, leading them to adhere more strongly to their appropriate way of life (i.e. they will “walk the path” for the sake of getting close to God).

The book will offer wisdom, so alternatively it may “awaken” a studier's subconscious acknowledgement of the Divine. It may cause them to reflect and approach life in a different way (e.g. to “walk the path”).

If a book disagrees with basic fundamental concepts both external (in the world) and internal (morality based upon conscience and effects on society), the person will reject it. A person may accept a book as belief or hypothesis until (if ever) disproven. This would not affect one's faith in God, since the scripture is not God.

Progressive people are humanistic and conscious of God (to be conscious of God, we have to be conscious of ourselves). The purpose of religions is to get close to God (however one imagines Him), and whether they are official or not, this is called “progress”.

Progressive people work to replace cultists (people who distort religion and follow things which conflict with human morality, whether they claim “religion” or not).

They work to progress humanity (ultimately to a conception of God) without enforcing it, and that is Religion.

Dawn

Without inspiration, it's difficult.

At times, it's tempting to *throw in the towel*
(Especially if you're combatting cults),
But our trouble's the tug of a vaster Vow.

It's a void, evolving into Distance

Opened in unison with our inner Eye
Around which the stars align and dance
To the tune of a celestial Symphony...

...It is the tribute of the breaking dawn

Rehearsing for that eternal Day,
And as we see the Pathway start to spawn,
We witness the shadows fading away...

(We are the dawn)

Lesson 44: “An unnecessary evil”

Evil walks in view, wearing a cowl called “Complexity”. Although the Devil is disguised, this cloak looks so scary that people are afraid to question or investigate what is inside.

It is the cloak worn by Institutions, including Sunnism and the economic system. Complexity in no way serves society; it merely wraps around like a snake and suffocates anyone who tries to breathe. It is a blanket of black cloud, but anyone who stops looking, closes their eyes and takes the time to feel the wind, to breathe deeply enough to “feel” their freedom – to know that there is really Nothing blocking their view – will know that these clouds can be blown away by the slightest breath.

Humans and all organisms have instinct. The way to live well, in harmony with the earth and each other, is programmed into us. We do not need to create Complexity to tell us how to exist. We are already a product of Complexity, thus it is all there. When it comes to “wisdom”, nothing worth knowing can be taught. Social, religious, economic, political and all the other types of Institution are essentially redundant. What is created can be uncreated, and we would not cease to be. All that holds them there is our choice – our choice to not look behind the veil, the veil that has no purpose but to protect the one who wears it, the one who, while wearing it, can do what he wants.

Human beings have the mind and intelligence to make choices. People make millions of subconscious choices each day, thereby governing their own individual lives. If people can govern their own lives, they do not need more man-made laws to tell them how to do it. The purpose of such laws must be to ensure the natural humanistic flow of society, not to maintain the Institutions thus make people tools of the System rather than the System a tool of the people.

Humans are, by their nature, progressive. That is to say, we naturally wish to “improve” our condition according to our individual perception of “what is better”. This will be relative from situation to situation, and two perceptions which clash will create discord. For example, a selfish notion of “what is better” will be at the intrinsic expense of others, leading to societal imbalance. The affected parties will attempt to correct this imbalance, but if done from purely selfish motives rather than for the sake of society as a whole, change will be temporal like topsoil without roots.

The quality of a practice or organisation can be measured by its sustainability. Short-sightedness is non-sustainable. Conflict and discord is non-sustainable, but neither is peace if based upon self-serving and thus short-sighted motives. The Capitalist monetary system relies on a constant series of imbalances and rebalances (expenditure and earnings), thus miring people in the “selfish state”. Principally, we must expend our energy for short-term goals or else we will be unable to service our higher needs.

Maslow's “hierarchy of needs” identifies five basic needs: “physiological”, “security”, “belonging”, “self-esteem” and “self-actualisation”. The Capitalist monetary system principally includes a need below “physiological”, which we call “financial”. It ensures that our progress towards “self-actualisation” is really a cyclical reversion to a non-

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

sustainable necessity – money.

