

The Importance Of Coherence In Quranic Verses

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Introduction

The Holy Quran is an immortal book which is a source of growth and guidance but also a form of eloquence and literary beauty and charm. One of the angles of the beauty of the Holy Quran, its attributes and perfection is the discipline and relevance in it. Many things are mentioned in one surah, promises and commination, good news and visions, proverbs and stories, commands and prohibitions are all discussed. But every time with such an order and appropriateness that even the idea of such discipline and communication is beyond human intellect. And everything is said to be connected with this beauty and charm, like pearls in a string, if even a single word is removed from its place, the beauty of the verse will be lost. Therefore, from the beginning till today, a large number of scholars and commentators have been convinced of discipline and relevance in the Holy Quran, and they have rendered services in this art from different angles.

Who can understand the discipline in the Holy Quran? Ibn-e-Qutaybah answered this question as follows:

“Only a person who has deep and wide knowledge can understand the value and status of the Holy Quran. Equipped with vast knowledge, be familiar with the customs and religions of the Arabs and their linguistic styles. Be familiar with the features that Allah Almighty has bestowed on

the Arabic language in comparison to other languages. Because no other nation in the world has the language and expression skills that the Arabs have been given. Because Allah Almighty sent His Messenger among them, and provided proof of the Prophethood through His Book”¹

Imam Fakhr-ud-Din Razi is the great Muffassir, who in his exegesis claimed, that most of the mysteries of the Holy Quran lie in its discipline and relevance. Imam Razi in his exegesis emphasized that the entire Quran is a coherent and organized from beginning to end, in which there is no disruption and no interruption. It is based on a solid order. Imam Razi used many words in his exegesis when he shows discipline and appropriateness. He said: "وجبة المناسبة هو", sometimes he used to say: "وجبة انظم هو", then he said: "تعلق هذه الاية بما قبل". He has made arrangements to show the relevance in his entire exegesis. Imam Razi's Tafsir "Mufatih-al-Ghayb" has proved to be a path for the later Muffassirin.

Imam al-Baq'a'i, the great Muffassir who brought the knowledge of the Holy Quran to its zenith, emphasized that the whole Quran is coherent and organized. There is proportion in its words, verses and Surahs, in which there is no disruption. He said in the abstract of his book Nazam-ud-Durar:

"الحمد لله الذي انزل الكتاب متناسبا سورته، وآياته متشابهها فواصلته و غاياته"¹

"Praise is to Allah Who revealed a book which has proportions in its surahs and verses, whose goals and objectives are similar"

Explaining the importance of the Quran, Imam al-Baq'a'i said:

"وبه ايضا يوضح انه لا وقف تام في كتاب الله الا على آخر سورة
"قل اعوذ برب الناس"² بل هي متصله مع كونها آخر القرآن
بالفاتحه التي هو اوله كما اتصالها بما قبلها بل اشد"³

"And with this knowledge, the fact becomes clear that there is no full stop anywhere in the Holy Quran, nor until the last surah al-Nas. On the contrary, the end of the Holy Quran is connected to its beginning in the same way as it is connected to its predecessor."

Imam Zarkashi said about the importance of this knowledge:

"واعلم ان المناسبه علم شريف، تحزر به القول ويعرف به قدر
القائل فيما يقول"⁴

"Appropriateness is a great knowledge, with which the intellect and wisdom are tested and the value and importance of the speaker's speech is recognized."

Imam Zarkashi has described benefits of this knowledge in these words:

"The advantage of this knowledge is that some parts of the kalam are attached to other and the kalam becomes stable. Its condition is like a building that is stable in every aspect and its components are interconnected."⁵

Coherence and appropriateness of the Quran is not merely a coincidental and hypothetical

knowledge, but it is a milestone in understanding the mysteries and secrets of the Divine kalam and knowing the miracles of the kalam. That is why in every age the adherents of the Quran have rendered invaluable services in this regard.

