

After a person has praised Allah and thanked Him, he stands before Him, addressing Him directly: "O' Allah! Our worship, obedience, submission and devotion are all for You alone. O' Allah! We know that You are the Lord of the Universe and have power over everything; therefore, we turn to You alone to fulfill our needs and to help us worship You as you desire us to."

"Guide us to The Straight Path."

i.e. Make us firm on the straight path and do not let us deviate. The straight path mentioned here and elsewhere in the *Qur'an* refers to Islam. We have already mentioned the *Hadith* according to which, when a servant of Allah proclaims, "Guide us to The Right Way", Allah says, "This is for My bondsman and My bondsman shall acquire what he has asked for."

"The Way of those whom You have favored."

Allah's servant prays to Him to guide him towards the straight path in every walk of life; the path of those upon whom He has bestowed His mercy i.e. people who are obedient to Allah and His Messengers.

"Not of those who have earned Your wrath, nor of those who have lost The Way."

A bondsman of Allah also prays to Him to help him avoid the path of those whom He is angry with, whose intentions are corrupt, and who know the truth but still deviate. The bondsman also asks for Allah's help to avoid the path of those who were led astray. These two paths are those of the *Jews* and the *Christians*. "Not of those who have earned Your wrath", refers to the *Jews*, while "nor of those who have lost The Way" alludes to the *Christians*.

After completing the recitation of *Al-Fatihah*, it is recommended to say *Amin*, which means, 'O' Allah! Accept our invocation', for everyone and strongly recommended for those who are praying, as the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: "When any of you says in the prayer *Amin*, and the angels in the heaven say *Amin* in unison, his previous sins are forgiven."^[4]

Endnotes

[1] Abd-ur-Rahman Ibn Kamal-ud-Din Abi Bakr Ibn Muhammad Ibn Sabiq-ud-Din, Jalal-ud-Din Al-Misri As-Suyuti, (849-911), the mujtahid imam and renewer of the tenth Islamic century, foremost Hadith master, jurist, and historian, he authored works in virtually every Islamic science.

[2] Sahih Muslim.

[3] Sahih Muslim and Sunan An-Nisai.

[4] Sahih Muslim 1:307.

When he says, "Guide us to the straight path—the path of those whom You have granted, not of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray", Allah says, "This is for My bondsman, and for My bondsman is what he has asked for."^[3]

In this *Hadith*, the word *Salah* has been used in reference to *surah Al-Fatihah*, which also testifies the importance of this *surah* and reciting it in every *rak'ah* of the prayer.

Al-Fatihah is not merely an introduction to the *Qur'an*; it is a prayer of a person whose nature is not perverted and who has the faculty of reasoning. The rest of the *Qur'an* is the answer from his Lord. If a person is an earnest seeker of the truth, and recognizes that the Lord of the Universe is the source of all knowledge, he prays to Him to grant him guidance and Allah (SWT) places the *Qur'an* before him in response to his prayer.

Translation and Brief Elucidation

"I take Allah's refuge from Satan, the banished."

"In the name of Allah, the most Benevolent, the Most Merciful."

"All praise is for Allah, the Benefactor of the Worlds."

Al-Fatihah starts with the praise of Allah, who is the Lord and the Creator of this world and the Hereafter. It states that all thanks and praise are due to Allah alone, and nothing is to be worshipped except Him. He is the Sustainer and Owner of all that He has created in both *A'lams* (Worlds).

"The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."

Ar-Rahman (Most Gracious) and *Ar-Raheem* (Most Merciful) are two words of the same root, *Ar-Rahmah* (the mercy). Allah is *Ar-Rahman* for all humankind and provides them with sustenance, irrespective of whether they believe in Him or not and whether they are good-doers or evildoers. On the other hand, He is *Ar-Raheem* for those who believe in Him and showers His special blessings on them in the form of bliss and contentment in this life and the best of rewards in the Hereafter.

"Master of the Day of Judgment."

After Allah (SWT) describes that He is *Ar-Rahman* and *Ar-Raheem*, He immediately gives a warning to His bondsmen not to forget that alongwith His mercy, He is also the Master of the *Day of Judgment* and every soul will be answerable to Him on that day.