For instance, according to the Capitalist system, before someone can have food they must have money to buy it with. When this person's physiological needs are fulfilled, their natural human tendency to progress will lead to the pursuit of longer-sighted goals such as security, family etc.. In the current system, all levels of the hierarchy are directly dependent upon money. If a person wishes to have a family, he/she needs money, not food. This is because all levels below the others are fulfilled only by money. Family does not lead to self-esteem – it leads to necessity of more money (for the family). Self-fulfilment will be dependent on the ability of money to fulfil ALL levels below it, and under this artificial life-support, money controls the entire hierarchy of who we are and what we need.

It follows that “self-actualisation” (in this System) is dependent upon man-made necessity, and thus can never exist without the System. Pursuit of something “higher” than all lower needs exists as a part of Capitalist society, and thus cannot change it. Ideals such as “freedom”, “achievement” etc. are presented as ornaments which can only be obtained by pursuit of material goods and hedonistic (short-sighted) goals. This is because “self-fulfilment” becomes more possible with more money (e.g. one can live in luxury or give to the poor), thus the more money we have, the more self-fulfilled we can become! In effect, the only way to be “self-fulfilled” is to look good and be free from worry or dissatisfaction thanks to having a lot of money. The more money someone has, the less “short-sighted” they can be and the more they can speak about the importance of giving others money, or how money does not make us happy (there of course cannot be too many charitable rich people, unless there are too many poor people with incentive to work). Nothing changes, since money is the answer to its own problems.

The System is deliberately flawed, ensuring its problems are never fixed and thus is always needed. As more people participate and accept “virtues” such as competition, acquisition and the necessity of money, the System perpetuates and it becomes harder for weaker players to progress to higher needs. This has nothing to do with who they are as people, but rather the amount of money they have. When power and opportunity become concentrated, the gap between the weak and strong widens. Since competition and acquisition are considered natural components of society, and since equal distribution of wealth would effectively destroy the need for the System, this imbalance is “necessary”. Money becomes more and more important to our social fabric, such that the event of a financial breakdown leads to mass chaos as millions of selfish notions collide.

With globalisation, the System spreads and its symptoms begin on a macro-scale. Nations maintain a monopoly whilst others are exploited and left to starve. The more competition there is, the more tension and hatred arises.

It is obvious from empirical study that the notion of unchecked acquisition is an ultimately unsustainable concept. The desire for more than what one needs allows an extra “need” to contaminate the basic hierarchy. One does not need money. One needs food, after which they can progress to the next level, and so on. It is a natural, symbiotic and progressive chain, but money runs through it like blight.

If we can understand Progress as a natural process which builds on itself from stage to stage, we can understand that each experience, each acquisition and each decision is in fact part of a larger, non-cyclical Process. This does not end in money, nor does it require it. “Self-actualisation” is about reaching one's potential, and the only way to do this is to progress BEYOND all lower needs (including acquisition) such that these lower needs actually mean something. Food means nothing if we consume ourselves to death. Security means nothing if we stay in a palace all of our lives. Belonging means nothing if others have no vision or individual thought, and self-esteem means nothing if it is based on temporal notions of “status”.

“Self-actualisation” defines the rest of the Process (Path). Once all lower needs are fulfilled, a person will feel the natural compulsion to progress past the “selfish-state”. This is a (long-sighted) stage distanced enough from short-sighted needs to see that the most sustainable (therefore conducive) condition for human continuance is harmony with the environment. As mentioned, the desire for excess creates an unnecessary “need” which contaminates all higher levels. For example, if someone wishes to eat too much food, their higher needs will be satisfied only as long as they can still have that excess food. The cure is to see each need in its proper functional perspective - i.e. as a part of the larger Process. The stage of “self-actualisation” continues to increase self-awareness whilst manifesting it outwardly (for the benefit of others).

Just as each stage is a part of a larger Process, people are part of a larger community and environment. Humans are naturally dependent upon each other, starting at birth. Being in harmony with the environment means recognising one's real needs, and this extends to harmony with other humans. Nature is the real System, and it provides the commodities that we need. Humans working together to manage resources ensures that each group or individual is protected from the threat of competition, and accelerates technological progress. Competition is based upon short-sighted (selfish) motives, and ignores the rest of the Process of which necessary acquisition is just one part.

