

# **ISLAM-A RELIGION OF MANKIND OR THE RELIGION FOR MANKIND**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

This long article has been written in order to demonstrate that God's religion has always been one. It is mortal humans who have been going astray and creating divisions in God's religion while God has been repeatedly restoring his religion back to its original form. Ultimately He completed His religion and preserved it for humanity for all times to come by sending His final Messenger Holy Prophet Muhammed (salawato wa salam abbreviated as sws in this article). This is called Islam which has in fact always been its name. The article consists of four major parts and a number of sections and subsections which become clear as the reader goes along in his reading. I have made every effort to appeal to common sense, keep my arguments simple and based on facts. The readers would find it helpful if they could keep the Quran or its easy translation at hand while reading this article. The inspiration to write this article has been a treatise by a UK based Muslim scholar Dr Farhad Shafti, 'The true meaning of universality of the Quran' which is available on his website: [www.exploring-islam.com](http://www.exploring-islam.com). The readers can appreciate the content of the article better if this treatise is in sight.

## **A) THE RELIGION IN PERSPECTIVE:**

Humanity can be seen divided into a plethora of ideologies and religions, each with its own understanding of human origin, its current existence on earth and its fate with variable emphasis on these aspects of humanity. This article is based on teachings of the Quran and human history and deals with these questions particularly from the point of view of human existence on this earth, humanity's journey in this life, its common goal, the responsibility of humans to recognise this goal and help each other in achieving this goal.

### **A:1: THE HUMAN EXISTENCE**

The existence of human being on this planet Earth, with all its complicated nature, fascinating faculties and abilities and striking weaknesses raise some important questions. Has this existence come into being on its own through the spin of wheel of evolution over millions of years or is it a manifestation of a design? Has this human existence any purpose or is it without any purpose? Has this existence any time bound logical end or is it going to last for ever?

Let us set aside the viewpoint of people who do not believe in God or Allah (as referred in the Quran and subsequently in this article) and for the time being, accept as a starting point, the viewpoint of those who affirm the existence of an omnipotent Allah (subhana'hu wata'la or abbreviated as swt in this article) and that the human existence is a manifestation of a design, that it has some purpose and that it has a logical conclusion. Briefly this viewpoint states that Allah (swt) created this universe, defined and decreed laws which govern it and at one point in the history of this universe created human being. He adorned humans with fascinating faculties, peculiar abilities and a complicated nature. He gave him a limited autonomy and placed him on this earth with a clear purpose which is to see who amongst human race surrender this limited autonomy and horn their nature, faculties and abilities to the will of their Creator God or Allah (swt). According to this viewpoint, this worldly human life is hence a test (the Quran 67:2) and the purpose of this test is to

lead humans to another life i.e.to inhabit another abode called paradise, with those amongst human race who are successful in this test.

Now, is this test easy? The summary answer is that this test is by no means easy. Firstly because the Creator Allah (swt) has hidden Himself from human faculties and cannot be seen and touched like humans perceive the existence of physical objects. Secondly human existence is marred by so many barriers and limitations which become a hindrance and make it difficult for him to navigate his way to success.

## **A:2: THE PROBLEMS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE:**

Human life has been brought into existence with innumerable problems and limitations which become tools of this test it is subjected to on this planet. These can be divided into:

### **A:2:1 Physical or manifest:**

- a) **Limitations of choice:** Human existence is marred by limitations of choice. These limitations can be absolute like place and time of birth, choice of parents, choice of abilities or can be relative like where to live, what to do in life etc.
- b) **Preservation of self:** Human existence in this life is based on deep love for this worldly existence which leads to the principle of preservation of self. It, in turn, results in passions like greed for power and resources, jealousy, prejudice, pride, anger, competitiveness, combativeness, seeking of pleasure and comfort and avoidance of pain.
- c) **Limitations of faculties:** Human being, in addition to basic sensations of vision, hearing, smell, touch and taste like other animals, is adorned with advanced abilities like consciousness, memory, intelligence, language, analysis, predictability, foresight and creativity. However all these, not only have limitations, but at times are prone to failure as well.
- d) **Variations in existence:** Human life and its environment is characterised by variations. The human characteristics mentioned above and many others which have not been mentioned, come in continua from one end of the scale to the other. In addition to the aforementioned, just note characters like height, weight, intelligence, beauty and many others.
- e) **Vulnerabilities to forces of nature:** Human existence is subjected to countless challenges from its environment (the Quran 74-31). Extremes of climate, accidents like earthquakes, excessive rains causing floods, droughts resulting in famines, epidemics and diseases are just a few examples. These make humans vulnerable and make an important part of the test, the human life is subjected to.
- f) **Death:** And then is the ultimate malady which chases human life all the time, called death. If we pause for a moment and think about this monstrous reality, it leaves us in sheer awe.

All these problems and limitations should raise questions in human mind. Any intelligent mind, if it ponders over these questions, can easily make out that human life is full of unanswered questions. It can also easily and logically make connections in this jigsaw puzzle and understand that human life is designed in a particularly way, that there is a purpose in this design and that there is a Designer behind all this. As a famous philosopher once said that, in God everything is explained while without God nothing could be explained. Allah's

guidance through revelation affirms all this premise and also the second type of test which is metaphysical or hidden.

### **A:2:2Metaphysical or hidden:**

These problems of existence are those relating to areas which are beyond the reach of human senses and humans have no means to precisely understand and describe. These are part of the test humans are subjected to, but humans have no direct access to these. However these can be understood to be logical and to be completing the missing links of human existence. These become sure knowledge for humans through revelation from the Creator Allah (swt). These are mainly two:

- a) **Metaphysical:**The existence of Allah (swt), Angels, heaven and hell and the form of human existence before or after this worldly existence. Humans cannot have physical experience of any of these by any means.
- b) **The challenge of Iblees:**Allah (swt) has revealed to mankind that his test in this worldly life will be complicated by Satan who challenged to covertly work against humanity to fail them in this test. The knowledge about Iblees, his arrogance and his challenge for mankind has been transmitted to humanity only by revelation and humans have no other means of knowing about it.

### **A:3THE HUMANITY AND ITS COMMON GOAL:**

If we carefully go through the Quran it becomes clear that it is 'the test made easy' manual for mankind from the Lord (swt) of the universe. It makes clear that Allah (swt) is dealing with humanity with utmost mercy as a unit and a family. This family has a common goal and it is facing a common challenge. The Quran describes the test, the humanity is subjected to and how to be successful in this test. It describes the resources, the humans are equipped with, to face this test. It identifies their common enemy which is Iblees and describes his challenge. It describes how by exploiting their weaknesses he is going to prop them up with arrogance against their creator Allah (swt) and also play up against each other causing disunity, corruption and bloodshed amongst them. It warns those who, despite this clear guidance, fall in this trap and start working against humanity. Through His sheer mercy, Allah (swt) on the other hand also advises them against disunity, corruption and bloodshed. He advocates and promotes brotherhood, unity and cooperativeness amongst humans (4:1) in order to succeed in the test they are subjected to. **An important part of this cooperativeness is to invite fellow humans to the way and guidance of their Lord so they can avoid the wrath and punishment of their Lord and gain success in the life hereafter. Hence inviting humanity to the correct ways of their Lord is the greatest service, a human being can render to humanity.**

### **A:4THE RESOURCES OF HUMANITY:**

In order to succeed in the test of life, human beings have been equipped with proper tools and resources. This is the guidance of our Creator Lord or Allah (swt). It has taken two forms:

#### **A:4:1Deen-e-fitrat (guidance in human nature):**

This is the main, primary and innate guidance with which the humans have been adorned with by their Lord (the Quran 91:8). The core of this guidance is inherent knowledge of right (or good) from wrong (or bad) which is common heritage of humanity and is known to humans irrespective of race, colour, language, ideologies and religions. Every human being knows by his very nature that truth, honesty, justice, fulfilments of promises, kindness, mercy and forgiveness are righteous or good and

the opposite of all these are wrong or bad. It forms the basis of human relations, lays the foundation of human society and promotes 'family-hood' in humanity. Allah has enjoined upon humans to practice everything what is 'right' (called Ma'roof in the Quran) in this guidance and shun everything what is known as 'wrong' (called Munkar in the Quran) in this guidance. This guidance is essential for human existence on this planet and is also essential to succeed in the test of life and earn reward of paradise in the next life however it is not the only requirement for the later.

#### **A:4:2Deen-e-wahi (guidance of revelation):**

The human intellect, if it works correctly, can make out on its own that human existence on this planet is by design, that there is a Designer (called God or Allah (swt)) behind this and that the injustices and imperfections of this human existence should be complimented by another existence, more perfect and more just. However, due to risk of faulty working of human intellect under the influence of demands of preservation of self, the challenge of Iblees and to precisely lay out for mankind the liking and disliking of his Creator, Allah (swt) through his sheer mercy helped humanity right from its inception with guidance of revelation (Deen-e-wahi) (the Quran 2:38). To keep the nature of the test intact, the methodology adopted was to choose from amongst humans certain individuals, make them perfect examples of Deen-e-fitrat, equip them with revelation and appoint them to guide mankind. The guidance brought by these noblest of humans from Allah (swt) is Deen-e-wahi.

#### **A:5THE UNITY OF RELIGION:**

These individuals are called prophets of Allah (swt) and the guidance they brought from Allah was declared by Allah (swt) to be **the religion of mankind called Islam**(the Quran 3:19 and 3:84-85). Hence Islam, as understood from the Quran, could be defined as:

**'The religion of voluntary and total submission to Allah (sws) according to His guidance'.**

The very first human being Adam (sws) was fully equipped with both the types of guidance. In other words humanity started its journey under the clear guidance of Allah (swt). However gradually the humans started differing amongst themselves about the guidance under the influence of main weapon of Iblees, arrogance, thereby tainting and corrupting this guidance. Hence Allah (swt) then started sending prophets who would restore the guidance as has been clarified in the Quran:

**'Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over the Scripture except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves. And Allah guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path' (the Quran 2: 213).**

Hence it becomes clear from the above and several other places in the Quran that Allah's chosen religion for humanity has always been one and that is Islam.

Hence it is completely wrong to say that all religions are true and different forms of ways to the Lord. The Quran does not buy this theory at all (3:19, 23:51-54). It does not accept that certain ancient prophets brought Hinduism in India or Moses (sws) brought Judaism or Jesus (sws) brought Christianity and that it is acceptable to practice these as valid religions of Allah (swt). The Quranic concept of religion is that the guidance of Allah (swt) for mankind has always been one and it has

always meant voluntary and total submission to Allah(swt) according to His guidance which has been named Islam.

## **A:6A CONCISE HISTORY OF RELIGION:**

### **A:6:1An outline of human societal development:**

If we look at human history we can see progressive development of humanity's resources and society. At one point he was just a hunter-gatherer with rudimentary tools at his disposal and no art of reading and writing. The demand for search for food started the process of dispersal and development of separate communities laying the foundation of tribal societies. The process of variation and then of separation of languages started. Gradually domestication of animals and agriculture started. The inevitable result was certain inventions and the development of skills. Complex interdependent communities with division of labour started developing. With it developed the need for record keeping, some form of currency to exchange labour and some form of collective order. The art of reading and writing started developing in some of these more complex communities and developed at variable pace in different communities. With it developed the different writing materials until paper was invented in China in second century CE. Under the dictates of climate, geography and pattern of resources certain communities remained stuck in tribal mode while in certain other areas civilizations started developing. In these civilizations first city states and then empires developed.

### **A:6:2Parallel development of Divine guidance:**

Humanity and its resources have evolved within the framework of physical laws by which Allah (sws) has dictated this universe. Similarly, the Divine guidance for mankind has also developed within this framework and in accordance with the resources of humanity. Hence we can see that Allah (swt)'s guidance has three phases.

**Phase 1:**As clarified above the Divine guidance has remained the same throughout its history although its form and shape developed according to development of human society and its resources. As mentioned earlier, to maintain the nature of test, Allah (swt)'s guidance took the form of revelation which was bestowed upon certain individuals called prophets who were appointed as guides (or Haad in Quranic terms, the Quran 13:7). In the initial stages when human population was not very large, language was the only means of communication and humanity lacked reliable resources to preserve and transfer Allah (swt)'s guidance, the prophets were sent separately to different societies or nations in their own languages (the Quran 13:7 and 14:4).

**Phase 2:**At a point in history, about 3700 years ago, Allah (swt) changed the methodology of sending guidance to mankind. He confined prophethood to Prophet's Ibrahim's (sws) progeny. As we know he had two sons Ismael (or Ishmael) and Is'haq (or Isaac) who were both prophets of Allah (swt). Prophet Ibrahim (sws) inhabited his older son Ismael in Arabian Peninsula and younger son Is'haq in Palestine. The prophethood was then firstly confined in younger son Is'haq's lineage in Palestine, an area which was at the crossroads of all three known continents at that time (while there were no further prophets for about 23 centuries in the older son's lineage). Then the scope to spread the divine guidance was further widened as a result of increase in human population and increased

communication amongst societies of more civilized parts of the World. After Prophet Moses (sws), the whole progeny of Is'haq's son Jacob (sws) called Bani Israel, after their exodus from Egypt and resettlement in Palestine, were raised in status amongst all nations about 3300 years ago to become helpers of prophets to spread and carry forward the message of guidance of Allah (swt). Humanity was in the meantime gradually developing its resources. Hence Bani Israel started persevering this guidance in some oral but mostly in written form. However it could not be preserved accurately in its original form due to a number of reasons which included, as a few examples, the loss of material, mixture of divine and secular material, textual problems, in some cases absence of use of original languages, repetitions and translations. After prophethood ended in Is'haq's lineage with Prophet Isaa (Jesus Christ) (sws), all this religious record got preserved within a few centuries as a mixture of history and Scripture, in the form of what we know today as the Bible. Ironically the books in the Bible got preserved only when human resources to preserve records achieved a certain state of maturity however what wrong had earlier been done could not be undone. However this was the time when humanity had developed resources to accurately preserve the records.

**Phase 3:** Hence at a point in history when humanity's resources had sufficiently developed to the extent that these could accurately preserve divine guidance, Allah (swt) sent Holy Prophet Muhammad (sws) in lineage of Abraham's older son Ismael in Arabia. It appears (and Allah (swt) knows best) that Allah (swt) balanced the honour of sending a number of prophets in Is'haq's lineage (while no prophets were sent in older son Ismael's progeny during this whole period) by ending prophethood in Ismael's progeny and giving the following honour to Ismael's lineage:

- The institution of prophethood was culminated hence ending all forms of direct revelation to mankind and in its place:
- The final revelation to the last Prophet Muhammed (sws) was precisely preserved in its original language in the form of the Quran.
- The Shari'ah was completed and preserved after subtracting certain things which were local and temporary and adding certain items, although, the core of Sharia remained the same as is confirmed in the Quran (42:13). This final sharia was fully preserved and enshrined in the form of the Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammed (sws).
- The final guidance brought by Holy Prophet (sws) also became the final form of guidance of Allah (swt) for the whole of humanity to follow until the day of judgement.

Hence this is the final phase, which started with the advent of Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws), which we are all now living in and which will last until the day of judgement.

#### **A:7: THE WIDENING RESPONSIBILITY:**

If we study the history of mankind from the perspective of responsibility of calling to Allah (swt)'s guidance which has always been Islam, in the initial phase, it primarily rested with the prophets and their close followers. In the second phase it initially was upon Holy Prophet Ibrahim's family (immediate progeny) and those of his descendants who were prophets and their followers. However then the whole nation of Bani Israel were given this responsibility. It can be seen that the scope of responsibility of calling to Allah (swt)'s guidance has been widening over the history. In the final phase which started with the advent of Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) and will last until the day of judgement, the responsibility of calling to Islam has been further widened and now the responsibility

of calling to Allah (swt)'s guidance lies upon everybody who accepts this guidance and calls himself to be a Muslim.

It is important to understand that after Holy Prophet (sws) it was **not only** Bani Ismael who were raised to the responsibility of calling to Allah's guidance i.e Islam, as previously **only** Bani Israel were raised. Rather it was the Ummah of Holy Prophet (sws) as a whole which were raised to this status and given responsibility of calling the rest of mankind to Islam, the only authentic source of which is now Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) and the Quran until the day of judgement. Hence while Bani Israel were chosen exclusively however Bani Ismael were not chosen exclusively rather whole of the Muslim Ummah were chosen for this responsibility (the Quran 22:77-78). This can be understood from the following evidence from the Quran:

-Bani Israel have been addressed in Quran in the 'first person' as 'Ya Bani Israel' at 4 places (the Quran 2: 40, 2:47, 2:122 and 20:80) while they have been referred to as a nation at 37 different places in the Quran while **Bani Ismael have neither been addressed to in the first person nor referred to as a nation even once in the Quran.** This difference is too striking to be ignored.

