# I. Faith in Books and Prophets

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#### A. Introduction.

Allah the Creator and Sustainer of the universe has sent revelations and messengers and prophets to guide humanity to the right path. He is the Most Generous and the Most Compassionate, and that He has sent many messengers throughout history, to guide humanity to the right path and to invite them to His mercy and forgiveness. He is the Most Merciful and the Most Just, and that He does not punish anyone without sending them a clear warning and proof of His truth. He is the Most Wise and the Most Knowledgeable, and that He knows the best and the most suitable messenger for each nation and each time. The Quran, the final and preserved

revelation, states that Allah has sent a messenger to every civilization to convey the message of worshipping Allah alone and avoiding false gods:

- 1. [An-Nahl, 16:36]: "We surely sent a messenger to every civilization, saying, 'Worship Allah and shun false gods.' But some of them were guided by Allah, while others were destined to stray. So travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers!"
- 2. [Yunus, 10:47]: "And for every civilization is a messenger. So when their messenger comes, it will be judged between them in justice, and they will not be wronged."

## B. Allah Sent a Large Number of Prophets and Messengers.

It was narrated that Abu Dharr said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, how many Prophets were there? He said: "One hundred and twenty-four thousand." I said: O Messenger of Allah, how many of them were Messengers? He said: "Three hundred and thirteen, a good number." I said: O Messenger of Allah, who was the first of them? He said: "Adam." 1 ... The Quran mentions 24 Prophets (or 25 for those who consider Luqman a prophet). In Quran, "And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you, - and to Musa Allah spoke directly" [an-Nisa' 4:164]. The mentioned Prophets are:

- 1. Adam, the first human and prophet, who was created from clay and lived in Paradise with his wife Eve, until they were sent to Earth for disobeying Allah.
- 2. Idris, the first prophet to write with a pen, and who was raised to a high station by Allah.
- 3. Nuh, the prophet who preached to his people for 950 years, and who built an ark to save himself and the believers from the great flood that Allah sent as a punishment for the disbelievers.
- 4. Hud, the prophet who was sent to the people of Aad, who were arrogant and powerful, and who were destroyed by a violent wind that lasted for eight days and seven nights.
- 5. Salih, the prophet who was sent to the people of Thamud, who carved their homes in the mountains, and who were asked to believe in Allah by the sign of a shecamel, but they killed it and were struck by an earthquake.
- 6. Ibrahim, the prophet who was tested by Allah with many trials, and who was willing to sacrifice his son Ismail for Allah's sake, but Allah replaced him with a ram. He also built the Kaaba with his son Ismail.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Musnad Imam Ahmad, Chapter name: The Musnad of the Companions Who Narrated Many Hadiths, Chapter number: 5, Hadith number: 361. However, this hadith is not considered authentic by some scholars, as it has some weakness in its chain of narrators.

- 7. Ismail, the son of Ibrahim and the father of the Arabs, who helped his father build the Kaaba, and who was known for his truthfulness and obedience.
- 8. Ishaq, the son of Ibrahim and the father of the Israelites, who was a gift from Allah to his parents in their old age, and who was blessed with prophethood and wisdom.
- 9. Lut, the nephew of Ibrahim and the prophet who was sent to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, who practiced homosexuality and other sins, and who were annihilated by stones from the sky.
- 10. Yaqub, the son of Ishaq and the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, who was also called Israel, and who was given the gift of interpreting dreams.
- 11. Yusuf, the son of Yaqub and the prophet who was sold as a slave by his brothers, and who became a powerful ruler in Egypt, and who was tested by the seduction of the wife of his master, and who was reunited with his family after many years.
- 12. Shuayb, the prophet who was sent to the people of Madyan, who cheated in their trade and worshiped idols, and who were punished by a thunderbolt after they rejected his message.
- 13. Ayyub, the prophet who was afflicted with a severe illness and lost his wealth and children, but who remained patient and grateful, and who was restored to health and prosperity by Allah.
- 14. Yunus, the prophet who was sent to the people of Nineveh, who fled from his mission on a ship, and who was swallowed by a whale, but who repented and was saved by Allah, and who returned to his people who believed in him.
- 15. Musa, the prophet who was saved from the tyranny of Pharaoh, who spoke to Allah directly, who received the Torah, who split the sea, who brought water from the rock, who witnessed the mount of Tur, and who led the Children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness.
- 16. Harun, the brother of Musa and his helper, who accompanied him to Pharaoh, who supported him during his absence, who tried to stop the people from worshipping the calf, and who died before entering the Promised Land.
- 17. Dawud, the prophet who killed Goliath, who became a king, who was given the Zabur (Psalms), who had a beautiful voice, who could soften iron, and who was a wise judge.
- 18. Sulayman, the son of Dawud and the prophet who inherited his kingdom, who was given the power to control the wind, the jinn, the animals, and the plants, who understood the speech of the birds and the ants, and who was tested by the Queen of Sheba.
- 19. Ilyas, the prophet who was sent to the people of Baal, who challenged the false prophets of Baal to a contest of fire, and who was victorious by the help of Allah, and who was taken up to the heaven in a whirlwind.