For example, if one community hoards resources at the expense of another, it is basing its needs, identity and existence on the possession of unnecessary goods. Individuals can only progress when they surpass unnecessary wants, and societies addicted to excess and unsustainable practices will be forced to exploit the weak and to acquire more and more. Instead of a progressive, mutually-beneficial human family, Capitalism will result. However, if society satisfies its basic needs and recognises them as stages of natural human progression, it will continue to develop socially, technologically and spiritually. Since humans ultimately require love, security and spirituality, these values will manifest outwardly. They are the results of Progress and self-awareness, and are what we must embody if they are to mean something. This is the basic nature of humanity, the “natural state” beyond the selfishness derived from artificial and unnecessary Complexity.

Afterthought:

We can envisage “Eternity” in terms of “endless sustainability”. If a person recognises that Progress is about seeking the ultimate Truth, he/she will devote the entire

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Process of existence towards seeking knowledge and acknowledging that all the values of Progress are a part of that Truth.

Belief in God gives sustainable meaning to this quest.

The Path will not be completed in this lifetime, but even to the Atheist, to worry about this is to say that we should kill ourselves since we will die anyway.

It is no more irrational than love.

Selfishness is irrational.
All progress is to God, however you imagine Him.

Lesson 45: "Directed answers to some misguided questions"

As we learnt in the prior two lessons:

"Say: Then bring some (other) book from Allah which is a better guide than both of them, (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful." (28:49)

We do not need the Message to believe in God.

Belief in God is a sustainable way of giving meaning to our progressive existence.

We are "His" creation, and thus to know our purpose we must know ourselves.

We can thus recognise what leads to God (progressiveness).

For a Muslim, the Qur'anic way of life leads to God.

All values in the Qur'an are a part of Islam, but a person does not have to use Qur'anic values with intention obey it (for example, someone who does not know the Qur'an).

That person does it because it is "right"/better, whether or not he/she gives meaning to what is "right"/better by acknowledging what is best (God).

The principles of what is "right"/better can be recognised by effects on individuals and society as a whole.

For a Muslim, the Qur'an embodies the best and most direct framework/identification of righteousness.

Ahadith do not reach the Qur'anic standard, and aside from providing some nice examples of Qur'anic/self-evident wisdom, lead only to regression via compulsion, perversion and man-made complexity.

If a person finds a better guide than the Qur'an, logically they would adhere to it.

Ahadith are not better; they are worse, thus are not even relevant to the question of authenticity.

"And when they commit an indecency they say: We found our fathers doing this, and Allah has enjoined it on us. Say: Surely Allah does not enjoin indecency; do you say against Allah what you do not know?" (7:28)

"...and those who slay men who enjoin justice, announce to them a painful chastisement." (3:21)

"Oh ye who believe! be maintainers of justice..." (4:135)

The system itself is self-evident:

"Then set your face upright for religion in the right state-- the nature made by Allah in which He has made men." (30:30)

"And when Ibrahim said to his sire, Azar: Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error." (6:74)

"Then He inspired in it its right and wrong. Indeed, he succeeds who purifies it." (91:8)

Hypocrites ask: "But if this is your standard, what prevents you tweaking it?"

We say: "The Qur'an embodies all positive values. We see the Qur'an for what it is: a source of wisdom guiding to what is best. We compare it to what we know, thus most importantly we can recognise truth inside and outside of ourselves.

The Qur'an is not a guide because of what it teaches, but because of the direction it makes us face.

The specific laws/practices in the Qur'an are compatible with Islamic moral principles.

For example, fasting promotes discipline and Hajj promotes union/interaction and equality (22:25).

The Qur'an could have mandated 99 hidings for adulterers, or decreed fasting in another month, but it is about the attitude to such things, not details.

It is about the direction we spiritually face.

The rest is up to us.

"Say: Then bring some (other) book from Allah which is a better guide than both of them, (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful." (28:49)

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

We must know why we follow a specific path. Self-awareness eliminates reliance upon human opinion, and Sunnism is shown to be self-evidently false.

The purpose of the above is not to say that we can change the Qur'an, but to demonstrate that whether one believes the Qur'an or not, ahadith are irrelevant.

QUESTION 1

In one recitation of the Qur'an, it says that the Romans were defeated and would be overcome. In another, it says that the Romans were defeated and would triumph. Which one do you accept?

ANSWER 1

The one with historical evidence, since one is right and one is wrong.