-In the Quran the responsibility of calling to the guidance has been assigned to Muslim Ummah as a whole as per the following dictate of the Quran:

**'And thus We have made you a just community (ummah) that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah (swt) has guided. And never would Allah (swt) have caused you to lose your faith. Indeed Allah (swt) is, to the people, Kind and Merciful'** (the Quran 2:143).

One can appreciate that in this verse the community of believers which included Ismaeli and non Ismaeli Muslims has been addressed collectively rather than Bani Ismael only.

-In the Quran, the Muslims have been collectively addressed to as 'Ya ayyuhalla zina a'amanu' at numerous places which included all the Muslims rather than only the Bani Ismael.

Hence we can easily appreciate that the scope of responsibility of inviting to Allah's guidance has been progressively widening and after Holy Prophet (sws) it rests with each and every person of the Muslim Ummah.

## **A:8 THE COMPLETION OF RELIGION:**

Allah (swt) perfected, completed and finalised its guidance for mankind in the form of finality of prophethood of Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws). The belief system, the morals and ethics and the divine law have all been completed. The Quran and the person of Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) have been established as reference for everything pertaining to Allah (swt)'s guidance. To accept Islam as one's religion and follow the complete guidance as enshrined in this religion has become a binding on each and every human being since the advent of his prophethood and will remain a binding on each and every human being until the day of judgement. All humans are required to profess faith in all the prophets of Allah but must only follow Islam as presented by the last prophet Muhammed (sws). Similarly the institution of prophethood has been ended and any claim to divine appointment or any form of direct access to guidance from Allah after Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) must be rejected without even considering it.

## **B: A STUDY OF SOME MISUNDERSTANDINGS:**

This large section deals with ideas which have been put forward in a detailed article titled '**THE TRUE MEANING OF UNIVERSALITY OF THE QURAN**' by Dr Farhad Shafti, a UK based Muslim scholar (throughout this section he will be referred to as 'the Author'). To fully appreciate this section it would be worthwhile to read his full article and then keep the article in sight while reading this section. While writing this section I want to highlight a couple of points:

-I have discussed his views mostly in the same sequence as these appear in his article. If the sequence is changed at some point it has been properly mentioned. Also certain points are covered in other areas.

-Throughout this section I will quote only briefly or partially from his original article and the reader would be requested to read the full para/concept from the Author's original article to fully understanding the viewpoint of the Author.

-All quotations from the Author's article (like here) *will be in oblique font.*

### **B:1TWO TERMS OR ONE TERM:**

The Author has, in his own words, 'invented' two terms to refer to two concepts '*General universality of the Quran*' and '*Specific universality of the Quran*'. In my opinion there is no real basis of these two concepts in the Quran as we will see while sifting views of the Author in this section. The Quran came with a message for all of mankind, which is uniform and universal for every human being. Hence there is only one universality in the Quran and that it (which the Author calls specific universality of the Quran) should be called 'General universality of the Quran' in its simple literal meaning and not as defined by the Author. If we have to describe this '**General universality of the Quran**', it will be as follows:

'The human life on this planet is a test (67:2). Allah (swt), through his sheer mercy, has helped humanity in this test by providing guidance to mankind(2:38) through His appointed guides (called haads including prophets (Ambia) and messengers (Rusul)). The mankind has in its history repeatedly corrupted this guidance in one form or the other and Allah (swt) has repeatedly restored this guidance (2:213). Ultimately Allah (swt) completed His guidance and preserved it through Prophet Muhammed (sws) who became the last and final prophet of Allah (swt). With this, Allah (swt) announced completion of His religion and favours for mankind (5:3), guaranteed preservation of this guidance in the form of the Quran and Sunnah (15:9) and announced the culmination of his direct guidance to mankind (finality of prophethood) (33:40). This is called Islam. Now the Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran are the only authentic source and criterion of Allah's guidance and it is a binding on every human being to follow this guidance called Islam until the day of judgement'.

The Author has raised 8 queries to set the scene to develop his point of view. Out of these point 1, 5, 6 and 7 are related with the language and style of the Quran hence these will be dealt with together here.

## **B:2 LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF THE QURAN:**

**The Author raises the question in point 1, '.....why it (the Quran) is relying on a very complex style of Arabic language.....?'**

Now the Quran is refuting this claim in clear terms:

'All praise is due to Allah who has sent down upon his servant the book and has not made therein any deviance' (18:1).

And

'An Arabic Quran, without any deviance that they might become righteous' (39:28).

Then Allah (swt) has clarified at a number of places in the Quran that it has been sent in clear Arabic or it has been made clear (5:15, 12:1, 15:1, 26:2, 26:195, 28:2, 36:69, 43:2-3 and 44:2 are just a few references). With such clear statements of the Quran, a question about the style of the Quran should not even arise in the mind of a Muslim. However here are a few points which could clarify this misunderstanding further:

-The Quran was sent in the dialect of its direct addressees that is the people of Makkah and its surroundings (Hijaz) which was quite natural. There is no evidence at all from within the Quran and history that **these people (the direct addressees) ever said that its style of language is complex or they cannot understand it. They understood and appreciated its language very well.**

-The Quran's language and style is majestic, to the point and a masterpiece of literary Arabic of the time but not complex. Again, being a divine book, these are very befitting attributes of its language and style.

-The Quran deals with a vast variety of subjects like creation of universe and mankind, human nature and behaviour, human history, history of Allah's guidance for mankind, laws working in nature and physical phenomena, belief system, Shari'ah law, morals, life after death, details about the day of judgement, heaven and hell, reward and punishment and many others. Then being a Book which was revealed piecemeal, parallel to and supervising the mission of Holy Prophet (sws), it dealt with issues and questions which cropped up on the spot during that mission. Then all the above varied subjects were being dealt with side by side and then rearranged in a peculiar manner in the Quran. **To deal with all these subjects in a descriptive and detailed style, probably volumes which would fill a library, would have been required.** In this case the divine literature would become unmanageable for common man and religion, a prerogative of a select learned religious class only (as had happened previously in history). However, in the case of the Quran, the total size of the Book was meant to be small enough so that it could be memorised completely by a common man (and mind you, memorising which was established as a tradition in the Muslim society was an important medium of preserving the Quran) and Allah's guidance embodied in a reasonable sized book, would remain accessible to an ordinary human being. Hence it is wrong to say that the language or style of language of the Quran is complex rather it is the complex and varied nature of subject matters being dealt

with in tandem in a very concise book which gives this impression. Even then all these assortment of subjects have been dealt with in such a masterly simple and clear manner that it has, in its own right, become a miracle and proof of its divine origin.

-As far as the differences of opinion amongst the Muslim scholars is concerned, as pointed out by the Author, these are nothing but a natural manifestation of human differences which can be seen in every field of knowledge. These differences are more common in matters of religion (and can be observed in all religious traditions); first because religion deals with certain matters which are not verifiable by objective scientific evidence and are open to conjecture and opinions; and second due to passion and prejudice which become involved in religious affairs. The Quran, in addition, is dealing with a vast variety of subjects as mentioned above, hence the differences of opinion are but natural. However if we look at the Muslim Ummah's history, the differences of opinion are mainly due to sources external to the Quran like Hadith and History and people have been projecting those on to the Quran due to sectarian behaviour. If the Quran is made the primary source of knowledge and the focus of 'taddabur', as the Quran repeatedly encourages, the differences become minimal.

-It is not correct to say that '*no attempts can be seen in the Quran to make the style of its language clear enough.....*'. In my opinion it is a judgemental statement without any evidence. As has been clarified above, the Quran's style of language is simple and clear and has been set in the vernacular of the Hijaz of the time. Additionally it has its own noble characteristics.

However to be best guided by the Quran, with its peculiar and unique style, which is the result of above features, the Quran itself has repeatedly stressed upon the need to use intellect (taddabur, taffakur and Ta'aqul) to understand the Quran. It means the Book is itself guiding human beings how to best make use of this guidance.

**Summary:** To deal with the immediate and local issues and the vast variety of subjects (which were required to be dealt with to make it a guidance for the whole of mankind) and to keep the size of the Book reasonable (both to preserve it for future humanity by committing to memory and to keep it within the reach of ordinary human beings of future generations) Allah (swt) chose the style of language and organisation which best suited the immediate local needs and for all times to come. Its language is clear and literary while the style is simple, noble, majestic, precise, repetitive, rhythmic and a music to the ears on recitation.

**The Author states in point (5),** '*how are non-Arabs supposed to be guided by the Quran when they cannot even understand the Arabic...'*. **And in point (6)** '*Where in the Qur'an God has made it the duty of non-Arab Muslims to learn Arabic, or where has it instructed Arab Muslims to translate the Qur'an for non-Arabs? Where in the Qur'an any mechanism is illustrated to guide the Arabs of the time on how to preach Islam to non-Arabs at that time and in the future? Why there is not a single verse in the Qur'an to instruct the Arabs to go beyond Arabia in order to preach Islam to non-Arabs?'*

The above arguments given by the Author carry no substance. Here are a few points which would clarify this:

-The language is an innate human trait which manifests in social context as the brain matures. Similarly human brain has an in-built capacity for second language acquisition. Learning of new languages and translations are automatic mechanisms of human civilization which unfold and become operational when the need arises. These are natural processes which had manifested previously in human history as well. The history of Biblical literature and its translations is a clear example of these in-built social mechanisms. There are no directives in the Old or the New Testament to translate these but people just did as the need arose. The same phenomenon manifested in the history of Muslims as well. Allah (swt), the all-Knowing and all-Wise, did not have to give specific directives to non-Arabs to learn Arabic or translate the Quran. These mechanisms just unfolded in Muslim civilization under the dictates of mechanisms in-built in human nature as Islam spread far and wide.

-The issue can be clarified by giving an example from the Quran and Islamic history i.e determining the direction of Qibla. Allah (swt) clearly directed faithful to face Masjid al Haram during their prayers (2:150). If this directive was considered local (as the Author would like to conclude from the words '...from wherever 'you' go out (for prayer).....' and only for direct addressees of the Quran, this directive would be followed accurately only by people who lived in the vicinity of the Kaaba and would be hard to follow even in the whole of Arabia. However the believers understood the directive correctly and followed it wherever they went in the whole World. Now Allah (swt) did not tell them in the Quran how to navigate the direction of Qibla in various parts of the World. The Muslims just learned it by making appropriate inventions as the need arose. Similarly Allah (swt) did not need to give any directive related to the points put forward by the Author as Muslims just recognised the need and followed common sense inculcated in every human being by the Creator in finding solutions to the challenges faced by them. Another glaring example is that of memorising the Quran. Where in the Quran Allah (swt) asked believers to memorise and preserve it? However they started doing it under the guidance of Holy Prophet (sws) and it in fact is another evidence that the earliest Muslims, whose language was Arabic, understood clearly that the Book's message is universal and was to be transmitted to the posterity.

So it is quite clear from the above that things like creating instruments to find direction of Qibla, writing the Quran or printing it, translation of Quran in other languages, learning Arabic language and many other similar things are just technical and operational in nature which are left to human intellect and common sense. These did not need any divine directives. In fact, I dare say that giving such instructions would have been against Allah's all-encompassing Divine Knowledge and Wisdom.

A few facts from history would illustrate the point further:

-The non-Arabs who accepted Islam in millions over the generations learned the Quran's language with love, reverence and dedication. Interestingly apart from initial 200 years of Muslim history, non-Arab Muslims have always been in majority and currently the non-Arab Muslims form about 85 percent of the World Muslim population and nobody can say that the non-Arab Muslims have been less guided than Arab Muslims despite the Arabic not being their first language. The non-Arab Muslims have made hundreds of institutions of

religious learning over the centuries with Arabic language as their foundation stone. The list of non-Arab Muslim scholars who have been an authority on Arabic language is too long and in no way shorter than that of Arab scholars. Ironically most of the scholars the Author has referred to in his article are non-Arabs (including the likes of Tabari, Razi, Zamakhshary, Hameed Uddin Farahi, Amin Ahsan Islahi and Javed Gamidi) whose first language has not been Arabic however all of these have contributed immensely to the understanding of the Quran's Arabic and its exegesis. The scholars, preachers and teachers have left no stone unturned to convey the message of Islam and the Quran to Muslim masses over the centuries. Similarly the Quran has been memorised and adorned with beautiful recitations in equal proportions by the Arab and non-Arab Muslims. It is true that Muslims are clear that the translation of the Quran is not Quran but it does not mean that one cannot understand the meanings of the Quran with translations. I have partly sifted seven English translations of the Quran and hardly found any differences in meanings. The perceived differences in meanings and interpretations can be easily resolved by keeping the language of the Quran, the context and arrangement of the verses in view. It means that translation can fairly accurately convey the meanings of the Quran.

-Non-Arab Muslims have never objected to or complained as to why the Quran is in Arabic (simply because the objection does not make sense). **In fact the view that translation of the Quran is not Quran is held with equal clarity by non-Arab Muslims as well.**

-Anybody who reads the Quran even superficially would be convinced that the Book is generic in its message and addresses the whole of mankind. So it is not a matter of citing one verse which instructs Arabs to preach it to non-Arabs rather the whole Book is loud and clear in this regard. It was but natural for the direct first addressees of the Quran to take it beyond Arabian Peninsula to non-Arabs as they were instinctively convinced by the Book that it is for all mankind. In fact it is the first addressees of this book (companions of Holy Prophet whose language was the same as that of the Quran) who did the job of taking it out of the Arabian Peninsula and preach it. How come they did not ask these questions which the Author is asking now? Is the Author trying to say that Khulafa e Rashidon, thousands of companions of the Holy Prophet (sws) and thousands of Ummah's best people whose language was Arabic and who spread the Quran and the message of Islam far and wide outside Arabian peninsula within a hundred years did not understand the message of Quran that the Book is not for non-Arabs?

-Surprisingly the Author is convinced that other religions are also 'islam' as he says '*This is the message of Monotheism (tauwhid), being mindful about the hereafter and doing righteous things. This is a message that is in common between almost all religions that exist on the face of earth*'. **The Author finds it perfectly acceptable to follow these other religious traditions however he is not willing to apply the same yardstick of language to all these religions.** Let me quote the example of Christianity. Jesus's first language was Aramaic which is now not a spoken language in any part of the World. The Gospels were written decades after Jesus (sws) and out of the four accepted Gospels, Matthew was either written in Hebrew or Greek (there is a difference of opinion) while the other three (Mark, Luke and John) were written in Greek. Still, going by the author's wider views expressed in his article,

Christianity (which has no linguistic connection with mother tongue of Jesus Christ (sws) at all) will be a valid religion from Allah (sws) for millions of people over the globe to follow but the Quran (which was preserved exactly in its original language which is itself one of the major living languages of the World today) was only meant for local Arabs. I am sure if the Author fairly applies the language criterion to other religions, even then he would be convinced that **Islam as presented by Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) is the only religion which mankind should follow.**

### **B:3 THE UNIVERSAL NATURE OF THE QURAN:**

In order to reduce Allah (swt)'s final, complete and fully preserved guidance for mankind to a mere local religion of Arabs, the second tool the Author has attempted to use, after the language tool, is to give the impression that the Quran is heavily culture bound and tied to local issues.

**In his point 2** the Author notes, *'...why the vast majority (if not all) of the issues that the Book addresses are local issues? Why the addressees of almost all verses are the local addressees? Why (as Amin Ahsan Islahi rightly noted), even the apparently general titles like Mushrikin, Ahl Al-Kitab and Alladhina Amanu are in most cases referring to the Mushrikin, Ahl al-Kitab and believers at the time in Arabia? Why there are not much guidance for those who were not and are not among the primary addressees of the Qur'an? Why the other nations and faiths are almost completely ignored? How a book that only covered the local issues of a limited group of people at a certain point of history can be said to be sent as 'the' guide for all the nations of all time?'*

These statements are based on misunderstandings which can be easily cleared through the following explanations:

-While it is true that a large number of verses directly address the people amongst whom the Holy Prophet (sws) was sent (people of the Arabia in seventh century including polytheists and the people of the Book) but claiming that the addressees of almost all verses are local is a gross overstatement. There are equally large number of verses which do not specifically address local people and are generic in style (here are 'just a few random' examples: Sura Fateha, then see 2:38, 2:255-257, 21: 92-93, 22:75-76, 24:35-40, 28:70, 31:1-20, 50:8-10, 55:1-12, 59:20-24, and then see complete Surahs 76, 91, 99, 101, 103, 107, 112). The Holy Prophet (sws) was sent as a Rasul to a particular people at a particular time in history and he had to directly complete Itmam-e-hujjah (completion of Allah's evidence to the extent that no excuse is left for the addressees to deny the truth) on these people. Hence addressing these people directly was but natural. However the important point is that any human being of any period and of any linguistic and cultural background can easily relate to the message of the Quran and in fact can easily understand himself to be the addressee of the Quran.