The following are some arguments for the importance of coherence.

1. Coherence and Miracles of the Quran
2. Ilm-al-Manasbat as a source of understanding the Quran
3. Ilm-al-Manasbat and Rejection of orientalist
4. Derivation of problems

Coherence and Miracles of the Quran

"A miracle is an extraordinary command, in which there is Tehri (when it becomes difficult to find out the truth sat some point, think and act the way the presumption prevails, is Tehri) and its saved from contradiction."⁶

There are two types of miracles, sensory and rational. Most of the miracles of Bani-Israel were sensory because they were dull-witted and incomprehensible, while the miracles of this ummah of Muhammad are rational due to the intelligence of the people of this ummah and the perfection of their intellect. And the second reason is that the Shari'ah of Mustafavi is the Shari'ah that will remain constant till the Day of Judgment. Therefore, it was given the characteristic that the Prophet (PBUH) was endowed an everlasting rational miracle so that the people of insight could see it in every age.⁷

The miraculous features of the Holy Quran include the miracle of words, the miracle of composition, and the miracle of its coherence. That is, an exact miracle of the Holy Quran is in

the interrelationship and arrangement of its verses.

Imam Ibn-e-Qutaybah compiled his famous book "Tawil-Mushkil-Al-Quran" and in his abstract he proved that Quran is a miraculous book and it has great and strange appropriateness in its verses and even reciting it over and over does not tire the human nature.¹

Mustafa Sadiq Rafi'i stated about the appropriateness of the Quran: "The Holy Quran is unprecedented in its strength and rarity. The main reason for this is the synthesis of the spirit of the Holy Quran on which the divine words are based. This spirit is not found anywhere else in the Arabic language except the Quran. The Quran is beyond human capacity due to the existence of this soul. If it did not contain that soul, then there would be a difference in its components, this soul has made these components interconnected."²

Sheikh Abdul Qahir Al-Jarjani arguments are very powerful regarding miracle of the Quran due to its discipline and suitability. He said:

"When the Arabs were challenged to imitate the Quran, they were exposed to certain qualities of the Quran which they could not create in their own words. This special quality of the Quran not only confined to its words and its sublime sentences because it was not a difficult thing for the Arabs. Therefore, the special quality of the Holy Quran is its appropriateness. It contains verses and context that were unknown before the revelation of the Quran."³

Ilm-al-Manasbat as a source of understanding the Quran

To know the mysteries and secrets of any book, it is necessary to know all its details. That is why it is very important to know all the sciences related

to it in order to understand the Quran. The sublime and strange verses of the Holy Quran have compelled the writers to kneel before it and its sweetness is such that the tongue does not get tired of its recitation and the ears do not get satisfied while listening to it. Its wonders are not endless, and its benefits are immortal. To understand the Quran, one has to look at the verses before and after the relevant verse so he can understand that what is in the first and the following verses.

Allama Khattabi wrote about the extent of this knowledge proves to be helpful in understanding the Quran:

"The Quran strongly condemns polytheism and teaches Tawheed. It taught obedience to Allah almighty. It teaches the rules of halal and haraam.

It clarifies the rules of امر بالمعروف و نهى عن المنكر, and it combines all these different teachings in a string that the slightest thread breaks all the beads will be scattered. Quranic rhetoric encompasses all the styles of literature which is beyond human comprehension. If they are removed even a little from their assigned place, then the meaning will be confused and the textures of the Quran will be distracted."⁴

Allama Khattabi further said in this regard:

"The Kalam became eloquent in three respects, beautiful words, spiritual depth and a connection that brings them both together in a series. When we deeply consider Quran it becomes clear that these three things are present in most perfect form. There are no more eloquent, beautiful and charming words than the words of the Holy Quran. There is no example of discipline and harmony found in the Holy Quran and as far as its meanings is concerned, every sane person will

bear witness that the depth of its meanings is reaching its zenith.”¹

Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi explained in the abstract of his exegesis "Tadabbur-ul-Quran" how important it is to know the meanings of the Quran. He said:

