

MAKKAN AND MADINAN REVELATIONS

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

By

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Arabic Transliteration System

I have adopted in my thesis the Library of Congress transliteration system for all the Arabic expressions that occur throughout the present work. The following table explains the Arabic transliteration system for Arabic consonants and vowels:

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
أ	a	ط	ṭ
ء	'	ظ	ẓ
ب	b	ع	c
ت	t	غ	gh
ث	th	ف	f
ج	j	ق	q
ح	ḥ	ك	k
خ	kh	ل	l
د	d	م	m
ذ	dh	ن	n
ر	r	هـ	h
ز	z	و	w
س	s	ي	y
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ		
ض	ḍ		

Arabic short - long vowels and case endings:

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
ا	ā	ـَ	-an
و	ū	ـُ	-un
ي	ī	ـِ	-in
ا	a		
و	u		
ي	i		

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide an in-depth study of the Makkan and Madinan revelations of the Qur'ān in terms of structure, themes, linguistic, stylistic and textual analysis of the *sūras*. The main objective of these analyses is to make the contents of the Qur'ān more accessible and easy to understand by the modern reader. Most importantly, the present study focuses on pivotal themes of the Qur'ān.

Firstly to represent the context in which the revelations took place, an account of the historical background of the two towns Makka and Madīna at the time of the Prophet himself is given. Also, the present study provides details on the inhabitants of these towns who were the main addressees of the Makkan and Madinan revelations. An overview of the Prophet Muḥammad as an individual, his tribal origins, and his social life in Makka until he got married and before his Message has also been given. The present discussion presents the Qur'ān in terms of its composition and its status as a Holy Scripture, compared to the previous other two Scriptures, the Old and the New Testaments. Thus, an insight into the Makkan *sūras* has been provided: Outlines of its structure, themes, peculiarities, and textual analysis in terms of tenets of faith of some selected Makkan *sūras* have been dealt with. Similarly, an insight into the Madinan *sūras* has also been provided along with structural, thematic and textual analysis of some selected Madinan *sūras*. Other concepts such as the 'coherence in the Qur'ān', '*naẓm in the Qur'ān*' and '*i'jāz al-Qur'ān*' which are looked at in terms of conceptual chaining between adjacent *sūras* and *āyas* have been developed in this study.

Throughout our analysis of the Qur'ān, our aim is to deal with its *sūras* and their classifications according to the descending order from the longest *sūra* to the shortest ones rather than in terms of its chronological order of revelation.

The present thesis provides intriguing comparative and contrastive analyses of the Makkan and Madinan *sūras* from Muslim and non-Muslim perspectives. This study also provides 28 highly valuable observations about the study of the two phases of revelation. This provides a new insight into the analysis of the Qur'ān and it points out a new direction in the analysis of Makkan and Madinan revelations. My approach has thus become different from classical classification of the *sūras*. It is now based on *sūras* structure, themes, text linguistics, etc.

Introduction

In the last forty to fifty years, there have been significant developments in the study of the “Qur’ān as Text”. Amongst these are the critical analysis of the structure and composition of *sūras* and the linguistic/stylistic form that constitutes the Qur’ānic text. These textual analyses have improved considerably throughout the years thanks to the work undertaken by a few Qur’ān scholars who were all attracted to the study of the structure and linguistics/stylistics of the Qur’ān. Angelica Neuwirth, Pierre Crapon de Caprona, Neal Robinson and Mathias Zahniser, to mention a few, (for detail see bibliography). The first two scholars have studied mainly the short Makkan *sūras*. Crapon de Caprona analysed them according to their rhythm and Neuwirth analysed them according to the rhyme, the style and the theme, establishing her analysis on the idea that each *sūra* is a literary unit. The two other scholars, Neal Robinson and Mathias Zahniser, tackled the long Madinan *sūras* by studying the repetition of words and expressions and their meanings, publishing the results of their research either as a chapter in a book or as a paper in a journal.

Regarding the in-depth studies carried out by Michel Cuypers, they focused on the Qur’ānic rhetoric which is a new and complementary approach to the other research mentioned above. Based on Semitic rhetoric, Cuypers’ analysis is extended to the structure that makes up the Qur’ānic text, on the one hand, and develops his work on the “correspondences” by highlighting the various textual levels, on the other. He first used his method when analysing the short Makkan *sūras* and recently he applied it to Q5 which is a Madinan *sūra*. As for Hussein Abdul-Raof, his approach is based on a thematic analysis of the *sūras* through the four tenets of faith: monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, and reward and punishment. According to him, these tenets of faith are omnipresent in each *sūra* of the Qur’ān, Makkan and Madinan; however, these tenets of faith are enhanced by sub-themes which appear either separately or all together in the same *sūra*. These include admonition, the omnipotence of God, and Islamic legal rulings. His aim is to demonstrate how each *āya* of the Qur’ān is linked to the other to establish “conceptual chaining” or “intertextual links” which, for him, constitute the major textual feature of the Qur’ān and most importantly, for him, makes the Qur’ān a divine text rather than human. Abdul-Raof’s contribution has been mainly based on his text linguistic approach through which he successfully managed to substantiate his argument that Qur’ānic discourse is unique through the tenets of faith and their intriguing

presentation technique which neither a *kāhin* (soothsayer) nor a poet has ever managed to produce. His theory has proved logical especially with regards to the analysis of the sequential order of *āyas* within the same *sūra* or of the sequential order of *sūras*.

Other scholars, such as Jean-Luc Monneret, Louis Alfred De Prémare, Mohamed Abdel-Haleem and Fazlur Rahman, just to name a few, also based their approach on a thematic analysis of the *sūras* through their major themes. Their aim is to offer clarity to the reader with a logical mind who, when dealing with the Qur'ān, feels lost when faced with this text which seems shapeless and without apparent logical coherence.

Regarding the unity of the *āyas* and *sūras*, many scholars have been involved in this field of research and the famous Urdu exegesis “*tadabburi-al-Qur'ān*” of the Pakistani author Amīn Aḥsan Islāḥī is a typical example of this kind. Following the same approach, we also have Mustansir Mir who translated into English and analysed Islāḥī's work in his book *Coherence in the Qur'ān* which dealt, as the title of his book indicated, with the unity and coherence of the Qur'ān.

However, all these Qur'ān scholars mentioned above have considered the Qur'ānic text from a synchronic point of view which distinguishes them radically from the previous Western scholars who used the classical approach of philological and historical analysis based on the diachronic perception of the Qur'ān. From Gustav Weil to Uri Rubin, from Theodore Nöldeke to Andrew Rippin, followed by Richard Bell, Régis Blachère and Alford Welch, these scholars based their study on a chronological and historical approach considering the *sūras*, and mainly the Madinan *sūras*, as a gathering of revelations from different times put together by various collectors of the Qur'ān during the first or second century of Islam. Motivated by the idea of reconstructing the history of the collection of the Qur'ān, these scholars struggled to simulate the atmosphere in which the collection of the Qur'ān happened centuries ago, by adding things and moving them from one place to another in order to understand and try to give a plausible explanation to the apparent “incoherence” of the Qur'ānic text.

This historical approach is, thus, diametrically opposed to that by other scholars who argued that each *āya* and *sūra* are perfectly linked to one another consistently and logically. This is illustrated by the hypothesis of Joseph Van Ess that the Qur'ānic *sūras* and particularly the Makkan ones were originally a liturgical text and, therefore, have unity and semantic coherence in their writing.

However, we should be aware that the study Cuypers made of the structural composition of the Qur'ān cannot be validated by reference to any of the classical Muslim works. Why is it that none of the classical Muslim scholars paid attention to Semitic rhetoric in general or Arabic in particular to explain the apparent “incoherence of the Qur'ān”? It seems that they were also preoccupied by it as we have seen a huge body of literature by Muslim scholars who focused on the *nazm al-Qur'ān* (the word order of the Qur'ān) or the *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (the inimitability of the Qur'ānic style) which aimed to find logical answers to the misconception of the “missing coherence of the Qur'ānic text”.

This thesis attempts to give an in-depth structural and textual analysis of Makkan and Madinan *sūras*. It also aims to synthesise what has been said or done previously and to bring clarifications about preconceived ideas which are numerous regarding what makes up a Makkan *sūra* and a Madinan one. However, ingenious discoveries and progress in this field have been made during the last century by Western scholars and these works cannot be overlooked. It is very important, I believe, to update these studies made by other scholars and produce new findings in order to refresh the eyes of our contemporary readers about Makkan and Madinan revelations. This thesis is aimed to achieve this academic end.

The present work falls into five chapters:

Chapter one provides an insight into the historical context in which the Qur'ān has been revealed, commencing in Makka and concluding in Madīna over a period of 23 years. It discusses the environmental milieu in which these two phases of revelations took place, the conflict and unwelcome reception in Makka and the welcoming reception and appreciation in Madīna. This chapter also focuses on the Prophet Muḥammad and give an overview of him as an ordinary human being, born in Makka among the pagans, chosen by God to receive the revelation of the Qur'ān, and instructed by his Lord to teach and spread it around him and to the rest of mankind.

Chapter two is concerned with the Qur'ān as a Scripture. An account of the various stages of the primary compilation phase of the Qur'ān is provided. A comparison with the other two Scriptures is also referred to in order to highlight the similarities and distinctions between them. Chapter two also investigates the contents of the Qur'ān and gives an introductory definition of it.

Chapter three is mainly concerned with the Makkan *sūras* and its unique features. This chapter also includes a list of the Makkan *sūras*, the chronological order of revelations, the Structure of Makkan *sūras*, and their themes and focuses. Three Makkan *sūras* have been chosen for textual analysis in terms of tenets of faith, and admonition, and the results of our investigation are shown in a table and a graph.

Chapter four is primarily concerned with the Madinan *sūras* and its related features. It also provides a list of the Madinan *sūras*. The chronological order of these revelations, the structure, themes and focuses are also discussed here. Three selected and representative Madinan *sūras* have been chosen for textual analysis in terms of tenets of faith, and admonition and results are shown in a table and a graph.

Chapter five provides our findings of research and it includes very useful conclusions and recommendations for future research.

The bibliography includes valuable sources for future research in Qur'ānic studies and includes major works by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars.

Chapter One

Makka and Madīna at the Time of Muḥammad

1.1 Introduction

Because of limitation of space, our discussion in this chapter will mainly focus on what the circumstances of Makka and Madīna were at the time of Muḥammad. The entire Arabic Peninsula¹ is certainly very interesting but not relevant to our discussion, therefore we will only deal with it when necessary. We will describe what the political, cultural and economic situation was in both Makka and Madīna at that time. We will also describe the habits and customs of these societies, their religious beliefs, rituals and practices and see what the Qur'ān says about them. By defining thoroughly the society of Makka, we will have a better understanding of the environment in which Muḥammad was born and grew up until his manhood in Makka. Further, by focusing on the Madinan society, we will be able to appreciate the purpose of Muḥammad's migration to Madīna. This journey in particular will mark the end of the so-called "Makkan revelations" and the start of the so-called "Madinan revelations". In order to learn more about the character of Muḥammad and the two kinds of revelation, this chapter will explore the matter thoroughly. An outline of the Prophet Muḥammad's life will be provided. However, a life as rich with events and achievements as that of the Prophet Muḥammad's cannot be comprehensively provided in this discussion due to the limitations of space. Instead, we have provided a discussion of the genealogy of the Prophet Muḥammad, his grandfather, parents and tribe, and followed his life throughout the course of his birth, youth and manhood among the Makkan people. Therefore, we shall describe only the most important events which happened to him developing some of them in more detail where necessary, as it is not his complete life that we are presenting here. We have relied on several classical books:

(i) The fundamental source is the Qur'ān. It is often allusive, but nonetheless it remains authentic, and the Prophet Muḥammad's life is studied through the Qur'ānic classification of Makkan and Madinan *sūras*. These chapters are subdivided into several stages, with the gradual evolution of the Islamic society which is founded upon it. Furthermore, it is a series

¹ The Arabic Peninsula is a peninsula in Southwest Asia at the junction of Africa and Asia consisting mainly of desert. The area is an important part of the Middle East and plays a critically important geopolitical role because of its vast reserves of oil and natural gas. The coasts of the peninsula are, on the west the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba, on the southeast the Arabian Sea (part of the Indian Ocean), and on the northeast, the Gulf of Oman, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Persian Gulf. (www.wikipedia.com). It is also called '*Jazirat al-'Arab*' which literally means 'the Island of the 'Arabs' and it is sometimes used instead of the 'Arabic Peninsula'. (Glassé, 1991:205).

of revelations referring to contemporary events which came to Muḥammad over a period of twenty years.

(ii) Another source is the traditions, contained in the collections of the *Hadīth*, rich in that they reproduce all known sayings, in the minutest detail, of the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions. Each *ḥadīth* has a chain of authority (*isnād*²) which makes it more valuable.

(iii) The third source is the *Sīrah* (biography of the Prophet), collected and summarised by Ibn Hishām (1995). Without doubt, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah* by Ibn Hisham is the oldest and most complete study that has been written about the Prophet Muḥammad. This study was completed no later than one century after his death by Ibn Ishāq according to accounts given by people who had known the Prophet, his wives, his companions or his descendants. We cannot, therefore, write about the Prophet Muḥammad without mentioning *al-Sīrah*.

1.2 Makka

Makka is a city in central Arabia and is situated in one of the most arid regions and the most deprived places in the world. Its trade was reduced in the past by the traffic of caravans in the desert between the north and the south of the Peninsula which made trading easy with other countries and towns, i.e., tribes, of the north or the south. Makka was neither rich nor powerful. However, other countries and cities envied its glory due to the holy place of *ka'ba*³, and later on, due to the prestige of giving birth to Muḥammad who had become the seal of the Prophets. Makka is also famous as the birthplace of Islam, and as its chief sanctuary except for a short period at the beginning. The Qur'ān refers to Makka by different names such as 'Bakka', or 'the city' as in the following verses:

“The first house (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka: full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings.” (Q3:96)

“I do call to witness this city -

And thou art a freeman of this city” - (Q90:1-2).

There is a reference to the city in the Qur'ān in Q105 reminding Muḥammad of the owners of the Elephants (*aṣḥāb al-fīl*), who were destroyed by birds (*abābīl*) which flung stones of *sijjīl*

² *Isnād*: Chain of authorities at the beginning of a *ḥadīth*. Mediaeval Islam developed a highly complex science of *Isnād* criticism. (Netton, 1997:128).

³ *Ka'ba*: Literally means 'cube'. The *Ka'ba*, which is in Makka, is a cube-shaped building within the precincts of the great Mosque of Makka. It is covered by the *kiswa* (cloth). Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl are revered as re-builders of the *ka'ba* originally established by Ādam. After the conquest of Makka by the Prophet Muḥammad, the idols which had been placed in the *ka'ba* during the period of the *Jāhiliyya* were removed. Muslims all over the world direct their prayers five times a day towards the *ka'ba* in Makka, and it also constitutes a primary focal point during the *Ḥajj*. However, it is most important to note here that Muslims do not worship the *ka'ba*, nor the *ḥajar al-aswad* (the black stone) set within one of its corners. The *ka'ba* is an ancient sanctuary whose presence is designed to raise man's heart and worship to God. (Netton, 1997:139)

(hard clay) at them. This is interpreted traditionally as an expedition by Abyssinians against the Makkan sanctuary, miraculously frustrated. Exegetes coupled *sūra* Q105 with Q106, which more obviously deals with Makka, and is itself a fragment, scarcely to be construed in its present form. In these two *sūras* the Quraysh (the tribe in possession of the Makkan sanctuary) are advised to worship the Lord of this House, who has given them food when they were hungry and safety when they were afraid. These two phenomena, food and safety, are mentioned elsewhere in connection with the Makkan sanctuary, the former as a result, it would seem, of visits from pilgrims, whereas the latter probably means safety for refugees:

“Let them adore the Lord of this House, Who provides them with food against hunger, and with security against fear (of danger).” (Q106:3-4)

“In it (the city of Makka) are signs manifest; (for example) the Station of Abraham; Whoever enters it attains security; Pilgrimage thereto is a duty Men owe to Allah—Those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures.”(Q3:97)

The sanctuary itself is called in the Qur’ān either ‘the house’ or ‘the house of Allāh’, the ‘sanctuary’ or the *ka’ba* or ‘the place of prostration’. In (Q3:96-97) cited above, the *ka’ba* is claimed to be the first house established for mankind, blessed and of guidance to the world, containing clear signs, the station of Abraham and whoever enters it is secure. Prior to Muḥammad’s time, the *ka’ba* was a sanctuary which enjoyed some popularity in parts of Arabia, and the right of sanctuary had to some extent been associated with the settlement of Makka and with its inhabitants. The biography of Muḥammad certainly implies that the Makkans had the very strongest of objection to bloodshed, and possessed little aptitude for warfare (Margoliouth 1980:511-514).

1.2.1 Bedouins and Sedentary Peoples

The people living in Makka at that time were divided into tribes who were either Bedouins or sedentary people. Before the advent of Islam, the moral life of the Bedouin is composed of four main traditional virtues which are sung by their poets and demonstrated by the support of Arab society, Bedouin or sedentary. These virtues are *murūwwa* (courage), *‘ird* (tribal honor), the family and individual as well, *karam* (generosity) and *ḍiyāfah* (hospitality). All these values were part of the psychology of the Arabs at the time of ignorance which is represented by their pre-Islamic poems. There was no such society as we can define nowadays. There were different kinds of tribes: the rulers, those who had the opportunity of looking after the sacred temple, and those who protected the town from incoming people. Indeed, the rules of

the tribe were a question of power and graduation. People of different tribes used to get married to each other in order to create better relations between two different tribes or to acquire more power through inter-marriage. Most of the Arab Peninsula, except for the southern sedentary, is a big desert where the nomads lived by travelling from one place to another. They were called Bedouins which means from the *bādiya* (steep) or by their ethnic names *ʿArāb*⁴ (Arabs). Gradually, this appellation became the name that qualified all the inhabitants of the Peninsula. Their lifestyle was conditioned by a perpetual search for food to stay alive, even if those people contented themselves with a little, they still had to travel to find more no matter how little. Installing tents, collective camel races, leaving the encampment perpetually in the hope of finding something to eat, has become a representation of the Bedouin life and his sobriety is his virtue. Because Arabia is a desert, drought occurs everywhere. In most of the region, the rain is less than 150mm per year. Furthermore, the difference between the temperature at night and during the day is large and between the seasons as well. The real salvation of Arabia is its wells. In certain regions, the well allowed the existence of cultivation, and a sedentary life in an oasis. The association of men was necessary to maintain relation with the society that lived outside the desert and to keep in touch with it. So, the base of the organization, rural or urban, was the tribe. The tribe included everybody descended from the same ancestor; its number is variable and could be inserted in another group bigger or smaller. The tribe is a big family which is under the authority of one man and his entire male descendants or his family (Miquel 1968:23-24).

1.2.2 The Tribe and its Power

At the end of the fourth century AD, the Arabs, nomads or sedentary, are gathered into several groups called *qabila* plural *qabā'il* (tribes) composed of several clans (*ʿashīra* plural *ʿashā'ir*) which are themselves divided into *ʿā'ila* (family). A group of tribes is generally called *shu'ūb* (people). There is no rule for using all this terminology but in most cases a people, a tribe or a clan is always dependent on a common ancestor and the group is called by his name, except in some cases it can be called by a nickname; for example, in Makka around 350AD, most of the Arab clans which were half-sedentary were linked to a common chief *fīhr* who was called by his nickname Quraysh (which means 'shark'). These Arabs used to call themselves Banū

⁴ *ʿArāb*: Arabs the native inhabitants of the Arabic Peninsula and their descendants. The ten references in the Qur'ān to a group called al-*Arāb* (nomadic Arabs) is a term that has preserved the same meaning up to the present day in many Arab countries and has been consistently applied by urban Arabs to nomads suggests a contrast of group identities that is not far from the ethnic. In short while the term "Arab" may not have been used in a strictly ethnic sense in the Qur'ān, a quality of Arabness is attached to the concept of umma, rendering it an essential aspect of the earliest self-definition of the new faith. (Khalidi, 2001:144-145).

Quraysh (son of Quraysh). In general, all members of a clan were relatives related either by blood or by alliance, but are under the same rule and it was the same for all other members. There are the *ḥalīfs* (alliance), the *jiwār*⁵ (protected) and the *mawlā*⁶ (guest). When a tribe became too weak, it associated itself with another one and became its *ḥalīf* after a contract of alliance. The condition for *jiwār* was the result of a relation or neighbourhood, and the condition of *mawlā* was the state of a slave who became free (Caratini 1993:45-46).