The claim that the Book covers only local issues has no bases at all. Here are a number of points which will amply correct this notion.

-Anybody who reads the Quran (or its translation) even superficially, can understand that it is deeply connected with the actual mission of Holy Prophet (sws) and hence some very local issues are expected to be found in the Quran. However these are, as a matter of reality, very few. To be precise, the total number of verses which deal with purely local-cultural issues is 32 (2:158, 2:189, 2:194, 2:196-199, 2:203, 2:217, 2:226, 2:233, 2:282, 4:22, 4:176, 5:2, 5:95-97, 5:103, 9:19, 9:36-37, 33:4, 37:158, 53:19-20, 58:1-3, 65:6, 81:8-9). Now if the Book's message was really local, one could expect a much greater number of such verses in a book which has more than 6200 verses. In fact having such a small number (32) in a book, which was primarily revealed to do *Itmam ehujjah* on a particular people (i.e. of Arabia), is itself a proof that its message is not local. I remember clearly that many years ago when I started to study the Quran as a student I used to be amazed about the fact that despite being sent to a particular people at a particular point in history, how generic and general the message of the Quran was and how subtly its message had been made universal. It is in fact another beautiful and miraculous aspect of the Quran.

-These verses which deal with purely local issues and are listed above (32 in total) are either related with Hajj rituals or sacred months or these are correctional and interventional in nature, meaning that there was some gross social-moral anomaly in the society and the Quran mentioned it to correct the anomaly. Any book which was being sent for the guidance of a local people as well as future humanity cannot, after all, ignore any existing social malady in the local community.

-It is a blatant distrust in human intellect and common sense that the human mind cannot understand that these (32) verses have pure local character, that it cannot put these verses in proper perspective, decipher and pick up what is the lesson for general humanity even in these very local-culture oriented verses.

-There are even larger number of verses in the Quran which deal with the family life of Holy Prophet (and not including those which are related to the Prophet (sws) in person). The number of such verses is 34 (24:11-20, 24:62-63, 33:4-6, 33:28-34, 33:37, 33:50-51, 33:53, 33:59, 49:4, 65:1, 66:1-5). Now is this possible for anybody to argue on the basis of these verses that the Quran was revealed only for the family of the Prophet (sws)? I am sure the answer will be in the negative. Similarly, on the basis of some verses which deal with purely local issues it is not correct to claim that the Quran was revealed only for local Arabs.

-Then there are a very large number of verses which are 'addressing directly' to the local people and talk about their daily lives, things happening around them and their common observations however their message is completely universal. It means that anybody from any cultural background in any part of the World and in any era can understand and relate with these verses without even slightest of difficulty. These deal with a vast variety of subjects like the skies and celestial bodies like Sun, Moon and stars; the oceans, rivers, clouds, rain, water cycle; the mountains, valleys, plantations; the reproduction, variations in human existence, human behaviour and morals; the animals and benefits accrued from

them; then death, resurrection and a large number of other subjects. The number of such verses easily run into hundreds and are far too many to give a completelist (however as 'just a few random' examples please see 2:21-29, 6:2-3, 6:60, 14:33-34, 16:65-72, 21:35, 22:5 and 65-66, 24:41-43, 28:71-73, 30:20-25, 31: 10 & 28-29,40:61-64 and 79-80, 41:39,42:11, 45:12-13, 77:7-28, 78:6-16, 79:27-33, Sura 102). None of these are specific to any nation and culture. Existence of such a large number of verses dealing with such a large variety of subjects common to all mankind is a testimony to the universal nature of the message of the Quran.

-Similarly there are hundreds of verses in Quran which are of the nature of reminder to mankind and are an invitation for mankind to the ways of their Lord. These include those which deal with life stories and missions of previous prophets, details of the day of judgement and details of reward and punishment in the next life. Then there are a large number of verses which describe Allah (swt)'s Exalted Holiness and His attributes. All these hundreds and possibly thousands of verses are not specific to Arabs, have nothing to do with Arab culture and are common for all of the mankind.

-Hence the message of the Quran is completely generalisable and people of any era can extract comprehensive guidance from it. If we look at the human history, the mankind's relationship with their Creator (swt) takes only a few broad patterns; correct monotheism and following proper guidance of Allah (for example Islam and to a limited extent Judaism), professing faith in Allah (swt) but indulging in various forms of polytheism and following corrupted guidance and innovations (bida'at) (for example Hinduism, Christianity and a variety of cults), being ignorant of proper religion, indulging too much in Worldly life and leading a life of Godlessness (for example the common trend in modern society in both the East and the West) and finally denying the existence of Creator, purpose of life and accountability altogether (for example Bhudhism in classical religious traditions and all forms and variations of atheism). Another pattern used to emerge when messengers (Rusul) used to be sent to nations and that is, that of rejecting the messenger, challenging the guidance due to arrogance and insisting on the ways of forefathers. Different human societies vary as to which pattern is predominant at any one point however all human societies can be classified to predominantly follow one of these patterns or a mixture of these patterns. Although Holy Prophet's (sws) direct mission was to do Itmam e hujjah on all the direct addressees of his message, the Quran has amply addressed all the above patterns, elaborated correct behaviour for humans and societies and hence provides complete guidance for every human being of every society and every era.

**Summary:** Hence the claim that Quran mainly addresses local issues or is time bound is completely baseless. Similarly the claim that the Quran does not contain guidance for other nations and other faiths also does not carry any substance. Any human being of any cultural, religious and linguistic background can clearly understand what the book is saying. It subtly awakens human intellect by asking basic questions, kindles the dormant divine instinct, nurtures the spark of love for the Creator (swt)(24:35) and guides one who is willing to become serious, is not arrogant and is willing to challenge his prejudices (2:257). If we read or listen to testimonies of thousands of people from all backgrounds who have reverted to

Islam, one can easily understand how human nature relates to the Quran. In fact any human being who reads it can relate with its message without even a slightest of difficulty.

**In points 3 and 4** of his article the Author has raised certain questions about Islamic Shar'iah. Then later in his article he has inserted a supplementary note on Shar'iah and still later he has included issues related with Shar'iah in his seven principles. These issues on Shar'iah will be dealt with later under one umbrella title 'The Nature, the History and importance of Shari'ah' in Section C.

After pointing out the weaknesses in Author's claim that the Quran has, '*local and culturally specific tone and references*', we will now proceed to examine **Section 2** of the author which he has used to prove his claims and has titled it '**Reasoning from the Quran**'. The Author has further sub-divided this section into four subsections 2:1, 2:2 (further subdivided into 2:2:1, 2:2:2, 2:2:3 and 2:2:4), 2:3 and 2:4. I have adopted the same titles as those of the Author to make it easier for the readers to identify the part being discussed.

#### **ANSWER TO 2.1. Evidences related to the style of the Qur'an and its content:**

In this sub-section the Author has once again presented in some condensed form, more or less the same (8) points already discussed above. However contrary to the claim of the title he has not given any evidence at all in this section. His assertions are mere claims and judgements without any back up of evidence. Then he has given a highly judgemental commentary assuming that whatever he has claimed is a proven fact. The Author is then making some sweeping statements e.g

*'The overall localised and specific tone and arguments of the Qur'an are so dominating in the book that relating the Qur'an to nations other than the Arabs of the time (Ummi'in) and time other than 1400 years ago, is today one of the challenges of the scholars of Islam'.*

I am not sure which scholars are finding it as a challenge. The Muslim scholars and ordinary people have always and are still presenting the same Quran to rest of humanity without any qualms, explanations or apologies. Their efforts might have been inadequate or misdirected but they have always been fully convinced that the Quran is relevant to every human being and every nation.

Then the Author states:

*'It is important to notice that the arguments such as 'the Qur'an focused on its primary addressees so that they then become capable of focusing on the world' is a justification that holds little practical validity'.*

Again this is just a presumption on the part of the Author and is not the argument of Islam or Muslims. This whole presumption is incorrect. The correct paradigm of Islam and the understanding of Muslims is that the mission of Holy Prophet (sws) was two-fold which has been mentioned in a hadith of Holy Prophet as well. One was his 'in-person' direct mission (which included his companions as well) as Rasul to people of Arabia (including polytheists, the people of the Book and others). These were subject to divine punishment in case of rejecting the Rasul. Then was his indirect mission for all mankind until the day of judgement.

This mission was to be fulfilled by his companions and future Muslims through proselytising the religion of Allah (swt) using the Quran (which had been rearranged and preserved in its original language for the future mankind precisely for this purpose).As already mentioned above the relationship of human societies to their Creator can be classified into a few categories or patterns. All human societies of all times broadly fall into those categories which are amply discussed in the Quran which means that despite directly addressing the Arabs, all other societies' beliefs and ailments have been fully discussed in the Quran. The Author or anybody else should give example of any society and their beliefs which they think has not been covered by the Quran and Inshallah these will be explained from the Quran.

The author then concludes this section by saying *'the Qur'an is the word of God, immune of any defects. However the nation who accepted the Qur'an were only human beings, therefore fallible. In delivering a universal and single system of guidance to the mankind, a fallible mechanism cannot replace an infallible one. The history of both Christianity and Muslims has illustrated what happens when this takes place'*.

Here the Author has put forward something which is apparently a very logical argument, however, its fallacy becomes clear when we put it to the test of history and facts. No doubt the Quran was infallible and Bani Ismael (and others of the time) who received the Quran were fallible. However Allah (swt) employed an infallible strategy to deliver the Quran to mankind. To understand it, one should first appreciate that Allah (swt) has historically dealt with humanity according to their circumstances. In previous times human resources were not developed enough for guidance to be accurately preserved. Hence, in previous times the guidance of Allah (swt) could be completely lost (as it happened with Suhuf e Ibrahim which are mentioned both in the Bible and the Quran) or corrupted in a number of ways as it happened with Biblical books. At the time of the Quranic revelation, human resources had developed enough to accurately preserve the guidance. As Allah(swt) had promised to preserve the Quran, He used sufficiently developed human resources, kept the size of the book reasonable (so it could be memorised) and guided the Prophet (sws) to adopt methods which would be suitable to preserve this guidance. Hence although Bani Ismael were fallible however Allah (swt) guaranteed the Quran's preservation by adopting infallible methods. So Allah (swt) used an infallible system to deliver a universal and single system of guidance to mankind. Hence it was not a case of fallible mechanism replacing an infallible one, rather it was a case of an infallible mechanism preserving the infallible Quran. The comparison between history of Islam and Christianity is entirely out of place here.

**ANSWER TO:2.2. Verses of the Qur'an that determine which scenario is correct:**

Before dealing with the 4 sections of the Quranic verses which the Author has used to prove his point of view I would request the careful attention of readers to the following points:

-Muslims do not say that the Quran was not sent for its direct addressees i.e polytheists and people of book of the Arabian Peninsula. There is no disagreement that the Holy Prophet's (sws) direct (in-person) mission was to do Itmam e hujjah on these direct addressees. We,the Muslims, say that his indirect (not in person) mission was for the rest of mankind

until the day of judgement. If the Quran says that it is sent to guide the people of Makkah and its surroundings how does it preclude it and the Holy Prophet (sws) from being guides for the rest of mankind particularly when there is ample evidence to support this role. As a very simple example a teacher delivers a lesson in a classroom in person but the same lesson, inaccurately recorded form, can benefit a number of other classes using audio-visual equipment without the teacher going to different classes in person.

-The Quran claims that it is free of contradictions (4:82). Now anybody who believes it to be the word of Allah (swt) must have unwavering believe that the Quran is in fact free of contradictions. Hence he should always try his best to establish the correct meaning and settle down for the meaning of some Verse or portion of the Quran which does not carry any contradiction with any other statement in the Quran. Still if he is unable to resolve what appears to him to be a contradiction due to his own limitations, he must pause and keep on looking for better meaning until, what appears to him a contradiction, is removed.

-To establish meaning and develop proper understanding one should not ignore the authentic narrations from Holy Prophet (sws) which could explain something the Quran has stated.

-The Quran was revealed to mankind, and for the guidance of the mankind. Hence it should not be against known human history. Also it should be interpreted in the frame work of human history. Any interpretation which does not fit in with generally known human history will be faulty.

-The Author has (most likely unknowingly) used what is called selective bias to build his arguments. In this process, certain aspects which favour a particular point of view are made prominent, exaggerated and strung into a particular pattern which appear to prove a person's point of view while certain other aspects which go against are ignored, suppressed, diminished or given new meanings. All the so called evidence the Author has collected from the Quran to build up his argument is a clear example of selective bias.

-To understand and establish correct meaning, the context of a particular statement or verse should always be kept in sight. The context includes a number of things: the Sura in which the verse has come, the tone of that Sura and its relationship with the rest of the Quran, relationship of the verse with time and place in the mission of the Holy Prophet (sws), the verses before and after the particular statement in the Surah etc.

***ANSWER TO:2:2:1Verses that limit the scope of the prophetic mission by explaining the reason that the Qur'an was revealed***

The author has quoted the following verses in this section to prove that the Quran was indeed revealed for Arabia: 42:7, 6:92, 43:44, 28:46, 36:6, 32:3, 6:155-157. Now firstly, as mentioned, nobody is denying the fact that the direct and specific mission of Holy Prophet (sws) was to do Itmam e hujjah on the Arabs.

However, if we carefully look at this group of verses which the author has quoted, one can see that there is hint about general mission of Holy Prophet even in these verses. The verse 42:7 ends: '.....A party shall be in the garden and a party in the burning fire'. Now we know

that this description of some people being in paradise and some in hell has also been mentioned for the people of book and for humanity at large at numerous other places in the Quran (e.g 80:38-42, 101:6-11) which means that the fate described for mankind in general will be accorded to the Arabs as well and similarly the message being given to Arabs could be extrapolated to the rest of mankind. So in a very subtle manner it has been clarified that although, at this point, the direct addressees are being warned here, however, nobody should try to limit the scope of the Quran. Then if we see the verses 42:7 and 6: 92, the people of Makkah and its surroundings also include the Ahl e Kitab of Arabia as well, as the author would agree. However in verses 6:155-157 the specific revelation of the Quran to the polytheists of Arabia is being mentioned exclusive of the people of the Book (so will that mean on the basis of 6:155-157 that the Quran was not for people of the Book of the Arabia). It shows that in verses 6:155-157 its revelation to the polytheist of Arabia is mentioned while in 42:7 and 6:92 its revelation to both the polytheists of Arabia and the people of Book combined is mentioned. Similarly at other places its revelation to all mankind has also been mentioned or hinted at (just two example 2:2-5, 45:20-22). The verses 43:44, 28:46, 36:6 and 32:3 can be seen in the same light.

So plucking isolated verses (and sometimes even small parts of verses), stringing them together to build up a logic while ignoring the rest of the Quran is an unfair approach which is typically used by proponents of almost all the sects to promote their sects and sectarianism. Interestingly by using isolated verses in a cut and paste style I have seen Christian missionaries even trying to extract Trinity from the Quran. Ironically I read an article many years ago from an Indian Muslim professor who 'proved' from the Quran that actually vegetarianism is the way prescribed by Islam. Sadly the Author's approach is no different.

***ANSWER TO: 2:2:2 Verses that associate diversity of nations with the need to have separate guides for each nation:***

The Author has quoted the following verses to substantiate his view point mentioned in the title of this sub-section, 13:7, 35:24, 10:47, 16:36, 12:2, 44:58, 19:97, 14:4 and 41:44. A few points need careful consideration before looking at these verses quoted by the Author.