The guidance itself is a series of principles, much more important (per se) than linguistic accuracy. Its way of life and spiritual direction is self-evident, the main principle being abstinence from following human authority (as unquestionable religion).

It is impossible for me and many others to follow humans as a source of religion, since we were given individual brains to use. If you refer to my article "Progressive Souls", you will find my further thoughts.

So if the Qur'an is corrupted or false, it is corrupted and false. Reliance upon human narrations/stories cannot change that. The Qur'an as I have it is complete and fully-detailed in and of itself, and besides, my rationale in studying IT does not "about-turn" and resort to following what other people force themselves to swallow.

The system itself is self-evident:

"Then set your face upright for religion in the right state-- the nature made by Allah in which He has made men." (30:30)

"And when Ibrahim said to his sire, Azar: Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error." (6:74)

"Then He inspired in it its right and wrong. Indeed, he succeeds who purifies it." (91:8)

One of the great things about the Qur'an is its hostility towards reliance upon man-made narrations.

As for your example, such a scribal variance is not the only amongst available copies, and represents the fallibility of human scribes. It is to me possible that the preservation of the Dhikr refers to that in 85:21-22, but I am still researching the Qur'an itself.

It is of course also to be considered that there exists "one true" recitation, without the guarantee that all people have access to it. This is the thing, and is why people must approach Religion with the right intention and right personal effort (in this case we just take the recitation which is historically correct).

After all, there was no necessary guarantee that the previous Messages were preserved, so how did people live?

By discarding idols (e.g. institutions), working to purify oneself and embodying the self-evident values that benefit society.

Religion is beyond "institution". The institution is temporary and means nothing.

Finally, the actual wisdom and dhikr of the recitation is apparently preserved.

QUESTION 2

Do you then believe that consensus (e.g. on the punishment for adultery) is a basis on which to make laws?

ANSWER 2

Human consensus has to be a product of human reason, and thus it has to be a product of individual choice. Therefore I do not "accept" what the crowd does just because the crowd does it.

I mentioned stoning in "Progressive souls". As per the Qur'an, we are supposed to be able to reform ourselves. It is the practice of idol-worshippers, and is not something that God would endorse for adultery.

The law of equivalence is a self-evident principle (2:190, 5:8, 5:45, 5:77, 17:33, 42:40).

Now consensus does not make something correct. What is right can be rationally conceived without the need for propaganda and herd-thinking.

Back to the topic, if we are to say that there is no actual preserved recitation of the Qur'an, we must follow the self-evident principles which the Qur'an *does* dictate.

If hypothetically the Qur'an sinks, then "Sunna" certainly sinks before it. We cannot confirm something stronger with something weaker.

If that happens, nothing for me changes since I followed the path because of the path, not what was said about it.

A religion has to live up to its claims, and so apart from textual variants, the actual wisdom itself (dhikr) seems preserved.

Following on...

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

Response to the claim that we cannot confirm Qur'anic authenticity without ahadith:

You confirm the Qur'an with something written after it...

Do you mean that the Qur'an is not sufficient to believe in without the companions saying it is true?

Do you believe they followed the Qur'an? Because they arranged it, do you believe they could do whatever they desired? If not, why do you use them to confirm the Qur'an rather than the Qur'an to judge their actions (including the Prophet's)?

Do you say that they were perfect? If they were perfect, they could not have been made perfect except by God, yes? If they were perfect, it follows that they transmitted the Qur'an and that the book we have today is authentic. If that is correct, why do you resort to imperfect sources (ahadith) to add to and explain the Qur'an? Now according to the perfect Qur'an, God never guaranteed the preservation of anything except the Qur'an.

You say that you believe in God. However, you cannot believe in the Qur'an without first confirming it by unprotected reports. You believe God made the companions perfect, but you will not believe that the Qur'an is His unless you believe he made the companions perfect.

Where did God say He made the companions perfect?

Where do you get your religion?

Your actual belief in Allah and the Qur'an comes from your belief in the infallibility of humans. When examined closely, you actually follow the companions as gods. To you, the Qur'an comes from them or else God never authored it. Moreover, the reports of these companions are from fallible humans.

Did you read ahadith first, found them a good source of religion and then accepted the Qur'an as a decoration?

Maybe you do not think that the companions were perfect. Maybe you think that hadith-writers are infallible.

