

GOD'S TESTIMONY

THE DIVINE AUTHORSHIP OF
THE QURAN



one reason
AN IERA PROJECT

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Introduction

Picture this: you are walking back home from a busy day and you see a blind person trying to cross the highway. No one notices him except you. You rush to help and guide him safely across. You do what any compassionate person would.

In life, we are also blind in a way. We are thrown into existence and we do not have any clear vision of why. We don't even know where we are heading to after this life. God's guidance provides answers to the questions that blind us from knowing why we are here, what we are supposed to do and where we are going. Since God is the source of all goodness, and He is the most compassionate, giving guidance to humanity is an inevitable expression of His nature.

In the same way, when we make a mobile phone, a car or laptop, we provide the buyer with a manual or some sort of instructions. We don't want people to learn the hard way or damage their new expensive 'toy' by misusing it. Since God created this world and everything in it, then it makes sense that God would tell us why he created us. God created a universe with the right set of life-sensitive physical laws to permit our existence. He also provided us with everything we have: from the air we breathe, fruit we eat, to the family and friends we have. God provided for us all with our physical needs; so why would he not provide for us when it comes to our existential and

spiritual needs?

As humans, we want to know the purpose of life, what happens to us after death, the right way to live, what is right and wrong - and we want to know more about God. Clearly, God is central to our existence; therefore, it makes sense he would want to communicate and guide us.

The question arises: with so many differing religions and religious books out there, which one do we follow? Surely they all can't be right: so maybe they are all wrong? It is easy to simply reject all religious texts and say God has revealed nothing and all religions are wrong. This is partly true; there are a lot of contradictory and man-made religions out there. However, it is illogical to conclude that God has not revealed anything at all; we have good reasons to believe that God would send us guidance. It would be better to keep an open mind and look for evidence or test the religious books before we pass judgement. Many may turn out to be false, but there may be one that will pass the test.

This short booklet aims to show how, based on objective rational criteria, the Qur'an is the word of God. This does not mean that the Qur'an is the only revelation that God has revealed to humanity. Islam teaches that God has been revealing guidance and scripture to His messengers throughout time; the Qur'an is simply the last and final revelation.

Test the Message

Any rational person would agree that to assess whether a particular book has been revealed by God, it has to pass some kind of test. Without actual verification, any book can make the claim of being revealed by God. For the test to be taken seriously, it must be based on rational, objective criteria. The means we use to decide whether a book is from God or not must be applicable to any religious book. It can't just be based on personal and individual feelings, emotions, intuitions and experience; but should be something that can be applied by everyone, everywhere.

These rational criteria should include:

- 1.** The concept of God must be clear, coherent and rational. A God who is imperfect and human-like is irrational and doesn't satisfy the heart and mind. The message about our relationship with God should be clear and logical too. It wouldn't make sense for a book of God calling for worship and devotion to anything other than God.
- 2.** It should be internally and externally consistent: If a book says on page 20 that giving to charity is good, then on page 340 says that giving to charity is bad, that would be an internal inconsistency. Additionally, if the book says that the moon is made of cheese, that would be an external inconsistency. A book from God can't have these

inconsistencies.

3. It must have signs that show it is from God. The revelation must contain something that indicates it is from the Divine.

We will apply these criteria to the Qur'an, which will help us understand that it is God's revelation.

Concept of God in the Qur'an

If a book says God is a big human being in the sky with a long white beard, you could safely assume that this book is not from God. This is because reason leads us inevitably to conclude that God must be external to the universe and independent. A human, regardless of form, is a dependent being. This is because they have limited physical qualities such as size, shape and colour. All things with limited physical qualities are dependent because external factors gave rise to their limitations. God is not 'physical' and is independent, because He created the universe. Nothing with limited physical qualities can be God. God is the creator of all creation so logically He must be different and distinct from creation. God is not like the creation and can't be inside the creation.

