

The Revelation Of The Glorious Quran

A Miracle to last till the End!

Well before God's revelation marked him as a Prophet, Mohammad(p) had rejected the religion of Arabia. This religion called on the worship of several gods, and Mohammad felt that these idols were not responsible for life or creation. Questioning the religion that he was born into, Mohammad (p) found peace in reflection, meditation, and contemplation; however, these acts of private worship did not give Mohammad the answers that he was searching for. In his late thirties Mohammad began a practice of retirement, where he would seclude himself from his family and relations and spend several days in a cave on top of a mountain two miles outside of Makkah. He continued this for many years: during the month of Ramadan, Mohammad would often spend the entire month in seclusion, for some instinct must have told him that in this holiest month he would find the answers to his questions. So, it was in his fortieth year that Mohammad (p) received the revelation from God.

While engaged in worship in a corner of the cave of Hira in the heart of the night, the orphan son of Abdullah who had never studied or attended a school, was suddenly shaken by the summons, "O Muhammad!" followed by the command to recite, this being the beginning of revelation. A wave arose from the limitless ocean of Divinity, rent the breast of the Prophet, bewildered and anxious, and filled to the brim the cup of his spirit.

Mohammad was shocked and afraid. How could there be another voice in the cave when he was all alone? Nevertheless, he replied: "I am not one of those who can read". After his answer, he was taken up, and violently hugged and then set free: the voice repeated, "Read". Mohammad could only give the same answer: "I am not one of those who can read". The being repeated the same action, hugging him again. Once again it commanded him to "Read". This time Mohammad gave a different answer: he said, "What shall I read?", and the voice said:

"Read! In the Name of your Lord, who has created you! He created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Gracious, He who has taught by the pen, Taught man what he did not know."
[Al-Quran: 96:1-4]

The shining of a light from the realm of the unseen covered and enveloped his being and shone forth on his fair features, giving rise to new and bright life in the darkness of the night. Then, with a painful tumult in his heart and bearing on his shoulders the heaviest responsibility conceivable, he set out for home from the cave of Hira, destined to become the teacher of all human beings and to assume the leadership of humanity on its long march forward.

What force was it that had disquieted him despite his infinite patience, made him anxious despite all his tranquil courage, and plunged his whole being into painful turmoil? Thereafter the envoy of revelation came repeatedly, reciting verses to him, profound and astounding verses that bore no resemblance from the point of view of style and content either to the words of the Prophet himself, eloquent as they were, or to the conventional prose and poetry of the age.

Although the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance knew neither how to read nor how to write and had no historians, philosophers or scholars, they were famed for the excellence of their poetry and the eloquence of their speech. The Prophet, however, had never participated before the beginning of his mission in the cultivation of the arts of poetry and eloquence.

His conduct, on the one hand, and the verses of the Quran, on the other, both testify that he made no compromises in conveying his message. He conveyed the message that he had been ordered to deliver clearly, unambiguously and in utter contradiction both with the beliefs and inclinations of the people and with his own immediate interests. He loudly proclaimed the revelation he had received to the evil and the ignorant, to a people made degenerate and corrupt by the worship of the idols they had fashioned

themselves, and he informed them that their sole salvation lay in the worship of the One God.

The new factor that appeared at a particular time in the life of the Prophet and caused him to engage in unprecedented forms of activity was the wondrous phenomenon of revelation, the heavenly message which he as the most lofty and qualified of men had been chosen to receive. Before then, no preliminary effort or particular inclination had been seen on his part that might have led to the bringing about of the sudden and remarkable transformation of the world he was now about to accomplish.

The factor that had this profound effect on Muhammad, that changed that quiet and reflective man into an explosive source of revolutionary energy and enabled him to bring about such a profound transformation of humanity, from within the intense darkness of the Arabs' Age of Ignorance, was nothing other than revelation. It was a call that penetrated the very depths of the souls of human beings that melted the marrow of their bones, and directed all their strivings to the attainment of perfection.