Where did God say that he made hadith-writers (Bukhari and co.) infallible? After all, if it were not for these people telling us what the companions did, how could you believe in your perfected humans?

Now if the companions and hadith-writers were fallible, why do you ask the question?

Now I do not believe in the Qur'an based on what I want the companions to be like. The Qur'an is guidance, and it is recognisable to a Muslim firstly by its observations, and secondly by its wisdom.

A person who accepts the Qur'an does so because he/she already believes in God, or was open to it. If the Qur'an recognisably leads to God, or it awakens a subconscious awareness of Purpose, the reader will accept it.

If the Qur'an does not live up to a person's standards, he/she will reject it.

If one accepts the Qur'an, finding it perfect/satisfactory (we might be still learning), one does not need to adopt faith in humans. Faith in the preservation of the Qur'an depends upon the Qur'an itself. If it exists, it is given. The cosmos still exists, thus if you think it is created, its Creator is given.

Where do the companions confirm that God exists? How did the Messenger do that?

We accept the Qur'an before ahadith, yes? The Qur'an is self-sufficient, agreed? I noticed someone tried to worm out of the Qur'an being fully-detailed by saying it is fully-detailed to BELIEVE IN! Let us use that.

If the Qur'an is good enough, it follows that we will follow it BECAUSE it is good enough.

You say that it is only good enough because the companions were good enough.

Again, where does God declare they were good enough?

If there are different variations in the Qur'an (e.g. regarding verses 30:2-3), obviously one will be corrupt. We reject the one with human additions because it will not be as correct/sensible/perfect/satisfactory. We do not per se judge by humans (isnad), because that leads into the problems described (idol-worship). Of course, in this case judging by reliability is no problem since it is a historical matter. It does not affect the rest of the Qur'an, thus it follows that the one with historical evidence is the one to be accepted (from God).

In the presence of varying spellings etc., it does not matter if the meaning is unaltered. What matters is that the self-evident Message reached us. If the Qur'an is good enough now, then it follows that we accept that. If we personally disagree, then we explain ourselves.

We change our view with evidence.

"Certainly We have revealed to you a Book in which is your good reminder; what! do you not then understand?" (21:10)

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the reminder and indeed, We will be its guardian." (15:9)

"And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that when he spoke (or recited), Satan threw into it (some misunderstanding). But Allah abolishes that which Satan throws in; then Allah makes precise His verses. And Allah is Knowing and Wise." (22:52)

The actual point of the self-evident Message will survive: i.e. that there is one God, do good deeds, acknowledge sins and be sincere.

Recitations will vary and words can be rewritten/mistranslated, but the self-evident Message remains.

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

“Say: Then bring some (other) book from Allah which is a better guide than both of them, (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful.” (28:49)

So find something pointing to a better explanation of things, and which fits our common spirituality.

Find something more direct and beneficial to society, regardless of what you believe.

The details of practices such as fasting and Hajj are obviously not proof that something leads to God, but the principles of the practices themselves are self-evident. It is the “direction” we spiritually face which counts, and details are guidelines to eliminate disagreement. Having a framework of “dos” and “don’ts” keeps us focussed and defines the path.

The system itself is self-evident:

“Then set your face upright for religion in the right state-- the nature made by Allah in which He has made men.” (30:30)

“And when Ibrahim said to his sire, Azar: Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error.” (6:74)

“Then He inspired in it its right and wrong. Indeed, he succeeds who purifies it.” (91:8)

The criteria for accepting something from God is never related to judgement of humans, thus ahadith are entirely irrelevant to the topic.

If you accept a religious law from ahadith, please bring your proof (2:23, 2:111, 6:57, 8:42, 14:10, 21:24, 27:64, 28:75, 30:35, 52:38).

In short, I will not participate in your institution of human reverence. If you accept the Qur’an, you should abandon ahadith as sources of law. If you reject the Qur’an, you should abandon ahadith as sources of law.

This is the difference between your institution and my beliefs. Your desire to accept something without sincerity allows you to accept humans as idols.

I cannot accept humans as pinpoints of Faith, because that contradicts the entire purpose of Religion. I do not find the Qur’an in disagreement with me.

If you find that you need to believe in infallible humans (or just humans) to CONFIRM something, you need to examine why you believe what you say you do.