"You Alone we worship and You Alone we call on for help."

Virtues of Al-Fatihah

This is the most important *surah* in the *Qur'an*, and there are a lot of *Ahaadith* which narrate the virtues of this *surah*. In the *Musnad of Imam Ahmed*, he has recorded that *Abu Hurayrah* (RAA) said that the Prophet (SAW) said to *Ubaiy Ibn Ka'ab* (RA) "Would you like me to teach you a *surah* like which nothing has been revealed in the *Torah*, the *Injeel*, the *Zabur* (Psalms) or the *Furqan* (the *Qur'an*)"? He said, "Yes, O' Messenger of Allah!" The Messenger of Allah said, "I hope that I will not leave through this door until you have learned it." He (*Ubayy*) said, "The Messenger of Allah held my hand while speaking to me; meanwhile I was slowing down fearing that he might reach the door before he finished his conversation. When we came close to the door, I said: "O' Messenger of Allah! Which is the *surah* you have promised to teach me"? He said, "What do you read in the prayer"? *Ubayy* said, "I recited *Umm-ul-Qur'an* to him". He said, "By Him in Whose Hand is my soul! Allah has never revealed in the *Torah*, *Injeel*, *Zabur* or the *Furqan*, a *surah* like it. It is the seven repeated verses that I was given".

Al-Fatihah and Salah

Al-Fatihah is also called the *Salah*, because it is itself a prayer and reciting it is a condition for the correctness of the *Salah* (Prayer), as recorded by *Imaam Muslim* that *Abu Hurayrah* (RA) said that the Prophet (SAW) said: "Whoever performs any prayer without reciting *Umm-ul-Qur'an* (*Al-Fatihah*), his prayer is incomplete." He said it thrice. [2]

There is another *Hadith*, narrated by *Abu Hurayrah* (RA), that the Prophet (SAW) said; "Allah the exalted says, "I have divided the prayer (*Al-Fatihah*) into two halves between Myself and My bondsman. A half of it is for Me and a half for My bondsman, and for My bondsman is what he asks for."

When he says, "All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds", Allah says, "My bondsman has praised Me."

When the bondsman says, "The Most Benevolent, the Most Merciful." Allah says, "My bondsman has glorified Me."

When he says, "Master of the Day of Judgment." Allah says, "My bondsman has dignified Me."

When he says, "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help." Allah says, "This is between Me and My bondsman, and for My bondsman is what he has asked for."

Al-Fatihah

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Introduction

Surah Al-Fatihah is one of the earliest revelations. Infact, we learn from authentic traditions that it was the first complete *surah* revealed to the Prophet (SAW). Before this, only a few miscellaneous ayaat were revealed which form parts of *surahs Al-Alaq, Al-Muzzammil* and *Al-Muddathir*.

This *surah* is called *Al-Fatihah*; the Opener of the Book, and the *surah* with which prayers are begun. It is the greatest *surah* in the *Qur'an*, and is also called *Umm-ul-Kitab* (Mother of the Book), because it contains the meanings of the entire *Qur'an*. Other names for this *surah* are: *Salah, Al-hamd, Umm-ul-Qur'an, As-Sab-ul-Mathani, Ash-Shifa, Ar-Ruqayyah, and so on*. Infact, more than fifty names have been enumerated by *Jalal-ud-Din As-Suyuti* [1], in his famous book "*Al Itqan fi Uloom il Qur'an*".

Number of Ayaat

There has been a consensus of the majority of scholars since early generations that *surah Al-Fatihah* consists of seven *Ayaat*. However, they differ about whether *Bismillah* is a part of *Al-Fatihah*, and likewise every *surah*, or is a separate *ayah*. The first opinion, that *Bismillah* is a part of every *surah* except *surah At-Taubah*, is attributed to some Companions (RAA), *Imam Az-Zuhri, Imam Ash-Shafai, and Abdullah Bin Al-Mubarak*. They state that *Bismillah* is a part of *Al-Fatihah*, and the last *ayaat*; "*The Way of those whom You have favored*" and "*not of those who have earned Your wrath, nor of those who have lost The Way.*" are not separate *ayaat* but a single *ayah*. On the other hand, *Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifa* and their followers say that *Bismillah* is not an *ayah* in *Al-Fatihah* or any other *surah*, and is a separate *ayah* in the beginning of every *surah*. In any case, there is no disagreement over the matter that *Al-Fatihah* has seven *Ayaat*. Those who consider the last two *Ayaat* as one *ayah* include *Bismillah* in it, while those who consider the last two as separate *ayaat* say that *Bismillah* is not a part of it.