The Qur'an's view on God is intuitive, rational and logically coherent. The following verses are among the most oft-recited passages from the entire Qur'an, where God introduces Himself to us:

‘Say, “He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot none nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him”

The Qur'an, Chapter 112, Verses 1-4

This passage from the Qur'an was revealed as a response to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he was asked about the nature of God. On an initial reading, we have a clear understanding of what is being said, and conclude that this idea of God makes perfect sense:

God is one. You cannot have two unlimited powers co-existing, unless one of them limits their power. God, by definition is not limited - nothing external poses any restrictions on Him - therefore He is one. God is the only deity worthy of worship and devotion. God is the One: this oneness cannot be tampered with in any way; you cannot divide Him into parts. Although other religions also say God is one, what makes Islam unique is that God alone is the only one worthy of worship. While other religions may claim belief in one God, they do not commit to singling out God for worship. The Qur'an makes it clear that God alone should be worshipped and supplicated to.

God is eternal. God is uncreated. If God were created, He would require a creator. A thing that requires a creator cannot be God. God is the sole creator, owner and sustainer of everything in existence. Nothing takes place without His permission. God is the only one that can provide for all our needs; He is the only one we are completely dependent upon. Reflecting upon the true understanding of the oneness of God should completely change the way we understand reality and how we

function in life. This realisation is sufficient to remove all stress and worry from our lives, as we are no longer deluded into thinking that things around us or even ourselves have any intrinsic power. Once we understand the truth that all power belongs to God, who is truly in charge and is the only one that can help us, there is no longer any fear or worry. We realise that we are in the care of the best of protectors when we acknowledge that our maker and sustainer is God.

No one is comparable to Him. God is the creator, so does not resemble the creation in any way. When something creates another thing, it does not become that thing. When a carpenter creates a chair, he doesn't become a chair. By greater reason, God did not become the universe when He created it. Creation is distinct and disjoined from the creator. No one has the power, care, love, power, majesty and wisdom of God. Humans have limited, deficient quantities; but God's attributes are perfect.

Internally & Externally Consistent

The Qur'an maintains that a key criterion for a book to be from God is that it cannot have discrepancies:

**'Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)?
Had it been from other than God, they would
surely have found therein much discrepancy'**

The Qur'an, Chapter 4, Verse 82

We invite you to read the Qur'an for yourself and ponder on its verses. As an encouragement, we want to highlight the timeless nature of the book. The Qur'an uses a language that can be appreciated and understood by anyone, at any period of time. Even though it was revealed in the seventh century, it has the ability to address various levels of intellect, at various times, while describing natural phenomena and encouraging the reader to reflect on the physical world. The Qur'an achieves this by choosing words with a range of meanings that can be used to describe and point to the natural world. These words can relate to past and present

broad understandings of the natural world, as well as evoking spiritual and moral insights. It does not mean the Qur'an will agree with every single scientific theory - but it engages with various audiences, whether in the seventh or twenty-first centuries, and remains valid.

This should surely make one think about who authored this book. A Divine book should have the ability to speak to humanity during any era. It cannot just make sense during one period of time and not another. To do so would be a discrepancy!

Although the Qur'an describes many aspects of the natural world and universe which are mostly consistent with our present understandings, it is not a book of science. It is true that there have been direct conflicts between revelation and scientific conclusions; however, history has shown that science revises its conclusions. Believing this does not make one anti-science. Imagine how little progress we would make if scientists were not allowed to challenge past conclusions; There would be none!

Science is not a collection of eternal facts and was never meant to be. Until the 1950s, all physicists, including Einstein, believed that the universe was eternal; all the data supported this, yet this belief conflicted with the Qur'an, which explicitly states that the universe had a beginning. New observations made physicists drop the 'steady state' model of an eternal universe and replace

that with the Big Bang Model. Therefore, science came into line with the Qur'an. The same thing happened with the Qur'anic view of the sun. The Qur'an states that the sun has an orbit; astronomers disagreed, saying it was stationary. This was the most direct contradiction between observations of scientists and the Qur'an. After the discovery of the Hubble telescope, astronomers revised their conclusions and found the sun was orbiting around the centre of the milky way.

