

### Fast 9: “No doubt” in the Quran — the challenge of the Quran

- We continue with the passage from the Quran:

“This Book, in which there is **no doubt**, is a guide to those who keep their duty...” — ch. 2, v. 2

ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾

In the last Study, point (3) was that the description there is “no doubt” in this Book can have the meaning that there is no doubt that this Book is a revelation from God. This is in fact stated in a later chapter of the Quran. Chapter 32 begins with the letters *Alif, Lam, Meem*, just like chapter 2. Its second verse is as follows:

“The revelation of the Book, in which there is no doubt, is from the Lord of the worlds.” — ch. 32, v. 2

تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾

This verse clearly shows that one of the meanings of there being “no doubt” in the Quran is that there is no doubt that it is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

- A little later in chapter 2, the following passage occurs:

“And **if you are in doubt** as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your helpers besides Allah if you are truthful.” — ch. 2, v. 23

وَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِيْ رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلٰى عَبْدِنَا فَاتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهٖ ۗ وَ ادْعُوْا شُهَدَآءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾

The word for “doubt” (*raib*) is the same in all the above verses. Any “doubt” that the Quran is not a revelation from God can be dispelled by this “challenge” which the Quran puts forward. It says that even if all such doubters gathered together to help each other to produce some writing like the Quran, they would fail to do so (the words of v. 24 after the above verse are: “If you do not do it, and you can never do it ...”).

- This bold challenge occurs in three other places in the Quran (ch. 10, v. 38, ch. 11, v. 13, and ch. 17, v. 88). We quote the last one below:

“Say: If people and *jinn* should combine together to bring the like of this Quran, they could not bring the like of it, though they helped one another.” — ch. 17, v. 88

قُلْ لِّسِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلٰى اَنْ يَّاتُوْا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لَا يٰتُوْنَ بِمِثْلِهٖ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظٰهِيْرًا ﴿٨٨﴾

- We may digress here from our topic to consider the question: What is meant by the *jinn* mentioned here? There is no mention of *jinn* in any of the other places where this challenge occurs. If both “people and *jinn*”, combined together, cannot produce the like of the Quran, it means that these “*jinn*” must be a creation who are able to produce writings in Arabic and become co-authors with “people” in meeting the challenge to produce a writing to compare with the Quran. There is no point in challenging a group of beings to produce the like of the Quran if they have never produced any book at all and do not possess the skills of authorship. They could be challenged by any author to produce a book like his, and he would win the challenge!
- By “people and *jinn*” are meant the ordinary people and their leaders in knowledge and learning. Also, since the term *jinn* can refer to people of other lands or foreigners, the “people and *jinn*” of this verse may be Arabs and non-Arabs. The challenge of the Quran is not just directed at the Arabs to produce a writing like the Quran in Arabic, but to all mankind of all times to produce a writing like it in any form.
- Traditionally it is considered that the challenge of the Quran that no one can produce a book like it, or like a part of it, relates only to the eloquence of its language, and that the Quran issued this challenge to the Arab opponents of Islam and deniers of the Holy Prophet who prided themselves on their mastery of Arabic composition. But the Quran does not specify that it is referring to the eloquence of its language. There are other unrivalled qualities of the Quran as well. Two important ones are:
  - The universal truths and principles that it teaches, which no human being could arrive at by his knowledge and study;
  - The purifying effect it had on its hearers, and the great transformation of their character that it brought about, raising them from the worst of humanity to the best of mankind in morals and behaviour.
- Another achievement of the Quran is noted by scholar and professor Hartwig Hirschfeld, in his book *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Quran*, published in London in 1902. He, again, is no devotee or an uncritical admirer of Islam. Yet he admits the following:
  - “We must not be surprised to find the Quran regarded [by Muslims] as the fountain-head of all the sciences. Every subject connected with heaven or earth, human life, commerce and various trades, are occasionally touched upon. ... In this way the Quran was responsible for great discussions, and to it was also indirectly due the marvellous development of all branches of science in the Muslim world. ... Acquaintance with the philosophical, mathematical,

astronomical and medical writings of the Greeks, led to the pursuance of these studies. In the descriptive revelations [in the Quran] Muhammad repeatedly calls attention to the movements of the heavenly bodies, as parts of the miracles of Allah forced into the service of man and therefore *not* to be worshipped. How successfully Muslim peoples of all races pursued the study of astronomy is shown by the fact that for centuries they were its principal supporters. ... In the same manner the Quran gave an impetus to medical studies and recommended the contemplation and study of Nature in general.”  
(p. 9)

Just this particular achievement of the Quran, recognised even by the critics of Islam, cannot be matched by any other book of any kind. It turned a nation which had no interest in acquiring and developing knowledge of the world around us into the leader of many branches of knowledge. And the whole world benefitted from that nation’s advancement of knowledge.

Shown below is the image of part of the page from Hirschfeld’s book, from which the above extracts have been quoted:

We must not be surprised to find the Qorân regarded as the fountain-head of all the sciences.<sup>45</sup> Every subject connected with heaven or earth, human life, commerce and various trades are occasionally touched upon,<sup>46</sup> and this gave rise to the production of numerous monographs forming commentaries on parts of the holy book. In this way the Qorân was responsible for great discussions, and to it was also indirectly due the marvellous development of all branches of science in the Moslim world. — This again not only affected the Arabs but also induced Jewish philosophers<sup>47</sup> to treat metaphysical and religious questions after Arab methods. Finally, the way in which Christian-scholasticism was fertilised by Arabian theosophy need not be further discussed.

Spiritual activity once aroused within the Islamic bounds, was not confined to theological speculations alone. Acquaintance with the philosophical, mathematical,<sup>48</sup> astronomical and medical writings of the Greeks, led to the pursuance of these studies. In the descriptive revelations<sup>49</sup> Muhammed repeatedly calls attention to the movements of the heavenly bodies, as parts of the miracles of Allâh<sup>50</sup> forced into the service of man<sup>51</sup> and therefore *not* to be worshipped.<sup>52</sup> How successfully Moslem peoples of all races pursued the study of astronomy is shown by the fact that for centuries they were its principal supporters. Even now many Arabic names of stars and technical terms are in use. Mediæval astronomers in Europe were pupils of the Arabs, and the last Muhammedan astronomer, who was at the same time one of the greatest,<sup>53</sup> only died about twenty years before the birth of Copernicus.

In the same manner the Qorân gave an impetus to medical studies<sup>54</sup> and recommended the contemplation and study of Nature in general.<sup>55</sup> The very necessity for a better understanding of