each *surah* was fixed, but the sheets with the *surahs* on them were still in a loose arrangement i.e. not bound into a volume.

The *Qur'an* was finally compiled into a *Mushaf* (*Suhuf* collected into a volume), during the Caliphate of *Usman* (RAA), when the order of the *ayaat* within each *surah* as well as the order of the sheets was fixed. It was written from the main copy gathered during the era of *Abu Bakr* (RAA). It was kept at the residence of *Hafsah Bint Umar* (RAA). *Usman* (RAA), appointed the following scribes to do it:

1. *Zaid Ibn-e-Sabit.*
2. *Abdullah Ibn-e-Zubair.*
3. *Said Ibn-ul-'Aas.*
4. *Abdur Rahman Ibn-ul-Haris Ibn-ul-Hisham.*

They scribed many copies of the *Qur'an*, reflecting in their writing the different correct readings of it and excluding the incorrect ones. It was not marked with dots or vowel points. *Usman* (RA) kept a copy at *Madinah* and sent the remaining copies to the various Islamic countries.

Endnotes

[1] The Arabic word 'qur'an' is derived from the root qara'a, which has various meanings, such as to read, [Surah 17: 93.] to recite, [Surah 75:18:17: 46.] etc. *Qur'an* is a verbal noun and hence means 'reading' or 'recitation'. As used in the *Qur'an* itself, the word refers to the revelation from Allah in the broad sense [Surah 17: 82.] and is not always restricted to the written form in the shape of a book, as we have it before us today.

[2] Surah Al-Hijr (15): 9.

[3] Surah Al-Burooj (85): 21,22. Al-Lawh: every wide, flat surface or sheet of wood.

Al-Azhari said: Al-Lawh is a flat surface of wood, and a shoulder-blade [of an animal], it is something that is written on. Al-Lawh-ul-Mahfooz, as in the ayah means, the place where the decrees of Allah are kept. The plural form is *alwaah*. (*Lisaan-ul-'Arab*, 2/584).

[4] Surah Al-Waqi'ah(56): 77, 78.

[5] Surah Az-Zukhruf (43): 3.

[6] Surah Bani-Israel (17) and Surah Al-Furqan (25).

[7] The last section of the *Qur'an* beginning with surah Qaaf, (50-114).

[8] Musnad Ahmed, Sunan Abi Dawood, Sunan Ibn Majah.

[9] The *Qur'an* in a single volume.

[10] Kitab-ul-masahif by Ibn Abi Dawud.

[11] The Life of Muhammad, Ibn Hisham.

through angel *Jibreel* (AS). When the beloved Prophet (SAW) would receive a revelation, he would dictate it to a scribe, who would promptly write it down. The Prophet (SAW) had several such scribes, among whom *Zaid Bin Thabit* (RA) was very prominent. *Uthman* (RA) said that the Prophet (SAW) used to tell his scribes where to place a particular *ayah* that had just been revealed. He used to say: "Place these *ayaat* in the *surah*, in which this and this is mentioned." And when one *ayah* was revealed to him, he would say: "Place this *ayah* in the *surah* in which this and this is mentioned" [10]. The Revelation-scribes wrote down the *Qur'an*, according to the order of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), on pieces of cloth, leather, bones, and stones. Its *ayaat* were ordered and arranged according to Allah's inspiration. In the Prophet's lifetime, the *ayaat* were not gathered into one book. It was done afterwards in the period of *Abu Bakr* (RAA). The oral transmission of the revelation was based on memorization and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself was the first to commit a revelation to memory after the angel *Jibreel* (AS) had brought it to him. Every *Ramadhan*, all the portions of the *Qur'an* that had been revealed were revised and reconfirmed by the Prophet (SAW) with *Jibreel* (AS), according to the order of the *ayaat* revealed till that time. During the last *Ramadhan*, before the demise of the Prophet (SAW), the *Qur'an* was rechecked and reconfirmed twice.

