

THE SPIRIT OF THE QURAN

Review by Qasim Abbas of Toronto, Canada

THE FIRST EVER TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY OF HOLY QURAN IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE BY A MEMON

The Holy Quran, Muslim Holy Scripture, is revealed by Almighty Allah to His Beloved Prophet (S.A.W.), 1,400 years ago, for guidance not only for Muslims, but for whole mankind till Judgment Day. It is revealed through the medium of human language i.e. Arabic language, which was language of the Arabian Peninsula, where it was revealed in span of approximately 23 years period. It is full of guidance and complete code of life for whole mankind. It is in Arabic language, the language prevailing in land of Arabia, where Holy Quran was revealed at that time i.e. 1,400 years ago. Before that, other Holy Scriptures were also revealed on other Prophets (A.S.) for the guidance of their people. However, the Holy Quran is the last and final revelation, revealed by Almighty Allah on the last and final Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (S.A.W.). After this, no Prophet and no Holy Scripture will come.

The Holy Quran is addressed by Almighty Allah directly to mankind as well as to believers (mo`amins) and to Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and also in some Verses to Jinns and to non-believers (kuffars) as well. It is revealed in Arabic language, which is not the language of non-Arab people. In order to understand what Almighty Allah is addressing directly to mankind, translation of Holy Quran in various languages have been made. By these translations, people not knowing Arabic language can understand what Almighty Allah is addressing to them. Therefore, these translations in various languages have made understanding of Holy Quran easy for these non-Arab people. And Allah has repeated in Surah Al Qamar (54) four times in Verses 17, 22, 32 and 40: ``**And We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?**``

As testified by Holy Quran itself, the responsibility of mankind, including believers towards Holy Quran i.e. rights towards Holy Quran i.e. HUQOOQ-UL-QURAN by is mandatory i.e. obligatory i.e. FARZ by each believer. In various Verses of Holy Quran, this fact is mentioned. In all, there are six obligations i.e. FARZ on mankind towards Holy Quran, as under:

6 duties towards Quran i.e. HUQOOQ-UL-QURAN:

Believe it (2:177 etc.),
Read it (16:98 etc.),
Understand it (54:17 etc.),
Think and Mediate on it (38:29),
Obey and Follow it (2:170, 6:155 etc.)
and Propagate it(5:67 etc.).

These are MANDATORY, OBLIGATORY i.e. FARZ on all believers as Allah has revealed this time and again in Holy Quran.

The first ever complete translation and commentary of Holy Quran in English language by a Memon is now available. The translator (late) Mohataram Adam Esabhai Dokadia is a Halai Memon from Bhavnagar, India. A graduate of late fifties from Aligarh Muslim University, he was born in business family of Akola, India on 18 December 1936. The automobile trade was his source of livelihood. He migrated to Nagpur, studied famous English translation and commentary of Allama Muhammad Asad for a decade, and prepared this noble and unique work **"THE SPIRIT OF THE QURAN"**. This marvellous work contains 988 pages and each page contains Arabic text on right, English translation on left and in foot-note, it contains commentary (app. 1/3rd of page and sometime more than 1/3rd of page).

In this Quran translation and commentary, after "Contents", (2 pages), "Works of Reference" (2 pages) have been given, in which names of Hadees Books, Encyclopaedias, and other books of Islamic scholars are listed. "Preface" (3 pages) is written by Mohataram Hanif Haji A. Majid, who is also a Halai Memon from Vasawad, India and now he is in Mumbai. Then "Preservation of the Holy Quran" (3 pages) is also written by Mohataram Hanif Haji A. Majid. "Forward" (6 pages) does not contain any name, but it appears that it is from the translator.

At the end, it also contains: Appendix I – Symbolism and Allegory in The Quran (4 pages), Appendix II – Al-Muqatt'at (2 pages), Appendix III – On the Term and Concept of Jinn (2 pages) and Appendix IV – The Night Journey (3 pages).