-When a Rasul is sent to a nation he establishes something akin to the day of judgement for the people he is sent to. He does it mam e hujjah on his people and in this process every effort is made that the message is fully conveyed so that no excuse is left for them. All this is ensured because in case they reject the message, the rejecters are punished in this World which is not a small matter at all. Hence sending the message in exactly the same original language and through a person who knows the nation and its culture fully well is important to do it mam e hujjah otherwise it will appear unfair. Take the example of Holy Prophet Ibrahim (sws). He was Rasul for his own people in Iraq as he was of the same origin and had the same language. However after migrating to Palestine he had a role change and he was not Rasul in that sense for the people of Palestine due to language difference however he was still a prophet to the people of his newly adopted home, Palestine. On the other hand,

his nephew Prophet Lut (sws) who was quite young, had migrated with him out of Iraq (21:71) and settled in South Western parts of what is Jordan today. He had thoroughly acculturated himself into the language and culture of the new land and thence was appointed Rasul for his local people. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim (sws) then established his progeny at different places as he was to come to become the Imam of guidance for the whole of mankind (2:124). Interestingly Allah (swt) fulfilled his promise with him and established him on such an exalted position of 'patriarch of guidance' for the whole of mankind however the Suhuf e Ibrahim did not get preserved because those were subject to another reality of incapacity of humanity to preserve such a material in that age. Allah (swt) has dealt with humanity within the framework of His laws and Sunnan.

-Hence, it would make perfect sense if Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) also had different roles. He was Rasul for his people (polytheists and the people of the Book of Arabia) for whom he had come to establish 'The day of judgment in this World' and **his rejecters were subject to punishment in this world hence his language and origin had to be the same.** However his role did not end there. He was also Rasul, nabi, Haad or guide for the rest of mankind until the day of judgement. This second role was different in the sense that it was indirect (not in person), was to be performed by his Ummah and **the rejecters now were not punishable in this world however will be answerable on the day of judgement.** This role was made clear by a number of things; preservation of the language of the Quran so that it is still an established international language, a new arrangement of the Quran, the preservation of the Quran, the proselytising and spreading the guidance to other nations by his immediate followers and by the general and universal nature of the message of the Quran.

-In this connection he also had a unique role of being Khatam al Nabi'yin, the last and final messenger for mankind (33:40). It meant that the door of direct revelation and guidance from Allah (swt) to mankind closed for all times to come. It was also clarified that Allah (swt) completed his religion and his favours for mankind and chose Islam as His religion for mankind (5:3). If language was to be such a primary criteria for the validity of divine guidance, the finality of prophethood will become meaningless. Prophethood ended about 1500 hundred years ago and literally thousands of languages have existed during this period. Even new languages have developed and later got withered away during this period. So who have been messengers or divine guides for all the people between the last Prophet and today. If Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran could not be guides for these people, how come some even more ancient prophets whose languages have not even been preserved (probably not even known) could be guides for them.

-The role of language (along with a number of other things) is of primary importance only when a messenger (Rasul) is sent to a nation as it would be unfair to punish a people 'in this World' without the message having been made fully clear. Otherwise the transferability of language (by second language acquisition and translations) has been accepted as valid medium to transmit the guidance.

-The Quran was revealed in the vernacular of Hijaz. The Arabian Peninsula is a large mass of land which had very thinly spread tribal population distributed across the region. As is

normally the case with any language the Arabic language also had many variations and local dialects. If the Author's claim of the Quran's language and style to be complex has any value, it would simply mean that the Quran could not 'fully' reach even the whole of Arabia according to the stringent language criterion the Author wants to set up for transmission of the Quran because of variations and dialects across the Peninsula.

-The Author has described two absolute positions '*sending a guide for all nations*' and '*sending a guide for each nation*' and favoured the later position. In my opinion this position cannot be taken. The correct position which can be easily understood from the Quran (hence it is not correct to say that it is heavily opinion based interpretation as the Author has claimed) and corroborated with human history is that the strategy of guidance from Allah has evolved; initially guides were sent to nations separately, then Holy Prophet Ibrahim (sws) was made Imam of guidance for mankind and prophethood was confined to his progeny, then a nation (Bani Israel) from his progeny was chosen to help the prophets and lastly a final messenger and a Glowing Sun of guidance ('*sirajjan muneera*' 33:45-46), Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws), again from his progeny, was sent for all of the mankind, the guidance was completed and fully preserved in the form of the Quran and the Sunnah and after his departure, the responsibility of carrying the message of Islam transferred to all his followers as explained above in the section 'The widening responsibility'. If the position 'sending a guide for each nation' is accepted a number of questions arise. The Holy Prophet (sws) was sent for Arabs but which other prophets were sent to other major nations in the World like Greeks, Persians, Chinese, Romans and Indians (and whose ancient history has some record) at the same time or since the time of Prophet Ibrahim (sws) and was their guidance available in uncorrupted form? So why only a small group of people living in a desert, the Arabs, were chosen for this favour? In last 1500 years new religious communities have emerged e.g. Sikhs (whose numbers are more than Jews in the World). Which messenger has been sent for them? Then a large number of tribes in Africa, Americas, India, Australia and other parts of the World have existed in last 1500 years with as many diverse languages and religious cults as we can imagine. True their ancient history is not recorded and we cannot ask about any messengers sent to them between Holy Prophets Ibrahim and Muhammed (sws) but who have been divine guides for these people in the last 1500 years?

-There has been exponential rise in human population in last 1500 years and particularly in the last 200 years. Such a vast ocean of human population could not be left to their ways as Allah (swt) had sent so many messengers (some named but most of them not named in the Quran) before Holy Prophets Jesus (sws) and Muhammed (sws). There were only two ways to guide humanity in last 1500 years. The first was a continued series of Prophets in different parts of the World on national basis with different languages and cultural tones (according to the Author's approach) in which case there would be even more sectarianism and strife among the nations. The second was to give a universal guidance which is preserved as a reference for all mankind, is uniform for all mankind, cuts across all racial and national boundaries, promotes unity and reduces sectarianism. That could logically have only been achieved through the finality of prophethood with preservation of the guidance in its original language (along with the preservation of that language itself) and giving the

responsibility of guidance to those who accept this guidance. Allah (swt) in his divine wisdom chose the second strategy and closed the institution of prophethood at the right time in human history.

-Please keep the above points in view as we now turn to the verses the author has quoted. The verse 13:7 is only referring to Allah's historical Sunnah (usual method) regarding Rusul that before punishing a people Allah sends a warner as had been happening with all the nations previously and has nothing to suggest that all those 'Haads' are to be followed permanently (particularly when their teachings have not survived or have been thoroughly corrupted). Verse 35:24 is saying that Holy Prophet (sws) has been sent according to previous Sunnah but it does not preclude his future role. Verse 10:47 is even more clearly mentioning that whenever a messenger (Rasul) came the fate of his people was sealed. The verse 16:36 is clear as to be a warning from the history of Rusul. If we look at all these 4 verses carefully, the crux of the message is not to tell that there is guide for all the nations rather it is that all the nations who were sent Rusul met with same fate (please see Islahi and Ghamidi's views on these verses which clear the subject in a convincing manner). If we believe the Author's point of view then where are the names of Rusul (messengers) or Haads of all the nations who have no recorded history of (messengers) Rusul.

The verses 12:2, 44:58, 19:97 and 14:4 are again related with direct Itmam e hujjah on the Arabs so as to make things fully clear before their time is up and they become liable to punishment. The proper context of these verses can be understood from another verse (20:113) which states that the Quran has been sent in the Arabic language and Allah's warning has been clarified in different ways for the direct addressees.

The verse 41:44 is indeed very interesting if we read it in full within its context. The translation of the full verse 41:44 is as follows:

**'had we sent this Quran in a foreign language they would have objected why its verses have not been clarified (in our own language); strange! A foreign (speech) and Arabic (addressees)! Say, it is for those who believe in guidance and a cure, and those who do not believe-on their ears it is a burden and it is upon them a barrier. Those are the ones who will be called upon from a distance (on the day of judgement)'**.

If we look at this verse it is actually answering one of the objections of non-believers. The verse is in fact giving a message exactly opposite to 'the language argument' of the Author. It is saying that people who want to believe, language is not a problem for them (as is testified by millions of non-Arabs who have accepted Islam over the centuries and loved the Quran more than anything else) while for those who do not want to believe their faculties won't work even if it is (and as it indeed is) in their own language. Regarding the verses 26:198-199, again if we look at the context it is in fact against the 'language argument' of the Author. In this Surah (26 Shu'ara) prior to verses 195-200 there is a long series of stories of Itmama e jujjah of different messengers (Rusul) on their nations. The verses 195-200 are clarifying that the rejecters will not accept this Quran despite the fact that it has been sent in their own language, it has been mentioned in the earlier revelations and then scholars of Bani Israel clearly recognise it to be guidance from Allah (swt). Hence again the implication

here is that the language cannot be a barrier and it is the rejecters' attitude who have distorted their nature to the extent that they are not able to understand the clear message of the Quran. The commentary of Islahi and Ghamidi on these verses would make an interesting reading to show that the Author is not making correct inference here. The verses 2:151 and 9:128 can also be similarly explained.

The Author then states, *'One may argue that while prophet Muhammad (pbuh) on the basis of the verses that were mentioned earlier was only warner for Arabia, the guidance that he brought was for the entire mankind-----'*(please see his full para). I dare say that this is not the correct position of Islam. The correct position is that the Holy Prophet (sws) was a Rasul, guide, warner and bringer of glad tidings for both his direct addressees as well as the rest of mankind until the day of judgement. However, the difference is that as he did Itmam e hujjah on his direct addressees in person, therefore they had no excuse left and were subject to punishment in this World while the rest of mankind, on whom he did not do Itmam-e-hujjah directly, will be answerable on the day of judgement. If somebody is able to produce a genuine excuse on that day for not accepting and following the final and completed form of Islam (and 'islam') presented to mankind by the last and final messenger Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws), then Allah (swt) is the best of judges and most merciful.

**ANSWER TO: 2:2:3Verses that inform about accepting the diversity of paths towards God**

The Author has quoted the following verses in this sub-section to prove his point of view as enshrined in the title: 22:67, 2:148, 45:18, 5:43, 5:47, 5:48, 2:62, 16:89, 45:28, 17:71. However before we discuss these verses a few points should be kept in sight.

-At the time of Holy Prophet (sws), the Arabian Peninsula had three main religious followings: polytheist, Jews and Christians and these are extensively discussed in the Quran. The main focus of these addresses was to ask them to relinquish their wrong beliefs, stop their undue animosity towards the Holy Prophet (sws) and his mission, to profess faith in what he had brought, to follow him and the consequences of not following him. Here are some of the verses which clearly indicate that Jews and Christian were invited to Islam and they were supposed to, not only profess faith in the Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran, but also follow the Shari'ah brought by him in contrast to the Author's claim that the Ahl e kitab (people of the book) were not invited to accept Islam. They were, at many places, warned of serious punishment in case of rejecting the Prophet (sws). Some examples of such verses are:

-2:41, 2:75, 2:89-91, 2:97-101, 2:103, 2:120-121, 2:136-137, 2-146, 3:20, 3:61, 3:67-72, 3:183-184, 4:41-42, 4:47, 4:51-57, 9:29, 17:2-8, 32:23-26, 41:45 and 98:6.

-When a Rasul is sent to a group of people, they must profess faith in him, follow him wholeheartedly and join his party to help him in his mission (4:64, 4:69, 4:115). There is no such thing as professing a nominal faith in Allah's messenger and yet keep following unfounded believes.

-Allah (swt) has set out laws which govern this World. Allah (swt) allows so many things in this world and attributes their existence to Himself although He forbids those things for his

servants as those are harmful for them. For example alcohol is produced as a result of chemical reactions in accordance with physical laws of nature and Allah (swt) will attribute its creation to Himself however He has made it haram to consume it. Similarly in matters of religion Allah (swt) has given his standard guidance which is Islam and wants humanity to follow that religion so that they deservedly get reward from Him. However He has allowed so many religions and ideologies to exist as He has given autonomy to mankind (2: 256, 76:3, 90:10). Hence He allows diversity which is a by-product of the design of Allah (swt) which He has decreed for mankind and attributes it Himself however allowing diversity does not mean he endorses the following of these religious paths as well. Now, let us review the verses referred to by the author.

In Verse 22:67 it is being said that there have been some differences in apparent structure of Shari'ah. It is now a test of rejecters of people of the book whether they want to accept Allah's guidance irrespective of the form it has come in or they want to keep quarrelling. In the same verse the Holy Prophet (sws) is being reassured that in fact you are on the straight path and you should keep calling people (polytheists, Jews and Christians) to this path. Hence the verse is not endorsing that these groups should keep following what they had been, rather that they should not get entangled in superficial differences of Shari'ah and follow what the Holy Prophet (sws) had brought. In verse 2:148, when read in conjunction with the preceding verses (142-147), it is being said that Jews and Christians had appointed directions for themselves (not that Allah (swt) had appointed those, as is clarified in word 'ahwa'hum' in verse 145) and that Allah (swt) has now identified the real Qibla for you, so now you (the Muslims) should leave them alone and strive 'amongst yourself' in righteousness. Hence the verse is not saying at all what the Author is deriving here (please read the enlightening commentaries of Islahi and Ghamidi on these two verses). The verse 45:18, when read in conjunction with preceding two verses 16 and 17, is saying that Bani Israel were given the book, authority, prophethood and a clear path however they created irreconcilable differences through their rebellious behaviour which cannot be resolved until the day of judgement. Now Allah (swt) has once again established you on clear path, so follow this and do not follow bid'aat (ahwa'hum) of these people (of the book). Hence the verse 45:18 is not saying at all what the Author is implying here (please see the commentary of Islahi and Ghamidi on these verses).

Regarding the verses 5:43, 5:45 and 5:48 the Author has rightly pointed out that Surah Maidah was one of the last chapters revealed and the people of the Book have been severely criticised in this Surah (also the completion of religion has been declared in this Surah 5:3). Now, the people of the Book were in fact the claimants that they were already following the prophets and Allah's Shari'ah and that was, one of their main arguments, and an excuse for not professing faith in Holy Prophet (sws) and not following what he had brought. Now, if we study the Surah from the beginning, the main focus is the Shar'iah directives and behaviour of people of the book. Such a heavy critical discussion of people of the Book along with Shari'ah directives indicates that their actual ailment was to avoid Allah's Shar'iah, and which was once again being perfected as could be easily understood by reading the Surah. In verse 5:12 the covenant about following the Shar'iah and professing faith in Allah's messengers is mentioned. The next verse, 5:13 tells that they broke the

covenant which resulted in two consequences; one, they forgot part of what they were given and second, they use to alter meanings of the book. The next verse 5:14 tells us that Nasara (Christians) also broke the covenant and had forgotten part of what they were given (and as a result both the groups did not have perfect shar'iah with them). In next verses, 5:15 and 16, both the groups of people of the Book are being told that Allah's messenger, Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) has 'come to you' who is once again clarifying with this Quran what 'you' had been hiding (by textual and meanings alterations, selectively suppressing Shari'ah etc) from Allah's religion. In verses 5:17 and 18 their wrong beliefs and self-righteous claims are criticised and then in verse 5:19 they are being told that Allah's messenger has come after a long interval and now they will have no excuse on the day of judgement that no 'basheer' and 'nazeer' (warner) had come to them. This verse subtly indicates that the warning includes following whatever the messenger is presenting as Allah's religion both in terms of belief system and directives in letter and spirit. (It also indicates that Holy Prophet (sws) will be witness on the people of the Book on day of judgement and not the previous messengers). Verses 5:20-26 are reminding Bani Israel from their own history about their behaviour and disobedience to their own messenger Holy Prophet Moses (sws) and the consequence of their behaviour. Then verses 5:27-32 are highlighting to the people of the Book, the story of two sons of Adam (sws) that how arrogance and jealousy can lead to sinful act of bloodshed which resulted in Shari'ah directive about Qisas. These also are alerting them about their own arrogance and jealousy which was causing Bani Israel to reject Allah's Messenger sent amongst their brothers Bani Ismael. Verses 33-34 give Shari'ah directives about people who cause anarchy and bloodshed when Allah's and Rasul has established justice and peace in a land. Then in verses 5:36-37 it is declared that the fate of rejecters of the Rasul'Allah (sws) will be hellfire (polytheists, Jews and Christians and whoever else) from which they will have no respite whatever they do.

Now, this is the context in which verses 5:41-49 have followed (which include the three verses 43, 47 and 48 which the Author has quoted). If one carefully ponders on this set of verses from 5:41-49, it is being described that the people of the Book had been doing all sorts of mischief in matters of Allah's shari'ah which they did not want to follow. Now, they wanted to use the good offices of Allah's Messenger (sws) with similar ill designs particularly to avoid Hadud directives of Torah as the reference in 5:45 shows. Allah is asking his Messenger (sws) that if you want to adjudicate for them, do it with justice according to Allah's shari'ah and do not follow their desires.

Now let us see the verses 5:43, 5:47 and 5:48 individually but please keep the context described in above two paragraphs in sight.