The Prophet (SAW) also instructed his Companions (RAA) to memorize the *Qur'an*. *Abdullah Bin Masud* (RA) was the first man to publicly recite it at *Makkah*. It is also reported that *Abu Bakr* (RAA) used to recite the *Qur'an* in front of his house at *Makkah*. [11]. It is therefore clearly evident that the *Qur'an* was compiled and authenticated by the Prophet (SAW) himself during his lifetime, in written form as well as in the memory of several of his Companions (RAA).

In the second phase of the compilation of the *Qur'an*, it was collected as *Suhuf* (Loose pieces of writing material, such as paper and skin), during the Caliphate of *Abu Bakr* (RAA). Tradition informs us that in the Battle of *Yamama*, a number of Muslims who had memorized the *Qur'an* were killed and it was feared that unless a written copy of the *Qur'an* was prepared, a large part of the revelation might be lost. Therefore, *Abu Bakr* (RAA) ordered *Zaid-bin-Thabit* (RAA) to collect the *Qur'an*. *Zaid* (RA) collected it from various written materials and the memories of people. The sheets thus prepared were kept with *Abu Bakr*, then *Umar*, and then *Hafsah* (RAA). In these *suhuf*, the order of the *ayaat* within

Makkan and Madinan Division

As part of studying the revelation of the *Qur'an*, scholars have categorized the *surahs* of the *Qur'an* according to the periods of their revelation. This is known as the *Makkan and Madinan division* of the *Qur'an*. The *surahs* revealed before *Hijrah* are named as *Makkan surahs*, whereas those revealed after *Hijrah* are termed as *Madinan surahs*. The *Makkan surahs* are 85, while the *Madinan surahs* are 28 in number. There is a consensus among scholars regarding the categorization of the *Makkan* and the *Madinan surahs* except for a few, like *surah Al-Hajj*, which is considered to be a *Makkan surah* by some, while others declare it to be of *Madinan* origin. Infact, both opinions are correct, as it contains *ayaat* of the *Makkan* phase as well as those of the *Madinan* period.

Groups

The *surahs* have also been divided by some scholars of the recent past, into seven *Makkan-Madinan* groups, each group starting with one or more *Makkan surahs* and ending with one or more *Madinan surahs*. Every group has a central theme, one aspect of which is described in the *Makkan surahs* of that group, while the other side of the picture is portrayed in the *Madinan surahs*.

Asbab-un-nuzool (Reasons of revelation)

The *Qur'an* has been revealed for guidance for all times and situations to come. However, various *ayaat* were related to a particular time in history and particular circumstances, and thus we ought to have knowledge about the reasons of revelation (*Asbab un-nuzool*) i.e. the knowledge about the events and circumstances in history that are related to the revelation of certain passages of the *Qur'an*. With the knowledge of the reasons of revelation, it is also to be decided whether the revelation has a specific implication (*Taavil-e-Khas*) or is of a general nature (*Taavil-e-Aam*), and needs to be applied by all Muslims at all times.

The Order of Surahs

The complete *Qur'an* was revealed over a period of 22 years, portion by portion, as and when it was required. The sequence of the *ayaat* as they appear in the *Mushaf* [9] is different from its chronological order of revelation. The order and sequence of the *Qur'an* is based on Divine inspiration and was instructed to the Prophet (SAW) by Allah (SWT) through angel *Jibreel* (AS).

Compilation of the Qur'an

The compilation of the *Qur'an* was completed in three stages. First of all, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) received the revelation of the *Qur'an*

into topics or subjects, quite unlike the books we are accustomed with, and the reader also encounters abrupt transitions from one subject matter to another within a *surah*. This is what makes the *Qur'an* a unique Book. Likewise, a *surah* does not contain any chapters or paragraphs. That is why these terms cannot be used interchangeably with the Arabic word 'surah'.