Most of the Arab tribes were nomad living in the desert, mountains, or camping on their own territory around a well, following their cattle, sheep and camels. The political power at that time was attributed to the chief of the tribe. All tribes had their own *sayyid* (chief) who was from the most honourable family among all the clans. His power and function were given to him according to his rank in the tribal society. Once defined, they would remain unchanged for a while through generations to come. The *sayyid* was the military chief, the judge, the administrative director; it was him who signed all contracts of alliance with other tribes. He also decided on the *ghazwa*⁷ (raids) against caravans or another tribe in order to have revenge for an attack against one of their members, and it was him who fixed the “the blood money – al-diyya” when a member was killed. The Bedouin life was full of problems and disaster. The wealth of the tribe was measured by the number of camels it owned. Thus, the theft of camels was very frequent and was the purpose of most expeditions which in general had to take place without killing anybody, only during the day, and never during the night because it was considered as an act of dishonour if it took place at night. The victims of the robbery were captured then exchanged against a ransom. In this system where “life” or “life in community” is synonymous, the tribe extracted its power less from the cohesion of its members than the members extracted their cohesion from the existence of the tribe. Outside of the group, in fact, no safety without the tribe, which owned all the land (of grass) which could feed their herd. The men who lived in a group recognized one another; this represented the solidity of their tribal relation and their mutual bond (Miquel 1968:27-29).

⁵ *Jiwār* : ‘Protection’ or ‘neighbouring’. The Qur’ān mention this term *jiwār* where God is The Protector such as in (Q23:88). (Lecerf, J. E.I 2nd edition, vol.2, p572 1986).

⁶ *Mawlā*: (Pl. *mawālī*) Client. In early Islamic history this was the technical sense of the word, indicating a non-^cArab convert to Islam who became the ‘client’ of an Arab. Although, in theory, all Muslims in the early Islamic state were supposed to be treated as equals, in practice the *mawālī* or clients were often treated as second-class citizens by comparison with those of ^cArab stock. This was particularly the case from the point of view of taxation. The word *mawlā* also means ‘master’ and *al-Mawlā*, that is, ‘the Master’, is a synonym for God. (Netton, 1997:177).

⁷ *Ghazwa*: Lit. ‘A raid’ ‘an attack’, pl. *ghazawāt*. In particular, the desert raid, and by extension also a battle, war, etc. Related to this is *ghāzī*, “a warrior”, or a ‘war leader’, which is sometimes used as a title among the Turks. The Italian word *razzia* comes from *ghazwa*. Occasionally *ghazwa* is used to mean *jihād*, or ‘holy war’. (Glassé 2001:139).

1.2.2.1 The Quraysh Tribe of Makka

The Quraysh⁸ tribe of Makka was held in high esteem as the guardians of the *ka'ba*, the sacred house of Makka, and exercised a religious authority recognised by other tribes. Its function was to look after the temple and to provide water and food to the pilgrims who came to visit Makka from all other regions outside Makka. The *ka'ba* was a shelter for many divinities and the people of Makka were mainly pagans; they used to turn round the *ka'ba* and practise the *tawāf*⁹ (circumambulation) and pray in front of their idols there. Muḥammad was born in the tribe of Quraysh and his grandfather, Abd al-Muṭṭalib, was the chief of the tribe at that time. Another famous function of the tribe was to protect the sedentary people against attacks by other nomads. The main business of the tribe of Quraysh was trade. Many of its inhabitants travelled frequently to Syria, Abyssinia, Yemen, and Egypt. They mixed with foreign peoples of ancient civilizations, such as the Persians and the Byzantines, and became acquainted with the political, social and cultural conditions of these nations. These contacts greatly affected the intellectual standard which the Bedouins and the inhabitants of the deserts failed to attain. The majority of this tribe, however, took no interest in teaching their children how to read and write; only some of these children learned writing, reading and elementary arithmetic. When a poet appeared in an Arab family, the families living close would gather together around this family and wish them joy and good luck. This occasion would be celebrated; the women would join together in bands, playing upon lutes as they used to do at weddings. All would exchange congratulations, for a poet was a defence of honour, a weapon to ward off insults, and a means of perpetuating their glorious deeds and establishing their fame (Hassan 1967:21-22).

1.2.2.2 Prophet Muḥammad's Ascendants

Quṣay Ibn Kilāb¹⁰ (see figure 1: 1) was the great-great-great-great-grandfather of the Prophet Muḥammad, known among his people in Makka for his good sense and judgement. He was a

⁸ Quraysh: Major tribe in Makka, of which the clan of Hāshim, to which the Prophet Muḥammad belonged, was a part. The word Quraysh means 'shark'. Muḥammad descended from that branch of Quraysh which came to be called 'Quraysh of the hollows' (Quraysh al-batā'ih) who occupied the hollow within which was the *Ka'ba*, the whole tribe of Quraysh descended from a common ancestor called fiḥr or Quraysh. (Netton 1997:207-208). Quraysh is also the name of the *sūra* Q106.

⁹ *Tawāf*: Circumambulation, i.e. of the *Ka'ba* seven times at the start of the *Hajj*. At the end of the pilgrimage, before departing from Makka, the 'circumambulation of farewell' (*Tawāf al-wadā'*) maybe performed but this is not compulsory. (Netton 1997:247).

¹⁰ Quṣay Ibn Kilāb: 5th century AD father of 'Abd Manāf and 'Abd al-'Uzzā, and ancestor of the Prophet Muḥammad. (Netton, 1997:208).

successful tradesman, and had many sons. At the time, the honorary offices of the *Ka'ba*, and catering for the pilgrims, were in his hands. The tribe of Quraysh, descendants of Ismā'īl, supported him, and the people of Makka made him their King. He was the first to give hospitality to the pilgrims the duty of the Makkans, telling his people: 'people of Quraysh, you are the neighbours of Allāh and the people of His house and His holy precincts. The pilgrims are the guests of Allāh, the visitors to His house. Of all guests they are the most worthy of your hospitality, so prepare food and drink for them on the days of pilgrimage until they leave the land.' (Ismail 1988:5)

After Quṣay, the honorary offices of catering for the pilgrims were divided among his sons, then their progeny. Hāshim¹¹ was the most capable of his brothers, and like his grandfather, he called upon the Makkans to prepare food and drink for the pilgrims. During a trip in Yathrib (Madīna), he met a beautiful woman who managed her trade herself, and took charge of her dependants. He admired her greatly and later asked for her hand in marriage. Knowing his position among his people in Makka, she accepted his proposal. She was called Salmā and was from the tribe of banū Khazraj. The result of this marriage was a child whose maternal uncles were Madinans, and whose paternal uncles were Makkans: his name was Shayba.

Hāshim died during a trading trip to Ghaa. His brother, al-Muṭṭalib, became head of the tribe. Shayba returned with his mother to live with her tribe in Yathrib (Madīna). One day, al-Muttalib thought about his young nephew in Yathrib, and decided that it was time for him to live with his father's people in Makka, and later brought him back with him after visiting Yathrib. The people misunderstood the sight of the young boy with al-Muṭṭalib, thinking he was a new slave, thus naming him 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib¹². Although they learned that he was in fact his nephew, they still called him by this name, instead of Shayba (ibid: 6).

When 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib grew older, he inherited the positions that his father Hāshim occupied: welcoming the pilgrims and giving them water. But at this time, finding water for the pilgrims was a difficult task in itself, as he had only one son to help him, and many men were needed to carry the water and bring it from distant places. He later dreamt of the well of

¹¹ Hāshim: Great-grandfather of the Prophet Muḥammad whose name was borne by the Prophet's own clan. Hāshim was the son of 'Abd Manāf and also the father of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim. Hāshim was responsible for provisioning pilgrims and is also credited with having dug a number of wells. (Netton, 1997:99).

¹² 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hashim: The grandfather, on the paternal side, of the Prophet Muḥammad, and father of Muḥammad's father 'Abd Allah. He became head of the clan of Hāshim and was Muḥammad's first guardian after his father's death. One of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's wives was Fatima bint 'Amr: 'Abd Allah was her son. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib became a prosperous merchant and was the digger of a number of wells; he discovered and restored the well of *zamzam*. It is difficult to give precise date for 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's life beyond stating that he flourished in the 6th century AD. (Netton, 1997:13-14).

*Zamzam*¹³, the well of Ismāʿīl, son of Abraham, which was situated around the *Kaʿba*. In the dream, somebody was telling him to reopen the well, as it could not be seen from the ground due to it being completely covered with clay at the time. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib thus thought that if he could find it, his task of providing the pilgrims with water would be facilitated. When he was ready, he began to dig between two of the idols placed near the *Kaʿba*. After the water began to gush out, he continued to dig until two golden gazelles, money, and swords of his ancestors, were revealed. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib placed the gazelles at the doors of the *Kaʿba* along with the swords for decoration (ibid:6-7).

ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib had almost everything: health, wealth and power, and was respected by his tribe. There was however, one source of sadness, in that he had only one son, and needed more to help him in his noble task. He vowed that if he had ten sons, and all reached manhood, he would sacrifice one of them to Lord of the *Kaʿba*. There was an old Arabic tradition that people would sacrifice cattle, or one of their own sons to their gods, whenever they made a vow to them, and that they were obliged to do so because if they did not, the gods could punish them by bestowing a calamity upon them (ibid:10).

As the years went by, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib became the head of his tribe, and had eleven sons. He knew that he had to fulfil his vow to the gods of the *Kaʿba*, but was torn between choosing the son he should sacrifice, as all were dear to him, particularly ʿAbdullāh, and the youngest. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib therefore decided to draw lots, as he could not willingly part with any of them. The name of ʿAbdullāh came out, and ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib felt himself bound to fulfil his vow, no matter how painful it would be to him, but the people of Quraysh protested. Some of the wise men in Makka then advised him to consult a renowned soothsayer in al-Ṭāʾif, who told him to draw lots between the name of his son and ten camels. If the name of ʿAbdullāh came out again, they were to increase the number of camels each time by ten, until the gods were appeased. He went to Makka, near the *Kaʿba*, and kept the arrows for drawing lots, and asked to have lots drawn between ʿAbdullāh and ten camels. The name of ʿAbdullāh appeared ten times in a row, and he increased the number of camels by ten until they became one hundred. Upon the tenth time, the arrow of the camels appeared, and not ʿAbdullāh's name; ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib was relieved to be exonerated from his terrible vow, and that he could now keep his beloved young son ʿAbdullāh.

¹³ *Zamzam*, Well of: Well within the precincts of the great Mosque of Makka. The name of the well in Arabic represents the sound of the water as it rushed out when it was discovered. Pilgrims to Makka drink the water of *Zamzam* which they believe has a special sacredness; some believe that it has healing properties. (Netton, 1997:263-264).

1.2.2.3 The Prophet's Parents

°Abd al-Muṭṭalib was the immediate grandfather of the Prophet Muḥammad (ibid:11). The Prophet's father was called °Abdullāh b. °Abd al-Muṭṭalib¹⁴ who was born around 554 AD. He was the eleventh son, and youngest member of his family, and was a member of the second generation of the Hashimite tribes, like his brother Abū Ṭālib¹⁵ and his half brothers, Hamza, al-°Abbās and Abū Lahab (Caratini 1993:96). When °Abdullāh reached the age of twenty four, his father decided that it was time for him to get married, and chose Āmina, the daughter of the chief of Banū Zuhra, to be his wife.

For three days after the wedding, °Abdullāh remained with his bride, in her father's house, before taking her to his own home among the houses of Banū °Abd al-Muṭṭalib. The Makkans would build their houses according to their rank: the higher the rank, the closer the house was to the *Ka'ba*. The houses of Banū °Abd al-Muṭṭalib were the closest to the ancient house (*Ka'ba*), because they were the most noble of the Quraysh, and gave precedence to no one. °Abdullāh did not stay with his bride for long, but left to go on a trading expedition to Gaza in the north- one of two annual trade journeys that the Makkans used to make. The first one would take place in the summer, to the north, and the other during winter, to the south. This business tradition is referred to in the Qur'ān as *riḥlat al-shitā' wal-ṣayf* (Q106:2) (the Quraysh caravans in winter and in summer). During the trip, °Abdullāh stopped at Yathrib (Madīna) to visit his maternal uncles, Banū Najjar, but fell ill, and so the caravan had to leave without him. A month later he died, and was buried there. Āmina was pregnant when she heard that her husband had passed away, and after a while she moved to a house near the *Ka'ba*. One night she dreamt of an angel, who told her that she was pregnant with the highest man in the world, and the most noble of all its creatures. The angel told her to name him Muḥammad (ibid: 96-97).

This genealogy of the Prophet Muḥammad, referred to above (see figure 1:1), in the view of Caratini (ibid), has been reconstructed according to the *isnād*¹⁶ (chains of authority), and Ibn Ishāq gives all the names from whom he collected the information in his *al-Sīrah al-*

¹⁴ °Abdullāh b. °Abd al-Muṭṭalib: Father of the Prophet Muḥammad. He belonged to the clan of Ḥāshim of the tribe of Quraysh. His mother, who came from the clan of Makhzūm, was called Fatimah bint Amr. His wife's name was Āmina bint wahb; she came from the clan of the Zuhra. °Abdullāh died before the birth of Muḥammad. The Qur'ān in v.6 of *sūrat al-Duḥā* makes a direct reference to Muḥammad as an orphan. (Netton, 1997:13).

¹⁵ Abū Ṭālib: (died c. AD619) Uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad whose guardian he became on the death of °Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥāshim. Muḥammad is said to have gone on trading expeditions with him. As head of the clan of Ḥāshim he was able to give Muḥammad some protection while the latter was in Makka. The succession of Abū Ṭālib by Abū Lahab as clan chief had grave repercussion for Muḥammad. Abū Ṭālib was also the father of the 4th Khalifa, Ali b. Abī Ṭālib. (Netton, 1997:18).

¹⁶ Isnād: the chain of testimony by which a *hadith* is transmitted. (www.wikipedia.com).

Nabawiyya. His editor, Ibn Hishām (1995), also does this. In some instances, the details of the story were collected a long time ago directly from the Prophet himself; in some cases about a century ago. Ibn 'Ishāq wrote his book around 750 AD, and the Prophet died in 632 AD. Arabs will trust the authenticity of any document, as long as it contains the name of all the traditionalists (*al-muḥaddithūn*¹⁷, *ahl al-ḥadīth*) and historians from whom the information was collected; all of them were Muslims and would follow the Prophet's tradition (*ḥadīth*)¹⁸ very carefully (ibid:98-99).

1.2.2.4 Tribal Solidarity and Protection

The most important aspect of the social conditions in Muḥammad's Arabia was the concept of 'protection' (*jiwār*). This represented the support and solidarity of the kin-group. It is essentially an application of the *lex talionis* of 'life for life, eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' It meant that where a member of one's kin-group was injured or killed, it was a sacred duty to exact the like from the offending kin-group. It may seem primitive or barbaric to modern man but it was in fact the most effective way to maintain a degree of public order where no single ruler or ruling group is sufficiently powerful to do so. Also involved is the concept of 'collective responsibility' of the kin-group both for the misdemeanours of every member of the group and also for the exacting of vengeance. The Arabs changed the old practice of "*lex talionis*" (to demand an eye for an eye) by *al-diyya*¹⁹ (blood money), then one had to pay for one dead body a hundred camels, eighty males and twenty females, and for injured people, they had to work out how many camels they needed to pay. Later Islamic law accepted the *diyya* but the Qur'ān advises the believer to replace it by the *lex talionis* as in the *sūras* cited below:

“O ye who believe! The law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder:

¹⁷ *Muḥaddithūn*: Sing. *muḥaddith* is an Islamic title, referring to one who profoundly knows and narrates hadiths, the chains of their narration (*sanīd*), and the original and famous narrators. A *muḥaddith* can tell true *ḥadīth* from forgeries. A *muḥaddith* is a person, who is mainly familiar with narration of *ḥadīth*, unlike *faqīh*, who understands the meaning of *ḥadīth* and can derive rules and laws from *ḥadīth*. According to the 8th century Imam, Sheikh Muḥammad ibn Idris ash-Shafī'i, a *Muḥaddith* is someone who has memorised at least 400,000 narrations along with the chain of narrators for each narration. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁸ *ḥadīth* is a traditional account of things said or done by Muḥammad or his companions. *ḥadīth* used in the plural form mean the entire body of such accounts. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁹ *al-diyya*: (pl. *diyyāt*) Blood money, indemnity or compensation for injury or death. The Qur'ān, in v.45 of *sūrat al-Māida*, draws attention to the Judaic law which is stated to have enjoined a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and retaliation for inflicted wounds. (The verse also indicates that the wronged party could forego what was due.) Islam continued the Arabs' substitution of money, or goods which could, for example, be camels, in place of any rigid application of a *lex talionis*. Today, in those areas where Islamic law prevails, modern practice defines the *diyyā* as a variable quantity of money. (Netton 1997:74).

The free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman.

But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand, and compensate him with handsome gratitude, this is a concession and a mercy from your Lord. After this whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave penalty” (Q2:178).

“Never should a believer kill a believer; but (if it so happens) by mistake, (compensation is due): If one (so) kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation to the deceased’s family, unless they remit it freely. If the deceased belonged at war with you and he was a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (is enough), If he belonged to a people with whom ye have treaty of mutual alliance, compensation should be paid to his family, and a believing slave be freed. For those who find this beyond their means, (is prescribed) a fast for two months running: by way of repentance to Allah: For Allah hath All knowledge and All wisdom” (Q4: 92).

“We ordained therein for them: “Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal.” But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) wrong-doers” (Q5: 45).

During the lifetime of Muḥammad, it had become common to accept blood-money (*diyya*) instead of actually taking a life. The most puritanical among the Arabs thought that it was immoral to accept blood-money instead of an actual life, and taunted those who did so with accepting milk instead of blood (Watt 1998:17-18).

1.2.2.5 The Tribe’s Expedition

During the pre-Islamic era, the *ghazwa* (expedition) took place frequently. Some territories, however, were reserved for pagan divinities only and it was not possible to fight wars there. This was the case for the *ḥaram* (the sacred territory of Makka) around the *ka’ba* which accommodated more than 360 idols at this time which were venerated by Bedouins and caravans. Also, during certain holy months it was forbidden to launch a *ghazwa* (Caratini: 47-48). For the Bedouin, the *ghazwa* was an ideal opportunity to survive. For all the Arab tribes, sedentary or Bedouin, it was a way of redistributing wealth among them. From his childhood, the Bedouin was prepared to lead a dangerous life with violence and revenge. He was taught to hate the life of ‘the others’, to be ready to attack, not to trust any body, and at the end, his honour became his ultimate pride. To show how strong he was, how strong his clan was, he

sometimes asked a poet from his tribe to express his feelings in a poem. The Arabs fought not only with their weapons and their arrows but with their *hijā'* (satir poems) which are shouted out by their poets as loudly as they can; that is the reason why a poet was always welcomed in a tribe, a party was organized for him and women played music; the men of the tribe were very proud to have among them a man who would be able to praise their honour openly and to curse their enemy (Caratini 1993:49-51). Thus, the advent of Islam preached by Muḥammad came to put an end to many of their uncivilized customs by changing them into civilized ones. We can understand easily how difficult it was for Muḥammad to preach Islam. In fact, Islam teaches you virtues such as the love for your neighbour, to forgive any offence against you, it calls for respect for women, to be moderate, and to practise abstinence. The Arab pagans who were the first to receive the message revealed by the Qur'ān used to live a dangerous and difficult life and it was a hard task to make them change their habits quickly, violence, tribal vanity, and perversity into a peaceful and philanthropist life, which was taught by the Qur'ān in both its Makkan and Madinan revelations.

1.2.3 Makka and its Economy

The economy of the Makkan society was essentially based on trade such as dates and grain. The Bedouin's food depended only on milk products, sheep and camels meat but these did not last for long especially when there were special days or when feeding guests in transit. The she-camel was very precious for the Bedouin: she gave him milk, meat, her skin and wool and the latter was used to make garments, her dunghill was used as fuel. Men, camels and other animals always needed grass and water; for this reason, the Bedouins were always on the move and travelling according to the season. This kind of life forced Bedouin to carry his essential belongings everywhere, all the time: a gourd, a bucket, a tent made of goats hair which gave him shade during the summer and became his shelter during the winter, his garment a jacket and a blanket intended to be worn for all seasons. The sedentary Arabs, however, lived near an oasis; his life was different; he was the purveyor exchanging his own product such as dates, grains, arms and garments against the Bedouins protection from other nomads. The existence of the sedentary people and the caravan was necessary in this social and economic system to create a balance. Among the matters for which Quraysh are to thank God are their winter and summer caravans as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

“For the covenants (of security and safeguard enjoyed) by the Quraysh,
Their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer.” (Q106:1-2);

Traditionally, the caravans went to the Yemen in winter and to Syria in summer. The

development of Makka as a commercial centre was partly due to its geographical position about the middle of the caravan route up to the west coast of Arabia from the Yemen, and at the beginning of a route to Iraq. The existence of the Makkan sanctuary made life easier where blood feuds were in abeyance, and therefore provided security for men to come together at trade fairs. There is a reference in the Qur'ān to the dependence of Makkan prosperity on the sanctuary such as in (Q28:57):

“They say: “If we were to follow the guidance with thee, we should be snatched away from our land.” Have We not established for them a secure Sanctuary, to which are brought as tribute fruits of all kinds- a provision from ourselves? But most of them understand not.” (Q28:57)

There is also reference in the Qur'ān to the years of Muḥammad's success; some of the Muslims continued to be so addicted to trade that they showed much more interest in that than in worship, as in (Q24:36f) or (Q61:10-11) cited below (Miquel 1968:25-27, Watt 1988:39)²⁰.