- 20. Al-Yasa, the successor of Ilyas and the prophet who inherited his miracles, who cured the leprosy of Naaman, who revived a dead boy, and who performed many other wonders.
- 21. Zakariyya, the prophet who was the guardian of Maryam, who prayed to Allah for a son in his old age, and who was given the glad tidings of Yahya, and who was killed by his people.
- 22. Yahya, the son of Zakariyya and the prophet who was a noble, chaste, and righteous man, who confirmed the truth of the Torah, who prepared the way for Isa, and who was martyred by the order of a tyrant king.
- 23. Isa, the son of Maryam and the prophet who was born without a father, who spoke in the cradle, who was supported by the Holy Spirit, who performed many miracles, such as healing the blind and the leper, and raising the dead, who was sent to the Children of Israel, who received the Injeel (Gospel), who was not killed or crucified, but was raised up to Allah, and who will return before the Day of Judgment.
- 24. Muhammad, the last and the seal of the prophets and messengers, who was sent to all of mankind, who received the Quran, the final and the universal revelation, who performed many miracles, such as the splitting of the moon, the night journey, and the conquest of Makkah, who established the Islamic state in Madinah, who fought many battles for the sake of Allah, who was the best example and the leader of the believers, and who died after conveying the message of Allah completely.
- 25. The Quran mentions Luqman in Surah Luqman, chapter 31, and praises his wisdom and gratitude to Allah. The Quran also narrates some of his counsels to his son, such as worshipping Allah alone, being kind to parents, avoiding polytheism, injustice, arrogance, and lying, being moderate in speech and walk, and being patient and steadfast. Some scholars believe that he was a prophet, and they add the phrase "peace be upon him" after his name, while others believe that he was not a prophet, but a saint or a righteous servant of Allah.

# C. The Difference Between a Prophet and a Messenger?

A prophet (nabi in Arabic) is someone who receives revelation from Allah but does not have a new book or law to deliver. A messenger (Rasul in Arabic) is someone who receives revelation from Allah and has a new book or law to deliver. Therefore, every messenger is a prophet, but not every prophet is a messenger. For example, Jesus is both a prophet and a messenger, because he received the Gospel (Injil) from Allah and brought a new law for the Children of Israel. However, John the Baptist is only a prophet, because he did not receive a new book or law but followed the Torah (Tawrat) that was revealed to Moses.

The difference between a prophet and a messenger also depends on the situation of the people they are sent to. There are three possible situations:

- 1. The first situation is when the book and the monotheistic faith of a previous messenger are corrupted and cannot be fixed, and the original language of the book is no longer spoken. This would make the followers of this religion non-believers. In this situation, Allah will send another messenger with a new book to replace the old one and to bring people back to the monotheistic faith. For example, Allah sent Muhammad with the Quran to replace the corrupted versions of the Torah and the Gospel, and to restore the faith of Abraham, who was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a monotheist (hanif).
- 2. The second situation is when the book and the monotheistic faith of a previous messenger did not change, and the original language of the book is still alive, but the believers stopped taking their religion seriously. They are still believers, but they partially abandoned their religion. Allah will then send a prophet to bring them back to practice their religion and take it seriously. There will be no need for a new book or law. For example, Allah sent many prophets, such as David, Solomon, Elijah, and Elisha, to the Children of Israel, who had the Torah and the faith of Moses, but deviated from them in various ways.
- 3. The third situation is when the Muslims, who have the Quran and the faith of Muhammad, partially abandon their religion and stop taking it seriously. Since the Quran and the monotheism in Islam are still the same and did not change, as well as the Arabic language, the language of the Quran, is still alive, then Allah will not send a prophet, because Muhammad is the last prophet and one of the minor signs of the Day of Judgment. Instead, Allah will send reformers (mujaddidin) who will bring Muslims back to practice their religion and take it seriously. A reformer is not a prophet or a messenger, but a scholar or a leader who revives the Islamic teachings and reforms the Muslim community.