In all above four Appendixes, the translator has explained the concept and explanation of these terms e.g.:

Allegory = MUTASHABAHAAT Ayats in Quran, whose interpretation is known to Allah alone as per 3:7 of Holy Quran.

Al-Muqatta'at = Disjointed letters i.e. those Arabic alphabets, which appear at the beginning of some Surahs e.g. ALIF-LAAM-MEEM, HAA-MEEM etc.

The Term and Concept of Jinn = Explanation about Jinn.

Night Journey = It refers to ME'ARAJ i.e. Ascension.

Before this noble work by a Memon, earlier (late) Mohataram Ebrahim Shahabz has translated Holy Quran, upto Parah 9 (upto Surah No. 8, Surah Al-Anfal, 40 Ayats), in Memoni language and Gujarati script. Also (late) Moulana Abdul Karim Parekh of Nagpur has written LUGHAT-UL-QURAN in Urdu language. And before that, around 60 years ago, (late) Mohataram Qasim Umer Ghazi Aliyabadawala has translated Surah Yaseen (36) in Memoni language and Gujarati script, and (late) Mohataram Noor Mohammed A. Latif Rangoonwala has translated Parah 30 in Memoni language and Gujarati script.

"THE SPIRIT OF THE QURAN" is published as 1st Edition in year 2006 by Mohammed Nasir Khan of Farid Book depot (P) Limited, 2158, M.P. Street, Pataudi House, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110 002 and printed at Farid Enterprises, Delhi-6. Phone Nos. 23247075, 23289786 23289159.

It is also available in Mumbai from Farid Book Depot (P) Limited, 208, Sardar Patel Road, Near Khoja Qabrastan, Dongri, Mumbai-400 009. Phone Nos. 23731786, 23774786.

The 988 pages publication **"THE SPIRIT OF THE QURAN"** is Copyright reserved and does not contain any price or hadiyah. Its ISBN No. is 81-7801-208-1.



**THE SPIRIT OF
THE
QUR'AN**

As Understood By
ADAM ESABHAI

© Copyright reserved.

THE SPIRIT OF THE QUR'AN

As Understood by
ADAM ESABHAI

1st Edition: **2006**

ISBN: 81-7801-208-1

Published by: **Muhammad Nasir Khan** for
FARID BOOK DEPOT (P) LTD.

2158, M.P. Street, Pataudi House,
Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002
Ph.: 23247075, 23289786, 23289159
Res.: 23262486 Fax: 23279998

Our Branches:

- Delhi:**
1. Farid Book Depot (P) Ltd.
422, Matia Mahal, Jama Masjid, Delhi-6
Ph.: 23265406, 23256590
 2. Farid Book Depot (P) Ltd.
168/1, Jha House, Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin (W),
New Delhi-110013 Ph.: 24351944, 55358122

- Mumbai:**
1. Farid Book Depot (P) Ltd.
208, Sardar Patel Road,
Near Khoja Qabristan, Dongri,
Mumbai-400009
Ph.: 022-23731786, 23774786

Printed at: **Farid Enterprises, Delhi-6**

5

In the name of ALLAH the most beneficent & merciful

Preface
(Hanif Haji Majid)

"Al-Qur'an" or "The Reading" - the very title implies the use of intellect. In other words the Qur'an is addressed to the human intellect and therefore it exhorts man to think, contemplate and reflect upon his actions. Obviously, 'Iman' or faith should be the outcome of an intellectual exercise. Thus, the Qur'an, while describing the gradual enlightenment of Ibrahim (PBUH) in Surah 6, verses 75-78, is also demonstrating the use of intellect in the most elementary manner.

Umar ibn Khattab surrendered his complete self to the will of the Creator the instance he read a few verses of Surah Ta-Ha. This is the same Qur'an which transformed the lives of millions, changed the course of history and heralded that golden era which ignited passions in every field of human endeavor. It truly laid the foundation of the ultimate human civilisation. With the revelation of the Qur'an, the human mind, the ultimate gift of the Creator, which distinguishes man from the rest of His creation, has been unleashed to unravel the mysteries of the unknown and to harness energies from the unimaginable in fulfilling the final scheme of Creation.