“In houses, which Allāh hath permitted to be raised to honour; for the celebration, in them, of his name: in them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again)

By men whom neither Traffic nor merchandise can divert from the remembrance of Allah, nor from regular Prayer, nor from the practice of regular charity: Their (only) fear is for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new).” (Q24:36-37)

“O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous penalty?

That ye believe in Allāh and his messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the cause of Allāh, with your property and your persons: that will be best for you, if ye but knew!”(Q61:11).

1.2.4 Traits of Character of the Arab

People of Arabia during the age of ignorance (*jāhiliyya*²¹) were famous for two easily developed traits of character which were firstly the art of poetry. They had a great deal of leisure time to devote to it at their disposal, during the nights in the open desert. Secondly the tremendous effort to survive and the subjection to a life of hardship made them extremely

²⁰ Cf. to Miquel, André (1968: 25-27). *L'Islam Et Sa Civilisation*. Paris: Armand Collin, for more detail. For 'Mecca as a commercial centre' see also Watt, W.M. (1988:39) “*Muḥammad's Mecca, History in the Qur'ān*”

²¹ *jāhiliyya*: State of ignorance. The Arabic word is used to designate the pre-Islamic period. (Netton 1997:133)

fond of fighting and of tests of strength. So much frequent combat led them naturally to self-praise and growing discretion for exhibiting a sense of dignity. Pride and boasting were the most typical qualities of the Arab men which led them to bravery and generosity defining roles that they would follow with great interest. Idleness and deep indulgence in poetic composition turned them to lovemaking and drinking. But bravery and boldness had made them hospitable to a high degree and firm in fulfilling their promise as a matter of honour. Gambling, archery, assemblies for recital of poetry verses, assertions of dignity, and competitions were some of the means of passing their time. In short, Arabia and its climate conditioned the Arab character. Below is an outline of the Arab's character which was obvious before and after the advent of Islam.

(i) The Arab's Culture of Memorization

The Arabs have a very well developed memory due to the climatic conditions of the country they live in and also due to their interest in genealogy which developed this skill. They were also especially proud of their ancestors. They used to keep in mind the exact genealogy of all their forefathers, and then remember their names and deeds to show their valor during fighting. It was a simple thing for them to remember accurately odes of tribute that were several hundred verses long, after hearing them only once. Their art of poetry and command of language led them to such a state of development that they named all the non-Arabs as *ʿajam* (literally: mute) (Najeebabadi 2000:66). In Pre-Islamic Arabia, the majority of the Arabs were illiterate. Therefore, they had to depend on their memory, and they used to relate their tradition orally. The Arabs of Hira adopted through the Persians Greek science and philosophy which they received at the hands of the Nestorians or the Platonists who had been driven out of Athens by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. The inhabitants of Hira had learned the art of writing before it was generally practised in Arabia, and they produced the oldest poetry in the Arabic language (Hassan 1967:21-23).

(ii) Pride and Rivalry in Poetry

A famous Arab custom was their passion for poetry. Men, women, and children were all poets and spoke in verse. During this period in Arabia, everyone would participate in the art of poetry. They were born with the skills of poetry and eloquence and they did not need to think or reflect to search for topics. They were so proud of their eloquence that they considered all non-Arabs as unable to speak. However, the Qur'ān challenged their linguistic skills and

shattered the arrogance of their eloquence and rhetoric into pieces (Hassan 1967:72). The Qur'ān refers to the poets as follows:

“It (Qur'ān) is not the word of a poet: Little it is ye believe!” (Q69: 41).

“And the poets it is those straying in evil, who follow them” (Q26: 224).

In the view of Ali (1998:762), poetry and other arts are not in themselves evil, but may on the contrary be used in the service of religion and righteousness. But there is a danger that they may be prostituted for base purposes. Poetry may be used as an instrument of evil or futility. Among the commendable poets contemporary with the Prophet is Ḥassān and Labīd: the latter had the honour of being one of the seven whose poems were selected for *Mu'allaqāt*²² (hung ones) in the days of ignorance (jāhiliyya). The Arab poet of the pre-Islamic age was held to be a person with supernatural knowledge, a wizard in league with spirits (*jinn*) or devils (*shayātīn*) and dependent on them for magical poems with which he was inspired. The influential position of a poet of the pre-Islamic age manifests itself in the tradition that a youth was refused the hand of a girl in marriage because he was neither a poet, nor a soothsayer, nor a water diviner. During the sacred months in which war ceased throughout Arabia, the Arabs gathered together in the customary season of pilgrimage in a great assembly. Markets were held in certain places (such as 'Ukāz²³ near Makka), where great fairs were associated with the recitation of poems. Among these poems mention may be made of the *Mu'allaqāt* (sing. *Mu'allaqa*), which, as Nicholson says (cf. Hassan 1967:21-23), is most likely, derived from the word *'ilq*, meaning a precious thing or a thing held in high estimation, either because one hangs on tenaciously to it, or in a treasury or storehouse. The *Mu'allaqāt* or 'suspended poems' may have been so called from having been hung up in the *ka'ba*, the sacred house in Makka, on account of their merit. This distinction was awarded by the judges at the fair at 'Ukāz, near Makka, where poets met in rivalry and recited their choicest productions. Before being affixed to the *ka'ba* the successful compositions were transcribed in letters of gold upon pieces of fine Egyptian linen. The names of the authors of these seven poems are: Imru' al-Qays, Ṭarafa Ibn al-'Abd, 'Amr Ibn Kulthūm, Hārith Ibn Hillizā, 'Antāra ībn Shaddād, Zuhayr Ibn Abī Sulmā, and Labīd Ibn Rabī'a (ibid).

²² *Mu'allaqāt*: Lit. The 'hung ones'. The Pre-Islamic poems that were acclaimed at the yearly fair such as Minā and 'Ukāz, written in gold letters and said to have been hung in honour in the *Ka'ba*. A small number of such odes have come down to modern times, the most famous being those of 'Imru'-l-Qays, 'Antarah, and Labid. (Glassé 1991:272).

²³ 'Ukāz: Town South-East of Makka (q.v.) where an annual fair was held in pre-Islamic times, for several weeks. Much poetry was recited during the fair which was, however, abolished by the Prophet Muḥammad. (Netton 1997:251).

1.2.5 Religious Beliefs in Makka

Before the advent of Islam, there were in Arabia and more precisely in Makka many religious beliefs including polytheism and Monotheism that were in practice among the Makkan inhabitants. The Makkan and Madinan revelations dealt with this matter; for this reason, in the following sections, we will enumerate these religious beliefs that are mentioned in the Qur'ān. Thus, being aware of all these beliefs will help us to tackle our topic more effectively and understand through the Qur'ānic text what the context behind the text was.

1.2.5.1 Polytheism in Arabia

Polytheism in Arabia is qualified in different ways in the Qur'ān, let us mention them here to get a better understanding and see what the difference is between these different qualifications.

1.2.5.1.1 The Ignorant of God (*jāhil*)

Let us consider first the background of the pre-Islamic era: This is called *jāhiliyya* (time of ignorance) and is the state in which the sedentary people and the nomads (Bedouins) of Arabia lived before the advent of Islam, i.e., before the year 610 AD. The adjective *jāhil* means 'ignorant'. However, in the Qur'ān, the word *jāhiliyya* appears several times with the meaning of "those who are ignorant of God", such as in those following verses:

"After the (excitement) of the distress, He sent down calm on a band of you overcome with slumber, while another band was stirred to anxiety by their own feelings, moved by wrong suspicions of Allāh- suspicions due to Ignorance..." (Q3: 154).

"Do they then seek after a judgment of (the days of) Ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allāh" (Q5: 50).

"And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times Of Ignorance; and establish regular prayer, and give regular charity; and obey Allāh and his messenger..."(Q33: 33).

"While the unbelievers got up in their hearts heat and cant- the heat and cant of ignorance. Allah sent down His tranquility to His messenger and to the believers, and made them stick close to the command of self-restraint; and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allāh has full knowledge of all things" (Q48: 26).

1.2.5.1.2 The associators (*mushrikūn*)

The Bedouins and the sedentary people in the north of Arabia were pagans. In the Qur'ān, they are referred to as *mushrikūn*²⁴ (associators) because they associated God with many other divinities. The Qur'ān refers to this matter:

“And behold! Ye come to Us bare and alone as We created you for the first time: Ye have left behind you all (the favors)” which We bestowed on you: We see not with you your intercessors whom ye thought to be partners in your affairs: so now all relations between you have been cut off, and your (pet) fancies have left you in the lurch!” (Q6:94)

In another *āya* we encounter:

“And they have taken (for worship) gods other than Allāh, to give them power and glory! Instead, they shall reject their worship, and become adversaries against them.” (Q19:81-82).

Many of those divinities are mentioned in the Qur'ān: al-Lāt²⁵, Manāt²⁶, al-°Uzza²⁷, Ḥubal²⁸, as follows:

“Have you seen al-Lāt and al-°Uzza, and another third (goddess), Manāt?” (Q53: 19-20).

1.2.5.1.3 The pagans (idolaters)

The pagans were those who worshipped idols and status. Societies at this time were polytheist, idolaters, and usually used magic and occult forces, and believed in superstitions. According to al-Ṭabari²⁹ and Ibn al-Athīr, the historians of *jāhiliyya* (cf. Chebel 1993:101-

²⁴ *mushrikūn*: (sing. *Mushrik*) Polytheists. The word derived from ‘*shirk*’ which literally mean ‘sharing’: man is forbidden to share his worship of God with that of any other creatures, and to ascribe partners to God as sharers of His Divinity. Polytheism is the one sin which the Qur'ān tells us cannot and will not be forgiven. This is because it denies God's very existence. (Netton, 1997: 182 & 231).

²⁵ al-Lāt: Literally, the ‘Goddess’. Major pre-Islamic Arabian female deity, particularly revered by the tribe of Thaḳīf. (Netton, 1997:151)

²⁶ Manāt: Major deity revered in the *jāhiliyya* by the Aws and the Khazrāj tribes. (Netton, 1997:161).

²⁷ al-°Uzza: Pre-Islamic goddess of Arabia, who has been identified with the Venus star, with a main shrine between al-Ṭā'if and Makka. Her name meant ‘the Mighty’. She was worshipped in pre-Islamic times not only by such Arabian tribes as Thaḳīf and Quraysh but also by the Lakhmids of Ḥīra. She is mentioned, and disparaged, in the Qur'ān together with al-Lāt and Manāt in *sūrat al-Najm* vv.19-23). (Netton, 1997:255).

²⁸ Ḥubal: Major idol of pre-Islamic Makka which had a cultic place and role within the Ka'ba (Netton, 1997:105).

²⁹ al-Ṭabari, Abū ja'far Muhammad b. Jarīr: (224-5/839-310/923) Major early Islamic historian and exegete of the Qur'ān. Born in Ṭabaristān in Northern Iran, he travelled to many of the great centres of the Islamic world. He was erudite in a large variety of subjects of which three stand out: history, Qur'ānic exegesis and law. He wrote an extremely important world history; his great commentary on the Qur'ān is used to this day; and he actually founded a School of law which became known as the *Jarīriyya*. This, however, seems to have owed much theoretically to the *Shāfi'ī* and fell into disuse. (Netton, 1997:239).

102), the reality was not different from what the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad said: "The morals of society before Islam were corrupt, this period was a dark period and the advent of Islam was the light coming from the creator". The people living in Makka were mostly pagans and polytheists. Makka possessed the sacred sanctuary where the *ka'ba* temple was build. At that time this temple was very important as it gave shelter to a pantheon³⁰ of divinities; all of them were well venerated by the polytheist of Makka (ibid: 101-102).

According to the Qur'ān, there were numerous beliefs and practices by the people of Makka and Yathrib³¹ (Madina) before Islam. The Qur'ān gave the most credible information about those divinities. The divinities that were often mentioned in the Qur'ān are: al-Lāt, Manāt and al-^oUzza, such as in (Q53:19-20), Ya^oūq, Nasr, Wudd and Suwa^o as in (Q71:23), Ba^oal as in (Q37:125)³². We also know that the *ka'ba* was the shelter of many idols and the people of old who believed in them used to circle around it (like the Muslims do during the pilgrimage). In old Arabia, we also find the *jinn* who had their own residence, a stone a tree or an animal. Each tribe had their own place and sacred moments which were the occasion for them to celebrate a sacrifice or any different rites of divination and magic. Many other centers of idolatry besides the *ka'ba* do exist in Arabia, for example Ghaṭfān had constructed a house similar to the *ka'ba* and called it Qalis and they even performed the *hajj* there. Another house called dhūl-khalāsah to perform *hajj* was built by Banū Khath^oam. Dhū al-Ka^obāt was the centre for worship of the Rabī^oā. Again, another temple called the *ka'ba* of Najrān³³ was built by a tribe of Najrān with three hundred skins; this temple was visited by many idolaters of Arabia as they did for the *ka'ba* of Makka; further, they had built a *haram*³⁴ (sanctuary)

³⁰ What exactly the three goddess were, and what light they shed on pre-Islamic Arabian religion, is however difficult to say. See now G.R.Hawting (1999:130-49). "*The idea of idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: from Polemic to History*" Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Compare, on the pre-Islamic deities, more generally, Fahd, Taoufic (1968). "*Le Panthéon de l'Arabie Centrale à la veille de l'Hegire*" Paris.

³¹ Yathrib: Original name borne by the city of Madina. (Netton, 1997:260).

³² Some other names are mentioned in the Qur'ān to designated the idols that were venerated by the Pagans such as Jibt and Thaghout in (Q4:51) (Q2:257), but we do not know which places they occupied between other divinities and what were their function amongst the pagans.

³³ Najrān: A district between Yemen and Najd, inhabited by a Christian tribe, whose endurance and constancy in their Christian belief are the subject of these verses of the Qur'ān (Q85:4-11), the verses are said to have been revealed at an early date, and indicate Muḥammad's kind feeling towards the Christians. Persecuted by dhū Nuwās, a votary of Judaism, and his large army the inhabitants were forced to become Jews. The Christians offered a strenuous resistance but yielded at length to the treacherous promise that no ill would be done to them. They were offered the choice of Judaism or death, and those who remained constant to the faith of Jesus were cruelly massacred. News of the proceeding reached the emperor Justin I, who desired to take vengeance upon the barbarous Nimyarite dhū Nuwās. He immediately set on foot an armament of 70000 warriors, dhū nuwās was defeated. The Christian calendar keeps a memory of this event as the 'martyrs of Najrān' and the Abyssinians victory occurred in 525AD. In year 10 after the *hijra*, a delegation from Najrān came to Madina in order to conclude a treaty with the Prophet Muḥammad. He allows them to pray in his own mosque. (Hugues, 1988:428; Glassé, 1991:290).

around it where even a murder or an assassin was safe inside. On the top of the temple, they had put an idol called Shams. Pictures of Abraham, Ismāʿīl, ʾĪsā (Jesus) and Maryam (Mary) were also worshipped in this *kaʿba* (Najeebabadi 1, 2000:68-69).

1.2.5.2 The Concept of Allāh in Arabian Paganism

According to Izutsu Toshihiko (1964:100-103), the concept of ‘Allāh’ existed in the religious view of the pre-Islamic Arabs and was described as follows:

1. Allāh as the creator of the world,
2. Allāh as the giver of rain, and the giver of life to all living things on earth,
3. Allāh as the One who presides over the most solemn oaths, and
4. Allāh as the Lord of *kaʿba*

These were the fundamental theological points that constituted the structure of the concept of ‘Allāh’ in the heart of Arabian paganism, i.e., during the *jāhiliyya* era. The concept of ‘Allāh’ that was prevalent among the pre-Islamic Arabs on the eve of the Islamic era was, in general, surprisingly close in nature to the Islamic one, so close, indeed that the Qurʾān sometimes wonders why such a right understanding of God does not finally lead the disbelievers to acknowledging the truth of the new teaching, as we are told by the following verses:

“If you asked them (i.e. the pagan Arabs) who has created the heavens and the earth, and has imposed law and order upon the sun and the moon? They will surely answer Allāh...”³⁵ (Q29: 61)

And in:

“If you asked them ‘who sends down rain from the sky and revives there with the earth after it has been dead? They will surely answer Allāh. (Q29:63)

Apparently, then, Allāh was already in the mind of the pre-Islamic Arabs as the Creator of the world and the Giver of rain. The only serious complaint brought against them by the Qurʾān in this respect was that the pagans failed to draw the logical and reasonable conclusion from the acknowledgement of ‘Allāh being the Creator of the heaven and the earth’ and that they should serve Allāh alone and no one else. The Qurʾān expressed this sentiment by the following verses:

“How, then can they be turned aside (from the right direction)?” (Q29:63)

And in:

³⁴ Ḥaram: Sanctuary. The Arabic word indicates an area of a particularly sacred nature. Examples include Makka and Madina, both of which are forbidden to non-Muslims. (Netton 1997:97)

³⁵ The Qurʾānic translation used here through this section are those provided by Izutsu Toshihiko (1964:101-103) himself.

“But most of them do not know how to exercise their intellect (i.e. how to draw the right conclusion.)” (Q29:63)

Izutsu (ibid) called this ‘temporary monotheism’ which the Qur’ān described by the following verses:

“...And they were commanded naught else than to serve god; making the religion pure for him as men of pure monotheism...” in (Q98:5)

We are also informed by the Qur’ān that when the pagan Arabs encountered danger or death for instance in the sea, they called upon Allāh for help to “make their religion pure for Allāh”.

The Qur’ān describes this as follows:

“And when waves enshroud them like dark clouds, they cry unto Allah making their faith pure for him alone.” (Q31:31-32)

“Now if they embark on a boat, they call on Allah, making their devotion sincerely (and exclusively) to Him...” (Q29:65)

This is another example of ‘temporary monotheism’. But as soon as the pagan Arabs reached the shore and felt sure of absolute safety, they forgot about what they had said and began again to ascribe partners to Allāh. In other words, they fell back into their original polytheism.

This is referred to in the Qur’ān:

“But when he brings them safe to land, behold they begin to ascribe partners.” (Q29:65)

More interestingly, the *jāhili* Arabs also used to invoke the name of Allāh as the most sacred and solemn oaths in *jāhiliyya* as we are told by the Qur’ān:

“And they swore by Allāh their most earnest oath.” (Q35:40-42)

1.2.5.3 Monotheism in Arabia

Muḥammad did not preach in a virgin land devoid of monotheistic beliefs. On the contrary, many other religious beliefs did exist before him. Admittedly, most of the Arabs, nomads or sedentary, were pagans, polytheists or animisms but there were also monotheists people and Muḥammad was aware of this; in fact, there were in the north near Madīna or Khaybar³⁶ some tribes who were scripturists (i.e., worshipping God according to their holy Book the Torah) who are referred to in the Qur’ān as “People of the Book³⁷” or “Children of Israel” such as in

³⁶ Khaybar: Khaybar was a wealthy Jewish oasis in the northern Hijaz, attacked and successfully captured by the Prophet Muḥammad in 7/628; Muḥammad believed that the people of Khaybar were fomenting discontent with Islam and its adherents. Some of the Jews of Khaybar had been exiled from Madīna. (Netton, 1997:146)

³⁷ People of the Book: In Arabic ‘*Ahl al-Kitāb*’. The name initially referred to the Jews and the Christians whose scriptures like the Torah and the Gospel were completed in Muslim belief by the Islamic revelation of the Qur’ān. The term was later broadened to cover adherents of other religions like Zoroastrianism. Qur’ānic references to the People of the Book are a

(Q2:47) or “yahūdī” (which means Jews) such as in (Q2:62), and in the south near Najrān and in Ethiopia, there were other monotheist people who were worshipping God according to their holy Book the Gospels, who are referred to also as “People of the Book” or “naṣāra” (which means Christians) such as in (Q2:62) and (Q5:14). Thus, the ignorance of God did not prevail every where in the Peninsula at that time. (Caratini 1993:129).