“As are the genealogies of families, in the same way, there are genealogies of good and evil. Sometimes we consider a virtue to be a minor however, this virtue belongs to the family from which all the branches of great virtues have sprouted. In the same way, sometimes we consider an evil as a minor evil, but it belongs to the family of evils which gives rise to all deadly diseases. Anyone who wants to understand the wisdom of religion must be well acquainted with all these stages of good and evil. This wisdom of the Quran comes not from the components of the word but from the whole verse. If a person is familiar with the different verses of a surah but is not familiar with the mutual arrangement of these verses within the surah, then he can never be acquainted with its wisdom.”²

The Quran is a word of God which requires deliberation, means knowledge of wisdom.

Allah Almighty Said:

وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ ٤٣

“And indeed, it is—in the Master Record¹ with Us—highly esteemed, rich in wisdom.”

In this blessed verse, the Quran is said to be based on *على* (high) wisdom. The Quran attributes Muhammad's exaltation to his wisdom. The meaning of wisdom is to strengthen and ensure. Therefore, when the very edifice of the Word itself is raised incorrectly and its components are

found to be erroneous in order, it is contrary to wisdom.

In order to clarify this fact, the attributes of "حكيم and عزيز" have come to the Quran. On this basis, Allah Almighty said that this book has been revealed by a wise person (حكيم).

وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ ٤١ لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَطْلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ ٤٢
تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ٤٢٤

“For it is truly a mighty Book. It cannot be proven false from any angle. It is a revelation from the One Who is All-Wise, Praiseworthy.”

In this verse, the strength of the Quran is described as being *عزيز*, while its wisdom is said to be a requirement of the attributes of God, the Wise. If there is no disturbance in the existing system then how is there any error in its word?

Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq's (R.A) argument for Jihad against the deniers of Zakat was found in the verses of the Holy Quran, that when jihad against the deniers of Salat is necessary then why the jihad against the deniers of Zakat should not be done, when the Quran mentions prayer and Zakat usually together. He (R.A) said on this occasion:

"والله لا قاتلن من فرق بين الصلوة والزكوة حق المال والله لو منعوني عقلا كانوا يودونها الى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم لقاتلتهم على منعها"⁵

“By God, I will fight against anyone who differentiates between prayer and zakat because: Zakat is the right of wealth, by God! If they refuse to give me a camel rope which they used to give to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), I will fight them.”

Ilm al-Manasbat and rejection of Orientalists:

One of the major objections raised by Orientalists to the Quran is lack of order in its verses.

Orientalists are non-Oriental people who have been engaged in the study of Eastern languages, civilizations, philosophies and religions in order to dominate the East. Orientalists have raised many objections to the Holy Quran. They said that every word of it is beautiful in its place, but this is not an organized and coherent book. The Muslim Ummah in every age has rejected these false arguments. The following is an overview of the Orientalists' erroneous views regarding the Holy Quran.

This is how Thomas Carlyle expressed his views on the Quran:

“It is difficult for a person to understand this, especially for the person who opposes that the Quran was created in the heavens, as a great blessing for the world, as a book written in a good style, leave the good, just as a book, he will definitely agree that this is a collection of disjointed and scattered articles. As far as writing is concerned, it is certainly a written book, but perhaps the worst written book in the world. I would say that it is not incomprehensible otherwise why Arabs love it so much.”¹

Sir William Meyer, a well-known nineteenth-century Orientalist, has expressed similar views:

“There is too much chaos and disorder in it. The subjects are mixed up with each other. It has neither chronological order nor semantic order. The later law repeals or amends the first law. There is a debate going on and suddenly another topic comes up which is totally unrelated to the

subject. In view of this situation, it is difficult for us to believe that the Quran, as it is now, was in the same order in the time of the Prophet (PBUH).”²