Lesson 45: “33:37”

Some people claim that 33:37 proves Allah used Muhammad’s conduct as an example, and thus that Muslims must follow Muhammad’s example (sunna).

RESPONSE:

“And when you said to him to whom Allah had shown favour and to whom you had shown a favour: Keep your wife to yourself and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; and you concealed in your soul what Allah would bring to light, and you feared men, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him. But when Zaid had accomplished his want of her, We gave her to you as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons, when they have accomplished their want of them; and Allah's command shall be performed.” (33:37)

“There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allah has ordained for him; such has been the course of Allah with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute.” (33:38)

“Those who deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear any one but Allah; and Allah is sufficient to take account.” (33:39)

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Last of the prophets; and Allah is cognizant of all things.” (33:40)

33:37 admonishes Muhammad for fearing the people more than Allah.

Muhammad’s fear of the people’s opinion made him envisage a prohibition not in the Qur’an.

The women allowed to Muhammad were given in 33:50, and there was no prohibition on the wives of adopted sons.

33:37-40 details an active example where Allah admonished Muhammad, and used his mistake to remind people that they should not make prohibitions which are not in the Qur’an. This point is confirmed by 33:38.

The Qur’an is a Book of moral and spiritual guidance (e.g. 7:52, 17:9), similitudes/examples (e.g. 3:61, 17:89, 66:1-5), narratives (e.g. 12:3), parables (e.g. 14:24) and real-time Revelations (e.g. 9:5, 33:59). All of these attributes contribute to the guiding quality of its Message.

All Revelation permanent to its addresses is included (e.g. 33:50). Where required, context is provided by the Qur’an itself.

There are active examples where the Arabic Qur’an seizes upon relevant preordained events to make a point. An example is 8:43 where Allah made Muhammad dream

A Qur'an-Alone Manual

something which gave him confidence (for the upcoming battle). This was so that the leader of the Muslims could inspire them.

33:37 was another such example, where Allah used Muhammad's fear of people's opinion (over Allah) to highlight how no-one can uphold prohibitions not in the Qur'an (i.e. not even their "boss").

After all, if Muhammad feared marrying the wife of his adopted son, the other Muslims would too.

Muhammad married Zainab as Allah's preordained example for the Muslims. 33:37 states that this was to break an old taboo so that other Muslims would not make the same mistake as Muhammad.

Muhammad was their leader, so if it could be seen that the most knowledgeable did something (compelled by Allah), then obviously Allah would allow them to marry the wives of their adopted sons.

Muhammad's marriage to Zainab was a preordained event, and is not comparable to explaining/demonstrating the Qur'an except in terms of *Allah* reminding people (not Muhammad). Muhammad's alleged explanations were not compelled events, for if he did not fulfil his mission, he would have been penalised.

Muhammad was under no threat of being punished for not marrying Zainab, since the marriage was preordained. Therefore there is no relationship between "sunna" and this episode.

Muhammad was not an exemplar in his personal choice; he was admonished for his attitude and compelled (used as a tool) to marry Zainab, thus demonstrating that Allah allowed it (not that Muhammad was to be followed).

There was no need to give a direct verse saying: "You may marry the wives of your adopted sons". The Muslims already knew that the prohibition they were upholding was false, and this is proved by the fact that Muhammad was fearing *the people's opinions*, not what Allah might think.

If he did not actually know that the prohibition was false, he could not have feared the people more than Allah.

The prohibition is self-evident since adopted sons are biologically not really sons, and their wives are thus completely unrelated (unless they are relatives).

33:39-40 confirm that the point of 33:37 was to remind people that they should only heed the Qur'an in matters of superstition, and that their prohibition was false because adopted sons are not really sons. The Muslims' previous attitude was the result of a man-made institution, not reality.

The active example was more effective because people were not going to respond to a verse declaring: "You may marry the wives of your adopted sons". Allah knew this because they were already upholding a false prohibition, therefore Allah deliberately made the Muslim leader "take the dive" and marry Zainab.

It was not compulsory to marry the wives of adopted sons, so to effectively break the psychological barrier, Allah caused it

to happen.

Muhammad was also admonished for his presumptuous attitude in 80:1-10, where the already obvious principle of social equality was abandoned. Allah used Muhammad's error to remind the other Muslims, just as they were reminded in 33:37-40.