1.2.5.3.1 The *Ḥums* and *Ḥunafa'*

Before the advent of Islam, two religious antagonist beliefs co-existed with the *jāhiliyya*: first the superstitious which was called the *Ḥums* plural *Aḥmās* (means strong and hard in fighting as much as in their religion) who followed many taboo and sacred habits practised by the Quraysh. The second belief was practised by people who adopted the original religion of Abraham who were called the *Ḥanīfs*³⁸ plural *Ḥunafā'* who were not associators (Caratini 1993:129). These are explained below:

(i) The *Ḥums*

According to Caratini (ibid:133), the *Sīra*³⁹ of Ibn Ishāq explains these two religious trends in detail. Ibn Ishāq⁴⁰ argues (cf. Caratini 1993:129) that the *Ḥums* were those who introduced new ritual practices among the Quraysh and many other tribes like Kināna⁴¹, Khuzā'a⁴²; it seems that the *Ḥums* were those who revived their religion in Makka. The expedition of Abraha⁴³ against the *ka'ba* in 570AD (see 2.4 for more details) marks the emergence of the

mixture of the friendly and the hostile. In early Islamic history the People of the Book had a protected status provided that they paid the poll tax (*jizya*). (Netton 1997:22-23).

³⁸ *Ḥanīf*: (pl. *Ḥunafā'*) Monotheist. The word occurs several times in its singular and plural forms in the Qur'ān. Here it basically indicates those who were neither Christians nor Jews but were monotheists. Ibrāhīm constitutes the basic paradigm of such usage (see v.67 of *sūrat Āl-Imrān*). The Qur'ānic usage of the word must be distinguished from that of pre-Islamic poetry where *hanīf* could mean a pagan or idol worshipper. (Netton 1997:96).

³⁹ *Sīra*: Biography, particularly that of the Prophet Muḥammad. The most famous exponent of this genre was Ibn Ishāq (Netton, 1997:234).

⁴⁰ Ibn Ishāq: (c.85/704c. 150/767) Born in Madina, his principal claim to fame rests in his collecting substantial materials for his life of the Prophet Muḥammad. These were edited into most popular form by Ibn Hishām (died 218/833 or 213/828) who spent his life in Egypt. The resulting book of the life of the Prophet of God (*kitāb sīrat rasūl Allāh*) is regarded as one of the most important of all sources for the life of the Prophet. (Netton 1997:112).

⁴¹ Kināna b. Khuzayma: Major Tribe of Polytheist around Makka from which originally came from the Quraysh tribe. (Watt: 1986:119)

⁴² Khuzā'a: °Arab tribe in the region of Makka. It was the retaliatory killing of some members of this tribe in 8/629 which precipitated the series of events leading up to the conquest of Makka by Muḥammad in 8/630 (Netton, 1997:148).

⁴³ Abraha: also known as 'Abraha al-Ashram , was an Ethiopian Christian viceroy in southern Arabia for the Kingdom of Aksum, and later self styled King of Saba'(Yemen) in the mid-6th century AD. He is famous among the Islamic chronicles for having led an unsuccessful assault on the city of Makka in c. AD570: the incident is covered in *sūrat al-fīl* of the Qur'ān. The

Hums in this period. The Hums introduced innovations in the Makkan cult to God and to the idol which personified him al-°Uzza, for example they restricted themselves to not eating cheese and butter during the annual pilgrimage which was during the time of the harvest of the dates, they also refrained from bringing food into the holy territory around the *ka°ba*; they respected many other taboos like not sleeping in a camel-hair tent but in a leather tent; furthermore, they never entered a house through the main door and never left through it. Among themselves, they used to call one another Aḥmasī for male and Aḥmasiyya for women (ibid:134). The main difference between them and the *hilla* (non-Aḥmasī) was the way they turned around the *ka°ba* to do the *ṭawāf* (circumambulation): In fact, they used to wear special clothes for this occasion and if inadvertently an Aḥmasī did not wear the special clothes for the *ṭawāf*, he then must put those clothes in the bin and never wear them again. Indeed, the Hums modified the rite of pilgrimage by marking out the boundary of the territory of pilgrimage to the borders of the *ḥaram* of Makka which was extended to °Arafāt⁴⁴ and Muzdalifā⁴⁵ by the Quraysh (ibid:135).

(ii) The *Hanifs*

The word *hanīf* occurs in the Qur’ān many times, particularly in the Madinan *sūras* and it means “monotheist” as opposed to “polytheist” or “idol-worshipper” (*mushrik*). The word is associated with Abraham “who was a *hanīf*, and neither a Jew nor a Christian, one who did not belong to the idol-worshippers” as explained by Q3:60-67. In other passages of the Qur’ān such as in Q2:127-135 and Q30:29-30, it is stated that this pure monotheistic belief symbolized by the name of Abraham is ‘the true religion’, the natural predisposition (*fiṭrah*⁴⁶)

presence of one or more elephants in Abraha’s entourage led to the year AD570 (the year of the Prophet Muḥammad’s birth) being called ‘the year of the Elephant’. The facts of Abraha’s life became much embellished with legend. (Netton 1997:16).

⁴⁴ Mount °Arafāt is a granite hill east of Makka. It is also known as the Mountain of Mercy (*Jabal ar-Rahmah*). The hill is the place Muḥammad delivered the Farewell Sermon to the Muslims who had accompanied him for the *Hajj* towards the end of his life. It reaches about 70 m in height. The level area surrounding the hill is called the Plain of °Arafāt. The term Mount °Arafāt is sometimes applied to this entire area. It is an important place in Islam because during the *Hajj*, pilgrims spend the afternoon there on the ninth day of Dhu al-Hijjah. Failure to be present in the plain of °Arafāt on the required day invalidates the pilgrimage. Many pilgrims stay here all night in vigil. Muslims believe Ādam and his wife Eve were reunited on the hill and forgiven by God after 200 years of separation on account of their disobedience in deference to the suggestion of Satan. Today, this is the place from where a *khutba* (sermon) addressed to the entire Muslim world is delivered. (www.wikipedia.com).

⁴⁵ Muzdalifā: A place between °Arafāt, 3.5miles away and Mīna, 2 miles distant from Makka. Here pilgrims spend the night after the ‘standing of the Day of °Arafāt’ during the *Hajj*. They pray at *al-Mash’ar al-Ḥarām* monument and gather pebbles for the ceremony of the stoning of the *jamarāt*, the stone pillars which represents the devil, in Mīna. (Glassé, 2001:294).

⁴⁶ *Fiṭrah*: In Islamic philosophy, it is the inherent disposition towards virtue in humanity, and what endows people with the ability to differentiate between right and wrong. According to the Qur’ān, it is the original state in which humans are created by Allah (God). (www.wikipedia.com).

to which Allāh predisposed mankind” (Izutsu, 1964:112). According to Ibn Nadīm, Ibn al-Munajjim and al-Thaʿlabi in the book “*al-Fihrist*” (cf. Gilliot 1996:9), the *ḥanīfs* (plural *ḥunafāʾ*) were considered as a sect who had their own particular holy books, they also compared these books to the “Abraham sheets” which are mentioned in the Qurʾān as follows:

“And this is in the books of the earliest (Revelation).

The books of Abraham and Moses. (Q87: 18-19)”

Nevertheless, it seems that this sect constituted a group of people who were seeking God alone, rejecting completely paganism and polytheism, and most of them were good ascetics. They were considered sometimes as part of the Jewish community and sometimes as part of the Christian community, then later they belonged to Islam (Gilliot, 2000:9). In the view of Frants Buhl (cf. Gilliot 2000:9), the *ḥanīf* means the original, innate, primitive religion and is in contrast to the corrupted religions of the possessors of the scriptures. However, the Qurʾān recognized the *ḥanīfs* as the followers of the first religion preached by Abraham. In the view of Hodgson (1974:160), there were a few men of the Quraysh in Muḥammad’s time who were attracted to monotheism; they seem to have worked out, perhaps each for himself, some sort of private faith. Demenghem (1958:10-11) refers to them as ‘very mysterious people’ and ‘were only few in number, but were the exponents of pure monotheism of Abraham, which had preceded the Mosaic religion and Christianity. Some accounts depict them as anxious spirits, travellers in search of truth. Some of them differed very little from Christians, and some were converted voluntarily to Christianity, as for example, Waraqa⁴⁷, the cousin of Muḥammad’s wife Khadija⁴⁸’. Blachère (2002) is tempted to group them with the Manicheans⁴⁹. Manichaeism, whether Christian or Mazdean⁵⁰-Persian, had spread widely in Arabia.

⁴⁷ Waraqa bin nawfal: Christian, or ḥanīf, cousin of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, the first wife of the Prophet Muḥammad. When Waraqa’s advice was sought about Muḥammad’s mission and revelations, Waraqa confirmed their truth. (Netton, 1997:257).

⁴⁸ Khadijah bint Khuwaylid: or Khadijah al-Kubrā (554 AD – 619 AD) was the first wife of Muḥammad. Khadijah al-Kubrā, was the daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad and Fātimah bint Zāʾidah and belonged to the clan of Banū Hāshim of the tribe of Banū Asad. She became the first person to convert to Islam. A widow with considerable wealth, for whom Muḥammad had originally worked, she married the Prophet when she was aged 40 and he aged 25. While she remained alive, the Prophet did not take any other wives. Khadija bore the Prophet six children: two boys, ʿAbd Allāh and al-Qāsim, both of whom died very young, and four girls, Fātima, Ruqayya, Umm Kulthūm and Zaynab. Khadija was buried in Makka. (Netton, 1997:142).

⁴⁹ Manicheans: Mani is an intriguing figure in the history of religion. Born in 215 or 216A.D. in a region which lies between Persian and Arab territories, he died in imprisonment in 276A.D. His father Patik (known later to the Arabs as Futuq) had been converted to a dualist sect which practiced sacramental ablutions, and which must have believed, as all dualists do, that God is made up of two contrary and absolute forces, good and evil, light and dark, etc. Mani was raised in this sect and dedicated to it, but in his early twenties he showed a genius for organization, and created his own religion. He did not hesitate to adapt his religion to the outward form of any other, and these included Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Hellenist paganism, Buddhism, etc. The irruption of Islam out of the desert of the Arabs posed a special problem for the Manicheans. Mani, (“a healer from the land of Babel” as he introduced himself to the king of Persia) had claimed unequivocally to be the last Prophet; yet suddenly, a new religion of the first magnitude, a new revelation which was sweeping the world. As Mani

The Qur'ān uses the word *ḥanīf* to describe them and makes a difference between them and the “People of the Book”; the word appeared many times in the Qur'ān and it can be translated as “the original believer”:

“They say: “Become Jews or Christians if ye would be guided (to salvation).” Say thou: “Nay! (I would rather) the Religion of Abraham the *Ḥanīfs* (true), and joined not gods with Allāh.” (Q2: 135).

“Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian; but he was *Ḥanīfs* (true in faith), and bowed his will to Allāh's (which is Islam), and he joined not gods with Allāh.” (Q3: 67).

“Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allāh, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the *Ḥanīfs* (true in faith)? For Allāh did take Abraham for a friend.” (Q4: 125).

“So We have taught thee the inspired (message), follow the ways of Abraham the *Ḥanīfs* (true in faith), and he joined not gods with Allāh.” (Q16: 123).

“So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith (as a *Ḥanīfs*): (establish) Allāh's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allāh: that is the standard religion: but most among mankind understand not.” (Q30: 30).

There were in Makka four people who were *Ḥunafā'* according to Ibn Ishāq (cf. Caratini 1993:137); it happened once that the Quraysh were gathered all together before doing the pilgrimage when four men left the assembled people discreetly; they were: Waraqa b. Nawfal, °Ubayd Allāh b. Jaḥsh, °Uthmān b. al-Ḥuwayrith and Zayd b. °Amr. Waraqa was a cousin of Khadija, the first wife of the Prophet. He was a Christian and knew the Bible and the Gospels very well. During the Prophet's life he appeared many times: It was he who advised Khadija to marry Muḥammad after she had interrogated him about this project and told him about his mysterious journey to Syria⁵¹; it was he again who comforted Muḥammad after he received his first revelation and he also predicted his future triumph among his people. After this event, Waraqa felt ill, became blind and died in 612 or 613, without becoming a Muslim. °Uthmān b.

called himself “the Apostle of Jesus”, the obvious solution, after several false starts, such as those in the book *Umm al-Kitāb*, was to turn the Prophet into the apostle of Mani. Several tentative in order to establish their own school within Islam, as they had done within Christianity have been attempted but they were only unsuccessful attempts. Throughout the 9th century, there were persecution of Manicheans by the Muslim authorities in Syria and Iraq. (Glassé, 2001:252-255)

⁵⁰ Mazdean: A cult within Zoroastrian Mazdaeism. The leader of this cult was Mazdak a Magian priest in Persia in early 6th century A.D. He preached the holding of women and property in common, and advocated Dualism (in Arabic *thanawīyyah*), a system of belief in which evil is equal to good and possesses essence and substance. (Glassé, 2001:263).

⁵¹ For more detail about the mysterious journey in Syria see 2.5 and footnote about Bahīrā in chapter two.

al-Ḥuwayrith, as Waraqa, was from the tribe of Banū Asad; he emigrated to the Byzantine empire and became a Christian. ʿUbayd Allāh b. Jaḥsh, was from the tribe of banū ʿAbd Shams; he did not convert to Islam but he followed his wife who was a Muslim when she emigrated to Abyssinia with many other Muslims in 615. There, he became a Christian and died in the same country. Zayd b. ʿAmr was from the tribe of Banū ʿAdī; he remained a monotheist but he became neither a Jew, nor a Christian, nor a Muslim. He just blamed and condemned openly the idolatrous practices of the Quraysh. People used to say about him that he used to bow in front of the *kaʿba* claiming to his people: O Quraysh, by this which holds my soul in its hand, none of you follows the religion of Abraham, except me! Zayd denied paganism completely, but he was seeking the true religion of Abraham, interrogating monks and Rabbis all over Syria and Mesopotamia. At the end, he met a Christian monk who told him: ‘You are seeking a religion which nobody today could help you, but time is near when someone will be born in your country, a Prophet who will be able to teach you.’ Zayd was full of hope and turned back to the *ḥijāz* but he was killed there (Caratini 1993:137-138).

1.2.6 Prophet Muḥammad’s Life in Makka

The Prophet Muḥammad was born in Makka to a noble family of Banū Hāshim of the Quraysh. We are not sure about the exact date of his birth, but according to Caratini (1993:102-103), the Prophet Muḥammad’s birth, mentioned in *al-Sīra*, seems too accurate to be believed because it is too precise in terms of day and month. Caratini writes: ‘The Prophet Muḥammad was born on Monday the twelfth of Rabīʿ al-Awwal in the year of the Elephant’, i.e., 570 AD (*al-Sīra*, 69 cf. Caratini 1993:102-103). However, according to other historical sources, the expedition of Abraha to Makka was before 570 AD, and the Prophet Muḥammad’s birth was later. According to Watt (1989 cf. Caratini 1993:102-103) and Buhl (1932:685), the date of birth was around 570. According to Dermenghem (1958:7), the year of the Elephant must be prior to 572, and is doubtless 571: traditional dates are not truthful but relate to their passion for symmetry so that tradition dates Muḥammad’s prophetic mission from the time he was forty, and reckons his preaching period at Makka and the final period at Madīna each as ten years. Some claim his age of death to be sixty-three or sixty-five. To follow this tradition would mean that his birth would have fallen between 567 and 572, the most likely date being 571, which would thus place the beginning of his mission at approximately 612. Rahman (1981:17) claims that the Prophet Muḥammad was born at a time when the message of the previous prophets was completely lost and mankind was living under the darkness of ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*). The Arabs had forgotten the religion of their

forefathers, Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl, and had started worshipping idols and stones in the house of God, the *Kaʿba*. Indeed, the teachings of Moses and Jesus had been practically lost by their followers. Rahman also adds that they had changed and corrupted the teachings of God's Messengers and introduced other ideas with them (ibid).

This is also referred to in the Qur'ān as follows:

O Messenger! Let not those grieve you, who race each other into unbelief : whether it be among those who say: 'we believe' with their lips but whose hearts have no faith; Or it be among the Jews-Men who will listen to any lie, will listen even to others who have never so much as come to you. They change the words from their right places they say: 'if ye are given this, take it, but if not, beware!' If any one's trial is intended by Allāh, thou hast no authority in the least for him against Allāh. For such it is not Allāh's will to purify their hearts. For them there is disgrace in this world, and in the hereafter a heavy punishment. (Q5:41)

The notion of monotheism had lost its main significance and practicality, and this implicated both Jews and Christians, so were the ʿArabs who were also completely engulfed in the worship of idols and polytheism. The Qur'ān also refers repeatedly to this significant matter, as follows:

O people! Worship your Lord who created you and those who came before you that ye may become righteous, who has made the earth your couch, and the Heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the Heavens; and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance; then do not set up rivals unto Allāh when ye know the truth. (Q2: 21-22).

This *āya* urges people to do two things: (i) to adhere to monotheism, and (ii) to abandon worshipping false gods. At a time when the whole world had forgotten the message of God the Creator, and was lost in the wilderness of polytheism, the last Prophet was born, an orphan, and had grown up in harsh conditions, as notified in the Qur'ān:

Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter,
 And He found you wandering, and gave you guidance,
 And He found you in need, and made you independent,
 Therefore, do not treat the orphan with harshness,
 And as for anyone who seeks aid, do not repel him. (Q93:6-10)

According to the tradition of the noble families of Makka, he was taken in by a foster mother, Ḥalīma⁵², to her village, where he lived for a few years in her care, along with a foster father. He did, however, visit his mother a number of times in Makka. Many stories relating to his life with his foster family al-Sa'd (Buhl 1932:686).

The Qur'ān also refers to this matter:

Have we not expanded you your breast?

And removed from you your burden. (Q94:1-2)

This *sūra* refers to Muḥammad when he was three years old: he was still living with his foster family at the time. One morning, he went with his foster brother, to take their sheep and goats to graze in the pasture, when his foster brother suddenly cried to Ḥalīma: 'Mother, mother, two men are holding my Qurayshi brother!' Ḥalīma ran to him and found him looking rather pale, before asking what had happened to him, to which the boy replied: 'when I was looking after the sheep in the pasture, I saw two men wearing big, bright white garments. Then one asked the other, indicating in my direction: 'is it him?' – 'Yes it is'. I panicked completely when they held me, laid me on my back and then opened my heart and took out something like a small black stone from inside it, before then throwing it away. After this, they washed my heart and my body until it was purified; then, they closed it and disappeared as ghosts.' (al-Banna 1999:41)

According to al-Banna (ibid), the men who opened the Prophet Muḥammad's heart were in reality angels. This story, as with many others in the Qur'ān, needs to be interpreted with caution; here, for example, it is the mischief of the evil which has been taken out of the body of a boy as pure as Muḥammad. This surgical and theological operation was inflicted on the Prophet Muḥammad when he was only two or three years old, in relation to a doctrine named the 'doctrine of free will'. This means that mankind is free to choose between good and evil before doing something. God created only the good, and the evil came either from man or from Satan. Although God knows the choice available to people, He does not command them to commit sins, they choose to do so; it simply means that people freely choose the element of evil which is inherent in them. Here, the black lump that the white angels removed from the Prophet Muḥammad's heart was the element of evil which Satan imprints in the heart of each and every human. In the heart of an exceptional person like Prophet Muḥammad, someone chosen by God, there could not have been a single satanic impurity in him, as all traces had been removed, and his heart washed with snow, by the surgical angel.

⁵² Ḥalīma bint Abī Dhu'ayb: Foster mother and wet nurse of the Prophet Muḥammad, for his first two years of life. She belonged to the banū Sa'd b. Bakr, a branch of the Ḥawāzin tribe. (Netton, 1997:93).

After this event, we are guaranteed the theological purity of the Prophet Muḥammad. Because of the absence of evil from his body, he remains pure until the end of the world. This is the meaning of *sūra* 94, which is given above (Caratini 1993:110-111).

Muḥammad was returned to his mother when he was around five years old, and about a year later, with the consent of his grandfather, °Abd al-Muṭṭalib, his mother took him to visit her family in Madīna. He had been appointed Muḥammad's guardian since his father's death, and it was the first trip of the Prophet Muḥammad to Madīna, where he spent one year.

His mother died on the way back to Makka and Muḥammad was brought into the full care of his grandfather °Abd al-Muṭṭalib, however it was not long before he died, too. Muḥammad was about eight years old when he was brought to Abū Ṭālib, his uncle, who looked after him well, bringing him up as his own son. Muḥammad was also greatly attached to his uncle, and lived happily with him (ibid: 112-113). When Muḥammad was twelve, he accompanied his uncle on a trading trip to Syria; during this journey, a Christian monk, known as Baḥīrā⁵³, told Abū Ṭālib that the boy would be a Prophet of God, and advised him to return to his country and protect his nephew from the Jews, who were enemies for him (ibid:115).