Islam, meaning submission, is the Law of Nature. All creation except man is programmed to submit. Man, by virtue of his life being a test has a choice - to conform to the Laws of Creation and reap the benefits in this world; submit to the Laws of Conduct and be the recipient of the Creator's Grace in the hereafter. His refusal to submit to the first choice results in poverty and misery in this world and refusal to submit to the second ensures perpetual doom in the hereafter.

Essentially the Qur'an is a comprehensive answer to the question, "How shall I behave in order to achieve the good life in this world and happiness in the life to come?" The one aspect of the Qur'an which differentiates it fundamentally from all other sacred scriptures is its stress on reason as a valid way to faith as well as its insistence on the inseparability of the spiritual and the physical spheres of human existence: the inseparability of man's daily actions and behavior, however "mundane", from his spiritual life and destiny.

This absence of any division of reality into "physical" and "spiritual" compartment makes it difficult for people brought up in the orbit of other religions, with their accent on the "supernatural" element allegedly inherent in every true religious experience, to appreciate the predominantly rational approach of the Qur'an to all religious questions. Consequently, its constant interweaving of spiritual teachings with practical legislation perplexes the reader, who has become accustomed to identifying "religious experience" with a thrill of numinous awe before things hidden and beyond all intellectual comprehension, and is suddenly confronted with the claim of the Qur'an to being a guidance not only towards the spiritual good of the hereafter but also towards the good life - spiritual, physical and social attainable in this world. In short, he cannot readily accept the Qur'anic thesis that all life, being God given, is a unity, and that problems of the flesh and of the mind, of sex and economics, of individual righteousness and social equity are intimately connected with the hopes which man may legitimately entertain with regard to his life after death.

The very fact that the Qur'an claims to provide guidance till the Day of Judgment, therefore, the more our worldly knowledge and historical experience increase with the passing of time, the more meanings, hitherto unsuspected, reveal themselves in its pages. These meanings apparently have a two-fold purpose; on the one hand the information thus revealed carries the unique stamp of the Creator - the knowledge only He could have had as an evidence of the Writ being His word, for every age and for all levels of intellect. And secondly to meet the demand of guidance in the ever changing environment. As an example the part of verse 3 of chapter 30 "fi adnal arda" has been translated as "in the lands close-by". Whereas the actual translation should be, "in the lowest lands..." The reference here is to the area around the Dead Sea where the battle between the Romans and the Persians took place. That area happens to be 395 meters below sea

THE FIRST SŪRAH

(17)

AL-FĀTIHAH (THE OPENING)

MECCA PERIOD

THIS SŪRAH is also called *Fātiḥat al-Kitāb* ("The Opening of the Divine Writ"), *Umm - al -Kitāb* ("The Essence of the Divine Writ"), *Sūrat al -Ḥamd* ("The Surah of Praise"), *Asās al-Qur'ān* ("The Foundation of the Qur'ān"), and is known by several other names as well. It is mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān as *As-Sab' al-Mathāni* ("The Seven Oft-Repeated [Verses]") because it is repeated several times in the course of each of the five daily prayers. According to Bukhārī, the designation *Umm al-Kitāb* was given to it by the Prophet himself, and this in view of the fact that it contains, in a condensed form, all the fundamental principles laid down in the Qur'ān: the principle of God's oneness and uniqueness, of His being the originator and fosterer of the universe, the fount of all life-giving graces, the One to whom man is ultimately responsible, the only power that can really guide and help, the call to righteous action in the life of this world ("guide us the straight way"); the principle of life after death and of the organic consequences of man's actions and behaviour (expressed in the term "Day of Judgment"), the principle of guidance

through God's message-bearers (evident in the reference to "those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings") and, flowing from it, the principle of the continuity of all true religions (implied in the allusion to people who have lived - and erred - in the past); and, finally, the need for voluntary self-surrender to the will of the Supreme Being and, thus, for worshipping Him alone. It is for this reason that this sūrah has been formulated as a prayer, to be constantly repeated and reflected upon by the believer.