The verse 5:43 is commenting on behaviour of Jews that they do not want to accept Holy Prophet (sws) as their Rasul but still they come to him for adjudication to avoid Allah's decree which is clearly mentioned in Torah and then they do not accept Holy Prophet's decision (which will be according to Shar'iah of the Torah and the Quran) if it is against their wishes and all this behaviour is because they want to run away from Allah's shar'iah. Hence the verse is clearly highlighting the treacherous behaviour of Jews and does not mean at all

what the Author is implying (that they should not go to Holy Prophet (sws) for adjudication and just follow Torah). The verse 5:36 had already clarified the severe punishment in case they rejected Rasul'Allah and the Quran. Verse 5:47 when read in conjunction with the preceding verse 5:46 is saying that Jesus Christ (sws) was sent testifying the Torah and was given Injeel which carried light and guidance so that (5:47) its followers upheld what was ordained upon them in it (that they will follow the shar'iah of Torah because the Injeel did not bring a new Shar'iah and Jesus and his followers followed the shari'ah of Holy Prophet Moses (sws)) and if they did not they will be 'faasiq'. Hence the verse 5:47 is just describing a historical fact and not saying what the Author is implying. Verse 5:48 starts by saying that Allah has sent the Quran in accordance with the glad tidings of the previous book and as guardian on it (with all its correcting, highlighting and clarifying roles for the previous book). Then a covenant is being taken from the Messenger (and through him from the Muslims) that they will judge according to the shar'iah of Allah (swt) and not according to the whims of people. Then it is being mentioned that had Allah (swt) wished He would have dictated all people to be on one path but He had given different structures of Shar'iah so that he could test who in fact rises above the superficial structure, surpasses his prejudices and shows obedience by accepting Allah's new guidance when it comes (because at the beginning of verse the coming of the Quran is mentioned). Then Muslims are encouraged to enhance themselves in piety in accordance with Allah's guidance which has now been sent. The verse ends with the message that the people have the liberty of choice and can follow whatever they want in this life (and hence this diversity of ideologies and religions) but their end is going to be with their Lord and He will inform them about what they differed in. Once again the verse is not saying what the Author is claiming. Please read the very detailed and enlightening commentary of Islahi and Ghamidi on these verses which clearly show the mistake of the Author.

Verse 2:62 (and 5:69, a similar verse with minor changes in wording) is just saying that the success in the hereafter is not dependant on being attached to a particular group but on having true faith in Allah (swt), the day of judgement and doing good deeds. To understand the point being made in this verse fully, one should first appreciate that the meaning of a statement should be understood in its context. The context at both the places (2:62 and 5:69) is to correct the false notion of the people of the book that the salvation is dependent on being part of a particular group (as was the claim of Jews or Christians, for example see 2:111-112). These verses (2:62 and 5:69) are not meant to give, and are not giving, any exhaustive criteria of success in the hereafter. As an example 2:256 mentions about belief in Allah (swt) only and does not even mention faith in the hereafter and doing good deeds. So will that mean that the latter two are not criterion of success in the hereafter as per 2:256? Another example is 16:106 where faith in summary form is mentioned and would not mean that one should not forsake faith in Allah (sws) but it would be fine to do that in case of the Hereafter and other elements of the faith. Interestingly the verses before and after verse 5:69 are severely criticising the behaviour and wrong beliefs of Jews and Christians, warning them about the dire consequences of their behaviour and asking them to profess faith in Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran. It means that the Author has missed the basic point and is giving a wrong meaning to the verse ignoring other areas of the Quran. The verse 2:62 and

5:69 are just mentioning a general 'positive' criterion of success in a summary form and not the negative criterion which could equally jeopardize that success (e.g committing shirk, not believing in any true prophet of Allah(swt) through prejudice, arrogance or neglect, committing major sins etc).

The Author has then quoted three verses (45:28, 16:89 and 17:71) in support of his treatise that every nation has its own guide, scripture and path to follow and that Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran are only for the Arabs of his time (or at the most for later Arabs and somebody who accepts Islam). In Verse 45:28 the word 'kitaab' is not used for the Scripture (like the Torah, the Injeel or the Quran) and is used as 'register of deeds' of people as the next verse 45:29 clarifies and hence is not relevant to the discussion and the Author should not have used it as a reference. According to Verse 16:89 the messengers (Rusul) will be witness over their respective nations amongst whom they were raised and similarly Holy Prophet (sws) will be a witness on people of Arabs of his time. However it does not preclude him to be witness (through his Ummah) on all of the mankind until the day of judgement as firstly he is the last and final Messenger (33:40), secondly Islam was completed (and preserved in the form of the Quran and Sunnah) on him (5:3) and thirdly his Ummah has been raised to the status of witness on rest of mankind (2:143). Hence he will indirectly be witness on rest of mankind as Holy Prophet (sws) himself said that he had two ministries (be'sat). In fact the third verse (17:71) which the Author has quoted, supports this point. It is saying that righteous people will be with their righteous leaders while rebellious people will be with their rebellious leaders. Due to the general nature of the verse, one can in fact conclude that Holy Prophet (sws) will be the leader of all the community of people who will be given their 'result cards' in their right hands after him until the day of judgement as he is the only divinely appointed imam of righteousness since the start of his prophethood until the day of judgement.

***ANSWER TO 2.2.4. Verses that gave glad tidings to the righteous among the people of the book despite them not being Muslims:***

In this sub-section the Author has used the following verses to prove his point that as Allah (sws) gave glad tidings in these verses to the righteous among the people of the book which would mean that they could legitimately follow their own paths: (3:113-114, 3:199, 3:110, 5:82-85, 5:19, 5:68, 5:66, 5:48 (54:5)). Once again the author's view point is not correct as we will see below. Here are a few points to keep in sight before discussing these verses:

-The process of relinquishing a set of beliefs and accepting a new set of beliefs is a slow process. The process of adopting new practices under change of religion is even more difficult and slower. It is not always wise to quickly demand the practice of each and every directive of Shari'ah from a new revert. Rather they are given time to let faith take root and flourish until there is inner yearning, as a manifestation of love and submission to Allah (swt) that practice of Shari'ah starts appearing.

-Referring to the believers from amongst Jews and Christians as people of the book, is simply to highlight that there were people from amongst these groups to profess faith in what Holy Prophet (sws) had presented and does not necessarily mean they were still Jews and

Christians. For example in 4:136 people who were already Muslims had been asked to profess faith. Here it is a style of emphasis to stress that they should acquire faith in the real sense.

-Allah has only praised those Jews and Christians who also professed faith in Holy Prophet (sws) and what he had brought in the form of the Quran and Sunnah (and ultimately followed him). It is responsibility of the Author to show a single verse which shows that there were Jews and Christians who rejected Holy Prophet (sws), did not testify the prophethood of Holy Prophet (sws) and were still praised. In my understanding after professing faith in his Risalat it was enjoined upon them to practice the shari'ah he had brought which they sooner or later did. Hence it is the responsibility of the Author to show a single verse which gives exemption to Jews and Christians (and for that matter any group) from following Shar'iah.

-There were a few people of the Book who were sincere in their faith, honestly practiced whatever shari'ah they had inherited and knew that a prophet would be coming. These ultimately professed faith in Holy Prophet (sws) as well (7:159, 28:52-54 and 57:27-29) and hence were promised double reward. **However there was no example of not professing faith in Holy Prophet (sws) and not ultimately following shari'ah he had brought and still be promised reward.** We review here two verses to clarify this point. Please read Surah Bayyannah and focus on Verse 98:6 which clearly states that whoever amongst the people of the book did not profess faith in the Quran will go to hellfire. Then also see verse 9:29. Now we know that Sura Tauba (9<sup>th</sup> Surah) was revealed towards the last part of the mission of Holy Prophet (sws) and is describing the fate of different groups after *Itmam e hujjah* of Rasul'Allah (sws). Verse 9:29 is describing punishment for the people of Book if they did not accept faith and did not follow the shari'ah brought by Holy Prophet (sws). This verse is in fact also an answer to the Author's challenge which he has thrown later in this section that *'there is not even a single verse in the Qur'an in which people of the book are told to follow the shari'ah of the Qur'an'*.

-Injeel does not carry any shar'iah and even today there is no independent sharia in Christian religion. Jesus Christ (sws) followed shar'iah of Torah as did his followers.

After the above points I do not think any need is left to comment further however we will review the verses the Author has quoted. The verse 3:110 states that now the Muslims were the best of Ummah (because of the characteristics mentioned in the verse) and had the people of the Book also professed faith it would have been better for them. There are few (who have fulfilled the covenant of accepting and supporting Allah's Rasul) and professed faith but the majority are 'faasiq' (as they have not fulfilled the covenant). Verses 3:113-114 state that there were some righteous people amongst the people of book however these were actually the ones who had professed faith in the Quran as has been mentioned in similar verses elsewhere, otherwise they would have been dealt with under 9:29 and 98:6. Also referring to them 'min ahlal kitaab' shows their origin to highlight a point and does not mean they were still 'ahlal kitaab' as has been explained above. For example a family

migrates from Medina to Makkah and years later, if their friends in the area call them 'ahlal Medina' it would mean the family who came from Medina as a mark of identify and not that they are still living in Medina (and Allah (swt) knows best). The verses 5:82-85 have similar explanation. Hence I do maintain that it is not possible for any non-Muslim (of Holy Prophet's time or afterwards) to enter paradise until and unless they accept faith in Holy Prophet (sws) and The Quran and follow their teachings. It is not matter of choice or preference it is a must unless somebody has a genuine excuse about their failure to do so.

The Author writes later in the section '*.....The assumption is that believing in the prophet (pbuh) and accepting his message necessarily entails converting to Islam and following the shari'ah. This comes from a very limited and ritualistic view about religion. Our traditional mind does not appreciate the objectivity of religious values and the subjectivity of religious law and rituals as part of one system*'.

I would say that by taking this position the Author is ignoring a few basic facts of history and is also making an assumption. The assumption is that the previous religious traditions were fully intact as these had been presented by their respective prophets and hence were still valid religions. This assumption is not correct at all. The previous scriptures had either been lost (e.g. suhuf e Ibrahim) or corrupted. At the level of belief system they had lost true monotheism (particularly the polytheists and Christians). At the level of content of religion and shar'iah they had either forsaken shar'iah (like Christians), damaged the content of religion beyond repair (like Polytheists) or had made the shari'ah too ritualistic and burdensome (like the Jews). Then historically the shar'iah and rituals always carry the spirit and deep colour of belief systems. If the belief system is corrupted it is bound to manifest in laws, practices and rituals as well. As an example, one can see how much beliefs like Trinity, Son of God and redemption have infused in the practices, rituals and culture of Christianity. We need to appreciate that the addressees of Holy Prophet (sws) had lost the objectivity of religious values and that was their basic problem. They were not willing to see that the religion in its true form (both in letter and spirit) was being revived by Holy Prophet (sws). They were the victim of prejudice, arrogance, self-righteousness and sectarian attitude which was preventing them from seeing the truth. Please go through all the discussions about the people of the book in the Quran particularly Sura Baqara (chapter 2) and one can easily appreciate this. The author has mentioned 7 points (numbered 'a' to 'g') which are in fact indicative of (although I strongly disagree with point 'a' as I have already discussed above) the ailments mentioned above. A very small proportion of righteous amongst them who had the spirit of truth and honesty left intact within them, appreciated and broke down the boundaries of prejudice and accepted the message of Holy Prophets (sws).

The author has then quoted verse 5:19 which is very interesting in that it is giving almost the same meaning as the verses 32:3, 36:6 and 28:46 which the author quoted in 2:2:1. These later three verses are saying that the Messenger (sws) has been sent to these 'Ummiy'in' people who had not been warned before. In the same way, the verse 5:19 is saying that this Messenger (sws) had come after a long interval so that these people of the book cannot table an excuse that no 'nazir' and 'bashir' had come to them. If we carefully ponder on these 4 verses, these indicate that firstly as Ummiy'in had lost all meaningful contact with

Holy Prophets Ibrahim (sws) and Ismael (sws), the same way these people of the book had lost all meaningful contact with their prophets Moses (sws) and Jesus (sws) and secondly that the Holy Prophet (sws) will be the sole witness on the day of judgement on these people of the book as he will be on the Ummy'in of the Arabs and not Ibrahim (on Ummy'n), Moses (on Jews) and Jesus (on Christians). Hence the verse 5:19 is giving entirely different message from what the Author is deriving. Verse 5:48 has already been discussed before.

Then the Author has quoted verse 5:68 to prove his point of view. However once again the verse is not saying what the Author has derived from the verse. While I tend to agree with the author that 'ma unzila alaykum min rabbikum' most likely means other books sent to people of the Book (e.g Psalms) however his overall interpretation is completely out of place. Injeel did not carry any Shar'iah hence the meaning here of 'tuqeemu' to uphold Shar'iah is ruled out anyway. Also to uphold core of religion which is the Author's interpretation does not fit in with further statement 'wa la'yazidanna kaseerrum minhum ma unzil alayka.....'. The correct interpretation of the verse hence would be that the people of the book had no basis until they upheld what was foretold in their scriptures (the Torah, the Injeel and Psalms) and taken covenant about (professing faith and supporting) the Final Messenger, however, the Quran's revelation from your Lord has only increased their 'kufr' and rebelliousness. The Author also quoted 5:66 to substantiate his viewpoint but somehow has omitted the middle verse (5:67) which is a bit surprising. The middle verse 5:67 is asking the Holy Prophet (sws) in strongest terms to convey the message of the Quran to the people of the Book whom Allah (swt) is calling 'kafir' in the verse. Please deliberate on the verses carefully to grasp the point. There meaning is not anywhere near what the Author is trying to prove.

I have analysed all the verses the Author mentioned in the 4 groups of his sub-section 2:2 '*Verses of the Qur'an that determine which scenario is correct*' and clearly demonstrated that the Author has either misquoted, quoted out of context or derived wrong conclusions while citing these verses and hence his point of view cannot be established from these 30 plus verses. After the four groups of verses (which have been explained in detail above) the Author's subsections 2:3 and 2:4 ('*Summary of the analysis of the verses of the Quran*' and under this title the 7 principles he has outlined) will be analysed and discussed after his Section 3.

### **ANSWER TO: 3 Verses used in the traditional understanding.**

In this Section the Author says that there are only three verses which are generally brought up to justify the traditional understanding. As a quick reference the author has quoted 25:1, 6:19, 2:143 (a similar verse 22:78). Before we discuss these verses the attention of the reader is drawn to a number of points:

-Certain words are used in different meanings at different places. The context (which could be Quranic and historic) generally establishes which meaning would be appropriate at a particular place. Sometimes a word is used in general meaning, while at others, in limited or local meanings while still at places both the local and general meanings could be taken depending on the context. Words like 'man' (meaning whoever), 'Naas' and 'Insaan', are

examples of words which have been very commonly used in either general or limited and local context. Here are a few examples: 2:124 (Naas here means all of mankind), 3:9 ('Naas' here means all of mankind) 22:75 ('Naas' here means all of mankind), 5:32 (despite the context being Bani Israel 'Naas' here means all of mankind), 76:1 ('Insaan' here means mankind in general). Similarly Arabic pronouns 'ka/kum' and 'anta/antum' can also give different meanings at different places. For example in 69:11-12 see the use of 'kum' (meaning you) in front of direct addressees (Arabs) while they were not there. These two verses are classical example that while addressing local people some other people might be meant. In 56:7, the pronoun 'tum' does not only mean local addressees but the whole of humanity as the rest of the Surah shows. The examples of using ka/kum and anta/antum for local addressees but carrying generalised meanings are too many in the Quran.

-However, the Author's general tendency, to prove his point, is to use limited or local meaning or choose examples which give limited or local meaning and to avoid examples of general meaning (while general meaning will make perfect sense).

-Then certain words also carry different meanings at different places and the context determines the correct meaning e.g. kufr, aya, book, rasul, islam, imaan are some of the words which have been very frequently used in different meanings at different places and sometimes even in the same set of verses. As an example please see 49:14-17, the word imaan is repeated in this set of verses but used in different meanings.

-Then there is always an issue about literal and term meaning. Here again the Author has clear tendency to use meanings which suit him while the other meaning will be more appropriate. For example in verses where the people of the book are asked to accept faith in Holy Prophet (sws) or the Quran he will reinterpret the meaning of imaan to say that it means they should stop animosity against the Prophet or it means only nominal faith. Similarly for the word Islam he will take literal meaning (submission) in the sense he has used the word 'islam' at most places and not Islam as the complete and final form of religion of Allah (swt) as presented by the last and final Messenger of Allah (swt).

After these few points we will study the 3 verses quoted by the Author in this section (25:1, 6:19 and 2:143).