1.2.7 Prophet Muḥammad's Youth and Character

According to al-Banna (1999:45), Muḥammad is said never to have associated himself with playful children as a boy, nor wasted his time in idleness. Despite the prevailing environment of corruption, gambling, drinking alcohol and other social vices which were very common among people of his age in Makka at this time, he always kept himself aloof. Indeed, Muḥammad never bowed before idols, and never accepted eating meat which was sacrificed for idols and brought to him (ibid). Rahman (1981:18) also adds that Muḥammad was a very hard working young man, and learned trading from his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, becoming a successful trader. He would initially go with him on commercial trips to various Middle Eastern countries, but later began to trade on his own, honest and fair in his dealing with other people. He lived a very peaceful life in Makka, and was respected and honoured by all people of different faiths. Most importantly, the Prophet Muḥammad had never believed in polytheism and had never participated in any such ceremony: he was a firm believer in one God. He was modest and well-mannered, had a strong and spotless moral character. Muḥammad was helpful and generous to the poor, and was kind and sincere to his friends. He

⁵³ Baḥīrā: Name of a Christian monk and hermit encountered by Muḥammad while on a trading expedition to Syria with his uncle Abū Ṭālib; Muḥammad at the time was aged about twelve. Baḥīrā recognized the seal of prophethood on Muḥammad and he forecast great things for the Prophet. (Netton,1997:50).

was faithful in respect of his promises. He was humble even in his youth and lived a very simple life. The people of Makka were very impressed by Muḥammad's good conduct and because they thoroughly trusted him, they nicknamed him: *al-ṣādiq* (the truthful) and *al-amīn* (the trustworthy). The Qur'ān also refers to Muḥammad's good manners and character:

And verily, for you are on an exalted standard of character. (Q68:4)

Indeed in the messenger of Allāh you have a good example to follow. (Q33:21)

The Prophet Muḥammad was only fifteen years old when he participated in a war named *Ḥarb al-Fujjār* (battle of wicked), fought between the tribes of Quraysh and Qays Aylān at Ukāz⁵⁴. Ismail (1988:18) relates that a man from the clan of Quraysh killed a man from the tribe of Hawāzin out of jealousy, because this man had acquired the job of guide to a caravan of al-Mudīr, which the man from Quraysh had coveted. The result was a war between the two tribes that lasted for four years, despite the Makkan tradition that war was forbidden during the *ḥajj* season (annual pilgrimage). In participating in this war, Muḥammad never raised arms against his opponents, as his effort were confined to picking up the arrows of the enemy as they fell, and handing them to his uncle, Abū Ṭālib. Towards the end of the war, the Quraysh felt that it was their man who had been wrong and that, if they continued to support his claim, their prestige among the tribes would suffer, and their unrivalled position as guardian of the *Ka'ba* would be challenged. They were the keepers of the House of Allāh; therefore it was their duty, more than that of any other tribe, to be absolutely fair and impartial, even against their own. They knew that had ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib been alive, this would not have happened. No man now held the position of high esteem and authority that ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib had enjoyed, so they decided to make a covenant that would give them jointly the authority he had enjoyed, and to be forgiven. Muḥammad, as young as he was, was delighted by this covenant.

The Makkans also decided to create a body which would suppress violence and injustice, and help the weak and the needy. One of Muḥammad's uncles, named al-Zubayr, invited him to a meeting at the house of ʿAbdullāh Ibn Sūdān. There, a society called *Ḥilf al-Faḍūl* (the covenant of redress) was formed. Muḥammad worked actively on this confederacy among the Makkan tribes. He tried to maintain peace in the region, eliminate violence and injustice, and restore the rights of the weak, the poor and the destitute. Muḥammad played an important part in its formation. Later on in his prophethood, he recalled the incident as follows: 'in return for

⁵⁴ Ukāz: See map of the Arabian Peninsula and footnote 23 for detail.

this pledge I will not accept a gift of red camels and even now if I am called upon for such a pledge, I will not refuse.’ (al-Banna 1999:45-46)

1.2.8 Prophet Muḥammad’s Manhood

This section provides details of the Prophet Muḥammad before he married Khadija⁵⁵, after his marriage with Khadija, and the trust he enjoyed amongst the pagan Arabs when he was asked to place the black stone (*Al-ḥajar al-aswad*⁵⁶) at its proper place during the construction of *Ka’ba*.

1.2.8.1 Before Getting Married

The Prophet Muḥammad grew older, and as mentioned above, was known as *al-amīn* (the trustworthy) by his fellow citizens in Makka and its suburbs. The people of Makka would leave their valuables with him, however Muḥammad was not happy to be a part of this corrupt society, and he often went to a mountain called al-Hira, situated about three miles from Makka. There he would meditate and ask for protection from the darkness of ignorance, evil and polytheism (Rahman 1981:21).

Due to its position in one of the most barren regions on earth, Makka was unable to offer any natural resources to its inhabitants. They were obliged to trade with the passing caravans of Yemen towards Syria, as it was their only opportunity to subsist in the desert, and would exchange their dates for farming products, grains, rice, oats and other products from Greece. Abū Ṭālib would also trade in this manner, as would women, although they usually trusted men, who were organising the caravans, with their possessions to trade for them. They would then share the profits with them when they came back. A rich and noble widowed woman called Khadija Bint Khuwaylid, who was a businesswoman and owned her own trading business, heard about the good reputation and the wisdom and honesty of Muḥammad, and decided to entrust him with her business, appointing him to take charge of her trade (around 594 AD). She initially entrusted him with a caravan to Syria, offering him the bonus of double salary that she would normally give for this expedition. Muḥammad accepted this offer; but his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, remembered the advice which was given to him by the monk Baḥīra many years before. The former had told him not to go further inland with his nephew, and to

⁵⁵ See footnote 48

⁵⁶ *Al-ḥajar al-aswad*: ‘The black stone’, set in the *Ka’ba*; those pilgrims near enough to it will attempt to kiss the black stone during their circumambulation (*tawāf*) of the *ka’ba* during the Islamic pilgrimage. Tradition associates the stone with Ādam and Ibrāhīm. (Netton, 1997:91)

protect him from the Jews, whose desire would be to kill him due to his potentially great importance in years to come. Abū Ṭālib was not confident in letting him go on this trip, and when the caravan was about to depart, he reminded each man there to be cautious about Muḥammad, particularly Maysara, Khadija's confident slave who was travelling with him. Abū Ṭālib also added that he would make them responsible for any evil which might happen to Muḥammad during the trip (Dinet and Ben Ibrahim 1927:28-30).

Surprisingly they crossed the desert without anything major occurring, and arrived at Boṣrā, Syria, in good health. There Muḥammad sold his products, making a large profit, and found all he was to buy in Syria without any problem at all. When all the transactions had finished, the caravan headed back to Makka. Immediately the same miraculous cloud which accompanied them on the way out took its place above their caravan, casting a shadow over their heads, thus protecting them from the very hot weather (ibid:32).

When they arrived at Makka, Muḥammad related their expedition to Khadija, in detail, and how they had managed to sell her products with great profit. She thanked him gracefully, and congratulated him on his efforts, although she was not surprised by his success in the expedition, and began to believe that he was predestined. Maysara confirmed her opinion by relating to her the miraculous events which had happened to them during their trip, such as:

- (i) A miraculous cloud that had accompanied them since they left Makka in order to protect them from the severe sun heat, and
- (ii) A monk from Boṣrā⁵⁷ named Gorgis, who recommended Muḥammad to Maysara and warned him about Muḥammad's great destiny, in the same way as the monk Bahīra had done to Abū Ṭālib many years before. Khadija, impressed by all these interesting events about Muḥammad, did not stop questioning Maysara for further details (ibid:33). The Prophet Muḥammad was around twenty years old when he began working for Khadija as a trader; first, he used to trade in countries outside Makka (Buhl 1932:688).

⁵⁷ Boṣrā: is an ancient city administratively belonging to the Daraa Governorate in southern modern-day Syria. It is an archaeological and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Boṣrā was the first Nabatean city in the 2nd century BC. The Nabatean Kingdom was conquered by Cornelius Palma, a general of Trajan, in 106. The city flourished and became a major metropolis at the juncture of several trade routes, including the Roman road to the Red Sea. The Forces of Rashidūn Caliphate under Khālīd ibn Walīd conquered the city from the Romans in the Battle of Boṣrā in 634. In Islamic times, the settlement was noted as the birthplace of Ibn Kathīr. A famous Assyrian from Boṣrā, was Bahīra in Muslim times. (www.wikipedia.com).

1.2.8.2 Prophet Muḥammad's Marriage with Khadija

Khadija paid Muḥammad double what she had initially promised him, and now only had one dream, which was to appoint him manager of her large fortune. The best way for this would be to marry him, but she was older: he was only twenty-five and she was around forty. In spite of her age, she was still a suitable match who was in demand in the city because of her beauty, moral virtue, high social rank and wealth. She had been proposed to previously by a number of noble men, but refused them all. Attracted by Muḥammad's noble character and moral values, she changed her mind and decided to marry him. She decided to find out about his genuine intention through Maysara. Maysara questioned Muḥammad's opinion on getting married to Khadija. He was rather surprised at first, as he knew that Khadija had turned down many men of great importance. Although he liked her, the thought of marriage had never occurred to him, and he was slightly embarrassed, due to his financial situation in comparison with hers. However, he never implied that he was against the idea of marrying her, and this was clear enough for Maysara. She reassured Muḥammad that his financial situation was not a problem for Khadija. Maysara informed Khadija that Muḥammad had agreed to marry her (Dinet and Ben Ibrahim:34-35). Muḥammad married Khadija Bint Khuwaylid, despite her age, and despite the fact that she had been twice widowed and had two sons and a daughter from her previous husbands, from whom she had also inherited a large fortune. The Prophet Muḥammad was known as an honest and virtuous trader; he used to help the poor and the widows. The fact that he loved the orphans and the weak impressed Khadija, who offered herself in marriage to him (Rahman 1981:21). A date was thus fixed, in which Muḥammad would come, with his uncles, to Khadija's house. Her family was also present, and her uncle gave the bride away. Muḥammad paid her a dowry of twenty young camels, according to the custom of the ʿArabs (Ismail 1988:21).

This episode is referred to in the Qur'ān:

And we found you in need, and made you independent/rich. (Q94:8)

This *āya* thus refers to the Prophet Muḥammad's wedding with Khadija, and her wealth. After his marriage, Muḥammad stopped travelling for his trade, and worked only in Makka (Buhl 1982:688). Khadija was the first and only wife of the Prophet Muḥammad during her life. She gave him seven children, four girls: Ruqaiya, Zaynab, umm Kulthūm and Fāṭma and three sons: Qāsim, Ṭāhir and Ṭaiyib. Unfortunately the boys died a few years after they were born, and only the girls survived, thus assisting later on with the events of Islam (Rahman 1981:21).

1.2.8.3 *Ka'ba* and its Reconstruction

The construction of the *Ka'ba* is also related to the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and is referred to in the Qur'ān:

Remember we made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take you the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and we covenanted with Abraham and Ismā'īl, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or bow, or prostrate themselves. And remember Abraham said: 'My lord, make this a city of peace, and feed its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allāh and the last Day.'

He said: 'Yea, and such as reject faith, for a while will I grant them their pleasure, but will soon drive them to the torment of fire, an evil destination (indeed)!'

And remember Abraham and Ismā'īl raised the foundations of the House with this prayer): 'Our Lord! Accept this service from us: for you are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.'

Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to your will and show us our places for the celebration of due rites; and turn unto us (in mercy); for you are the Oft-relenting Most Merciful. (Q2:125-128)

Ali (1998), in his commentary on the Qur'ān for these āyās from 125 to 128, mentions that the *Ka'ba* is the House of Allāh. Its foundation goes back by Arab tradition to Abraham, and its fourfold character is here referred to:

- (i) It was the centre of trade for all Arab tribes, and was also used for poetic contests and worship.
- (ii) It was sacred territory, respected by friend and foe alike. All fighting, or carrying of arms, was forbidden within its limits, and no game or other creature could be killed. Like the cities of Refuge under the Mosaic Dispensation, to which Manslayers could flee, or the Sanctuaries in Mediaeval Europe, to which criminals could not be pursued. Makka was recognised by Arab customs as inviolable for the pursuit of revenge or violence.
- (iii) It was a place of prayer: even today, there remains the Station of Abraham within the enclosure, where Abraham was supposed to have prayed.
- (iv) It must be held pure and sacred for all purposes (Ali 1998:39 footnote 125).

Rahman's explanation of the construction of the *Ka'ba* also relates closely to the life of the Prophet Muḥammad. He adds that the *Ka'ba* has been a source of protection from every enemy, and a means of livelihood for the people of Makka. All people respected and honoured them as custodians of the House of Allah, and their trade caravans passed freely from other lands without the slightest risk or danger from anyone (Rahman 1981:14).

This House is described as follows in the Qur'ān:

The first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at Bekkah (that is Makka), full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings. In it are signs manifest; the station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allāh, those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allāh stands not in need of any of His creatures. (Q3:96-97)

The *Ka'ba* is a temple known as *bayt allāh al-ḥarām* (the holy house of God), and its origin is as old as the antiquity. According to Arab tradition, Adam, the father of mankind, built it. Destroyed by the deluge, it was rebuilt, upon the same foundation, by the prophet Abraham, along with the help of his son, Ismā'īl, the ancestor of the Arabs. The temple was the centrepiece for Arab pilgrimage, and people would come to adore their Lord, the unique, and do their ritual, *al-tawāf*— orbiting the *ka'ba* seven times in the same way as their ancestors. This ritual, however, became just a memory, and the Arabs began to include idols in their cult of worshipping. When the Prophet Muḥammad was sent to them to destroy their idols, the temple contained around three hundred and sixty idols. (Dinet and Ben Ibrahim 1927:11)

In the corner northeast of the *ka'ba*, *al-ḥajar al-aswad* (the black stone) is situated, and it is placed in a circle of silver. This stone fell from the heavens, and was given by the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Abraham and his son, Ismā'īl at the time of the reconstruction of the *ka'ba*, and remains in the same place to this day. Its main function is to show the pilgrims the departure point when they began their ritual turning around the *ka'ba*. Originally the black stone was as white as milk, but became black by mankind's sins, typically when people came to touch it or kiss it, imploring God to forgive them, during their pilgrimage, their sins (ibid). Not far from the *ka'ba* is the well of zamzam, where, by a miracle, water sprang out from the earth in order to save Ismā'īl, son of Abraham, who was dying of thirst when lost in the desert with his mother, Ager.

Due to neglect by the Arabs, the well of zamzam became covered, and it was only under Abd al-Muṭṭalib's care, shortly before Muḥammad's birth, that it was recovered. To this day, its water is valued by Muslims, who use it for their own purification, and drink it before going to

the *kaʿba*. Both functions of *siqāya* (the administration of the water in particular zamzam’s water) and *ḥijāba* (the administration of the *kaʿba*) were very famous and solicited by the ʿArabs at that time; both of them in the hands of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib Ibn Hāshim, from the tribe of Quraysh, the grandfather of the Prophet Muḥammad (ibid: 12).

Due to its position, which is at the lowest point in the valley of Faran, the *kaʿba* was regularly flooded; indeed, there was no roof over it, so the building was frequently damaged. The Makkan people therefore decided to rebuild it, but were superstitious and did not dare to destroy the holy house. It was instead decided that each wall of the *kaʿba* would be destroyed by a determinate tribe, helped by other people from Makka, and the destruction would be done at once so that, if the divinity of the temple punished them for this action, the punishment would strike them all at the same time. The different parts of the building were divided, and the work was completed in harmony and without any dispute. However, when the time to place the black stone at its proper place came, a serious dispute began among the chiefs of Makka: everyone wanted the honour of placing the holy stone in its place. It was proposed that the first man who entered the *kaʿba* on the following morning should decide on the issue. The first man who entered the *kaʿba* the next day was Muḥammad; when they saw him entering the holy house, they were very pleased and shouted: ‘al-amīn has come’, proclaiming loudly that they would accept Muḥammad’s decision. Muḥammad removed his coat, spread it on the ground, and put the holy stone in the middle, before asking the leaders of each tribe to hold the four corners of his coat and lift it up together, so that all would have their share of honour. When the stone reached the proper height, Muḥammad lifted the black stone and put it down in its proper place with his own hands. The year that Makkan people rebuilt it was 605; a difficult situation was resolved by the wisdom and foresight of Muḥammad when he was only thirty-five years old. At the same time, God placed the holy stone in its proper place with the hands of the last Messenger on Earth, and the Makkan polytheists were deprived of this great honour by their own decision (Rahman 1981:18-21). According to Caratini (1993:125), al-Ṭabari, in his commentary, relates that the *kaʿba* was not re-built before this, since Abraham’s period, which was centuries ago, maybe nineteen centuries before AD. Caratini also adds that according to the *al-Sīra*, Quṣay was the first who reorganised the area of the *kaʿba*, and ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib who installed metal doors on the *kaʿba* covering them with gold (ibid).

1.2.9 Retreats in the Cave of Hira

The Prophet Muḥammad is said to have never associated himself with his fellow-citizens in their social life in Makka, except when participating in the reconstruction of the *ka'ba* by accident and that was about fifteen years after he married Khadija. He was unhappy being among people of Makka, who were living in an environment of corruption, alcohol and other social illnesses. They had completely forgotten the monotheistic religion, which was the religion of Abraham, their ancestor. Despite being drawn to the *ka'ba*, which was built by Abraham, they became *mushrikūn* (associators): they associated many gods with the one unique God of the *ka'ba*. Each tribe venerated its favourite idols until these idols became about three hundred and sixty in the *ka'ba*. Further to this cult of idols, Makkans believed in many superstitious things: they kept the custom of drawing lots before making an important decision, would consult soothsayers and married many women for as long as they could feed them. All this made those people cease to think for themselves until they became ignorant. Most abominable was the ʿArab custom of burying infant girls alive, due to their sentiment of honour (*al-sharaf*); they were worried that those girls might behave badly in the future and bring disgrace on their family. Some fathers would prefer to eliminate their girls as soon as they were born. Lastly the pride of the ʿArab and their ostentation made them become rebellious. As a result, any union, progress or organisation amongst themselves became impossible. So tribes began fighting with one another: indeed revenge between families brought bloodshed to the whole of Arabia. Prophet Muḥammad could not endure these evil flaws in society, and could not find any solution to resolve them. He would therefore seclude himself from society, and find places of solitary confinement. The big empty space was his favourite place, which allowed him to forget all their iniquity. He loved this space during his childhood, and it brought back happy memories. He was able to meditate, and spent hours contemplating the environment around him, by which he was impressed. This retreat in the desert eased his mind. (Dinet and Ben Ibrahim 1927:39-43).

Hodgson (1974:158) adds that Muḥammad was perhaps in his thirties when he became preoccupied with the questions of how to live a serious life in truth and purity among his tribe in Makka. He apparently listened to all who had something to say about the meaning of human life in this world, and would then meditate about it intensely. Even if he did not dissociate himself from the rites and customs of Quraysh, they continued to admire him.

However, he sought something which they lacked. The cave Hira in mount Nūr⁵⁸ was one of his favourite resorts. His heart continuously sought to comprehend the mysteries of creation, life and death, good and evil. He knew that there had to be One Creator and Almighty (al-Banna 1999: 49-50).

1.3 Muḥammad's *Hijra*

At the season of the annual pilgrimage, Muḥammad preached Islam to the gatherings of the various Arab tribes in Makka; but the one-ness of God excited the ridicule and scorn of these tribes. However, circumstances proved more favourable for spreading this faith when Muḥammad met a little group of six men of banū Khazraj tribe from Madīna who were present in Makka at the pilgrimage season. The inhabitants of Madīna consisted at that time of Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj, and the Jewish tribes of Banū Quraiza and Banū al-Nadīr. They had long been engaged in tribal feuds; however, they were more capable of understanding Muḥammad's message than the idolatrous people of Makka. The Jews had long prayed for victory over the Messiah. So when Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj learned about the message of Muḥammad, they remembered the threats of the Jews and welcomed his message so that they might unite against the Jews, saying: "We have left our people, for no tribe is so divided by hatred and rancour as they. Perhaps God will unite us through you. So let us go to them and invite them into it, and then no man will be mightier than you". They returned to their city as believers and missionaries of the new faith which spread from house to house and from tribe to tribe. The Arabs of Madīna accepted Islam. This was a turning point of Muḥammad's mission which led him to his migration there, and this journey from Makka to Madina is now called the *hijra* (Hassan 1967:47-49).

⁵⁸ Mount Nūr is situated around Makka and it can be visited, it is the place where the Prophet first saw the angel Gabriel. (www.wikipedia.com).