The Qur'an may contain statements that seem to contradict some scientific theories, but there is nothing in these that are either impossible or fundamentally contradictory. The Qur'an does not go into details concerning natural phenomena. Most of the things it refers to can be understood and verified with the naked eye. The main objective of verses that point towards the natural world is to highlight God's metaphysical power and wisdom, rather than elucidating scientific details which can change over time. The Qur'an is a book of signs, not science. The fact that natural phenomena have a power and wisdom behind them is a timeless reality. From this perspective, some sort of conflict between the Qur'an and scientific conclusions will probably continue, as they are two completely different types of knowledge. A Qur'anic verse which is not in line with current science may align in the future; likewise, a verse which is in line with science today may be out of line in the future. Neither of these cases is of much significance, as the takeaway message of the Qur'anic verses is timelessly

relevant to the reader.

Here are some examples to show the expansiveness of the Qur'an:

The Orbits of Planets

'And it is He who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon; all [heavenly bodies] in an orbit are swimming'

The Qur'an, Chapter 21, Verse 33

At the time of revelation of the Qur'an, the Arabic word in the verse used to describe the motion of the sun and the moon, 'yasbahuna' (which means swimming or floating), would have made sense to seventh century desert Arabs, because they could observe planets with the naked eye. But the word also makes sense to us in the twenty-first century, as it can relate to today's scientific findings on celestial mechanics: the orbits of the planets in space. Regardless of the meanings we attach to what we observe, the verse in its most basic form should encourage reflection on the power, wisdom and knowledge that brought this about. Whether one adopts a primitive understanding or a modern one, the objective of the verse is the same in both cases.

The Human Embryo

'Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot'

The Qur'an, Chapter 23, Verse 14

The Qur'an uses the Arabic word 'alaqah' to describe a stage of the development of the human embryo. This word can mean a clinging substance, a leech or worm, a blood clot, or blood in a general sense. Ancient Greek physicians and ancient Hebrews predating the Qur'anic revelation also described the embryo as a clinging substance and a blood clot. From this perspective, it agrees with the predominant scientific view of the time. Interestingly, this is perfectly in line with our modern understanding of embryology, as this description of the early stages of the developing embryo matches the external and internal appearance of the leech. It is remarkable that in the seventh century, doctors would not have known that the human embryo had this leech-like appearance, as this particular view of the embryo can only be observed with microscopes. Is it mere coincidence that these descriptions are so accurate - or a sign that the source of this knowledge is from God?

When we look at this from a spiritual and meditative dimension, the term 'clinging clot' is not just about describing a stage of the developing human. The insight

that we were once a clot-like substance should evoke humility and awe. We are compelled to ask and conclude: who and what put the physical causes in place to ensure I was developed from such a substance? How can I be arrogant when I was once a clinging clot that was dependent on almost an infinite number of variables to ensure I turned into a fully functioning person?

There are many other such examples in the Qur'an; we invite you to ponder its numerous signs for yourself. The Qur'an is a book that encourages reflection and deep thought. We've seen that many of its statements concerning the natural world communicate on various levels and have a range of meanings. The Qur'an has a timeless quality that engages with various audiences, yet still remains valid.

Signs To God

At this stage, that a book has a rational and logical view on God and is internally and externally consistent may not be enough for you to conclusively establish its Divine origins. This last section of the booklet will convey some further reasons why the Qur'an must be from God:

Profound Meaning

The Qur'an is a unique text. It is an ocean of depth of meaning. Its descriptive and vivid verses draw you into a different world. Every verse upon initial reading delivers lessons, whilst an in-depth reflection on the verses opens up a treasure trove of wisdom and insights.

The authoritative voice and style compels you to acknowledge its divine origins. Hearing it recited in Arabic has a profound comforting effect on the listener, who cannot help but be moved by its beauty and rhythm. The highly respected Arabist, Arthur J. Arberry, once recalled how the Qur'an supported him through a difficult time in his life; and how listening to the Qur'an being recited was like listening to the beat of his own heart. Without a doubt, hearing the Qur'an in its original Arabic language has a profound impact. In this section, we will focus on the depth of the message of the Qur'an and its

meanings. We will see how pondering over the verses can have a life-changing impact on us, an outcome nothing short of a miracle.