The command of revelation negated all the false and lying criteria which human beings had regarded as the measure of goodness and considered the sole means of evaluating human characteristics and habits, while, in fact, clothing falsehood in the garment of truth. It brought into operation new and clear criteria which showed human beings the goals to which they should strive to advance and brought about creativity in their lives. The veil of ignorance and silence was torn apart, the human beings' energies were set to work, the power of thought within them was aroused, and their spirits were borne aloft toward the infinite summit of being.

A people who in their ignorance and lowliness would tear each apart on account of the most insignificant things and had lost all virtue, thanks to their various forms of enslavement, now became, through Islam and its great concept of monotheism - the true pillar of humanity and the breaker of idols - so elevated of spirit and so self-sacrificing that they happily abandoned both their lives and their property. The remarkable stories of self-sacrifice on the part of those early Muslims will stand eternally as examples of true nobility.

The Prophet of Islam had the vision and belief of a world leader, but he began to proclaim his Divine summons to monotheism in a relatively restricted sphere, a closed environment where tribal institutions exercised great influence and idols were counted as the most sacred and beloved of objects. It was an environment that was not in any way prepared to accept the message of Divine unity.

The heavenly teachings of Islam and the culture to which they gave rise were superior not only to the intellectual atmosphere prevailing in the idolatrous society of the Arabs but also to all the religious doctrines and cultures of that age.

The program for reforming systems of thought and culture that had become corrupt was laid down by a man who had never studied, who was unlettered, and who knew nothing of the religious books or the civilization of his age.

At first he invited his relatives to worship the Creator, and then the people of Mecca and the Arabian Peninsula. Finally he proclaimed to the entire world his mission as the last of the Prophets.

The Prophet had been born into an environment where human beings engaged in empty boasting out of their shortsightedness and tribal mentality, where privileges were based on unjust social conditions and prejudices. Now he arose and swept aside all those false privileges. He established new values and concepts with respect to labor, life and social relations, in the framework of a series of rules and ordinances, and strove to concentrate all the goals and thoughts of the human being on a program for liberating peoples from slavery, and delivering the oppressed from the tyranny of emperors and kings. Even for those who do not regard these exalted aims as having a heavenly origin will admit that they are among the most exalted and previous values observable in human history.

What is significant about the Revelation, the Message of God, is that it was an act for which the Prophet (pbuh) was ready. Meaning, that he had already forsaken the beliefs of his people and his culture. Mohammad (pbuh) had proved himself ready for prophethood through his pious actions and behavior. Among his people he had already earned the name Al-Amin, The Trustworthy. Moreover, Mohammad (pbuh) was a mature man, one who had lived the majority of his life, and could devote the next twenty-three years of that life to the service of God.

Since different verses of the Qur'an were being revealed as and when appropriate, it was not possible from the very beginning to write and preserve it in a book form. So, during the initial stage of Islam, major emphasis was laid on memory as a means of preserving the Qur'an.

When a revelation used to come in the very beginning, the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would tend to repeat its words instantly so that they would be memorized well enough. Thereupon, Allah Almighty directed him through the verses of Soorah Qiyaamah that he need not repeat words in a hurry immediately as revelation came. Allah Almighty would himself endow him with a memory that he will be unable to forget the words of the revelation once its descent has been completed. So it was that the moment the Qur'anic verses would come to him, they would be committed to his memory the next moment. Thus, the blessed chest of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), was the most protected vault of the Qur'an, in which there was no chance of even some common mistake, editing or alteration. Moreover, as a matter of additional precaution, he used to recite the Qur'an before angel Jibra'eel every year during the month of Ramadhaan; and the year he left this mortal world he completed a cumulative review of Qur'anic recitation twice with Jibra'eel. (Saheeh Bukhaari with Fat'hul Baari)

Again, as it was, he would not restrict his teachings of the Sahaabah (Companions) to just the meaning of the Qur'an, but had them memorize its words as well. Then, the revered Companions were themselves so enamored with a desire to learn and remember the Qur'an that every one of them was anxious to get ahead of the other. There were women who claimed no dowry from their husbands except that they would teach the Qur'an.