# D. All Prophets Taught the Same Faith But Different Sharia (Laws).

# i. The faith of all the Prophets.

The faith in Allah is the same for all prophets and messengers because Allah who sent them is one, and He does not change. The faith about Allah is based on the concept of tawhid (monotheism), which means the oneness and uniqueness of Allah:

1. The oneness of Allah in His lordship means that Allah is the only Creator, Sustainer, Provider, and Ruler of everything. He has no partners, rivals, or helpers in His

- dominion. He is the source of all power, authority, and sovereignty. He is the one who gives life and death, and He is the one who controls all affairs.
- 2. The oneness of Allah in His worship means that Allah is the only one who deserves to be worshiped, obeyed, and loved. He has no partners, rivals, or helpers in His worship. He is the ultimate goal and purpose of life. He is the one who commands and forbids, and He is the one who rewards and punishes.
- 3. The oneness of Allah in His names and attributes means that Allah has the most beautiful names and the most perfect attributes. He has no partners, rivals, or helpers in His names and attributes. He is the one who is unique and incomparable. He is the one who is above and beyond any deficiency, limitation, or resemblance.

#### ii. Islam capital I versus islam (small i).

All prophets and messengers taught this faith about Allah to their people and invited them to worship Allah alone and follow His laws. However, the faith in Allah is not the same as the law (sharia) of the prophets and messengers. The law (sharia) is the set of rules and regulations that Allah prescribes and legislates. The religion of all prophets and messengers is the same, which is islam (with a small i). The islam means submission and obedience to Allah. The Quran states that islam is the only religion acceptable to Allah. The Quran also states that all prophets and messengers were Muslims, meaning they submitted and obeyed Allah.

However, the law (sharia) of the prophets and messengers is not the same, but different. The law (sharia) is the specific way of worship and conduct that Allah ordains for a specific people at a specific time. The law (sharia) varies according to the circumstances, needs, and conditions of the people. The Quran states that Allah has assigned a law and a way to each nation. The Quran also states that Allah has made some things lawful and some things unlawful for some nations, but not for others. The faith about Allah is the same for all prophets and messengers, but the law (sharia) is different. The Prophet Muhammad said that the messengers are like brothers who have the same father but different mothers. This means that they have the same faith but different laws. Therefore, Islam (with capital I) refers to the specific sharia of the Prophet Muhammad, which includes the five pillars of worship.

#### iii. Examples of different Sharia laws among the messengers.

There are many examples of different Sharia laws among the messengers, depending on the type and level of worship, conduct, and morality. Here are some examples:

- 1. Fasting: Fasting is abstaining from food, drink, and intimacy from dawn to sunset for a specific period of time, as an act of worship and obedience to Allah. Fasting is prescribed for Muslims in the month of Ramadan, as one of the five pillars of Islam. However, fasting was different for the previous nations. For example, the Children of Israel were commanded to fast on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which is the tenth day of the seventh month in the Jewish calendar. Their fasting was more strict than the Muslims, as they were not allowed to eat, drink, wash, wear leather shoes, or have intimacy for the entire day. Another example is that the followers of Jesus were commanded to fast for forty days before Easter, which is the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus. Their fasting was more lenient than the Muslims, as they were allowed to eat, drink, and have intimacy at night, but they had to abstain from certain foods, such as meat, eggs, and dairy products.
- 2. Marriage rules were different for the previous nations. For example, the Children of Israel were allowed to marry two sisters at the same time, as Jacob did with Leah and Rachel. However, this is prohibited for Muslims, as the Quran states that one cannot marry two sisters simultaneously.
- 3. Bathing rules was different for the previous nations. For example, the Children of Israel were allowed to bathe naked in the presence of the same gender, as they did not consider it shameful or indecent. However, this is prohibited for Muslims, as the Prophet Muhammad said that one should not look at the private parts of another person, even if they are of the same gender. Another example is that Moses, who was a messenger to the Children of Israel, did not bathe naked with them, but preferred to bathe alone, as he was shy and modest. However, this was not because of a divine command, but because of a personal preference.
- 4. Sabbath: Sabbath is a day of rest and worship, dedicated to Allah. Sabbath is observed by Muslims on Friday, which is the best day of the week, according to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims are required to attend the congregational prayer and sermon (jumu'ah) on Friday, and to refrain from worldly activities during that time only. However, they are allowed to resume their normal activities after the prayer, and to engage in trade and commerce. However, Sabbath was different for the previous nations. For example, the Children of Israel were commanded to observe the Sabbath on Saturday, which is the seventh day of the week, according to the Jewish calendar. They were forbidden to do any work or activity on that day, such as lighting a fire, cooking, harvesting, or traveling. They were also required to keep the Sabbath holy and sanctified, as a sign of their covenant with Allah.

# E. The Special Status of the People of The Book.

### i. Common grounds with the people of the book.

The people of the book (ahl al-kitab in Arabic) are those who received a scripture from Allah before the Quran, the Jews and the Christians. The Quran acknowledges that the people of the book have many common grounds with the Muslims, such as the belief in one God, the revelation of books, the sending of prophets, the resurrection, and the accountability. The Quran also commands the Muslims to have a respectful and peaceful dialogue with the people of the book, and to invite them to the common word of worshipping Allah alone and avoiding false gods. In [Al-Ankabut, 29:46] "And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are in submission to Him." Because of their special status, Islam allows Muslim men to marry women from the people of the book [Maeda 5:5]. They are considered to be the best Non-Muslims.

### ii. Differences with the people of the book.

The Quran also criticizes the people of the book for their deviation from the original teachings of their scriptures, such as their alteration, concealment, and rejection of some parts of the revelation, their exaggeration and distortion of the status of some prophets and messengers, their division and dispute among themselves, and their hostility and aggression towards the Muslims. The Quran also warns the Muslims not to follow the footsteps of the people of the book, and not to take them as allies or guardians against Allah and His messenger. Therefore, the people of the book are not the same as the Muslims, nor are they the same as the polytheists or the disbelievers. They have a special status in Islam, which entails both respect and criticism, both dialogue and debate, and both cooperation and confrontation.

### iii. The need to send a new messenger (Mohammad) with a new book.

In Surat [Al-Bayyinah, 98:1-5] Allah indicates the need for a new messenger and a new scripture because the existing scripture and the existing faiths are irreparable. The people of the book will not quit unless they get the Bayyinah, which is Prophet Mahammad and the Quran.

## F. Do All Prophets Have the Same Status in Islam?

The answer to this question is that all prophets have the same status in Islam in terms of their faith and their mission, but they have different status in Islam in terms of their rank and their merit. All prophets have the same faith and mission, as they all believe in the oneness and the uniqueness of Allah, and they all convey the message and the guidance of Allah to their people. The Quran states that the Muslims are required to believe in all the prophets without discrimination, and that they do not differentiate between any of them. The Quran also states that all prophets are Muslims, meaning they submit and obey Allah.

However, all prophets do not have the same rank and merit, as some of them are preferred and elevated by Allah over others, according to their virtues and their achievements. The Quran states that Allah has favored some of the prophets over others, and that He has raised some of them in degrees. The Quran also states that Allah has given David the Psalms, and that He has spoken to Moses directly.

The Prophet Muhammad said that there are five prophets who are the most resolute and the most determined in their mission, and they are called the possessors of firmness (ulu al-azm). They are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad also said that he is the leader and the master of the children of Adam, and that he is the first and the last of the prophets. The Prophet Muhammad also said that he has been given six privileges that no other prophet has been given, such as the finality of his prophethood, the universality of his message, the comprehensiveness of his law, the intercession for his nation, the victory over his enemies, and the permission to take spoils of war.