### **ANSWER TO: 3.1 The word 'Alamin in the Qur'an (25:1)**

First of all 25:1 is not the only verse where Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran are mentioned as being sent for the 'alamin'. Here are other verses 6:90, 12:104, 21:107, 38:87, 68:52 and 81:27. The actual issue is what will be the meaning of this word 'alamin' in this context for the Prophet (sws) and the Quran. The author has rightly pointed out that it would carry different meanings in different contexts. However looking at various uses in the Quran it becomes clear that it always gives a meaning of expansiveness, vastness, grandeur, undetermined and unknown. Please see all the 73 uses of this word in the Quran to feel the different flavours of this word. In fact the most frequent use in the Quran is in relation to Allah (swt) and as we all know 'Rabbul'alamin' is a very well-known phrase of the Quran. However the author has tried very hard to limit its meaning which reduces Islam to just one

of the many religions and The Quran to just one of religious books. In this attempt he has alsomisinterpreted some of the other verses which he has quoted.

Now, when this word 'alamin' is used in relation to Allah(swt) it will carry meaning of maximum, infinity, universe or all of the known and unknown Worlds depending upon the context. **However in all other cases the context will determine the limit and the meaning will be established by excluding what will not be applicable within a particular context.** It isa fairly common sense process and did not require such a long complicated discussion and references of great scholars.

-In relation to Bani Israel (2:47) it will mean they were chosen amongst all the nations of the World at that time and it was something which was not bestowed upon any nation before that. This meaning becomes clear when we see verse 5:20. Hence the meaning of 'alamin' in this verse will be all the nations of the time of Moses (sws).

-6:83-86, after mentioning a few prophets (sws) it is being said that they were given 'fazeallah' over the mankind (hence 'alamin' here means all of mankind). It is not a comparison of these prophets with the other prophets rather, it is a comparison of these prophets with the rest of mankind which the Author has misinterpreted.

-21:91, here the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ (sws) is being referred to and due to this unique incidentbeing a well-known history of all ofmankind, there is no scope to limit the meaning of 'alamin'to their time. Hence the correct interpretation would be that Allah (swt) made Maryum and her son Jesus (sws) a sign of His authority for the people of their time and all mankind until the day of judgement. If one wants to limit the meaning of 'alamin' to their time only, the scope will be just a few villages of Palestine of the time which would be against the majestic way the incident is being described. Hence the meaning of 'alamin' in this versewill be people of Palestine of the time and rest of mankind afterwards until the day of judgement.

-21:71, here the land being pointed out is certainly Shaam however 'alamin' here means that due to its suitable climate and rich soil it had bounties (Baraka) for all kinds of life like plantation, birds, animals, humans etc. Even if it means people, thesense one gets is that of human species as the land was bountiful for 'human kind' and that is what will be the meaning of 'alamin', that is mankind as a species.

There is another verse (15:70) which could give impression that 'alamin' can be something limited. However in this verse, the sense is foreigners, outsiders, unknown, undetermined.

In other words the word 'alamin' even used in relation to situations or people other than Allah (swt), always give a meaning of 'expanse and vastness'.

Now let us turn to the verse 25:1. The Author states that if the literal meaning of 'alamin' is taken *'the prophet (or the Qur'an) is a warner for the whole world and everything in it, including animals, plants, mountains, etc.'*and I agree that this is not the correct interpretation. However his completely opposite and restrictive interpretation that 'alamin' here means entire population of the Arabia is also not correct at all. The evidence he has presented is as follows:

*a. The Qur'an being in Arabic*

*b. Explicit verses of the Qur'an (like 42:7, 6:92 and also 28:46, 32:3 and 36:6) that limit the mission of the Qur'an and the prophet (pbuh) to the Arabia*

*c. The main addressees of the Qur'an being local groups*

*d. The theme of the Qur'an being a local theme, i.e. warning the polytheists and the people of the book in Arabia.*

Now it has been fully explained in the preceding sections that none of these points can be held as a valid argument against the Quran being a book of guidance for all mankind and the Holy Prophet (sws) being a Messenger (Rasul) until the day of judgement. The Author has then raised another discussion on the basis of verses mentioned in point (b) 42:7, 6:92, 28:46, 32:3, 36:6. As these have already been discussed and proven not to validate the Author's point of view, I do not need to comment on this discussion. The Author has then quoted 81:27-28 but is needlessly limiting the meaning to the local Arabs. True the verse 81:28 is addressing the local people to say that whoever amongst you wishes to, can get the straight path from this zikr (the Quran) which is in fact (according to 81:27) for 'alamin'. Hence verse 81:28 would not affect the universal meaning of 'alamin' in 81:27.

On the contrary, the meaning of 'alamin' in 25:1 and the other verses 6:90, 12:104, 21:107, 38:87, 68:52, 81: 27 cannot be confined to local Arabs for the following reasons:

-Almost all the uses of the word 'alamin' in the Quran give meaning of greatness, vastness, expanse and unknown.

-As shown above, in situations where the word 'alamin' is used for people and situations other than Allah (swt), it gives the meaning of the World and all of mankind. Hence the common sense says that in case of Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran, the meaning would be all of mankind from his time onwards to the day of judgement. The common sense would also say that in case of Holy Prophet (sws) it should not include animals, plants and mountains as he was the 'Guide' 'Messenger', 'Bashir' and 'Nazir' for the 'accountable creations' i.e. primarily mankind and secondarily Jinn.

-The Quran was rearranged in an entirely new manner, was accurately preserved in its original language and its language was also kept alive to the point that today it is one of the major languages of the World. It would not be wrong to say that the Arabic language is one of the most sought after and learned languages by non-Arab people in the World and this is mainly due to interest in the Quran. All of this indicates that the Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran were meant to be 'the Guidance' for rest of the mankind and for all times to come.

-None of the previous scriptures had been preserved free of changes and in their original forms and languages. Then the belief systems and culture of every religious tradition had developed serious problems which required large corrections and rehabilitation as the Author agrees.

-Most importantly, the Holy Prophet (sws) was the last and final messenger for mankind and the Quran the last revelation for mankind until the day of judgement.

On the basis of these points we can easily conclude with full certainty that 'alamin' used for the Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran will mean all of mankind until the day of judgement.

**ANSWER TO3.2. The verse of Man Balagh (6:19)**

The author does admit that the Quran can effectively reach non-Arabs so I don't think there was any need for spending time on dictionary meaning of the word 'balagh'. It is in fact quite commonly used word in the Quran in its various linguistic forms, verb, noun, adjective and active/passive participles. If we look at these various uses it simply gives the meaning of reaching, arriving, attaining or maturing at various places and the author has gone out of the way to give a peculiar angle to it. If we try to understand the 'Iblagh'(transmission) of the Quran it did not simply mean its relationship with Arabic language. For 'Iblagh' there were other factors which were also equally important. As far as the 'Iblagh' of the Quran to Arabs of the time or other people (whether Arabs or others) of all later times is concerned please consider the following two scenarios which would clarify this point:

- a) 'Polytheists of the time of Holy Prophet (sws) had no previous experience of divine revelation in their culture. They were listening to the Quran suddenly and for the first time. Also everybody was not always in the company of the Prophet (sws), particularly the rejecters who tended to stay away from the Prophet (sws) and the Muslims. Then they heard it only piecemeal from the Prophet (sws) according to whatever portion was revealed. Then non-Muslims had less chances of rehearsing or listening to it again and again in order for its message to really gain grounds in hearts and souls rather they were erecting all sorts of barriers in its free 'Iblagh'. Then no multiple printed copies were available at the time of the Prophet (sws). Then Arabic was not a one uniform language across all of the Arabia as it had its dialects and variations across the vast stretches of Arabian Peninsula'.
- b) 'During later generations Muslims enjoyed political authority over vast lands (including and)outside ofthe Arabian Peninsula. Islam became a well-known religion with huge following which directly or indirectly effected political, social and religious life of vast masses all over the known World. The Quran's copies in its final form were abundantly available. It's learning and memorising was part of everyday Muslim life. It was integral part of educational, legal, social and political life of all of the Muslim World. Despite changes in political fortunes the above scenario has never changed over the centuries. In modern ages the Quran has been even more easily available all over the World. The quality of translations have progressively improved in last 100 years and its translation is available in hundreds of languages of the World in addition to tens of millions of copies in its original language. It is a button click away for an average house hold all over the world. Then Muslims have a presence in each and every country of the World'.

Now, please see the above two scenarios and one can easily grasp that 'Iblagh' had constraints even in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (sws) and secondly the language is not the only criterion for 'Iblagh' rather there are so many other factors which play vital role in 'Iblagh'. If we try to apply the harsh criterion which the author is applying, one can (Ma'az'Allah) claim that the Quran did not even fully reach all the people of the entire Arabian Peninsula during the lifetime of Holy Prophet (sws).

The Author has again tried to take restrictive meaning of 'man balagh' in 6:19 on the basis of a few verses which have already been explained as not proving his viewpoint. After this discussion it becomes very clear that the verse 6:19 carries universal meaning and the Quran is as relevant for salvation of every human being on the face of this planet as it was for Arabs of the seventh century.

### **ANSWER TO 3.3. The verses of shuhada (2:143, 22:78)**

Before reviewing the author's viewpoint, please read both the verses in full. The verse 22:78 particularly makes an interesting reading. In this verse Allah (swt) is asking the Muslim community (see the start of earlier verse 22:77 with ya'ayyuhalla'zina') to strive hard in the way of Allah (swt) and then by pointing out that, 'so you could be 'Shuhada' on people till the day of judgement', the nature of striving has been made clear and that is, to call people to the ways of their Lord. Then very subtly it has been clarified that you had been named Muslim previously and in this Quran as well. Now naming the followers of Holy Prophet (sws) Muslim here (although derived from literal spirit) is not in its literal sense (of submitter) rather it is used as a noun in legal sense which will be the legal status of all the followers of this religion until the day of judgement. So by reading these two verses, the following conclusions could be easily drawn:

- The Muslim community has been raised to a responsibility (ajtaba'akum).
- The name Muslim is a legal identity of every follower of this religion presented by Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws). This was name given to his followers by Ibrahim (sws) as well.
- The Muslim community is asked to strive hard in the way of Allah (swt) by calling people to Allah (swt) which hence becomes responsibility of every Muslim until the day of judgement.
- It also means that Islam was religion of all the prophets and their followers and Muslim (both literally as well as legally) was their name and Islam was their religion. The Jews, Christians and others had lost this identity and taken up new identities which was not given to them by Allah (swt) or their prophets. They have forgotten this identity to the extent that if they are now pointed out about it on the authority of the Quran they will be extremely surprised and will probably laugh you away. Now calling all of them to Islam (and encouraging them to be called Muslims) is in fact reviving their lost identity and reconnecting their link to their actual religion which is Islam, the core of which 'islam'.
- Sadly the Author has referred to this noble duty of the Muslim Ummah to call their lost fellow human brothers and sisters to submission to their Lord (Islam) and His ways (Shari'ah) in a demeaning manner as is evident from his overall tone and statements at a number of places like '*Muslims having to preach Islam to all mankind to convert them to Islam*' and '*The history caused some of the other nations to embrace Islam and to enthusiastically or forcefully follow the same shari'ah and become Muslims. This was of course a great advantage that the Almighty gave to Ummi'in and in no way this article tries to deny this advantage or to argue that such joining of other nations to Ummi'in should have not happened (except the ones that were forced to do so).*

Now coming back to the contents of this sub-section 3:3

-Once again the Author is exaggerating some differences in the scholarly opinions to blame the style of the Quran. The meaning of both the verses (2:143 and 22:78) is fairly clear that the Muslims have to fulfil their responsibility in this World so that they can give testimony on the day of judgement about having done their job, as the Prophet (sws) will be witness upon them of having done his job of doing Itmam e hujjah and conveying Allah's religion to his addressees.

-The Author has used verse 16:89 to limit the meaning of verses 2:143. The verse 16:89 says that on the day of judgement a witness will be raised on every 'Ummah' from amongst themselves and the Holy Prophet (sws) will be a witness on his addressees. So this means Holy Prophet Moses (sws) will be witness only on Bani Israel of his time amongst whom he was raised (not Bani Isarel and Jews of all times). Similarly Jesus (sws) will be witness on Bani Israel of his time (and not Christian of all times) as is clear from verse (61:6 '...oh Bani Israel I am a Rasul on to you....'). Similarly Holy Prophet (sws) will be witness on to his direct addressees. Now, because the institution of Prophethood ended with him, the question arises who will be the witness on the people until the day of judgement. As the verse 16:89 requires that the witnesses have to be from people amongst themselves, the verses 2:143 and 22:78 clarified that it will be Muslim Ummah of every age for their respective generations and as they will be doing this job with what Holy Prophet (sws) brought, hence actually the Holy Prophet (sws) will indirectly be witness on all mankind until the day of judgement and this is what Holy Prophet (sws) has himself clarified as recorded in traditions (Ahadith).

-A fine point here. By quoting 5:117 in 2:2:3 the Author admitted that Jesus will not be witness on Christians of later generations. Similarly Holy Prophet (sws) will not be the direct witness on Muslims and others peoples of later generations however he will be indirect witness (and this is the claim of Muslim Ummah) as what he gave to mankind (the Quran and Sunnah) was preserved with deliberation for all times to come and his Muslim Ummah has been chosen to act as witness on rest of mankind (see 'ajtaba'akum' in 22:78).

-The Author has quoted from the Bible as follows:

*'I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles (Isiah: 42:6)'...  
'I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth (Isiah: 49:6)'.*

First of all Isiah is not part of the New Testament rather it is Book No: 23 of the Old Testament. Then these verses are in fact quite clear on what the Bani Israel were chosen for and that was to carry the guidance of Allah to all corners of the World so that the rest of mankind could follow their Lord's guidance and win reward in the hereafter. The author says that *'no Jewish scholars have ever concluded from the above verses that therefore all gentiles need to become Jew!'.*

However in my humble opinion it was a clear mistake which happened because they saw their 'chosen status' in racial terms, forgot the responsibility attached to this status, made Judaism a racial-cultural tradition and did not preach to mankind what Allah (swt) had asked

for. It was in fact the greatest historical mistake they committed which had disastrous consequences for Judaism.

#### **OTHER EVIDENCE FROM THE QURAN:**

The author has given the impression that there are only three verses (25:1, 6:19 and 2:143) which suggest that the Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran had universal mission as he writes, 'Throughout my discussions and studies of this particular subject I have seen three verses that are brought up to justify the traditional understanding' although he has then himself mentioned 6 verses (21:107, 6:90, 12:104, 38:87, 68:52 and 81:27) in connection with 25:1 and another verse (22:78) in connection with 2:143. Out of these, 21:107 and 22:78 are particularly important in their universal message, however, the author has not paid attention to these.

-Another Verse 34:28 is absolutely clear where Allah (swt) is saying to Holy Prophet (sws) that he has been sent as a 'Bashir' and 'Nazir' for 'all of mankind'.

-Verses 7:155-158 need a careful reading. In these Holy Prophet's advent is being mentioned with such deliberation to Moses (sws) and his companions at the time of their great summoning at the mountain of Tur hundreds of years ago and the Bani Israel's salvation was made contingent upon professing faith and following him when he came. **The verses have nothing which should limit it to people of the book of Prophet's time only. Also these also indicate they were obliged to follow his Shari'ah as well.**

-Verse 4:115 is also worth mentioning. In this verse it has been clarified that after guidance has been revealed, anybody who tries to follow path other than that of the faithful will be a loser. Although the verse has come in a particular context as is clear from preceding verses however it contains this general principle as well. It is in accordance with the usual style of the Quran that something is revealed in a particular context but the meaning and guidance is general. If we read the subsequent verses up to 126, the general nature of the message becomes clear.

-Verses 33:45-46 indicate that Holy Prophet (sws) had been sent as 'Sirajjan Muneera'. Now the Sun has also been called Siraj at another place (25:61). In these verses (33:45-46) Holy Prophet (sws) has been called the glowing light in the way of Allah (sws). **As the Sun is shining on all of mankind until the day of judgement hence this Sun of guidance (the Holy Prophet(sws)) will also be shining on all of mankind until the day of judgement.**

-Verses 9:33, 48:28 and 61:9 are explaining the purpose of sending Holy Prophet (sws) and that is to dominate Allah's religion on all other religious paths. His direct mission was to dominate all those religious paths within the Arabian Peninsula both through preaching and use of force (after Itmam – hujjah) while indirectly, on his behalf, it is enjoined upon his Ummah (as being 'Ummat e wasat') to complete that mission through tireless dawah effort only (and not by force as using force to subdue was prerogative of only Rusul himself and his companions who were part of this divine mission) which must continue until the day of judgement.