Hundreds of Companions, freeing themselves from all other concerns, had devoted their whole lives for this purpose. Not only did they memorize the Qur'an but also went on repeating it within the nightly prayers. "When someone migrated from Makkah and came to Madeenah", says Ubaadah Ibne Saamit, "the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would entrust him to one of us Ansaar so that he could teach Qur'an to the new comer." The mosque of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was so filled with voices generated by learners and teachers of the Qur'an that the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had to ask them to lower their voices so that mistakes are not made. (Manaahilul 'Irfaan)

Thus memorisation of the Qur'an was given more emphasis in early Islam as this was the only protected and trustworthy method given the conditions of that time. The reason is that the number of people who could read or write was very limited in those days. The means of publishing books, such as printing press, etc., were not there. Therefore, in that situation, if writing was taken to be sufficient, it would have neither been possible to spread the Qur'an on an extensive scale nor to protect it reliably. In its place, Allah Almighty had blessed the people of Arabia with a memory of such dimensions that thousands of poetic lines would normally rest in the memory of one person after another. Common ordinary villagers would remember by heart their genealogies and those of their families and unbelievably enough - even those of their horses! Therefore, this power of memory was well utilized for the conservation and protection of the Qur'an and it was through it that the verses and chapters of the Qur'an reached all over in to the far corners of Arabia.

Besides having the Qur'an committed to memory, the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) made special arrangements to have the Qur'an committed to writing as well. Zayd Ibne Thaabit says: "I used to write down the words of wahee for him. When wahee came to him he felt burning with heat and the drops of perspiration would start rolling down on his body like pearls. When this state would go away from him, I

would present myself before him with shoulder-bone or a piece (of something else). He would go on dictating and I would go on writing. When I would be finished with writing, the sheer weight of copying the Qur'an would give me the feeling that my leg is going to break and that I will never be able to walk. In any case, when I would be finished with writing, he would say: 'Read.' I would read it back to him if there was a shortcoming, he would have it corrected and then let it be known to people. (Majma'uz Zawaa'id with reference to Tabraani)

Thus, there existed, during the time of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), a copy of the Noble Qur'aan which he had arranged to be committed to writing under his supervision. Although, it was not there as a formally prepared book, but it certainly was there in the form of various units of available writing materials. Along with it, it was also the practice of some revered Companions that they would make copies of the Qur'anic verses and keep them for personal recollection. This practice was common since the very early period of Islam. Accordingly, much before Umar embraced Islaam, his sister and brother-in-law had in their possession verses of the Qur'aan which they had written and kept in a book form. (Seerah Ibne Hishaam)

After reading about the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, you might find the following of interest:

- How the Holy Qur'an was preserved: <ieb_quran_preserved.htm> Zayd Ibne Thaabit says: "I used to write down the words of wahee for him. When wahee came to him he felt burning with heat and the drops of perspiration would start rolling down on his body like pearls. When this state would go away from him, I would present myself before him with shoulder-bone or a piece (of something else). He would go on dictating and I would go on writing. When I would be finished with writing, the sheer weight of copying the Qur'an would give me the feeling that my leg is going to break and that I will never be able to walk. In any case, when I would be finished with writing, he would say: 'Read.' I would read it back to him and if there was a shortcoming, he would have it corrected and then let it be known to people.

- The Demand of the Qur'an for a Direct Confrontation: <ieb_quran_direct_confrontation1.htm> From the very first day that the Prophet began preaching his message of monotheism, he summoned people also to a realistic vision of the world. When inviting them to faith, he addressed their wisdom and intelligence and called on them to use their eyes and their ears to perceive the truth.

- Do we deserve the Qur'an ? <ieb_quran_deserve.htm> The student of the Qur'an will find out that, Qur'an is telling us that the messengers of Allah will lead the people from darkness into the light and that nowhere in the Qur'an does Allah tell us a story of a community misled by its messenger or given the wrong teachings by him. The student of the Qur'an will find out that, Qur'an is telling us that the messengers of Allah will lead the people from darkness into the light and that nowhere in the Qur'an does Allah tell us a story of a community misled by its messenger or given the wrong teachings by him. earth."