Therefore, all prophets have the same status in Islam in terms of their faith and their mission, but they have different status in Islam in terms of their rank and their merit. The Muslims should respect and honor all the prophets, and should follow and emulate the best of them, who is Muhammad.

# G. Belief in Divine Books (Scripture).

### i. Prophets were sent to teach the book and wisdom.

Prophets are teachers who convey the message of Allah to their people and guide them to the right path. They need to teach from the scripture (kitab) that Allah has revealed to them, and the wisdom (hikmah) that Allah has granted them. The scripture is the book that contains the words of Allah, and the wisdom is the

understanding and application of those words. The Quran states that Allah has sent down the scripture and the wisdom to the prophets and has taught them what they did not know. The Quran also states that the prophets recite the verses of the scripture and teach the people the book and the wisdom [Baqra 2:129, 151, 231], [Imran 4:48, 164] and [Juma'a 62:2].

#### ii. The needs for the divine books.

- 1. The books are a source of inspiration and motivation for the prophets and their followers, as they contain the glad tidings and the warnings from Allah, and the promises and the threats of the reward and the punishment in the hereafter.
- 2. The books are a source of laws and regulations for the prophets and their followers, as they contain the commands and the prohibitions from Allah, and the rights and the duties of the individuals and the society.
- 3. The books are a source of extending and explaining the laws and regulations for the prophets and their followers, as they contain the general and the specific rulings from Allah, and the exceptions and the exemptions for certain situations and cases.
- 4. The books are a source of verification and confirmation for the prophets and their followers, as they contain the signs and the miracles from Allah, and the evidence and the proof of the truth and the falsehood.

# H. The Difference Between the Quran and Other Scriptures

i. The scripture mentioned in the Quran.

The Quran mentions a few main scriptures that were revealed by Allah to some of His prophets. These are:

- 1. The Torah, which was given to Prophet Musa (Moses), and which contains the laws and the stories of the Children of Israel. The Quran confirms the truth and the guidance of the Torah, but also criticizes the Jewish rabbis who altered and concealed some of its teachings.
- 2. The Zabur, which was given to Prophet Dawud (David), and which is also known as the Psalms. The Quran praises the Zabur as a book of wisdom and remembrance of Allah, and also mentions some of the miracles and favors that Allah bestowed upon Dawud.
- 3. The Injeel, which was given to Prophet Isa (Jesus), and which is also known as the Gospel. The Quran confirms the Injeel as a book of light and guidance, and also mentions some of the miracles and signs that Allah granted to Isa. The Quran also

- warns the Christians against exaggerating and distorting the status and the message of Isa.
- 4. The scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa are scriptures that Allah revealed to His prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Musa (Moses), peace be upon them. The Quran mentions them in [Al-Ala, 87:19], where Allah says: "The scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa" The scholars have different opinions about the content, number, and language of these scriptures. Some say that they were ten scrolls for Ibrahim and thirty pages for Musa, and that they were in Syriac. Some say that they contained the debates of Ibrahim with the kings and his guidance to them, and the lessons and wisdom of Musa. Some say that they refer to the previous revelations that Allah sent to Ibrahim and Musa, and that they agree with what is in the scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa in terms of truth and guidance.

#### ii. Muslims believe in all divine books.

The scriptures mentioned in the Quran, were the sources of guidance and truth for the believers. We believe in them all, and we do not differentiate between any of them. We follow the Quran, which is the most comprehensive and the most clear of them, and we respect and honor the other scriptures, as long as they are in agreement with the Quran.

The Quran is distinguished from all other scriptures by its purity. Other scriptures are so thoroughly mixed with folklore, poetry, interpretation, personal commentary, errors in translation, copying, editing errors, transmission errors, other accretions and cultural influences, that the sifting out of actual revelation in these other scriptures becomes nearly impossible. These are the words of the scholars of other religions.

#### iii. The Quran is protected by Allah.

Because the Quran is the final and the universal revelation from Allah, and there will be no more prophets or messengers after Muhammad, Allah declared that He would guard the Quran from being lost, manipulated, or changed until the Day of Judgment. The Quran states that Muhammad is the seal of the prophets [Ahzab 33:40], and that he has completed and perfected the religion of Islam [Maeda 5:3].