Ruku'

The *surahs* are further divided into sections called *ruku's*. This division was not present at the time of the Prophet (SAW) or during the days of his Companions (RAA). It was done later on under the leadership of *Hajjaj Bin Yusuf*, for the convenience of readers and to enable a person to recite one *Ruku'* in one *Rak'at* of his *Salah* (Prayer).

Juz

The *Qur'an* is also divided into thirty well-known '*Ajza*' (*Parahs*) of approximately equal length for easy recitation during the thirty nights of a month, especially the month of *Ramadhan*. A *Juz* is generally indicated by the word it commences with and its number given alongside. This division of the *Qur'an* was also not present at the time of the Companions (RAA).

Hizb

The *Qur'anic* text is also divided into seven parts of approximately equal length, each part named as a *Hizb* (*Manzil*). It is indicated by the word '*manzil*' or '*hizb*' and the respective number in the margin. The first *hizb* comprises three *surahs*, excluding *Al-Fatihah*, while the others consist of five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen and sixty-five *surahs* respectively.

This arrangement was done by the Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW), to be able to recite the whole *Qur'an* in the course of a week, as indicated by the *Hadith*: *Aws bin Hudhayfah* said that he asked the Companions (RA) of the Prophet (SAW) how they used to divide the *Qur'an* during his lifetime; they said, "Three, five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen and the *Mufassal* [7] alone" [8].

Pairs

Most of the *surahs* in the *Qur'an* form *pairs*. For example, *surah Al-Baqarah* and *surah Aal-e-Imran* are in the form of a pair. Similarly the *surahs Bani Israel* and *Al-Kahf* form a pair. They form pairs because of the similarities of the subjects addressed in them. There are also some unique *surahs*, like *surah Yasin*, which do not form a pair with any *surah*.

Prophet (SAW) by addressing him continuously and whenever the need for guidance arose; secondly, to gradually implement the laws of Allah; and thirdly, to make understanding, application and memorization of the revelation easier for the believers.

During the 22 years of the revelation, the Prophet (SAW) stayed at *Makkah* for about 12 years, and then migrated to *Madinah* in the year 622 CE, where the revelation continued for another ten years. Nearly two-third of the *Qur'an* was revealed at *Makkah*, while the remaining was revealed at *Madinah*, other than some *surahs* that were revealed during the migration from *Makkah* to *Madinah*.

Divisions of the Qur'an

The *Qur'an* has been divided into units, portions and sections, according to the convenience of the readers who wishes to complete it in a given time, and according to the subject matter. The Arabic terms used for these divisions are *Ayah*, *Ruku'*, *Surah*, *Juz (Parah)* and *Hizb (Manzil)*. There are different interpretations in different English translations for these Arabic terms, but we will use most of these terms as they are in Arabic.

Ayah

Ayah is the basic unit of the *Qur'an*. As the *Qur'an* is the ultimate guidance from Allah (SWT) to the whole of Mankind, it is not at all surprising to find that its smallest divisions are called *ayaat* (signs). Every *ayah* is a sign of the Knowledge and the Wisdom of Allah. The terms *sentence* and *verse* are not appropriate to use in place of the word *ayah*, as the *Qur'an* is neither a book of poetry nor that of prose. The size of an *ayah* varies in different *surahs*. The smallest *ayah* in the *Qur'an* comprises only two letters i.e. '*Ha-Meem*'. On the other hand, an *ayah* can be as sizeable as *Ayat-ul-Kursi*, which is one of the lengthiest *ayaat* of the *Qur'an*. So the division or the length of an *ayah* is not based on any principal of Arabic grammar; instead, it is accepted as Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has informed us. There is a difference of opinion regarding the number of *ayaat* in the *Qur'an*, but it is a known fact that there are at least 6500 *ayaat* in the Glorious *Qur'an*.