George Sale talked about the Quran:

“The Muhammad was really the author and Chief Contriver of the Koran is beyond dispute, though it is highly probable that He had no small assistance in his design from other, as his countrymen failed not to object to him, however they differed so much. In their Conjecturers as to the particular person who gave him such assistance, that they were not able, it seems to prove. They change, Muhammad, it is to be presumed having taken his measure too well to be discovered.”³

According to R. Bosworth Smith, the surahs of the Holy Quran were not compiled because of any semantic proportions but they were compiled only because of their size, long or short. He wrote about this:

“While compiling the Surahs, those who have compiled Quran as a book, have arranged the Surahs only in terms of being long or short. In the same way that the longest surah was written first and then the shorter one, the order of the whole book was completed. Until the Quran reached us”⁴

Nold gave his opinion about Quran that;

“It seems that the surahs in the Quran are often fragmented in terms of thoughts and ideas. And we have no right to say that the inconsistency of the Quran is the ugly and disfigured act of a later man. Rather, such variations are abundant in the old Arabic literature.”⁵

All Orientalists have more or less the same opinion about the discipline and relevance of the Holy Quran that the spiritual and temporal order is missing in the Holy Quran. All these views of theirs are not the result of any research or reflection but the prejudice has blinded them so completely that the beautiful arrangement and proportions of the Holy Quran could not be revealed to them. According to Orientalists, the order of the Quran is flawed or there is no logic in the order of verses and the chain of words is a collection of scattered thoughts. In fact, these views of the Orientalists are false. The current order of the Quran is confined. The Quran was revealed over a long period of 23 years, as it was revealed, the work of arranging verses and surahs was done at the same time.

In terms of sequence of revelation, each verse was worthy of the needs of that time and in terms of complete plan, each verse became connected with the previous and later verses. Therefore, the confessions made by the Orientalists with reference to the present arrangement of the Quran are not based on facts. On the contrary, due to national and religious prejudice and unfamiliarity with the Arabic language, they saw a lack of coherence in the Quran. In short, order or meaning is an important feature of the Kalam, in order to understand the verses of the Quran and determine the correct meaning, it is necessary to consider the context of the verse. Otherwise, there will be a possibility of misunderstanding in learning the Quran. The objections raised by the orientalists regarding the ordering of the Quran can be answered by the coherence in the verses of Holy Quran.

Derivation of Problems

One of the benefits of adherence to discipline of the Quran is that it helps to deduce problems. The

following are some examples of blessed verses in this regard:

Allah Almighty said in the holy Quran:

”فصل لربك وانحر“¹

“So pray to your lord and sacrifice”

In the Arabic dictionary, the word "نحر" is used in several meanings. Explaining this, Imam Fakhrud-Din Razi stated in his exegesis Tafsir-Al-Kabeer:

“The word “نحر” is used in different meanings. For example, acts of prayer such as reception of Qiblah, sitting between two prostrations, raising hands up to the chest, suppressing the desires of the flesh and slaughtering an animal. “نحر البهيبة” means he slaughtered the animal.”²

Although the word “نحر” is used interchangeably, the best interpretation of discipline is slaughtering an animal. Because Allah Almighty has commanded Zakat after prayers in the Holy Quran and also there is command of “نحر” after prayers and sacrifice is in the category of Zakat. The polytheists of Makkah used to offer prayers and sacrifices for the idols, so Allah Almighty reserved both deeds for Himself. In the same order as Imam Razi has explained. Allah Almighty said in Holy Quran:

وَالْأَنْعَمَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ هـ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ ٦ وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا بَلِغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ ٧ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ٧ وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً ٨ وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ٨³

“And He created the cattle for you as a source of warmth, food, and ‘many other’ benefits. They are also pleasing to you when you bring them home and when you take them out to graze. And they carry your loads to ‘distant’ lands which you could not otherwise reach without great hardship.