-Verses 61:6 in which Holy Prophet Jesus (sws) gave glad tidings of a Rasul to Bani Israel 600 years ago in Palestine. Earlier Holy Prophets Ibrahim and Musa (sws) had also foretold the coming of Holy Prophet (sws). Now why would 3 of the greatest messengers of all times would be prophesying about the coming of a prophet with such a deliberation whose (according to the Author) mission was only for Arabs (who were in fact only a small scattered insignificant tribal nation in 7th century)? It does not make sense.

-Then there are numerous other verses from which the universal mission of Holy Prophet (sws) and the Quran could be easily inferred.

### **ANSWER TO: Summary of analysis of the verses of the Quran**

Under this title the Author has summarised his analysis as seven principles which I see are in fact clear misunderstandings. Let us analyse these:

#### **ANSWER TO Principle one: Islam vs islam**

*'there is only and there has been only one religion that God has given to mankind. That is the religion of submission to truth (islam). The conventional Islam is in fact a version or form of islam that was brought by Prophet Muhammed (pbuh)'.*

On a careful review of this statement one can easily appreciate that it is a complete misunderstanding. There is no doubt that Allah's religion has always been one and that is called Islam. The earlier nations who were given Islam could not preserve it in its original shape and form. They either lost original texts or corrupted these to the point that these could no longer be the source of pure guidance of Allah (swt). Then these nations developed belief systems which were in complete contrast to the belief system enshrined in original religion of Allah i.e Islam. For example descendants of Ibrahim (sws) in Arabia and Hinduism (which in my understanding was originally a pre-Abrahamic ancient prophets' religion or was the heritage of some unknown prophet from the progeny of Ibrahim (sws)) in India, degenerated completely into idol worshipping, and polytheism became their actual declared religion. Judaism became a racial tradition and Old Testament became devoid of belief in the hereafter while Christianity damaged monotheism by developing a system which revolved around the divinity of Jesus and which, in fact, had been the basis of belief system of vast majority of Christendom throughout its history. Then if we look at the two earlier established religious traditions which are well known to have descended from Prophet Ibrahim (sws) these had even lost their identity as 'Islam' and 'Muslim' although Allah (swt) has made it clear in the Quran that they were named Muslim (22:78) (please note that Muslim here was not in its literal 'the one who submits' rather they were actually named Muslim) and adopted different names i.e Judaism/Jew and Christianity/Christian. These names were not given to them at all by Allah (swt) and their prophets. **Then Allah has not recognised Judaism (Yahudiyyat) and Christianity (masihiyyat) as valid terms or forms of Islam and there is not even a single reference to this effect in the Quran (the Quran recognises these as 'de facto' religious groups but does not recognise these as 'de jure' valid religions).** Then Allah (swt) made it obligatory upon the followers of Prophet Muhammed (sws) to profess faith in all earlier prophets of Allah. How then was it possible that followers of these religious traditions and other people afterwards were made exempt from professing faith and following the last and final Prophet (sws) for mankind. The Quran has made it clear at several places that people of the book (Jews and Christians) must profess faith in Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) and warned them of dire consequences if they did not do so, as

has been referenced above. Hence it is a completely false claim that the 'Islam' presented to mankind by Holy Prophet (sws) was just another version of 'islam' and that the previous versions are still valid. Islam presented by Holy Prophet (sws) is in fact the complete and final version of Islam which has superseded all the previous versions and is now the only reliable version of Islam. This fact could be understood by a very simple example. Oxford text book of Medicine has many editions and in the presence of latest 2017 edition one cannot insist on reading its previous editions to acquire proper and up to date knowledge of Medicine.

#### **ANSWER TO Principle two: Variation within unification**

*'Every nation has its own guide that would provide his people with an illustration of islam that best suits them. While the form and the path may be different, the core concepts and values are the same. The main concepts are belief in one God, belief in the hereafter (no matter how different the description of it might be in different faiths) and doing righteous deeds. This is not exclusive to Abrahamic religions. Abrahamic religions are in fact one mega category of illustration of islam'.*

The concept outlined here carries many misunderstandings. Firstly it is not correct to say that every nation has its own guide rather the correct Quranic teaching is that Allah sent guides to every nation prior to Prophet Abraham (sws) while after him divine guides (prophets) have been confined only to his progeny. After finality of prophethood the only guide for all of mankind is the last and final Messenger of Allah (swt), Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws).

Also it is not correct to say that the form and paths may be different, the core concepts and values are same. Now the basic concepts of Islam have always been belief in oneness of Allah (swt) with all His attributes, total submission to Him, belief in the life hereafter and day of judgement and acquiring Tazkia within the framework of guidance brought by Allah's messengers. I am not sure how belief in trinity, divinity of Jesus and salvation without acquiring tazkia within the framework of Shari'ah (which are basic concepts of religion in Christianity) or concept of pantheism, deity worship, superstitions, endless cycle of reincarnation and pandemic polytheistic practices (which are basic concepts and practices of all forms of Hinduism) or muddled concept of the life hereafter (as in Judaism) or denial of the existence of the Divine (as in Buddhism) could be taken as the core concepts and values of Islam.

We should not ignore two important aspects of human existence in this discussion i.e human weaknesses and the challenge of Satan (Quran 7:17). Human society has been corrupting the guidance of Allah (swt) due to interplay of these two factors. As an example nobody can say that trinity or divinity of Jesus were taught by Allah (swt) or Jesus Christ. These beliefs were developed later by certain personalities as a complex interplay of corrupted sources, personality weaknesses and influences of Satan who is following every human being to corrupt his life journey. A large number of similar examples could be cited from every religious tradition to clarify that erroneous beliefs and practices have entered as later corruptions in Allah's religion i.e Islam. The Author is then making a very tall but bizarre claim that Abrahamic religions are one mega category of illustration of 'islam' without even slightest of support from the Quran and history. That claim in fact declares every tradition which has ever existed in the name of religion to be valid form of 'islam' and one is left wondering why would then the Quran say that if anybody wants religion other than Islam it will not be accepted and will be doomed in the hereafter (3:85).

#### **ANSWER TO Principle Three: Correcting than Converting**

*'Therefore if there is an opportunity for preaching, it should not be aimed at converting people to Islam. Rather it should be aimed at correcting people's false beliefs. Of course if a non-Muslim wishes to convert to Islam there is no problem with this and a Muslim should help him/her to do that'.*

If we carefully ponder on these assertions in the background of overall view being presented, it seems to imply that 'islam' in the universal sense means submission to Allah (swt) but it is practically confined to saying that God is one, be good human being and then remain Jew, Christian, Hindu, Parsi, Buddhist, Sikh or whatever you want to be. In terms of believe systems this viewpoint also means that it is okay if you do not want to profess faith in Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) (like every non-Muslim) or for that matter any prophet (like Hindus, Buddhists or Sikhs) or you do not want to believe in the day of judgement or life hereafter (like Hindus or Buddhists and many other religions) and it is also okay if you want to believe in Trinity or reincarnation. In terms of worship you should believe in one God (swt) but then it is perfectly okay if you want to bow in front of idols or you want to pray to Jesus or Mary. In terms of practice you can marry whoever you want to, you can eat whatever you want to and so on. This is an extremely dangerous territory the Author is leading people to. Please, bear in mind that the rejecters from amongst the people of the book and polytheists of the time of Holy Prophet (sws) did want to negotiate similar deals with the Holy Prophet (sws) and wanted to agree on some 'give and take for the peaceful co-existence' however Allah (swt) completely rejected it in unambiguous terms. The most disappointing part of this view point is that the same deal is now being offered 'whole sale' to all non-Muslims in the World by the Author. I do not mean at all that the Author would mean any of the above; however such impressions are easy to make from his assertion for any reader.

-This point of view is also too simplistic and naïve. It completely ignores human nature, its prejudices and also human history. It is based on very simplistic presumption that you can go to a non-Muslim and explain the universal 'islam' to him and he is going to gleefully accept it and leave all the beliefs and practices which have been so deeply rooted in his life. I can say with confidence that if a person can travel that distance so easily, he can also convert and accept 'Islam'. I have no hesitation in saying that Islam is Allah's prescribed guidance (both in form and structure) for mankind and it cannot be accepted piecemeal. The requirement of submission is to leave behind all preferences, attachments, and prejudices and acquire the complete colour of Allah's guidance down to its minutest details (2:138). **Hence converting and accepting Islam in its entirety is a manifestation of submission and a token of love and gratefulness to Allah (swt), of course, after the truth of Islam has fully dawned upon a person.** We Muslims however can never be sure that it has happened to a person beyond doubt (which is the prerogative of Prophets on knowledge from Allah (swt) only).

-The heart of the misunderstanding expressed in the above principle is in the terms 'islam' and 'Islam'. The former term is just a theoretical paradigm. The very nature of the paradigm 'total submission to one God' carries the implication that the same God is going to give guidance and directives (Quran 2-38). When these take the form of comprehensive system of beliefs and practices it becomes 'Islam' and accepting it fully is a manifestation of submission. Allah (swt) always gave 'Islam' to mankind through his prophets, the core of which was always 'islam' and hence 'islam' and 'Islam' are like soul and body to each other and are inseparable. However, the humans have been corrupting Islam (both in theory and practice). Hence Allah (swt) once again gave Islam through Prophet Muhammed (sws) in its complete and final form, the soul of which is 'islam'. It is now the only form which has correct 'islam' and no other religious tradition has true and correct 'islam'.

**ANSWER TO Principle Four: The Chosen Nations**

*The two communities of Bani Israel and Ummi'in (otherwise known as Bani Ishmael) have been particularly blessed by the Almighty. Bani Israel were privileged by being given a specific shari'ah and by having numerous prophets. Ummi'in were privileged as well by being given a specific shari'ah, quite similar to that of Bani Israel and by having the last prophet of God.*

While I agree with the overall statement however there are a few observations. While the Bani Ismael were part of the Ummi'yin, the latter is a broader term generally used for Arabs of Hijaz, something which is indicated by the fact that certain Jews have also been called Ummi'yin in the Quran (2:78). Then the blessed communities were Bani Israel and **all the Muslims** and not only Bani Ismael or Ummi'yin as has been explained before in this article and is also clear from 22:77-78. This difference is extremely important as it pre-empts any possibility of making Islam into a racial-cultural tradition (as unfortunately the Author has tried to do in his article), enables any human being of any background and era to become equal part of this noble blessing and it makes Islam a universal religion of mankind to follow for all times to come. The final observation is that while Shari'ah given to both the people was similar, however, the later Shari'ah was complete and final after every correction, addition and subtraction which Allah (swt) in His Divine Wisdom wanted to do.

#### **ANSWER TO Principle Five: Specific and General Rules**

*'The communities of God who entered a covenant with the Almighty are privileged by being given a shari'ah. This is to maintain their position of the chosen nations and remain practical illustrations of monotheist God aware communities. Any other people who by choice or by birth have entered the same covenant will also enjoy the same privilege. All other people are expected to follow the obvious rules of morality, often referred to as Noahic rules in the Biblical literature. These are also referred to with minor differences with the Quran, 17:22-39. Believing in One God is included in these rules'.*

Again, the above assertion carries misunderstandings. Firstly, there is a factual inaccuracy in this statement and that is the Genesis 9:8-17 does not carry any Noahic rules (reference here is to an earlier formulation of this principle which the Author has now modified) rather it refers to Noahic covenant which is a different thing. The Noahic rules (properly called laws) are not mentioned in the Bible and not at all in the Quran. These are mentioned in Talmud which is not a divine book in Judaism but is only a book of Fiqh (jurisprudence). Then attribution of these rules to Prophet Noah (sws) is very doubtful. The assertion that these are referred to with more or less the same detail in both the Quran and the Torah is also not correct. Particularly these are quite different from the Quranic principles (17:22-39) which are very comprehensive, vastly more sophisticated and morally superior. Then these inauthentic Noahic rules were in fact used by Judaism as a means of religious discrimination to affirm their 'chosen people of God' status and had possibly been promulgated just for this purpose. According to Judaism, a Gentile did not have to follow the Mosaic Law but could earn a reward in the life hereafter if they followed the Noahic laws which they thought were a universal law and a binding on all mankind. Similarly these were referred to (in other words abused) when St Paul did away with Shari'ah for early Church. The most important point to be noted is that these were put forward by Jews to exalt their position compared to other nations (gentiles) as a chosen people but by doing so they absolved themselves of their primary responsibility to mankind, that is, to invite nations to the guidance of Allah (swt). Hence Judaism became a racial, non-proselytizing religion and the result is that the Christian population is about 2000 million and the Muslim population is about 1500 million in the World today while the Jew population, despite being the oldest religious tradition in Abrahamic line, is a meagre 15 million.

Hence the idea of Noahic rules being sufficient for rest of mankind is Jewish in origin and has no basis whatsoever in Islam. Islam as presented to mankind by Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws) and the Quran is the final and universal edition of Allah's guidance to mankind and is for all mankind irrespective of colour, race, language, era and geography. It treats mankind as one family and all humanity being equal in front of their exalted Lord, Allah (swt). Introduction of the idea that Noahic rules are sufficient for the rest of mankind in Muslims is extremely dangerous and totally against the spirit of Islam.

**The views expressed in this principle are in fact against human equality and fraternity. Allah (swt) had chosen these two nations not to give them 'blue eyed boy' or some 'priestly class' status. Rather it was a responsibility which was to assist the prophets (in case of Bani Israel) and to do the job of prophets (in case of Muslims) and that was to carry Allah (swt) guidance to the rest of mankind and their reward both in this World and in the hereafter had been made contingent upon fulfilling that Job.**

#### **ANSWER TO Principle Six: Eternal Shari'ah with a Subjective Form**

*Shari'ah has an eternal wisdom but its form is temporary and evolves or changes as the societies evolve or change. This mostly applies to non-worship shari'ah.*

As the view expressed under this principle is related with Shari'ah, the answer will be included in the section on Shari'ah to follow later.

#### **ANSWER TO Principle Seven: The Advantage of the Qur'an:**

*The message of monotheism, hereafter and righteousness in the Qur'an is universal. This includes the wisdom behind its form of the shari'ah. For a Muslim and for anyone who believes in the Qur'an, the authenticity of the Book makes the Qur'an a criteria for recognising truth and false in other religions and ideologies.*

The view point is primarily correct however the Quran is equally important for non-Muslims as well, in that, they are also able to see the weaknesses in their religions and ideologies and rediscover and establish themselves on the true path of Allah (swt). However for this process to take place there has first to be the process of contact of followers of other religions and ideologies with the Quran. Now, this is the job of Muslims for which they have been raised as a community that they 'actively' reach out to the rest of humanity with the message of Islam. Seeing humanity in error in their relationship with their Lord and still not doing anything is a callous behaviour. In the last 3 to 4 centuries, with the age of reasoning and evolution of rational thought and scientific knowledge, the other religious traditions have been crumbling down, as these found it hard to stand the pressure of the test of rational thought. The result has been widespread atheism and its sister ideologies, nominal religious allegiance and thinning out of Godliness. Moreover, as the divine instinct is part of human nature and does not die, it has manifested in other deviant forms and resulted in mushrooming of cults like Satanism, Paganism, Scientology and numerous others. If the Muslims Ummah in modern times had understood their job properly and had genuinely felt their responsibility for the fellow humanity they could have filled the spiritual void and re-established humanity's relationship with their Lord through the Quran and Sunnah of Holy Prophet (sws). They did not do their job and then there have been recurrent attempts from within their ranks and files in last 200 years to confuse them and these attempts have achieved nothing but further subdivisions and sectarianism. I see the Author's views, as expressed in this article in the same light. **Ironically**

the Author has tried to present 'dawah' and preaching of Allah's religion, Islam, to mankind as something loathsome and conversion to Islam as something stigmatising which is only going to negatively affect their inadequate and disjointed efforts in this cause.

### **C) THE NATURE, HISTORY AND IMPORTANCE OF SHARIA:**

The nature of Allah (swt)'s guidance has been to help mankind to succeed in the test of life. Hence Allah (swt)'s guidance has been a sheer mercy for mankind. The main guidance has been enshrined in human nature called Deen e Fitrah. The basic elements of Deen e fitrah has been:

#### **C: 1The survival instinct:**

The human being is strongly driven by perseveration of self which manifests as preservation of both physical and psychological self. The survival instinct is essential for human existence however by nature it does not recognise limits and cannot strike balance. Greed, pride, lust, jealousy, anger are some of the elements of survival instinct. The uncontrolled expression of these lead to self-destruction and anarchy in human society.