"The Opening" was one of the earliest revelations bestowed upon the Prophet. Some authorities (for instance, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib) were even of the opinion that it was the very first revelation; but this view is contradicted by authentic Traditions quoted by both Bukhārī and Muslim, which unmistakably show that the first five verses of sūrah 96 ("The Germ-Cell") constituted the beginning of revelation. It is probable, however, that whereas the earlier revelations consisted of only a few verses each, "The Opening" was the first sūrah revealed to the Prophet in its entirety at one time; and this would explain the view held by 'Alī.

1. IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE DISPENSER OF GRACE!

2. ALL PRAISE is due to ALLAH alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds;¹
3. the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace,
4. Lord of the Day of Judgment!
5. You alone do we worship; and unto You alone do we turn for aid.
6. Guide us the straight way -



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

¹ According to most of the authorities, this invocation (which occurs at the beginning of every sūrah with the exception of sūrah 9) constitutes an integral part of "The Opening" and is, therefore, numbered as verse 1. In all other instances, the invocation "in the name of ALLAH" precedes the sūrah as such, and is not counted among its verses. -Both the divine epithets *rahmān* and *rahīm* are derived from the noun *rahmah*, which signifies "mercy", "compassion", "loving tenderness" and, more comprehensively, "grace". From the very earliest times, Islamic scholars have endeavoured to define the exact shades of meaning which differentiate the two terms. The best and simplest of these explanations is undoubtedly the one advanced by Ibn al-Qayyim (as quoted in Manār I, 48): the term *rahmān* circumscribes the quality of abounding grace inherent in, and inseparable from, the concept of ALLAH'S Being, whereas *rahīm* expresses the manifestation of that grace in, and its effect upon, His cre-

ation - in other words, an aspect of His activity.

² In this instance, the term "worlds" denotes all categories of existence both in the physical and the spiritual sense. The Arabic expression *rabb* - rendered by me as "Sustainer" - embraces a wide complex of meanings not easily expressed by a single term in another language. It comprises the ideas of having a just claim to the possession of anything and, consequently, authority over it, as well as of rearing, sustaining and fostering anything from its inception to its final completion. Thus, the head of a family is called *rabb ad-dār* ("master of the house") because he has authority over it and is responsible for its maintenance; similarly, his wife is called *rabbat ad-dār* ("mistress of the house"). Preceded by the definite article *al*, the designation *rabb* is applied, in the Qur'ān, exclusively to ALLAH as the sole fosterer and sustainer of all creation - objective as well as conceptual - and therefore the ultimate source of all authority.

THE HUNDRED-FOURTEENTH SŪRAH

AN-NĀS (MEN)

PERIOD. UNCERTAIN

SEE introductory note to the preceding sūrah, with which this one is closely connected.

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE DISPENSER OF GRACE



1. SAY: "I seek refuge with the Sustainer of men,
2. "the Sovereign of men,
3. "the ALLAH of men,
4. "from the evil of the whispering, elusive tempter
5. "who whispers in the hearts of men" -
6. "from all [temptation to evil by] invisible forces as well as men."²

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ
 مَلِكِ النَّاسِ
 إِلَهِ النَّاسِ
 مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ
 الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ
 مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

¹ I.e., "Shaitan" in the widest meaning of this designation, as pointed out by Rāzi (quoted in sūrah 14, note 31).

² The above is perhaps the oldest Qur'anic mention of the term and concept of *al-jinnah* (synonymous with *al-jinn*), which has been tentatively explained in Appendix III. In the above context, the term probably denotes the intangible, mysterious forces of nature to which man's psyche is exposed,

and which sometimes make it difficult for us to discern between right and wrong. However, in the light of this last verse of the last sūrah of the Qur'an it is also possible to conclude that the "invisible forces" from which we are told to seek refuge with ALLAH are the temptations to evil emanating from the blindness of our own hearts, from our gross appetites, and from the erroneous notions and false values that may have been handed down to us by our predecessors.