Who are we...?

'Was there not a period of time when man was nothing to speak of?'

The Qur'an, Chapter 76, Verse 1

One of the biggest barriers between us and God is arrogance; the idea that the whole world revolves around us, that we are completely independent, invincible and unstoppable. We look at ourselves daily in the mirror almost convinced that the self that stares back at us is the way we have always been. This type of self-worship is pushed in the world that we live in today; however, this could not be further from the truth.

In the Qur'an, God constantly reminds us of our both humble origins and inevitable demise. Where we came from and where we are going. If we were to honestly reflect over our origins, it would leave us in a state of utter humility, emptying the heart of clutter and making room for guidance. In the verse above, God takes us right back to where we came from: 'Was there not a period of time when man was nothing to speak of?' We know the answer. Without a shadow of a doubt, there was a time where we were not a thing mentioned. We were

insignificant and non-existent, at least from a material perspective. This should make us ask: Who brought us into being? If we ask this question, we will rationally and intuitively conclude the answer is God.

What's my purpose?...

**'And I did not create the jinn and mankind
except to worship Me'**

The Qur'an, Chapter 51, Verse 56

At some point in our lives, we all ask questions related to our ultimate purpose: Who am I? Why am I? What will happen to me when I die? Sometimes, you are able to brush these questions away until they re-emerge again later! For others, these questions become so troubling and persistent that finding the answer becomes the ultimate quest in life! If we think deeply, we can conclude that the answer cannot come from us as we did not create ourselves! Only the one who created the universe and gave us life and purpose, God, can tell us. In the verse above, God tells us that He did not create us for any other reason except to worship Him, clarifying that we were indeed created for a very specific purpose: removing the unintuitive notion that we have no purpose and that we are just an accident!

It is important to delve a little deeper into the meaning of 'worship' in the Qur'an, as it is different to what many

understand worship to be. Normally, when we think of worship, we think of rituals. When God speaks to us in the Qur'an, telling us that He created us to worship Him, this in fact incorporates every aspect and dimension of our lives. The purpose is to try to do everything in our lives in a way that God loves and is pleased with and avoid everything that will distance us from His love. Everything we do in life becomes a form of worship. This understanding elevates the human being. No longer are we lost and confused; now we know not only who we are, but why we are. We are a creation of God, created to worship Him; the Qur'an also tells us that we have a responsibility to take care of the world and everything within it. Just this short verse not only informs us of our purpose but elevates and empowers us to make the most of this life.

What's after this life...?

**'As for those who believe, and do good deeds,
they are the people of Paradise - there they
will live forever'**

The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 82

We all look forward to our holidays away: sandy beaches, palm trees, blue skies and clear oceans. After hard work, we want a break, to go away somewhere we can relax and unwind. Holiday companies constantly bombard us with images of holiday destinations know-

ing that these images trigger something deep inside. The desire to escape to a beautiful destination is part of our nature. The problem with visiting such beautiful places is that it doesn't last; every holiday will come to an end. However, God has prepared the most beautiful destination for those of us who believe and do good: paradise! Once you enter it, you will never leave: it will never come to an end. The Arabic word for paradise used in the Qur'an is 'Jannah'. This word literally means gardens. God describes this beautiful place as gardens beneath which rivers flow; a place of unimaginable beauty where you will never get bored, you will have no problems: only peace, tranquility and bliss.

When someone has such a beautiful destination to look forward to, how can they not be excited? How can they not want to work hard in this life with a clear goal in mind? In contrast, take the worldview of those who deny the life to come! If taken to its logical conclusion, our ends are a dark hole in the ground. You have worked hard all your life struggling and sacrificing to simply end up as a meal for worms. What would you rather choose? Which of the two options do you recognise to be true? This verse alone gives a clear objective to life. The prize is in sight; all we must do is work to get there.

