

Fast 1

“This **Book**, in which there is no doubt, is a guide to those who keep their duty, who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them, and who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are sure. These are on a right course from their Lord and these it is that are successful.” — Ch. 2, v. 1–5.

Notes: The Holy Quran is the only scripture that speaks of itself as a book, introduces itself, and tells the reader much about itself as a book.

The word translated as ‘this’ is *dhālika* which literally means ‘that’ (something remote) rather than ‘this’ (something near). However, it is also used instead of ‘this’ when speaking of something which is honoured. It indicates that the Quran will be greatly honoured and held in high estimation.

When this verse was revealed, no human could have known that the Quran would become a book, still less that it would become an honoured book.

By calling itself a ‘book’, the Quran has elevated the status of all books and emphasised the need for books. When the Quran was revealed, and in fact till a couple of centuries ago, in most people’s eyes books had no importance. Most people couldn’t read. But life today would be impossible without books.

“...in which there is no doubt” — This Book speaks with certainty. If you have self-doubt about your ideas, you will have difficulty in convincing other people about them. But the Author of the Quran speaks with absolute certainty and full knowledge. A person might not accept its claims but no one can be in any doubt as to what its claims are.

This quality of the Quran also means that it can remove doubts from our minds.

“...is a guide to those who keep their duty” — The word for “those who keep their duty” is *muttaqīn* (singular: *muttaqī*). It is considered equivalent to God fearing, pious, or righteous. The question then arises: If a person already has to be a *muttaqī* before the Quran can guide him, then why does he need the Quran? And if a person is not a *muttaqī*, and requires guidance, does it mean that the Quran cannot help him?

This question arises due to the notion that *muttaqī* is one fixed stage and that some people are *muttaqī* and others are not. Being a *muttaqī* is a process of development, and at each stage, low or high, the Quran is a guide. It is a guide to anyone who has the least desire to become a *muttaqī* and at the other end it is a guide also to those who reach the greatest heights of spiritual progress. Its guidance is open to everyone and is required by everyone. These verses then list the basic principles of belief and action to be followed by them.

As regards belief in revelation from God, Muslims are required to “believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you”. They must, first of all, believe in the revelation to the Holy Prophet, and then, as a result of that, believe that revelation came to prophets before him. As the revelation to the Holy Prophet is preserved in the Quran, without alteration, loss or error, this is the absolute authority for judging the accuracy of earlier revelations in the form in which we find them now.

There is no mention here of belief in any revelation to come *after* the time of the Quran which Muslims are required to believe in. No such revelation or recipient of such revelation can arise after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as he is the Last and Final of all Prophets.

Revelation to *saints* in Islam does not become a matter of belief in the revelation of any particular individual, but is rather a part of belief in God and His attribute of speaking. As Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote:

“...if a man, due to his blindness, denies my revelation, then if he is nonetheless called a Muslim, and is not a secret atheist, it should be part of his belief that ... just as in previous religious communities many men and women used to receive God’s revelation, even though they were not prophets, in this *Umma* too it is essential that sure and definite revelation should exist.” (*Nuzul al-Masih*, p. 89)