Surely your Lord is Ever Gracious, Most Merciful. He also created horses, mules, and donkeys for your transportation and adornment. And He creates what you do not know.”

In the above verses Allah Almighty mentioned the cattle that you used to make warm clothes from them and also eat them and then mentioned the horses, donkeys and mules and said about them that they are your adornment and used for your riding. The reason for not mentioning these animals with cattle is that these animals are not for eating but for riding and adornment. If they were for food, they would have been mentioned with them and the cause of their creation would not have been mentioned separately.

It has been proved that Imam Abu Hanifa has deduced the prohibition of these things from the adherence to the Holy Quran.

In short, appropriateness in the Quran plays a key role in deducing problems.

Existence / Beginning of Ilm-ul-Manasbat

The Holy Quran is a coherent and organized book from beginning to end. The commentators and scholars of the ummah have argued from various verses and relics regarding the knowledge of appropriateness and organization of Quran.

Here are some examples:

Allah Almighty said:

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا¹

“Allah has sent down the best message, a Book of perfect consistency and repeated lessons.”

كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ²

“This is a Book whose verses are well perfected”

From this blessed verse, the scholars have argued that the Quran is like “كلمه واحده”. In the explanation of this verse, Allama Zamakhshari said:

“This book has a strong and stable system, there is nothing wrong in it, it is like a proper and strong building.”³

Allah Almighty said:

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْفُرْعَانَ تَوَلَّوْكَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوْ جَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا
كَثِيرًا⁴ ٨٢٤

“Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies.”

Imam Qurtubi, in his exegesis wrote in the explanation this verse:

“One of the reasons for the Quranic miracle is relevance in it which is present in the outward and inward of the Quran and there is no difference in it.”⁵

The Quran was written in a completely chronological order in the era of Prophethood, while the Prophet (PBUH) read the Quran with Jibril (A.S). If the Quran was not compiled then how was it possible to read it as whole? Hazrat Usman (R.A) had written the Quran in the same order as in the time of Prophethood. Imam Bukhari narrated:

“Hazrat Ibn-e-Zubair (R.A) said, I told Hazrat Usman (R.A) that this verse was abrogated by another verse, so why did you write it in Quran? Or why not give it up? He (R.A) said! Oh my nephew, I cannot change order of any verse.”⁶

Numerous strong evidences are based on the relevance of the Quran. For example, the revelation of the Holy Quran was completed in about twenty three years. It revealed according to different circumstances and occasions. This arrangement of the Holy Quran is termed as descending order. If there was no relevance in the Quran, then the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would write the Quran as it was being revealed. But this did not happen. Whenever a verse of the Holy Quran was revealed, the Prophet (PBUH) would call for writer and tell them to write this verse in such place.

Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal narrated:

“Hazrat Usman (may Allah be pleased with him) said that sometimes more than one surahs were revealed on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When any verse revealed to Him, He (PBUH) called a writer and told him that write this verse in the surah in which such things are mentioned. Similarly, when a single verse was revealed, He (PBUH) would say that write this verse in surah in which such thing is mentioned.”¹

The question is that if there was no coherence in the Holy Quran then why didn't the Prophet (PBUH) write it in descending order. Why the order of detention has been adopted instead?

Writing the Quran in this way is proof that the Quran is a coherent and organized book. The idea of relevance of the Holy Quran dates back to early Islam, but the person who presented it as an art in the third century AH is Fara Delami (D: 207AH). He was the first person to elaborate on the context of the Quran in his book “Ma'ani-ul-Quran”. After that, Abu Ubaidah Ma'mar ibn ul-Muthanna compiled his book “Majaz-ul-Quran”. In the early third century AH, the Imam of the Mu'tazilites, Ibrahim al-Nizam (D: 209AH),

wrote his book “Daleel Sarfah”, he wrote in it that it was possible for the disbelievers to answer the Quran, but Allah Almighty did not grant them success. Then his student Abu Umar Jahez bin Bahr bin Mehboob Al-Kanani (D: 255AH) compiled his book "Nazm-ul-Quran". Imam Ibn-E-Qutaybah (D: 276AH) briefly described the organization of the Quran in his exegesis “Taweel-Mushkil-ul-Quran”. In the early 4th century AH, Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Wasiti (D: 306 AH) compiled the "Ijaz-ul-Quran". Regarding this book, Mustafa Sadiq Bin Abdul Razzaq Al Rabi, an egyption expert of literature and lexicon said:

“The first book in which the miracles of the Quran are described in detail, according to our knowledge, it is the book of Ijaz-ul-Quran by Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yazid-al-Wasti.”²

After that, Abu Bakar Neshapuri (D: 336AH) worked on the Quranic appropriateness. Imam Suyuti said about Abu Bakar Neshapuri:

“The first person to reveal the knowledge of relativity in Quran is Sheikh Abu Bakar Neshapuri. He was a great scholar of Shariah and literature. He used to sit on a chair and explain why this verse has been placed in the side of this verse. And what is the wisdom of placing this Surah on the side of this Surah. He used to rebuke the scholars of Baghdad for not learning this knowledge.”³

Ali ibn Essa al-Ramani (D: 386AH) in his compilation "Al-Nakat fi Ijaz-ul-Quran" worked on rhetoric of Quran and mentioned its degrees in detail. In the early 4th century AH Allamah Khattabi (D: 388AH) in his book 'Bayan-ul-Ijaz' wrote about this knowledge. Allamah Baqalani (D: 403AH) mentioned in detail the eloquence and miracles of Quran in his book 'Ijaz-ul-Quran'. Abdul Jabbar Al Hamdani (D: 410AH) worked in

this field in 5th century AH. He was a follower of Imam Shafi. After that Abdul Qahir Al-Jarjani worked about coherence of Holy Quran in his book “Dalail-al-Ijaz”. In the sixth century AH, Allama Zamakhshari (D: 538AH) in his exegesis “Al-Kashaf”, described in detail the context in the words, verses and surahs of the Quran. Imam Fakhar-ud-Deen Al-Razi (D: 606AH) in his exegesis “Mafatih-al-Ghaib”, Imam Badr-ud-Din Muhammad bin Abdullah Zarkashi in his book “Al-Bayyan Fi Uloom Al-Quran”, Allama Makhdoom (D: 835AH) in his Tafsir Tabsir-ur-Rehman, Imam Burhan-ud-Din Al-Baqai (D: 885AH) in his Tafsir “Nazam-ud-Durar fi Tanasib-ul-Ayaat-wa-Sawr”, Allamah Jalal-ud-Deen Suyuti (D: 911AH) in “Al-Itqan-fi-Uloom-ul-Quran”, Shaykh Mubarik ibn Khidr Naguri in his commentary “Munabba Ayun al-Ma'ani wa Mutla-Shams-al-Muthani”, Shaykh Muhammad Mustafa Al-Maraghi (D: 1335AH) in his book “Nizam-ul-Quran”, rendered invaluable services

to the coherence and appropriateness of the Holy Quran.

After that, Sheikh Mohammad Rasheed Raza (D: 1354AH), Maulana Hussain Ali (D: 1366AH), Mufti Ahmad Yaar Khan Naeemi in his exegesis “Tafsir-e-Naeemi”, Maulana Muhammad Idrees Kandhalvi (D: 1394AH), Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi in his book “Muarif-ul-Quran” explained the Quranic verses in great detail.

Shaykh al-Sa'id al-Hawi (D: 1410AH) in his Tafsir al-Assas fi Tafsir, and Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi (D: 1418AH) in his exegesis “Tadabbar-ul-Quran” did a great and detailed work on the coherence of the Holy Quran.

From the above brief overview it is clear that the scholars and commentators of the ummah have rendered invaluable services in the art of appropriateness of Holy Quran.