1.4 Madīna

Madina is situated in the *Hijāz*⁵⁹ on a plain sloping very gently toward the north, the boundaries of which are marked in the north and north-west by the hills of Uḥud⁶⁰ and ‘air about four miles from the town, two outer spurs of the range which forms the boundary between the Arabian highlands and the low lying coastlands (Tihām). West and east the plain is bounded by the Harras or Labas, barren areas covered with black basalt but the eastern Harras lie at a greater distance and leaves between them and the town room for more fertile patches so that the eastern frontier of the plain is really formed by a row of low black hills. In the south the plain stretches away farther than the eye can reach. Its noteworthy feature is a rich supply of water unusual in Arabia. All the water courses come from the south or from the Harras and flow to the north, where they combine at Zaghāba and then take a westerly course to the coast in the Wādi Īdām. As a rule, they only contain water after rain but they keep the level of the subterranean water fairly high so that there are a considerable number of wells and springs. After heavy rain, the open square of al-Munakha forms a lake and significant floods are common and may even be dangerous to the buildings in the southern part of the town (Buhl 1987:83).

Before Islam, Madīna’s proper name was Yathrib and sometimes another name such as ‘Ṭaibah’ is also cited meaning the ‘fragrant’. At the time of the Prophet, the Madinans were essentially living on their agricultural products, and local dates were among the most cherished products. Although a number of markets existed there, Madīna cannot be regarded as a trading town like, for example Makka (Margoliouth 1980:520-521).

1.4.1 Religious Beliefs in Madīna

The majority of the Arabs were heathen as we mentioned above and worshipped as many as 360 idols among which were al-Lāt (i.e. Allāh - God) in Ṭā’if, the ‘Uzzā in the valley of Nakhla on the road between Makka and Iraq, the third goddess was Manāt (i.e. al-maniyyah – fate, Q52:19-20) on the Qudayd route, on the Red Sea coast between Makka and Madīna. This

⁵⁹ *Hijāz*: lit. ‘Barrier’ or ‘anything similar by which two things are separated’. The name *Hijāz* is given to that tract of country which separates Najd from taḥamāh, and is an irregular parallelogram about 250miles long and 150 miles wide. It may be considered the holy land of the Muḥammadans, for within its limits are the sacred cities of al-Madina and Makka, and most of its places are someway connected with the history of Muhammad. Al-Ṭā’if, 72 miles from Makka, is celebrated for its gardens, and the neighbourhood of al-Madīna has cultivated fields. The towns on the coast are Jeddah and Yambu’, the former being considered as the port of Makka, from which it is distant of 55miles, and the latter that of al-Madina. The vicinity of Makka is surrounded with thousands of hills, the most celebrated of these are as-Ṣafā, ‘Arafāh and al-Marwā, which have always been connected with the religious rites of the Muḥammadans pilgrimage (Hugues 1988:174).

⁶⁰ Mount Uḥud: is the name of a mountain near Madina. It was the site of the second battle between Muslim and Makkan forces. The Battle of Uḥud was fought on 23 March, 625 CE, between a force from the small Muslim community of Madina, in what is now north-western Arabia, and a force from Makka (www.wikipedia.com).

latter goddess was worshipped by Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj tribes of Madīna. Also, among these idols was Suwā^c who was worshipped by the inhabitants of Yanbu^c and guarded by the Banū Lahyān tribe, and Wadd (i.e. the Moon) which was worshipped by the Kalb tribe. (Hassan 1967:28-30). Apart from the heathen there were at Madīna some tribes who were of different faiths such as Judaism and Christianity, for detail refer to section 1.2.5.3.

1.4.2 Madīna at the Arrival of Muḥammad

When the Prophet came to Madīna in 622 C.E., the town was divided between the various pagan and Jewish clans. According to Islamic tradition, Muḥammad was invited by deputies of Banū Aws⁶¹ and Banū Khazraj⁶² to settle in Madīna and to act as an arbiter of internal affairs. It was only after the battle of al-Bu^cath in which Banū Khazraj were heavily defeated that something like equilibrium prevailed in Yathrib. However, intermittent fighting between the two tribes and murders, with the consequent retaliation, continued. The momentous change was brought about by the *hijra* of the Prophet from Makka to Yathrib. Once Muḥammad arrived in Madīna, most members of Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj became Muslims and were henceforth known as the Prophet's "helpers" (*al-Anṣār*⁶³) although some continued to oppose him in secret. Seeing that the new Messiah was not to be found among them, the Jews yet refused to believe in Muḥammad's mission which they met with scorn and derision (Hassan 1967:47-49). This fact is referred to in the Qur'ān in (Q2:87). Muḥammad settled first at Qubā on Rabī^c I 12 (Tuesday, June 29, 622), at the southern fringe of Madīna, and there he also erected the first mosque of Islam. He engaged the hitherto antagonistic tribes to assist him in his struggle against his fellow-citizens of Makka. With the whole community accepting Islam, the Jewish community in Yathrib soon lost all its status and the clans of Banū Quraiza and Banū al-Nadīr were practically exterminated. Though the early converts from Makka were always held in higher esteem, the Prophet enjoyed the support of the Arab clans but he avoided becoming too closely affiliated with them and tried to remain aloof from their societal bonds. Rather, he tended to rely upon his fellow emigrants (*al-muḥājirūn*⁶⁴) who

⁶¹Banū Aws: Major tribe of Madina which constituted an important section of the Anṣār after the arrival of the Prophet Muḥammad in Madina. The name of al-Aws is mentioned in the 'Constitution of Madina'. The principal enemy of al-Aws in Madina was the tribe of al-Khazraj (Netton 1997:44).

⁶²Banū Khazraj: Major tribe in Madina, possibly originating in the Yemen, at the time of the *hijra* of Muḥammad. (Netton, 1997:146).

⁶³Anṣār: The first inhabitants of Madina to accept Islam, but also any of those who helped Muḥammad after he began his preaching. (www.wikipedia.com).

⁶⁴*Muḥājirūn*: The Emigrants are the early Muslims who followed Muḥammad on his *hijra* (immigration to Madina). The early Muslims from Madina are called the *Anṣār* ("helpers") (Netton 1997:174).

brought about misgivings between the Madinan helpers and the Makkan. There was some tension between the two groups that was not resolved until much later in Islamic history (Schöller 2003: 367-371; Krenkow 1987 4:938-939).

1.4.3 Madīnan Tribes and Their Political Power at the Time of Muḥammad

The population of pre-Islamic Madīna consisted of pagan Arabs and Jewish clans, with only a marginal presence of other monotheists. It is not known whether the Jews had come from Palestine or whether they were Arab proselytes. Some smaller Arabic tribes do, however, appear to have been either affiliated with Jewish tribes, or converts to Judaism. Madīna had two major Arab tribes: Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj, and three major Jewish tribes: Banū Qainuqāʿ, Banū Quraiza, and Banū al-Naḍir. The Qurʾān, however, uses the expression ‘People of the Book’ which includes both Christians and Jews to refer to those who received a Scripture before Muḥammad.

1.4.4 People of the Book

The Qurʾān makes recurrent reference only in the Madinan revelations to “*Ahl al-Kitāb*” i.e. “the People of the Book”, who included both the Jews and the Christians and provides comprehensive details about them. The word (*kitāb*) refers to both Scriptures the Old and the New Testament. However the expression “the People of the Book” as it appeared in the Qurʾān is clear enough to distinguish when it referred to the Jews and when it referred to the Christians according to the context as for example in the second *sūra* (Q2, *al-Baqarah* - the Cow) it is the Jews who are referred to there while in the third *sūra* (Q3, *Āl ʿImrān* - the Family of ʿImrān) the Qurʾān provides details about the Christians. However, the Qurʾān in its initial *sūra*, *al-Fātiḥah* (the opening), refers to the Jews as ‘*al-maghdūbi ʿalaihim*’ (those who have evoked the anger of Allāh) and the Christians as ‘*al-ḍāllīn*’ (those who are astray).

1.4.4.1 The Jewish Tribes in Madīna

There were three major Jewish tribes in Madīna: Banū Qainuqāʿ, Banū Quraiza, and Banū al-Naḍir. However, in the view of Margoliouth (1980:520-521), the native Jewish tradition appeared to know nothing of these colonies and were not aware of them. Linguistically, they had a dialect of their own, some fragments of which are preserved in the Qurʾān as we are told by Q4:48. Margoliouth, however, is not sure whether these tribes were of Arab origin who had adopted Judaism. The Muslim tradition, on the other hand, talks of the Jews as more advanced in civilization than the Arabs of Madīna; they had schools and written Arabic in

Hebrew script; they engaged both in trade, including lending money on security, and in agriculture where dates were their most important product. These Jewish tribes were under the protection of their Arab neighbours and were occasionally compelled to fight in tribal wars, much against their inclination (ibid). The three Jewish tribes of Madīna had Arabic names but kept detached from the Arabs, spoke a different dialect, and were economically prosperous through farming, money lending, and business in arms (Vacca 1987, 6:815). Muḥammad's discussions with the Madinan Jews on theological matters helped to formulate and clarify his message (Schöller 2003:367-371). These Jewish tribes are discussed below:

1.4.4.1.1 Banū Qainuqā'

The Jewish tribe of Banū Qainuqā' was one of the three Jewish tribes of Yathrib. In the view of Wensinck (1987, 4:645-6), nothing certain is known regarding their immigration to Yathrib and there is valid scepticism about their Jewish origin. They possessed no land there but lived on trading. After the dominating power in Madīna passed from the Jews to the Arab tribe of Banū Kaila, the tribe of Banū Qainuqā' entered an alliance with the Jewish tribe of Banū Khazraj. After the battle of Badr (in March 624 / Ramaḍān 2 H), Muḥammad's relations with the Jews of Madīna became troubled. The Jews had adopted an unfriendly attitude to the Prophet (Wensinck 1987, 4:645-6).

1.4.4.1.2 Banū Quraiza

The tribe of Banū Quraiza was one of the three Jewish tribes of Madīna (Yathrib) and was also related to the tribe of Banū al-Naḍir. According to Vacca (1987, 4:1127-8), the two tribes together bore the name of Banū Darīh, and were said to have settled in Yathrib much later than the other Jews. The tribe of Banū Quraiza consisted of two branches: Banū Ka'b and Banū 'Amr, who were landowners and farmers. The Jewish tribe of Banū Quraiza had brought agriculture to a high degree of development and lived prosperously on the products of the soil and their commerce. At the time of Muḥammad's arrival to Madīna, they had 750 warriors and possessed large stores of arms and armour. Like Banū al-Naḍir, the people of Quraiza were allies of the Jewish tribe of Banū Aws and they fought on their side in the battle of Bu'ath which took place on their territory a few years before the *hijra*⁶⁵. Their attitude towards the Prophet was hostile from the very beginning, like that of the other Jewish tribes,

⁶⁵ *Hijra*: The migration of the Prophet Muḥammad from Makka to Madīna, the starting point of Muslims calendar which took place in AD 622 (Abdul-Raof 2003:143).

but no definite break took place until the siege of Madina (in 5 A.H.), when Banū Quraīza who, in the beginning, contributed spades and baskets to the digging of the trench, withdrew their support. The tribe of Banū Quraīza planned an attack on Madīna, together with Quraysh and the Arab tribe of Ghaṭafān. However, the attack was not executed due to lack of mutual confidence and was limited to an unsuccessful night expedition of eleven men. Having failed to reach an agreement with the Quraysh, who refused to give them hostages in exchange for military support, Banū Quraīza finally abandoned the campaign. The Qur'ān makes reference to the tribe of Banū Quraīza as in Q8:60 and Q33:26-27 (Vacca 1987, 4:1127-8).

1.4.4.1.3 Banū al-Naḍīr

In the view of Vacca (1987, 6:815), the tribe of Banū al-Naḍīr was one of the three Jewish tribes of Madīna which settled in Yathrib after they immigrated from Palestine at an unknown date as a consequence of the Roman pressure after the Jewish wars. Vacca (ibid) also claims that the tribe of Banū al-Naḍīr were a section of the Jusham Arabs who converted to Judaism and first settled on mount al-Naḍīr, hence their name. Like the other Jews of Madīna, Banū al-Naḍīr bore Arabic names but kept aloof from the Arabs, spoke a different dialect, and enjoyed a prosperous life through agriculture, money lending, and business in armour and jewels. Banū al-Naḍīr were clients of the tribe of Banū Aws with whom they sided in their conflicts with the tribe of Banū Khazraj, and also joined them in the pact with Muḥammad known as the Constitution of Madīna in year 1 A.H. Their most important chief at this time was Huyaiy b. Akhtab whose daughter Ṣafiya became Muḥammad's wife in 7A.H. When Banū al-Naḍīr planned to kill Muhammad, relations with the nascent Muslim community became very tense and were besieged for about a fortnight with no hope of help from either the Jewish tribes of Banū Aws and Banū Quraīza nor from ʿAbd Allāh b.Ubaiy al-Khazraji, chief of the *munāfiqūn*⁶⁶ who persuaded them to resist in their fortresses and promised to send 2000 men to their aid but never did. The tribe of Banū al-Naḍīr decided to leave Madīna with a caravan of 600 camels; some headed to Syria and others to Khaibar. *Sūrat al-ḥashr* (Q59) refers to the tribe of Banū al-Naḍīr. From Khaibar, the exiles of Banū al-Naḍīr planned with the tribe of Quraysh the siege of Madīna in 5A.H. (Vacca, 1987, 6:815).

⁶⁶ Munāfiqūn: is also the Title of the 63rd *sūra* of the Qur'ān; It means the 'Hypocrites'. The *sūra* belongs to the Medinan period and contains 11 āyās. Its title is drawn from the first verse which tells the Prophet Muḥammad that God is well aware that the Hypocrites do not mean what they say when they acknowledge Muḥammad as the Prophet God. The Hypocrites do not understand that God is the real owner of all wealth and treasure in Heaven and on earth. (Netton, 1997:180).

1.4.5 The Pagan Arab Tribes

There were two major Arab super-tribes in Madīna known as Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj who constituted the most important pagan pact in Madīna. These tribes had emigrated in pre-Islamic times from Yemen to Madīna, where they eventually overcame the political power of the previously dominant Jewish tribes. The result was a form of unstable stalemate that lasted until Muḥammad's arrival in Madīna. The tribes of Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj were also engaged in conflicts that often resulted in feuds and bloodshed. Due to the long-standing feud between these two Arab tribes, Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj, they agreed to summon Muḥammad to put an end to their conflict. The Prophet called his new adherents *anṣār* 'helpers', a name which, according to the Qur'ān (Q3:45; Q61:14), originally belonged to the apostles, and doubtless is a popular etymology of Nazarene⁶⁷ (Margoliouth, 1980:520-521).

1.4.5.1 Banū Aws

In the view of Reckendorf (1987, 1:523-524), the tribe of Banū Aws was one of the two pagan tribes of Madīna. Their name is abbreviated by the dropping of the name of some deity, probably Manāt, for there was an Awsite clan called Banū Aws Manāt (in the Islamic period as Aws Allāh). The Awsites originated in south Arabia and after settling peaceably with the Khazrajites among the Jewish tribes who were in control of Madīna, gradually reduced them to a state of inferiority. The Jewish tribes of Banū al-Naḍīr and Banū Quraiza made an alliance with the Awsites. The Awsites in Madīna were much broken up and weakened by feuds among their clans and families. This resulted in many changes in their power, settlements, and wholesale exoduses from the district. The most serious were the battles between Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj which lasted for ten years. This war in which brother fought against brother reached its peak shortly before the *hijra* in the battle of Bu'ath in which the Awsites, although weakened by previous feuds which had ended unfavourably for them, were victorious, due to the support of Arabs from outside the district and support from the two Jewish tribes, Banū al-Naḍīr and Banū Quraiza. However, they were saved for a short time and their survival was only assured as a result of the migration of Muḥammad to Madīna to whom they promised protection and paved the way for his settling in Madīna. Muḥammad, on his part, gradually managed to adjust the still very strained relations among them. Gradually, the Awsites adopted Islam, even the Jewish families which had been politically merged with

⁶⁷ Nazarene: (pl. *Naṣāra*, sing. *Naṣrānī*). An Arabic name for Christians. Today the formal name is *Masīḥī*, from *Masīḥ* ("Messiah"), a usage established by Christian missionaries (Glassé, 2001:298).

them (Reckendorf 1987, 1:523-524).

1.4.5.2 Banū Khazraj

According to Krenkow (1987, 4:938-939), the tribe of Banū Khazraj is another pagan Arab tribe who with their brother-tribe Banu Aws were occupying the region of al-Madīna and farther north to Khaibar and Taima' at the time of the beginning of Islam. When in the course of their migration they reached Yathrib, which later received the name of Madīna, they found a number of Jewish tribes already settled there among which were the tribe of Banū Qainuqā', Banū Quraiza, Banū al-Naḍir. The tribe of Banu Khazraj settled at first on the outskirts of the town like Banu Aws, but as their numbers increased more rapidly than the resident Jewish population of the town, they soon asserted their power and made themselves masters of some of the *atam*⁶⁸. The immediate cause of their first war with the Jews is stated to have been that a prince of the Jewish family Zuhra, named al-Kaitun, intended to enforce the *jus primae noctis* with a bride from the tribe of Banū Aws for which the prince was slain by the brother of the bride. Banū Khazraj were stronger in numbers and to equalise this, Banu Aws made alliances at various times with the tribes of Sulaim and were generally also assisted by the Jewish tribes (Krenkow 1987, 4:938-939).

1.5 Does Other Scriptures Influence the Qur'ān?

One may wonder whether the previous scriptures or the pagan *kāhin* genres had influenced the Qur'ānic revelations in terms of form. A study has been done where the Qur'ānic text divided into *sūras* have been compared to different types of texts such as *kāhin* speech, Christian hymns or adaptations of Psalms. It is not my aim to investigate further in this field here so, I have just summarized Neuwirth (2006:168-169)⁶⁹ studied the style of some Makkan *sūras* and compared it with that of the pagan *kāhins* and also with some other religious texts such as Christian hymns or adaptations of Psalms that were in use at that time. "The assumption of a strong Christian presence in Makka and an equally strong Jewish one in its vicinity, at least since the emigration, and the familiarity of the Prophet and his followers with Christian and Jewish pious texts of worship, are indispensable for the understanding of the early *sūras*. Neuwirth claims that paganism in the Qur'ān has to be understood not as a fixed system of

⁶⁸ Banū Qainuqā', Banū Quraiza, Banū al-Naḍir and nearly twenty more clans possessed in Yathrib and its neighbourhood over 70 castles, named *Āṭam* (plu. *uṭm*), which formed one of the distinctive features of the city and which granted the inhabitants a measure of security not known in any other town of Arabia. If we had not repeated affirmation of Arab antiquarians that these buildings were constructed by the Jews, we might think that they were built on the model of similar buildings in the Yemen and introduced by the immigrants (Krenkow 1987:938-939).

⁶⁹ For more details, see Neuwirth (2006:168-169) article "sūra" in Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān, vol.5, Brill 2006.

beliefs but as the larger common denominator of a multiple and unstable set of elements, already strongly imbued with monotheist notions. She further adds that the earliest *sūras* of the Qur'ān must have been those that made use of the particular style related to the pre-Islamic *kāhin*, a soothsayer or seer, who claimed super-human origin for his enunciations. This literary form is known as *saj*⁷⁰, and it consists of short syntactical units marked by an expressive rhyme, often ultimate-stressed. This pattern of phonetic correspondence between the ending of the verses (*fāsila*) is not only more loose than the poetic rhyme (*qāfiya*⁷¹), but is also more flexible, as opposed to those *sūras* that remain close to the *kāhin* speech model attesting the speaker's ecstatic disposition which are: (Q111, Q101, Q100, Q99, Q84, Q82, Q81, Q79, Q77, etc.), there are other early *sūras* that in their quiet and solemn mood (Q95, Q94, Q93, Q87, Q74, Q73, etc.) remind one of Christian hymns or adaptations of Psalms rather than of a pagan ritual such as the performance of the *kāhin*. Moreover, many early *sūras* are replete with hymnal elements that are standard expressions in Christian and Jewish worship." (ibid). It is interesting to see how Neuwirth in her in-depth analysis comparing other religious texts to the style of the Qur'ān, found similarities amongst them and was able to distinguish clearly the style according to the chronological order of revelation. She pointed out that the earlier text according to her chronological ordering of the suras which follows the chronological ordering used by Noeldeke are those suras which resemble the *Kāhin* speech, thus the style changes to follow the Christian and Jewish text for worship. However from a traditional Muslim point of view her conclusion is not valid as it contradicts the message of the Qur'ān as for example in these verses below, where we are told in the Qur'ān that its discourse is not like that of the *kāhin* nor that of the poet, i.e., of a *saj*^c (assonance) feature: "And it is not the word of a poet, little do you believe. Nor the word of a soothsayer, little do you remember" such as in (Q69:41-42).

1.6 Social Customs of the Arabs Forbidden by the Qur'ān

In this section, we shall provide an outline of Arab customs which were in practice at the *jāhiliyya* period such as passion for fighting, sentiment of honour, killing their own baby daughters, divorce without any respect for women, superstitious beliefs, consulting *kāhin* to know the future, sacrifice for idols, ostentatious generosity, ferocity in taking revenge for

⁷⁰ Saj^c: see footnote 74

⁷¹ Qāfiya: The origin of "qāfiya" is Arabic; it is the rhyming of the ends of the words.(<http://dictionary.reference.com>)

somebody who has been murdered in the clan, all these are customs which later became forbidden by the Qur'ān.