Surah

Surah, plural *Suwar*, literally means 'row' or 'fence'. In *Qur'anic* terminology, it is the passage-wise division of the *Qur'anic* text. The *Qur'an* has 114 *surahs* of unequal length, the shortest consisting of three *ayaat* (*Al-Asr*, *Al-Kausar* and *An-Nasr*), whereas the longest, of 286 *ayaat* (*Al-Baqarah*). The *surahs* are not divided

Preservation of the Qur'an

Allah (SWT) says:

"Verily We have sent down the Zikr (the Qur'an) and We are going to guard it." [2]

Allah (SWT) revealed the previous Books for the people of a particular Prophet only, and not for the whole of mankind, and did not guarantee to preserve them. Their followers introduced alterations in them and distorted their meanings. The *Qur'an*, on the other hand, was revealed for all Mankind till the end of time. Being the final message, the *Qur'an* is preserved as a matter of Divine scheme in men's hearts and in written form, as is proven by events of history.

In another *ayah*, Allah (SWT) states:

"Surely this is a Glorious Qur'an, inscribed on the Preserved Tablet (Al-Lawh-ul- Mahfuz)." [3]

And in *surah Al-Waqi'ah*, He (SWT) says:

"This is indeed a Glorious Qur'an, in a well-guarded Book." [4]

Allah is protecting it from having anything added to or removed from it, and from being distorted. He is protecting its meanings from being twisted, just as He is protecting its words from being changed.

And in *surah Az-Zukhruf*, Allah says about the *Qur'an*:

"And verily it is in the Mother of the Book in Our Presence, high, full of wisdom." [5]

This means that the actual *Qur'an* is with Allah in the Mother of the Book, and from there it was revealed to Muhammad (SAW) in two stages. At first, Allah sent the *Qur'an* down all at one time from the Preserved Tablet [6] to the House of Might (*Bayt-ul-Izzah*), which is in the heaven of this world. Then it came down in parts to the Messenger of Allah, based upon the incidents that occurred over a period of twenty-two years.

Revelation

The Prophet (SAW) received the first revelation in 610 CE, in the Cave of *Hira*, in the Mountain of Light (*Jabal-e-Noor*), two and a half miles away from the House of Allah in the city of *Makkah*. It was revealed in *Lailat-ul-Qadr* (Night of Decree) in the holy month of *Ramadhan*, through Angel *Jibreel* (AS). The *Qur'an* was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in stages spreading over a period of 22 years and not as a complete book in one single act of revelation. It was done firstly to strengthen the heart of the

Introduction to the Qur'an

“Verily, We have revealed this Qur'an in Arabic (language) so that you may understand.” (12:2)

The Arabic language is the most eloquent, plain, deep and expressive of all languages. The most honorable Book was revealed in the most honorable language, to the most honorable Prophet and Messenger (SAW), delivered by the most honorable angel (*Jibreel*) in the most honorable land on earth (*Makkah*), with its revelation starting during the most honorable month of the lunar year (*Ramadhan*). The *Qur'an* [1] is perfect in every respect and is the greatest and the last of all Heavenly Books.

Central Theme and Purpose of Revelation

It is the word of the Lord of the Worlds, revealed to His Messenger, Muhammad (SAW) to bring mankind forth from darkness to light and to establish perfect justice on earth. The central theme that runs throughout the *Qur'an* is the exposition of the reality and the invitation to the right way. It declares that the same reality was revealed to Adam (AS) and all the Messengers after him, and that all the Prophets and Messengers preached the same right way. Thus the real objective of the Book is to call people to this "right way" and to illuminate Allah's true guidance, which has often been lost either through man's negligence and heedlessness, or distorted by his wicked perversity.

Addressees of the Qur'an

The first addressees of the *Qur'an* were the Arabs, who were from the progeny of *Ismail* (AS), the son of *Ibrahim* (AS). They were unlettered people and no Prophet had been sent to them before Muhammad (SAW). Secondly, the *Qur'an* addresses the people of the Book i.e. The Jews and the Christians, to whom the previous scriptures had been revealed and most of the Prophets sent before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). But as a whole, the *Qur'an* was revealed as guidance to the whole of Mankind, and not to a particular group or nation. It addresses innumerable varieties of people, remote from one another in time, space, and character, and still has such an easy way of explanation, such a purity of style and such a clear way of description, that it seems to be addressing a single, homogenous group, while each group feels that it is being addressed uniquely and specifically.