These revelations have impacted and continue to positively impact lives. The practical life-changing wisdom makes you quickly forget that the origins of the text are over 1400 years old. Surely a book which continues to

blossom like a flower with the passage of time providing solutions for every era cannot be from anyone other than the Divine. We have only skimmed the surface of a handful of verses in the Qur'an. The more you read it and contemplate, the more it reveals itself to you. As God says:

'[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded'

The Qur'an, Chapter 38, Verse 29

Linguistic Miracle

The Qur'an was revealed in Arabia to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. This period was known as an era of literary and linguistic perfection. The seventh century Arabs were socialised into being: a people who were the best at expressing themselves in their native tongue. They would celebrate when a poet rose amongst them. Cultivation of poetic skills and linguistic mastery was everything for them. It was their oxygen and lifeblood; they could not live or function without the perfection of their linguistic abilities. However, when the Qur'an was recited to them, they lost their breath; they were dumbfounded and stunned by the silence of their greatest experts. They could not produce anything like

Qur'anic discourse.

'And if you are in doubt about this book we have sent to our servant then produce one chapter like it'

The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 23

The verse above issues a challenge to produce a chapter like it, and daringly calls for the linguistic experts of any era to imitate the Qur'an's linguistic and literary features. The tools needed to meet this challenge are finite grammatical rules, literary and linguistic devices, and the twenty-eight letters that comprise the Arabic language; these are independent and objective measures available to all. That it has not been matched since it was first revealed does not surprise most scholars familiar with the Arabic language and the Qur'an.

A powerful argument that supports the assertion that seventh century Arabs failed to imitate the Qur'an relates to the socio-political circumstances of the time. Central to the Qur'anic message was the condemnation of the immoral, unjust and evil practices of the seventh century Meccan tribes. These included the objectification of women, unjust trade, polytheism, slavery, hoarding of wealth, infanticide and the shunning of orphans. The Meccan leadership was being challenged by the Qur'anic message, which had the potential to undermine their leadership and economic success. For

Islam to stop spreading, all that was needed was for the Prophet's adversaries to meet the linguistic and literary challenge of the Qur'an. Yet that Islam succeeded in its early, fragile days in Mecca testifies to the fact that its primary audience was not able to meet the Qur'anic challenge. No movement can succeed if a claim fundamental to its core is explicitly proven false. That the Meccan leadership had to resort to extreme campaigns like warfare and torture to attempt to extinguish Islam demonstrates that the easy method of refuting Islam—meeting the Qur'anic challenge—failed. Navid Kermani, an expert in Islamic studies, makes this point clear: 'Obviously, the Prophet succeeded in this conflict with the poets, otherwise Islam would not have spread like wildfire'. The failure of the seventh century Arabs shows that even the best people could not meet the challenge; the possibility of anyone doing so today is even more remote. When one understands this completely, it becomes one of the most powerful arguments supporting the Divine origin of the Qur'an.

Reflect and ask

If a book really is from God, pondering on its verses and thinking deeply about the meanings behind them would make it clear if it is man-made or Divine. The Qur'an is like a mirror; the state of your heart is reflected back to you when you read its verses.

'Will they not contemplate the Quran? Do they have locks on their hearts?'

The Qur'an, Chapter 47, Verse 24

The Qur'an is the most influential book in the world. The way it impacts the daily lives of billions is unprecedented. Only a book from God can create an influence that is long-lasting and meaningful on the human psyche. God is the creator of human beings and knows what triggers and moves them. In the grand scheme of things, whatever is said or written about the Qur'an will always fall short in describing and exploring its words and their meanings:

'Say, "If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement' "

The Qur'an, Chapter 18, Verse 109

Ultimately, to discover if a book really is from God, you need to ask the creator Himself. Prayer can be done by anyone at any time. If you really want to know if the Qur'an is from God, just ask Him. God will never reject the call of someone that wants to have a relationship with Him:

'When My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I respond to those who call Me, so let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, so that they may be guided'

The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 186

The Qur'an is indeed God's testimony to us. Get a copy of the Qur'an in your language, think, reflect and ask for guidance. God is loving, forgiving and merciful; He gives guidance to whoever seeks it sincerely.

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