#### **C: 2The social instinct:**

The human being is a social being. He understands by his very nature that he can survive and flourish only in a society. He understands that investing in others returns in the form of cooperation, praise, approval and protection. The social instinct works in various dimensions. Here, **the first and most basic dimension** is the gender relationship which is the basis of human procreation. It is most fundamental for survival of human species but not for an individual per se, hence Allah (swt) has riddled it with most compelling passions of attraction, love and lust so that humans surrender to it in order to ensure sustained procreation. **The second dimension** is that based on 'relatedness' which is quite manifestly based on survival instinct. It works on the principal of nearness i.e. the closer is the dearer. Human beings identify and relate themselves through ties of blood, kinship, colour, language, tribe, religion and nationality. **The third and the more universal and deeply ingrained dimension** is the dimension of human interactions. It is again a manifestation of survival instinct although in a more subtle and refined way. The human beings by their very nature know that their interactions should be based on truth, honesty, justice, trust, kindness and respect. Ironically human society does not always function to the ideal norms of these dimensions which result in exploitation, strife, warfare and bloodshed.

#### **C: 3The divine instinct:**

The human being is an intellectual being. He analyses and arrives at conclusions. He observes that he is just there on this planet without his choice and will have to leave it without his choice. Then he sees his very complex life which ends in death and wonders what it is all about. Then he sees chance and luck as inevitable part of his life and injustice as part of his social existence. He wants that there should be justice but is unable to strike perfect justice in his society. These and many other observations of his life and the universe around him take him to the conclusion that his life is not without purpose. The jigsaw puzzles gets solved and he is easily able to identify with and affirm what has been revealed to him through the prophets of God that he has a Creator Who has created this life and Who has put him on this planet as a test and Who will inhabit another abode, paradise, with those who are successful in the test of life. The flower of faith blossoms and love of God with intellectual satisfaction, passion, reverence and submission cultivates.

Humans have always felt the need to regulate its members so that the human life can be protected and every member of society can have reasonable degree of security, dignity and opportunity to flourish. The tribal societies have customs and traditions for this purpose while empires and states, in addition, makes laws and rules to achieve these goals. Hence traditions, customs, rules and laws have always been part and parcel of the human society.

We can easily understand by a careful deliberation on the above instincts that humans need guidance in all these three areas, as human intellect cannot on its own strike the balance in any area. It sometimes falls prey to human weaknesses like arrogance, greed, prejudice, and lust. At other times it lacks knowledge or has poor knowledge to strike balance. An example is what would be all the factors to take into account while making family laws. Another example is how much of his earnings a man should surrender to his society for the common good. Yet another example is once he recognises his Creator how he should express his gratitude or pay homage to his Creator which would be befitting for His Holiness, in other words how should he worship his Creator. Due to human limitations in finding 'the balance and the optimum' in all these areas **Allah (sws) has always chosen to give guidance to mankind in the form of certain rules so that humanity can stand on justice in all spheres of life and accepting and following these rules is an integral part of submission to the Creator which is required from the humans. This is called Islamic Shari'ah.**

#### **C: 4 Principles of Shari'ah:**

Shari'ah is the term used in religious scriptures for the collection of those divine rules which cover all aspects of human life that is personal, family, social and political. A little deliberation on human nature and human history as described in Holy Scriptures and the way Allah's guidance has unfolded in history can lead to some understanding of underlying principles of Shari'ah. Here are some of these principles:

-Allah (sws) is most merciful and benevolent. He (swt) does not burden his servants beyond their capacity. In all Shari'ah directives he has in-built systems of exemptions and concessions. The obligatory element in Shari'ah is always small while voluntary sphere is generally large and open.

-Allah's Shari'ah has taken human nature into account. It promotes 'ma'roof' (goodness) and curbs 'munkar' (evil) which are part of human nature. It takes accounts of aesthetics however disciplines it.

-The Shari'ah directives have some basic purposes: establishing justice and promoting cooperativeness in society; protecting society from wild passions, bloodshed and anarchy; protecting the weak and needy; self-discipline and spiritual growth.

-Allah has trusted human intellect and hence has given only limited directives as his Shari'ah while vast areas have been left to human intellect. These directives given by Allah (swt) cannot be changed. The society can make rules and regulations where no directives have been given based on these directives and on principles of justice and common good.

- The core of Shari'ah has always been the same. Anything clearly forbidden has never been permitted at some future point e.g. committing shirk (assigning partners with Allah), adultery, intoxication, gambling have always been forbidden.

-The Sharia directives have mainly been given where human intellect could not, on its own, decide about certain matters due to **lack of knowledge and inadequate wisdom** e.g. keeping faith in the existence of angels and the fact that despite executing Allah (swt)'s directives, Angels cannot be worshipped or **in adequate knowledge** e.g. how should one worship Allah or being unable to find

the balance as to how much should be obligatory worship or **where the matter could be doubtful** e.g. consuming blood and eating flesh of swine.

-Some of the directives have been local and temporary e.g. Sabbath was only part of shari'ah directives given to Prophet Moses (sws) as is clarified by the Quran (16:124) and was part of the Ten Commandments of Torah. It was abrogated in the final and completed form of the Shari'ah given to Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws).

-The directives regarding punishment for wrong deeds have not been meant to be a full penal code. The punishment for a few wrong deeds are of the nature of divine punishment with provisions about situations where the punishment could be relaxed. The collective order of society (state) can make a penal code to deal with wrong deeds of its members however it has no authority to change or abrogate those punishments which Allah (swt) has decreed. These must remain part of penal system of a Muslim state keeping strictly in view the circumstances in which these punishments can be given.

-As prophet hood ended with Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws), in the same way Allah's Shari'ah was perfected and finalised by retaining certain directives, changing or abrogating certain others and adding some new ones. Allah's shari'ah is comprehensive but not exhaustive. It is comprehensive in the sense that it contains directives in all spheres of human life however it is not exhaustive which means it gives only a few laws in each sphere and not the lengthy details which is the domain of fiqh.

-The Sharia, as finalised and perfected in final prophet hood is permanent for all times to come and a binding on all humanity to follow.

The Author has raised a number of points in his supplementary note on Sharia. I have presented a gist of his claims and commented on these.

*'.... a quick look at the social history of the Arabs just before the emergence of Islam reveals that the vast majority of the form of the shari'ah of Islam was already in practice in the Arab society.....'*

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This statement gives the impression that the directives of Shari'ah were based on Arab culture and were suitable only for them. The directives of Shari'ah were in fact based on established Abrahamic religious tradition. Some of these were present in Arabs but these were not secular-cultural Arab traditions rather these had come down as Abrahamic religious traditions. Holy Prophet (sws) continued these as part of Islamic Shari'ah, unchanged if no change was required or after necessary changes if these were required.

Most of these were also present in Bani Israel of Palestine, Arabia and elsewhere, again as established Abrahamic religious tradition, which refutes the author's scepticism about their attribution to Prophet Ibrahim (sws). Also these being mostly similar to Shari'ah of Moses (sws) refutes the Author's claim that these were just existing Arab cultural traditions. Regarding the specific examples quoted, halal meat (Tazkia of animals) was practiced by Bani Israel as well while the directive of marriage with non-Muslim was a new directive and was based on requirements of purity of faith and Tazkia and had nothing to do with Arab culture. Obligatory Zakah and prohibition of Riba again had nothing to do with Arab culture and were part of Abrahamic religious tradition. All the other directives of Shari'ah could similarly be reviewed.

Sadly the Author is mixing culture and Ma'roofat of the society with law (or Shari'ah). Allah's Shari'ah does not normally interfere with Ma'roofat of society until there is something morally objectionable. Whatever Islamic Shari'ah adapted from Arab society were religious practices which were deeply rooted in Abrahamic religious tradition and were practiced by Bani Israel as well and

these were not cultural practices or M'aroufat of the society. A scenario could clarify the difference: A Muslim from Punjab will have a lot more in common with a Sikh from Punjab in terms of style of dress, household lay out, cooking style, cuisine, musical notes, day to day instruments, sports, transport, local festivals than with a Muslim from Bengal, Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia however as soon as the question of Azan, Wudhu, prayers, Ramadhan and fasting, Hajj, Zapata, marriage, divorce, Eids, Halal foods, burial of deceased, importance of moon sighting will arise, all these Muslims from different parts of the World (who might not even understand each other's languages) will exactly understand what all these terms mean and will fall in line in the practice of these religious directives while the Sikh will be a complete outsider.

-The very claim that due to change in civilisation there were changes in Shari'ah between the periods of Holy Prophets Jesus (sws) and Muhammad (sws) is baseless. Jesus (sws) did not bring any new Shari'ah and followed the Mosaic Shari'ah. It was not a question of changes in Shari'ah rather it was more a question of completion of Shari'ah which included cleansing of Shari'ah of human interpolations, abrogation of certain elements and addition of certain elements.

The Author writes:

*On what basis then we can argue that the form of the shari'ah that was given 1400 years ago and was based on the norms and regulations of a particular society at that time is going to stay as the best system of rule forever? Evolvement of the form of the shari'ah has happened even while the form of the shari'ah was revealed at the time of the prophet (pbuh). This refers to the concept of abrogation. This evolvement or change of the form of the shari'ah kept happening at the time of the first four Caliphs of Islam.*

I have already shown above that **it is a complete misunderstanding to think that Shari'ah was based on norms and regulations of Arab society**. Then Arabia of Holy Prophet's time was a tribal society and lacked a collective political order in the form of a government. Talking of a 'civil law' in that society was meaningless anyway as such societies do not have collective political order or civil laws. When a tribal society is organised into a collective political order and a state is established, laws start evolving. We can see this process taking place in all societies in history. Islam transformed Arabia into collective political order and a state was established. Allah (swt) started giving its law as this state evolved which covered all the basic aspects of human life including personal, family, social and collective spheres in both worship and secular affairs. All this law (personal, family, social and collective, the latter being the basis of any Muslim state) was completed within the lifetime of Holy Prophet (sws). This is divine in origin, is enshrined in the Quran and Sunnah and is completely immune from any human change for all times to come and is called Islamic Shari'ah. It is all based on justice, compassion and collective benefit of human society. It carries the flavour of Godliness, aims at Tazkia and covers secular spheres of life as well. Muslims evolved this law in the form of Fiqh with the passage of time as the society became more complex keeping the original law intact. All this additional law (which included new laws as well as the detailed application of original law) which was the effort of Muslim jurists, was subject to further review and development, a process which should be on going. Hence Islamic fiqh evolved and new additions came in however the actual Shari'ah given by Holy Prophet (sws) in the form of the Quran and Sunnah remained completely unchanged. The process of abrogation was only limited to the life time of the Prophet (sws). **Hence the claim that Shari'ah kept evolving during the time of 4 caliphs is completely baseless and the author cannot give a single example that the Quran or Holy Prophet (sws) established something**

**as Shari'ah and any of the 4 Caliphs abrogated it or added something to make it part of the Shari'ah.**

As mentioned the Shari'ah law is not extensive and vast spheres of civilisation were left to human intellect to make rules and laws in accordance with the changing needs. I do not see where and how the question of belittling human intellect (aql) arises. I do not have slightest doubt that whatever Allah (sws) has given as his Shari'ah has complete relevance to our time and nobody has the right to change even an iota in Allah's Shari'ah, provided any instruction or directive has been incorrectly understood to be part of Islamic Shari'ah. The author needs to show which directives of Shari'ah are not relevant in this age or how technological advances and rapid change in civilisation are making the Shari'ah given by Allah not practical or relevant. Then the author is readjusting his view point by saying that non-worship Shari'ah is the one which should be changeable. What is the basis of making such distinctions and from where the Author is deriving this authority. Tomorrow another scholar may rise to say that 'no in fact the worship Shari'ah should be changed'. Also according to the Author, if only the spirit of Shari'ah has to be maintained then the shari'ah of worship should be changed as well (God forbid) and instead of the established salat rituals (the main purpose of which is to remember Allah 20:14) one should just remember God in a chair or bed instead of making wuzu and going through the whole motions of Salat.

#### **D) THE NATURE, IMPORTANCE AND DUTY OF DAWAH:**

-As discussed above this earthly human life is a test from the Quranic perspective. However due to a number of limitations humans have and the impediments which are part of this life, this test has not been easy. Allah (swt) through His sheer mercy recognised these and arranged clear guidance for mankind. He chose certain individuals from among humans and provided them with His guidance for mankind. These sacred beings were prophets of Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) provided the guidance to them through direct revelation.

-Allah (swt) has dealt with humanity as a unit and a family and has made mutual cooperativeness as one of the basic organising principles of human society. The principle of cooperativeness has been so pervasive and deeply ingrained that no human being can survive without this cooperativeness. Even a cursory view of human life makes it clear that every human being is completely dependent on other humans for all his basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, transportation and countless others. That is why service to mankind is recognised by Allah (swt) as well as humanity (on the basis of Deen e Fitrah) as a primary virtue. Farmers, artisans, masons, drivers, tailors, teachers, scientists, doctors, engineers all perform this service. In fact the very livelihood of every human has been made dependent on providing some sort of service to fellow humans. All these services are related with this worldly life.

-However, as this life is a test, so the actual aim of humanity should be to be successful in this test so that they can get reward from Allah (swt) of entering His paradise. Humanity also needs cooperation in this all important eternal life as they need for this worldly life. Allah (swt) has enjoined upon humans to perform the service of helping fellow beings to gain success in this test as well. This duty was firstly given to prophets whose lives were completely dedicated to providing this service of calling to the way of Lord and purifying human life so that the humans can pass the test and enter paradise after death. Initially, in history this duty was performed by prophets and their companions. Later the scope of this responsibility was widened and a whole nation (Bani Israel) were chosen for

this purpose as has been described earlier in this article. Still later when the institution of prophethood ended with Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws), the responsibility transferred to the whole of Muslim Ummah.

-Dawah to mankind is a service (and would be entitled to a wage or reward like a farmer, artisan, doctor, teacher, driver gets the wage or reward) as is indicated by the fact that Allah's prophets used to mention about this wage or reward (Quran 6:90, 25:57, 26:109, 26:127, 26:145, 26:180, 36:21, 38:86 and other places) although the difference is that they would not ask for this wage or reward for their service from the fellow human beings like humans do for their worldly services. This service is now to be performed by each and every individual of Muslim Ummah.

-After the finality of prophethood the noble service of Dawah automatically shifted to all the followers of Holy Prophet Muhammed (sws). The responsibility is full time for Ulema (religious scholars) of this Ummah while for others it is based on capacity although nobody is exempt. As Islam is now the only true form of guidance from Allah (swt) (the soul of which is 'Islam' and the body of which is Shari'ah enshrined in the Quran and Sunnah) all its followers have primary responsibility of providing this service to mankind in the form of Dawah to non-Muslims irrespective of race, language and belief systems.

-Unfortunately this noble duty of Dawah has come to be misunderstood by terms like 'conversion' and also due to struggle for political dominance which has become so ubiquitous amongst the nations of the world. If it is understood in its proper perspective and spirit every sensible person would acknowledge its necessity. Would not a doctor alert a person who is risking his health by smoking excessively or by poor lifestyle choices. Would a person not alert his brother who is risking his life by irresponsible driving. **Similarly teaching fellow human beings about the purpose of life and guidance from Allah, giving them glad tidings on following this guidance and alerting them to the possible consequences of rejecting this guidance should be but a natural duty of every Muslim.**

-However it is of paramount importance that those values are upheld which are befitting for this noble duty.

\*The foremost of these is that the Quran should be the primary medium of Dawah.

\*Dawah should be based on genuine love, kindness and sense of fraternity for fellow beings taking humanity as a unit and a family.

\*It should not be based on any ulterior motives like political gains or dominance for Muslim Ummah.

\*The reward of paradise is for those who willingly and completely submit themselves to their Lord and purify in the light of His guidance (now enshrined only in the Quran and Sunnah) unless somebody has genuine excuse for not accepting it. Hence dawah should give free choice and should not carry any element of compulsion, coercion, imposition or undue enticement.

\*It should appeal to common sense and intellect. The mistakes of already held views and beliefs should be gently and intellectually dealt with and cursing, belittling and undue criticism should be avoided. It should be acknowledged that beliefs systems and prejudices are deep rooted and take long to get corrected and hence would require patience and perseverance.

\*It is of paramount importance that very organised and dedicated efforts are made to carry out this important duty effectively. There should be well organised Muslim organisations in every society which are completely committed to perform this duty. Each and every Muslim should not only be alert to every dawah opportunity but also dedicate some of his time, skills and resources for those organisations who have taken up this task.

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