"And most certainly, We have made the Qur'an easy for remembrance: is there then anyone to seek remembrance?"

On the other hand, the higher level of the comprehension of the Qur'an is 'Tadabbur' i.e. deep contemplation. At this level, the Qur'an is a boundless ocean with immeasurable depths. No one, even after spending one's whole life in learning and pondering over the words of the Qur'an, can ever claim to have completely explored its expanse or reached its depths.

Since the revelation of this wonderful Book, Allah (SWT) has been selecting some blessed souls from the *Ummah* of His last Prophet (SAW) for the privilege of serving it. Being the ultimate guidance for all humans, regardless of their race, nation, language and region, it needed to be translated into non-Arabic languages. Many great scholars devoted their lives to its learning, contemplation and elucidation. Many magnificent exegeses of this Book have been written.

Dr. Israr Ahmad is also one of those who have devoted their lives to the service of the Book of Allah. He started his *Ruju' Ilal Qur'an* (Reverting towards the Qur'an) movement in 1965. Since then, he, alongwith his companions, has been striving to propagate the message of the Qur'an to the masses. The *Daura-e-Tarjuma-e-Qur'an* in the nights of *Ramadhan* to call the Muslims, who have disassociated themselves from this rope of Allah back to it, is the cornerstone of this movement. The pages that follow are basically an edited form of the transcription of Dr. Israr's *Daura-e-Tarjuma-e-Qur'an*, delivered in English in the US. This is the first volume, comprising an introduction to the Qur'an, alongwith the translation, for which help has been taken from the translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and brief elucidation of *surahs Al-Fatihah, Al-Baqarah* and *Aal-e-Imran*. Although effort has been made to make it as useful as possible for the readers, there is certainly room for improvement in it. It is not a detailed exegesis of the Qur'an and is meant to fulfill to some extent, the need of the basic level of the understanding of the Qur'an i.e. *Tazakkur*. Its main objective is to present the meaning of the Qur'an in an easily comprehensible way, with the hope that it may become a source of inspiration and revitalization of faith for the Muslims, specially their youth, may instigate them to devote their lives to the service of the final Divine Book, as the Prophet (SAW) said: "The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it" and may play a part in an Islamic Renaissance. And all help is from Allah alone.

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MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN

Translation and Brief Elucidation

By

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

PROLOGUE

All praise is due to Allah (SWT), who commenced His Book with praise and said: *"All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds"*, commenced His creation with praise and said: *"All praise is for Allah, who created the heavens and the earth and created darkness and light"* and concluded it with praise and said after mentioning the final destiny of the dwellers of Paradise and the tenants of Hell: *"And the decision will be made among them and it will be said that all praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds."* For Him is all praise in this world as well as in the Hereafter. He revealed His ultimate guidance to His last Prophet (SAW) and brought mankind forth from darkness into light through it.

May Allah shower His blessings and mercy upon our beloved Prophet, Muhammad (SAW), who not only conveyed the message of Allah in the best manner, but also gave a perfect practical demonstration of it through his actions, as Ayesha (RA) said: *"His conduct was the Qur'an."*

The Glorious *Qur'an*, the final word of the Lord of the worlds, a miracle of miracles, guidance for all humanity until the Day of Resurrection, is the greatest blessing of our Creator upon us. If there is anything to rejoice in this world, it is the *Qur'an* with its guidance that eliminates all shades of darkness and illuminates whatever it falls upon. The whole world with all its glitter is nothing compared to this blessing of Allah (SWT). Who would know better about its worth than the one who revealed it? He (SWT) says:

"O Mankind! Certainly an advice from your Lord and a cure for what is in the breasts and guidance and blessing for the believers has come to you. Say: (It is) through Allah's bounty and His blessing, so this is what they should celebrate. It is better than what they amass." (Surah Yunus: 56-57)

There are two levels of the understanding of the *Qur'an*. The basic level is 'Tazakkur' i.e. seeking remembrance and guidance, for which this Book is the easiest and the most comprehensible of all Books. Allah (SWT) emphasizes this fact by mentioning it four times in *Surah Al-Qamar*.