Allah has taken the responsibility of preserving and protecting the Quran from any distortion or alteration, as a mercy and a favor to His servants, and as a challenge and a warning to His enemies. The Quran states that Allah has revealed the Quran, and that He is its guardian [Hijr 15:9]. The Quran also states that no one can change the

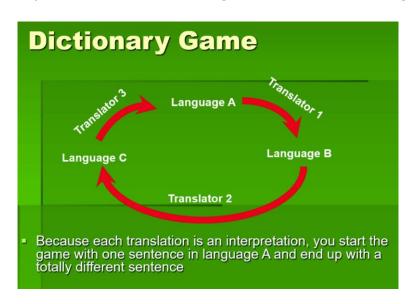
words of Allah [Anam 6:34, 115] and [Kahf 18:27], and that no falsehood can approach the Quran from before or behind it [Fusilat 41:42].

#### iv. Preservation of Quran.

The difference between the Quran and other scriptures is that the Quran is the pure and unaltered word of Allah, while other scriptures are the corrupted and changed words of humans. Other scriptures, such as the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms, and the Zabur, were originally revealed by Allah to some of His messengers, such as Moses, Jesus, David, and Abraham. However, they were not preserved and protected by Allah, as they were meant for specific people at specific times, and they were superseded and abrogated by the Quran, which is the final and the universal revelation.

Other scriptures have been subjected to various forms of corruption and alteration, such as:

Translation: Other scriptures have been translated from their original languages, such as Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, into other languages, such as Latin, English, and French. Translation involves interpretation and explanation, which may introduce errors and biases, and may lose some of the meanings and nuances of the original words.



Manipulation: Other scriptures have been manipulated by some of their followers, such as the Jews and the Christians, who have added, deleted, or changed some parts of the revelation, according to their desires and interests. Manipulation involves fabrication and distortion, which may introduce

Contradiction: Other scriptures have been contradicted by some of their followers, such as the Jews and the Christians, who have adopted doctrines and beliefs that are incompatible with the revelation, such as the trinity, the sonship, the crucifixion, and the original sin. Contradiction involves deviation and innovation, which may introduce confusion and inconsistency in the scripture.

Loss: Other scriptures have been lost or destroyed by some of their enemies, such as the pagans, the idolaters, and the oppressors, who have persecuted and killed some of the messengers and their followers, and have burned and erased some of the books and the scrolls. Loss involves disappearance and elimination, which may introduce gaps and missing parts in the scripture.

The Quran, on the other hand, has been preserved and protected by Allah from any corruption or alteration, such as:

Translation: The Quran has been translated into many languages, such as English, French, and Urdu, to make it accessible and understandable to the non-Arabic speakers. However, the translation is not considered the Quran itself, but only an interpretation and explanation of the meaning of the Quran. The Quran itself is only in Arabic, which is the language of revelation, and which has been kept alive and unchanged by Allah. The Quran states that it is a clear Arabic Quran, and that it is easy to remember and to recite.

Manipulation: The Quran has not been manipulated by any of its followers, such as the Muslims, who have preserved and transmitted the Quran with utmost care and accuracy, according to the instructions and the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad. The Quran has been recorded and memorized by thousands of companions and successors of the Prophet, who have verified and confirmed the authenticity and the completeness of the Quran. The Quran states that it is a noble and trustworthy Quran, and that it is a consistent and coherent Quran.

Contradiction: The Quran has not been contradicted by any of its followers, such as the Muslims, who have followed and practiced the Quran with utmost sincerity and faithfulness, according to the teachings and the examples of the Prophet Muhammad. The Quran has been understood and applied by thousands of scholars and experts of the Quran, who have explained and clarified the meanings and the implications of the Quran. The Quran states that it is a guidance and a criterion for the believers, and that it is a clear and detailed Quran.

Loss: The Quran has not been lost or destroyed by any of its enemies, such as the disbelievers, the hypocrites, and the tyrants, who have failed and despaired to harm or extinguish the Quran, despite their efforts and plots. The Quran has been protected and guarded by Allah, who has promised and fulfilled to safeguard the Quran from any distortion or alteration. The Quran states that it is a glorious and exalted Quran, and that it is a protected and guarded Quran.