(i) Taking revenge for any member's death in the clan

Helping the helpless and the oppressed and keeping firm against the oppressors were qualities appreciated by one and all. Timidity and miserliness were taken as the greatest defects and the worst flaw of character. The Arabs fixed several months as months of peace and order so, during these months, fighting was forbidden, and they all suspended it. Instead, during these specific days, they would visit the *ka'ba* and perform the *hajj*. But if an individual of one clan was killed by that of another, the clan belonging to the dead person would not rest until they took revenge. To be at rest without an act of retaliation was a matter of utter shame and disgrace for them. (Najeebabadi 2000:67). The Qur'ān forbids that and changes it as follows:

“We ordained therein for them “life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal.” But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) wrong-doers.” (Q5:45)

(ii) The unfair divorce (*al-ḍihār*)

al-ḍihār was one of the most unjust practices by Arab men. *al-ḍihār* means the unfair divorce of a wife for no reasonable reason. This was an evil Arab custom by which the husband selfishly deprived his wife of her conjugal rights and yet kept her tied to himself like a slave without her being free to remarry. He pronounced words importing that she was like his mother. After that, she could not demand conjugal rights, but was not free from his control and could not contract another marriage, (Ali 1998:860). The following verses from the Qur'ān refer to *al-ḍihār*:

“Allāh has not made for any man two hearts in his (one) body: Nor has He made your wives whom ye divorce by *ḍihār* your mothers: nor has He made your adopted sons your sons. Such is (only) your (manner of) speech by your mouths. But Allāh tells (you) the truth, and He shows the (right) way” (Q33: 4).

“If any men among you divorce their wives by *ḍihār* (calling them mothers), they cannot be their mothers: Except those who gave birth to them. And in fact they use words (both) iniquitous and false: but truly Allāh is one that blots out (sins), and forgives (again and again)” (Q58: 2).

“But those who divorce their wives by *dihār*, then wish to go back on the words they uttered (it is ordained that such one) should free a slave before they touch each other: Thus are ye admonished to perform: and Allah is Well-acquainted with (all) that ye do” (Q58:3).

(iii) Superstitious beliefs in polytheist society

The Arabs believed in the existence of many superstitious things such as the existence of *jinn*s, demons and fairies. They also believed that union between *jinn* and human could bear babies, or between human and angel as well; they thought that was the case for the Queen Balqīs⁷² of Saba’ (Queen of Sheba). They also believed that the *jinn* feared rabbits so they suspended rabbit bones from the neck of their children to keep them safe from the ill effect of *jinn*. They believed in many superstitions about their cattle such as:

- (i) The she-camel which produced five calves and the fifth being a male was called baḥīrah and they left it free to go and graze by piercing its ears then nobody would object to it.
- (ii) In case any sheep bore a male, it was offered to the idols.
- (iii) The male camel that had fathered ten calves was held in great honour. They neither loaded it or made it a mount and left it free like a bull.

They also used arrows before taking any decision; they would put three arrows before the idols or at the threshold of the temples. They wrote *la* (no) on one arrow and *na’am* (yes) on another, the third would be blank. If they had a problem they would take out one arrow from the quiver and let the arrow decide what they should do. (Najeebabadi 2000:75-76). All superstitions were condemned in the Qur’ān, such as the stones on which oil was poured for consecration, or the arrows used for divination. The *ansāb* (lottery) were objects of worship, and were common in Arabia before Islam, seeking undue stimulation in intoxicants or undue advantage in gambling. The Qur’ān instructs one to obey the commands of Allāh which are always reasonable instead of following superstitions which are irrational. To some may well be temporary excitement or pleasure in these, but that is not the way either of prosperity or piety (Ali 1998:222), as in the following verse of the Qur’ān:

“O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abominations of Satan’s handiwork: Eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper” (Q5:90).

⁷² Bilqīs: The Pre-Islamic queen of Sheba (a place variously spelled in Arabic). She is not mentioned by name in the Qur’ān but the exegetes identify her with the queen in *sūrat al-naml* who visits Sulaymān and surrenders with Sulaymān to the one true God. (Netton 1997:57).

(iv) Giving sacrifice by following the ‘fathers’ as bearers of tradition

The deep-rooted conservatism of the nomadic and other Arabs is closely linked with the idea of following in the steps of the ‘fathers’, as many verses of the Qur’ān illustrate:

“Truly they found their fathers on the wrong Path;

So they (too) were rushed down on their footsteps!” (Q37:69-70)

“When they are told to follow the (Revelation) that Allāh has sent down, they say:

“Nay, we shall follow the ways that we found our fathers (following)...” (Q31:21)

“When it is said to them: “Follow what Allāh hath revealed:” they say: “Nay! We shall follow the ways of our fathers. What! Even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance.” (Q2:170) and (Q5:104).

The custom of offering sacrifices gives a vivid picture of Arab society in the Pagan period. In fact, it is obvious to remark that Muḥammad’s contemporaries and the generations immediately preceding them were, as a rule, little influenced by their religion. They followed the religious customs of their ancestors out of mere respect for tradition, the genuine Arab being essentially conservative; but no great significance was attached to such things. Nowhere do we find an instance of real devotion to a heathen deity. The hardships of nomadic life, and it must be remembered that the great majority of the Arabs were nomads, are in general, unfavourable to the development of religious feeling, as we may perceive even at the present day claimed Nöldeke (1980:659-673). The Arabs idolaters used to bring camels for sacrificing and offering to their idols during the *ḥajj* season. To mark their animals they used to hang their shoes around the necks of the camels to signify which animals were destined to sacrifice and which were not, then nobody would approach those sacrificial animals. Moreover, the calves of the camels and sheep and other animals were sacrificed to the idols, this is referred to in the Qur’ān such as in:

“It was not Allāh who instituted (superstitions like those of) a slit-ear She-camel let loose for free pasture, or idol sacrifices for twin-births in animals,...it is blasphemers who invent a lie against Allah; but most of them lack wisdom”. (Q5:103).

Some tribes had a practice of even sacrificing humans to their idols. (Najeebabadi 2000:69). Najeebabadi also adds that some idolaters of Arabia believed in the oneness of God and acknowledged Him as One⁷³. Ironically, they worshipped idols because they believed that

⁷³ For further details about the pagan belief of God as one major God see also Watt, W.M. (1988) “*Muḥammad’s Mecca, History in the Qur’ān*” and Isutzu, Toshihiko (1964). “*God and Man in the Koran*”.

they would intercede with Allāh for them. Further, they thought that the person on whose grave a she-camel was sacrificed, would on the Day of Judgment, rise from his grave mounted on his she-camel. That means that they believed in the Day of Resurrection as well.

(v) Eating forbidden food

The Arabs idolaters used to bring camels for sacrificing and offering to their idols, they also use to eat dead meat regardless of how the animals had been killed, the Qur'ān forbade this practice such as in the following verses:

“Forbidden to you (for food) are: Dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allāh; that which hath been killed by strangling, or by violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless you are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety (...)” (Q5:3)

“He hath only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides Allāh. But if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits- then is he guiltless. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Q2:173)

(vi) Infanticide of female infant

This was an abominable Arab custom which meant the burial of baby girls alive (*al-wa'd*), mainly because of their sentiment of honour. In fact, among the pre-Islamic Arabs, infant daughters were sometimes killed by being buried alive immediately after birth, through fear of humiliation or disgrace. Arab idolaters were excessively worried that those girls might behave badly when they became adults and bring disgrace on their family. The pre-Islamic Arabs were also concerned that their daughters might be captured as prisoners of war and that they would be raped by their enemy tribe bringing shame on the family and the tribe. For this reason some fathers preferred to eliminate their girls as soon as they were born. They took pride in killing their daughters and it was for them a status symbol. Their heartlessness reached such a height in some tribes that when the daughter became five or six years old, the stone-hearted father would take her in beautiful garments to a place outside his settlement where he had already dug a deep ditch. He would then make his daughter stand beside the ditch and then push her into the ditch stoning her to death while she called for her father's help. No screaming and crying could melt his heart and he would return after filling the ditch.

They took pride in burying their daughters alive. Qais bin ʿĀṣim, a man from banū Tamīm, buried his ten daughters alive in this manner. Although no tribe of Arabia was free from this inhuman custom, some tribes did it more than others. This custom was due to poverty and was confined to certain Arab tribes, such as the Banū Tamīm tribes (Hassan 1967:23).

This bad habit is also referred to in the Qurʾān as follows:

“When the female (infant), buried alive, is questioned
For what crime she was killed;” (Q81: 8-9)

And in another *sūra*:

“When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief!
With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had!
Shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in the dust? Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on?” (Q16:58-59).

(vii) Sons would marry their father’s widows

Among the bad customs of the Arabs in the days of ignorance was this one where a step-son or brother would take possession of a dead man’s widow or widows along with his goods and chattels. This shameful custom is forbidden by the Qurʾān as we are admonished in:

“O you who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will (...)” (Q4:19)
“And Marry not women whom your fathers married- Except what is past: It was shameful and odious - An abominable custom indeed.” (Q4:22).

(viii) Consulting *kāhin* to know the future

Kāhin, or *kāhinah* in the feminine, is a priest or a soothsayer. In pre-Islamic Arabia, soothsayers were often the guardians of sanctuaries considered to be holy places. It was believed that the *kāhins* had supernatural powers; they could confer blessings or cast curses; and remove curses cast by others. The *kāhin* would speak with his “familiar spirit”, look into people’s souls and read the future. Sometimes in a consultation the *kāhin* would go into a trance and make pronouncements in rhythmical prose called *saj*⁷⁴ (Glassé 2001:216).

⁷⁴ *Saj* is a form of rhymed prose in Arabic literature. It is named so because of its evenness or monotony, or from a fancied resemblance between its rhythm and the cooing of a dove. It is a highly artificial style of prose, characterized by a kind of rhythm as well as rhyme. It is a species of diction to which the Arabic language, because of its structure, the mathematical precision of its manifold formations and the essential assonance of numerous derivatives from the same root supplying the connexion between the sound and signification of words, peculiarly lends itself. (<http://Dictionary.reference.com>).

The Makkans also used special sacred divining arrows (*azlām*) without points, which were kept at the *kaʿba*, to make supernatural enquiries about courses of action. In fact Arrows were used for divination, i.e., for ascertaining lucky or unlucky moments, or learning the wishes of the heathen gods, as to whether men should undertake certain actions or not. But all kinds of superstitions are condemned in the Qurʾān (Ali 1998:222). Also a sort of lottery or raffle practised by the pagan Arabs was described in (Q5:90): The most familiar was gambling by casting lots by means of arrows, on the principle of a lottery: the arrows were marked and served the same purpose as a modern lottery ticket. For example, the carcass of a slaughtered animal was divided into unequal parts. The marked arrows were drawn from a bag. Some were blank and those who drew them got nothing. Others indicated prizes, which were big or small. The principle on which the objection is based is: that even if there is no fraud, you gain what you have not earned, or lose on a mere chance. Division of meat in this way is here forbidden, as it is a form of gambling. (ibid:70). This practice was forbidden by the Qurʾān such as in (Q5:3) and also (Q5:90).

“Forbidden to you (for food) are: Dead meat (...) that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety (...)” (Q5:3)

“O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abominations of Satan’s handiwork: Eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper” (Q5: 90).

(ix) Ostentatious generosity

Among the customs of the Arabs in the days of ignorance, was this one, i.e. their ostentatious generosity, which later become forbidden by the Qurʾān:

“Nor those who spend of their substance, to be seen of men, but have no faith in Allāh and the last Day: If any take Satan for their intimate, what a dreadful intimate he is!” (Q4:38)

“And what burden were it on them if they had faith in Allāh and in the Last Day, and they spent out of what Allāh hath given them for sustenance? For Allāh had full knowledge of them.” (Q4:39).

1.7 Conclusion

Knowledge of the historical scenario of Makka and Madīna as well as the history of the advent of Islam constitute the context in which the Qur'ān was revealed. Having it in mind, the reader will be ready to appreciate the Qur'ānic text and feel free to come back to the context easily if it is needed to clarify the Qur'ānic text. This is the reason why I have dedicated this introductory chapter to the two famous towns of Makka and Madīna which I believe have an important influence on the Makkan and Madinan revelations.

It is important to note that Muḥammad first adopted a conciliatory policy among the Arab clans and towards the Jews (as is shown by the so-called “Constitution of Madīna⁷⁵”), yet after growing troubles in Madīna and the overt enmity of the Makkan, he had to turn to a more resolute attitude that led to greater battles, in Madīna itself (against the Jews) as well as in its surrounding area and Uḥud. The outcome of the Prophet's determination was the capture of Makka and the defeat of the Madinan Jews who openly opposed his message and prophethood. Muḥammad managed to make Madīna a unique Islamic state whose exemplary character is seen as the model for all future Islamic societies. For Islam as a religion, Madīna was the place where almost all decisive elements of the Islamic creed took definite shape. The longer Madinan *sūras* of the Qur'ān have been deeply influential in the formation of Muslims life. Many details of rituals such as fasting and the direction of prayer were introduced during Muḥammad's Madinan years, and his discussions with the Madinan Jews on theological matters helped to formulate and clarify his message (Schöller 2003:367-371).

In the following chapter, I shall provide an overview on the Qur'ān as a Scripture.

⁷⁵ Constitution of Medina: According to R. B. Serjeant, verses 101-104 of *sūra* 11 of the Qur'ān make reference to the Constitution. The Constitution of Medīna, also known as the Charter of Medina, was drafted by the Islamic prophet Muḥammad in 622. It constituted a formal agreement between Muḥammad and all of the significant tribes and families of Yathrib (later known as Medina), including Muslims, Jews, and pagans. The document was drawn up with the explicit concern of bringing to an end the bitter inter tribal fighting between the clans of the Banū Aws and banū Khazraj within Medina. To this effect it instituted a number of rights and responsibilities for the Muslim, Jewish, and pagan communities of Medina bringing them within the fold of one community the Umma (www.wikipedia.com).

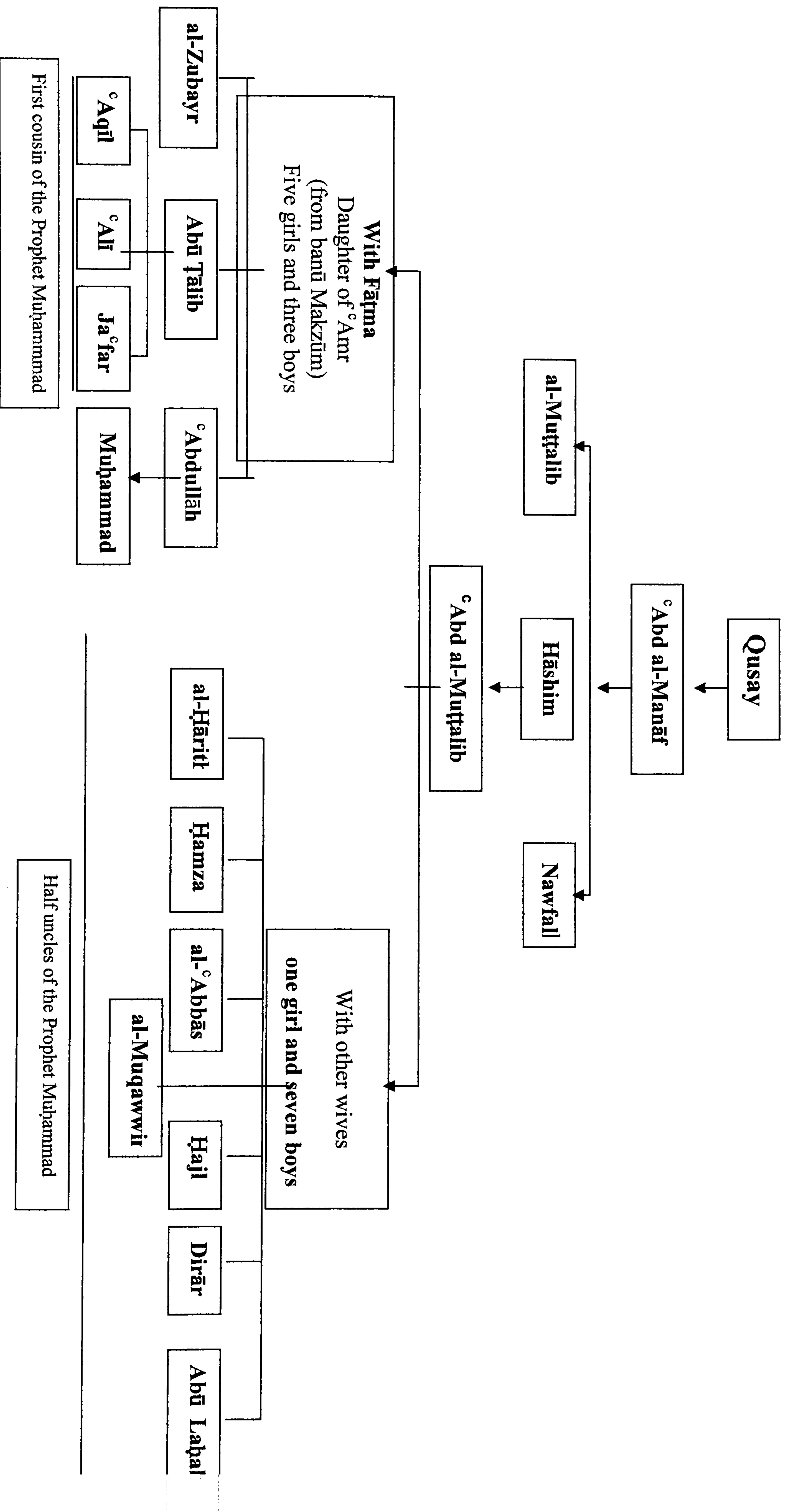


Figure 1.1: Genealogy of the Prophet Muhammad adapted from R. Caratini (1993:94)

Chapter Two

The Qur'ān as a Scripture

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we shall attempt to introduce the Qur'ān, the holy book of the Muslims which came after the two previous scriptures the Torah and the Bible. According to the traditional Muslim view the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Classical Muslim Scholars such as Suyuti, Zarkashi, al-Qattan developed a huge body of literature around the sacred nature of the Qur'ān which they named as “the Sciences of the Qur'ān” (*ʿulūm al-Qur'ān*) which include many features, these are: speech of God (*kalām Allāh*), inspiration (*al-waḥy*⁷⁶), revelation (*al-tanzīl*), inimitability of the Qur'ān (*ʿijāz al-Qur'ān*), Makkan and Madinan *sūras*, the clear and unclear *āyas* (*al-muḥkam wa al-mutashābih*), abrogating and abrogated⁷⁷ (*al-nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*), the compilation of the Qur'ān (*jamaʿ al-Qur'ān*), and the language of the Qur'ān (*lughat al-Qur'ān*) which includes linguistic and stylistic features such as parables, metaphors and similitudes (*al-amthāl*) in order to be considered as a holy Scripture the Qur'an must fulfill all these sciences they claimed. We are not going to define all the sciences of the Qur'ān here, as some are not relevant to the discussion in hand. Rather, we shall give an outline of those that will define the sacred nature of the Qur'ān. Firstly, we shall see how the revelation took place, and to whom it was revealed, and then list the major elements that characterise the Qur'ān as a divine text. We will conclude by investigating the disciplines of the Qur'ān, and describing the Qur'ān as it appears nowadays.

2.2 Muḥammad, Messenger of God according to the Qur'ān itself

For Muslims, Muḥammad was the chosen Prophet of God, to whom the Holy Qur'ān was revealed through the angel Gabriel (Jibrīl⁷⁸). The revelation period spanned twenty-three

⁷⁶ *al-waḥy*: ‘communication’. It is a two person relation term where there is a transmission by means of sign or signs, and there is no reciprocity between the two, that is to say, the relation once established, cannot be absolutely reversed. It is strictly unilateral communication. It is not necessarily verbal. There is always a sense of mysteriousness, secrecy and privacy. In other words, this type of communication is esoteric. There is a perfect communication between the two, but it is made in such a way that the context of communication is difficult to understand for the outsiders. (Toshihiko, 1964:156-158).

⁷⁷ *Nāsikh* and *mansūkh*: “Doctrine of abrogation in the Qur'ān according to which a verse revealed later may abrogate one revealed earlier; this resolves the problem of any apparent conflict etc. The Arabic word *nāsikh* designates the “abrogating” verse while *mansūkh*, indicates that the verse has been “abrogated”. The Qur'ān itself refers to this very principle of abrogation in *āya* 106 of *sūrat al-baqarah* and *āya* 101 of Q16. It must be stressed here that the abrogated verses still remain a part of the Qur'ān (Netton 1997:191).

years, beginning in Makka, when the Prophet Muḥammad was forty years old, continuing after his immigration to Madina (*ḥijra*), and ending just before he died (when he was around sixty-three years old). The Prophet Muḥammad was thus the messenger who came to announce his religion, which was new even to him, and so made him feel doubtful. However, the following verse was revealed to him by God in order to make him more confident about his message:

“If you were in doubt as to what We have revealed unto you, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before you: the truth has indeed come to you from your Lord: so be in nowise of those in doubt”⁷⁹. (Q10:94)

From this verse we can deduce that the Prophet Muḥammad was related to the people of other monotheistic religions. Moreover, we are told by the Qur'ān that those people knew from their holy books, that a Prophet called Muḥammad would come with a new holy book and announce his religion such as it is mentioned in the verse below:

“Those who follow the messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures) - in their Law and the Gospel- for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure) ...” (Q7:157)

We are told from the above verse that the Prophet was illiterate (*ummī*⁸⁰). The Prophet Muḥammad had probably heard about the Bible, although in the Qur'ān several stories are similar to those in the Bible, but the Prophet Muḥammad had no knowledge of them before he received the revelation. We are informed about this historical fact by the following *āya*:

“This is part of the tidings of the things unseen, which We reveal unto you (O Messenger!) by inspiration: You were not with them when they cast lots with arrows, as to which of them should be charged with the care of Mary: Nor were you with them when they disputed (the point)” (Q3:44).

The Prophet Muḥammad also confirmed that his religion was merely a continuity of the other two monotheistic religions that were revealed before him, Judaism and Christianity:

“Before this We wrote in the Psalms, after the message (given to Moses): ‘My servants,

⁷⁸ Jibrīl: The angel Gabriel. He is one of the greatest of all Islamic angels since he was the channel through which the holy Qur'ān was revealed from God to the Prophet Muḥammad. He is mentioned by name three times in the Qur'ān such as in (Q2:97-98) and in verse 4 of *sūrat at-Tahrīm* and elsewhere referred to by names like ‘The Spirit’. (Netton, 1997:136).

⁷⁹ For the translation of Qur'ānic *āyās* see: Ali, Abdullah Yusuf (1998). *The Holy Qur'ān: Translation and Commentary*. Birmingham: IPCI.

⁸⁰ *Ummī*: Illiterate, unlettered. The Prophet Muḥammad in the Qur'ān, in vv. 157 and 158 of *sūrat al-A'rāf* is described as *al-nabī al-ummī*: the phrase is usually translated by Muslims as “the illiterate Prophet”, ‘the unlettered Prophet’. (Netton, 1997:253)

the righteous, shall inherit the earth. Verily in this (Qur'ān) is a message for people who would (truly) worship Allāh". (Q21:105-106)

"Then, in their wake, We followed them up with (others of) Our Messengers: We sent after them Jesus, son of Mary, and bestowed on him the Gospel; and We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. But the Monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them . . ." (Q57:27)

In contrast with other prophets who founded new religions, the Prophet Muḥammad was the only one who was confident with his message and the eloquent divine language of the Qur'ān. He was also exempted from any divine miracle, other than the Qur'ān, making him one of the stronger messengers.⁸¹

2.3 Major Elements of the Qur'ān

In this section we will detail the major elements involved in the Qur'ān: the prophets (and their preaching), holy Scriptures, stories, legal legislation, principles of faith (monotheism, prophethood, resurrection, reward and punishment), creation as a manifestation of divine revelation, the pagans, scientific facts and admonition, and the compilation of the Qur'ān.

2.3.1 Prophets

The term ('prophet' – al-nabī) appears many times in the Qur'ān⁸²; the word (*rasūl*), which means 'messenger', appears only 117 times, and its variations appear even more. Prophets and messengers came as a means of guidance from God to mankind, bringing with them God's scripture:

"We sent a foretime Our messengers with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the balance, that men may stand forth in justice . . ." (Q57:25)

Every nation was sent a prophet; according to one *ḥadīth* (prophetic tradition), it was reported by Abū Oumāma⁸³ that Abū Dharr had asked the Prophet Muḥammad about the number of prophets who had been sent to Earth, to which the Prophet answered: 124000 prophets amongst which there were 315 messengers. The Qur'ān mentions only a few of them: Ādam (Adam), Nūḥ (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Ismā'īl (Ishmael), Ishāq (Isaac), Lūṭ (Lot), Ya'kūb

⁸¹Cf. to Buhl, Fr. (1982). 'Muḥammad'. In *Encyclopedia of Islam*. vol.7; pp.685-703.

⁸² °Abdul-Bāqī, Muḥammad Fu'ād (1996/1417H). *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahrass li-alfāḍ al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth.

⁸³ cf.to Godin, Asmaa (1999:17). *Les Sciences Du Coran*. Paris: Al-Qalam.

(Jacob), Yūsuf (Joseph), Mūsa (Moses), Hārūn (Aaron), Dāwūd (David), Sūlaimān (Solomon), Ilyās (Elias), Alyas'a (Elisha), Yūnus (Jonah), Ayyūb (Job), Zakariyā (Zaccharie), Yaḥyā (John), ʿĪsā (Jesus), Idrīs, Hūd (Hood), Dhul Kifl, Shuʿaib, Ṣāliḥ (Saleh), Luqmān, Dhul Qarnain, ʿUzair (Ezra), Muḥammad. Indeed, the Qur'ān makes it clear that the number of prophets and messengers is much larger than it may seem, and that although to each and every nation God has sent a messenger, not all are known:

“We did a foretime send messengers before you: of them there are some whose story We have related to you, and some whose story We have not related to thee. It was not (possible) for any messenger to bring a Sign except by the leave of Allāh . . .” (Q40:78)

“To every people (was sent) a messenger: when their messenger comes (before them), the matter will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be wronged”. (Q10:47)

2.3.2 Preaching by Prophets

God can send Prophets at any time and to any people in order to remind them in the light of the initial revelation, thus obliging them to remain faithful to the instructions given to them by their own respective Prophets. The experiences of mankind that have accumulated over the centuries illustrate to us that humans are forgetful of God, follow the wrong way, and thus cannot find the right way which leads them to the true God. As a general rule, the Prophets would announce the same unique message, which is that of monotheism. A representative *sūra* where the same preaching is exercised by all Prophets is Q11:

(i) Prophet Muḥammad:

“Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a warner and a bringer of good tidings”. (Q11:2)

(ii) Prophet Noah:

“We had certainly sent Noah to his people saying: ‘Indeed, I am to you a clear warner that you do not worship except Allāh’. (Q11:25-26)

(iii) Prophet Hūd:

“And to ʿĀd, We sent their brother Hūd. He said: ‘O my people, worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him’. (Q11:50)

(iv) Prophet Ṣāliḥ:

“And to Thamūd, We sent their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said: ‘O my people, worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him’. (Q11:61)

(v) Prophet Shuʿaib:

“And to Madyan, We sent their brother Shu‘aib. He said: ‘O my people, worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him”. (Q11:84)

Similarly, in:

“Not a messenger did We send before you without this inspiration sent by Us to him: that there is no God but I; therefore, worship and serve Me”. (Q21:25)

This proclamation, as demonstrated by the following *āya* (as well as by Q35:24 and Q13:7), has been repeatedly addressed to mankind because God has sent Prophets to all nations:

“For We assuredly sent amongst every people a messenger with the command, serve Allāh, and eschew evil: Of the people were some whom Allāh guided, and some on whom error became inevitably established. So travel through the earth, and see what the end was of those who denied the truth”. (Q16:36)

Although the message proclaimed to every nation by their different prophets was always the same, it was not proclaimed in the same way. The way in which the prophets expressed the message, its form and its linguistic presentation were ad hoc to the nations concerned in order to suit their conditions of life, and to be compatible with their circumstances, thus influencing them and showing them the right path they were required to follow:

“We sent not a messenger except to teach in the language of his own people, in order to make things clear to them. Now Allāh leaves a straying those whom He pleases: and He is exalted in power, full of wisdom”. (Q14:4)

2.3.3 Holy Scriptures Mentioned in the Qur'ān

The Prophet Muḥammad regarded the Jews and their Torah, and the Christians and their Gospels, as religious communities whom Scriptures were in accordance with most of the Qur'ānic message. I believe this is expected as these previous Scriptures, like the Qur'ān, were also revealed by Allāh. He also considered the message of Islam as continuity of the other revealed Books (the Torah and the Gospels), as mentioned in:

“And this is a Book which We have sent down, bringing blessings, and confirming the revelations which came before it: that you may warn the mother of cities and all around her. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in this Book, and they are constant in guarding their prayers”. (Q6:92)

This demonstrates the fact that the pluralities of the three revealed Books (the Torah, the Gospels, and the Qur'ān) share one united message that calls for the worship of God. According to the Qur'ān, this message had existed with God in the heavens, and that only one Scripture would be eternal, the ‘matrix of the book’:

“And verily, it is in the mother of the Book, in Our presence, high in dignity, full of wisdom”. (Q43:4)

The matrix of the Book was communicated to different peoples in their own respective languages; the Qur'ān is thus the Arabic text of this celestial original Book. By its divine origin, the revealed Scripture holds in it the marks of its infallible veracity, as we are admonished by the following *āya*:

“O mankind! Verily, there has come to you a convincing proof from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light that is manifest”. (Q4:174)

The Qur'ān affirms this unity of revelation and notes that it is also mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel, and that these Scriptures acknowledge Muḥammad and his message:

“Those who follow the messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own Scriptures in the Law and the Gospel”. (Q7:157)

Johannes Pedersen (1914:110-115, cf. to Madigan 2001:7) examined the Qur'ān phrase '*Ahl al-kitāb*', which refers to Jews and Christians and other communities with a Scripture, and is usually translated as 'People of the Book'. He felt these groups should not be understood as 'people who possess a revelation fixed in writings, but rather as the possessors of the Book (i.e. the heavenly one) which alone contains wisdoms.

The Qur'ān referred to the previous Scriptures by various names such as 'sheets' or 'leaves' (*ṣuḥuf*) - the sheets (*ṣuḥuf*) of Ibrāhīm and Mūsa, and also known as 'Book' or 'Scripture' (*kitāb*) such as in the verses below:

There is reference to The Torah (*Tawrāt*⁸⁴) of Mūsa such as in:

“But those will prosper who purify themselves, and glorify the name of their Guardian-Lord, and (lift their hearts) in prayer. No (behold), ye prefer the life of this world; But the Hereafter is better and more enduring. And this is in the Books of the earliest (revelation) the Books of Abraham and Moses”. (Q87:14-19)

It is also mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān such as in:

“It was We who revealed the Law (to Moses): therein was guidance and light. We ordained therein for them: Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal. But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. If any fail to judge by the light of what Allāh has revealed, they are no better than the wrong-doers”. (Q5:44-45)

⁸⁴ *Tawrāt*: is the Arabic transliteration of the Hebrew word Torah (also known as the “Five Books of Moses” or the “Pentateuch”) which Muslims believe was a holy book of Islam given by Allah to Mūsa (Moses). Some theorize that the *Tawrāt* may refer to the entire Tanach or Old Testament. Muslims believe that the *Tawrāt* has undergone “tahrīf”, that is, the meaning or words were distorted, passages were suppressed, others added, etc. (www.wikipedia.com).

There is reference to The Psalms (*Zabūr*⁸⁵) to Dāwūd such as in:

“Before this, We wrote in the Psalms after the message given to Moses: My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth”. (Q21:105)

There is reference to The Gospel (*Injīl*⁸⁶) to ʿĪsā such as in:

“Muḥammad is the messenger of Allāh; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, but compassionate amongst each other. You will see them bow and prostrate themselves in prayer, seeking grace from Allāh and his good pleasure. On their faces are their marks, being the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Torah; and their similitude in the Gospel is: Like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, filling the showers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the unbelievers with rage at them. Allāh has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a great reward”. (Q48:29)

I am in agreement with Von Denffer's⁸⁷ opinion that the pre-Qur'ānic scriptures, besides carrying the same message about God and His creation, also brought specific instructions addressed directly to particular communities of people, at given points of time in history, and in particular circumstances, such as the Jewish or Christian communities. Revelations before the Qur'ān, and hence scriptures before it, were in many of their details situation-oriented in nature and therefore confined to their particular frameworks. This also explains the continuity of revelation. With changing circumstances and different situations, new guidance from Allāh was required. If the revelation and Scripture were not completely universal in nature, the revelation itself would not be final.

The Qur'ān to Muḥammad, the last revelation

For Muslim scholars, Muḥammad was the last messenger from Allāh to mankind, and he received the final revelation from God to all mankind. Therefore, the Scripture containing this revelation is the last of the Holy Scriptures. Again, the main message of the Qur'ān is the same as in the previous revelations and Books, but the admonition and instructions by which it provides guidance for mankind are of a universal nature. This means that these moral

⁸⁵ *Zabūr*: or Psalm is the holy book of the Sebo'un which is equated by some scholars with Psalms, is, according to Islam, one of the Holy Book revealed by God before the Qur'ān (the others mentioned in the Qur'ān being the *Tawrāt* and *Injīl*). (www.wikipedia.com).

⁸⁶ *Injīl*: or Gospel, the teachings of Jesus and the apostles; the Christian revelation. The story of Christ's life and teachings, esp. as contained in the first four books of the New Testament, namely Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. (www.wikipedia.com).

⁸⁷ Cf. to Von Denffer, Ahmad (1983:16) *An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'ān*. Leicester: The Islamic Foundation.

instructions could apply to all situations, at any time. This last revelation corresponds to man's position on the earth and in history.⁸⁸

2.3.3.1 The Composition of the Qur'ān Compared to Other Scriptures

In her study, Neuwirth (2006)⁸⁹ compared the division of the Holy Scriptures, i.e., the *sūra*, the *Parashah* and the *Pericope*. Her aim was to adopt the same process of pericopization that happened to the Christian and Jewish Holy Books and compare to the process of collecting the Qur'ān. She claims that the ancient division of the Qur'ān into sections, some of which may already have been called *sūras* during the Prophet's lifetime, has ruled out a later pericopization such as occurred in Judaism and Christianity. Both Judaic and Christian orthodoxy bind Biblical texts to particular temporal frames. Neuwirth further adds that the Pentateuchal narratives, which brought the historical record up to the eve of the conquest of Canaan, together with the weekly lesson from the Prophets, were read aloud in the synagogue from beginning to end. The public reading was completed triennially in Palestine, annually in Babylonia, and immediately the reading would begin again. In an analogous way, the Gospels in the orthodox churches - having replaced in Christianity the Torah as the core of scriptures - are distributed over the course of the year, "cut" into pericopes (Greek *perikope*) and thus reflect the Jewish reading of weekly chapters of the Torah (Hebrew *Parashah*). She also claims that this cycle of readings from the core of the scripture is accompanied, as in Judaism, by a second sequence of texts taken from other parts of the scriptures. The Pauline letters (Greek *apostolos*) and additional readings from the historical or prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible (Greek *propheteia*) are meant to elucidate the pericopes from the core texts, the Gospels. This, of course, continues the tradition of the readings from the Prophets in Judaism (Hebrew *haftarah*), a corpus undisputed in its rank as a vital complement and a necessary exegetical context for the Torah. As against that, Neuwirth argues that no annual cycle of scriptural reading exists in Islam and that the Qur'ānic text has never been divided into required weekly or daily portions to be read out in public services. That means to her that a continuous recollection of salvation history from creation to redemption, as in Christianity, does not take place during the weekly ritual nor is the believers' predicates and salvation - their ever again being saved by divine intervention, as in Judaism, made present through the weekly service. *Sūras* as such, even if arranged in an annual cycle of recitations, would not

⁸⁸ Von Denffer (ibid:17)

⁸⁹ Neuwirth. Angelica (2006:169-176). 'Sūra' in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, vol 5, Leiden: Brill.

fulfill the task of the *parashah* or *perikope* to “represent” salvation history. Reflective as the *sūras* are of certain stages of the proto-Muslim communal development, they lack interest in an extended linear memorial representation of salvation history in its entirety. Yet the Qur'ān has been justly credited with having generated “a ceremonial of textual repetition with a pronouncedly obsessional character” (al-Azmeh, Muslim canon). This is, of course, due to its very structure, which predisposes it to be chanted. As the reciter with his chant re-enacts the practice of the Prophet's own recitation, he is, like the Prophet, free to select “whatever is easy for him to recite” (cf. Q73:20) be it an entire *sūra* or only a section of it. (Neuwirth, *ibid*)

2.3.3.2 The Qur'ān as a holy writing

Daniel Madigan (2001:3-7) in his book “The Qur'ān Self Image: Writings and Authority in Islam's Scripture” provides a new definition of what should be understood by a Scripture which he rather called a ‘holy writing’. His aim is to bring clarity on the meaning of the word ‘*kitāb*’ by referring to the Qur'ān self understanding view. He quotes several verses of the Qur'ān where it defined itself as a *kitāb* of divine origine. The apparent similarities between some of the Qur'ān's ideas on revelation and holy writings and those found elsewhere in the Near East have been closely examined by western writers he claimed and the Qur'ān makes no claim to novelty in this regard. Indeed it uses words derived from the root k-t-b mostly to refer not to the Qur'ān itself but to phenomena with which we are familiar from other religious contexts as for example: the recording of all that is destined to happen such as in (Q3:145; Q58:21) and about divine decrees binding either on humanity such as in (Q4:24) or on God himself such as in (Q6:12;54) or about the inventory of all that exists such as in (Q10:61; Q11:6) and about the registers of each individual's good and evil deeds, written either by God himself such as in (Q3:181) or by heavenly agents such as in (Q10:21). The way all these are alluded to in the Qur'ān makes it clear that Muḥammad's listeners were quite familiar with the idea of such divine writings. Arthur Jeffery (1964: 9-14 cf. to Madigan *ibid*: 5-6) among others documents similar notions in Mesopotamian religions in Biblical and post-Biblical writings, and in Zoroastrian sources too. Madigan (*ibid*) added that Islam is commonly characterised as a religion of the Book, not only in popular parlance but also in scholarly circles, and is even considered by many the most fully developed examples of this type of religion. The word ‘Scripture’ occupy a position and play a role in faith and practices of Muslims that is much more exalted and central than perhaps in other religions. However Islam is also characterised by an almost entirely oral approach to its Scripture. The simple ritual and the recitation of the Qur'ān that forms part of it are carried out from memory and it

is very common amongst Muslim to find some of them who memorised the entire sacred text by heart. Muslims acknowledge that the book is at the heart of their religion. (ibid: 3-4)

Regarding the conclusions made by Madigan in his book, Andrew Rippin says, I quote: “it provides a corrective to a generally accepted supposition and an impetus for further thinking about the nature of ‘Scripture in Islam’.” And Michael Sells added, I quote: “this book marks a major advance in studying the Qur'ān early Islamic history, and Islam's self-understanding. Daniel Madigan has grounded his conclusions in a cogere reading of the Qur'ān and other primary texts, and shows a sophisticated understanding of issues of revelation, and prophecy.”

2.3.4 Principles of Faith

These are subdivided into: monotheism (*al-tawḥīd*), prophethood (*al-nubuwwah*), resurrection (*al-ba'ath, al-ma'ād*), reward and punishment (*al-jazā' wal-'iqāb*).

(i) Monotheism

Islam is a monotheistic faith that is hinged upon belief in God only. During life, a human is required to show obedience and submission to the will of God. It is in this way that Islām conceives itself as the orthodox religion, which is the definitive and true religion, as shown in the following *āya*:

“The religion for Allāh is Islam (submission to His Will): Nor did the People of the Book dissent therefore except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny the signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account”. (Q3:19)

Islām is the religion that has established the authentic declaration of faith in God in all its original purity, but is also the religion of orthopraxy, meaning it is the religion of absolute devotion to God, and unconditional and complete submission to His will, in all aspects of human life. It is upon this basis that Muslims consider themselves as the community of a level-headed, middle-path:

“Thus have We made of you an *umma* (nation) justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the messenger a witness over yourselves . . .” (Q2:143)

The Qur'ānic revelation is considered as a lighthouse of a sanctified mode of existence, based on the faith unto Him, Who revealed himself in the Qur'ān: God (or in Arabic, Allāh):

“The messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one of them believeth in Allāh, His angels, His books, and His messengers . . .” (Q2:285)

The first part of the Muslim's declaration of faith (*shahāda*) is declared in the above Qur'ānic

verse, putting emphasis on the most important aspect- strict monotheism that constitutes the salient characteristic of Islam: 'I testify that there is no God but He'. According to the Qur'ān, this confession is the echo of another testimony proclaimed by God himself, which is described as follows:

“There is no God but He: that is the witness of Allāh, His angels, and those endued with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no God but He, the Exalted in power, the Wise”. (Q3:18)

God is the first witness of the faith. He has guaranteed the truthfulness of the revelation and has given official recognition of all His authority based upon it. Because it came directly from God, this testimony has an absolute value, and is restrictive for all of mankind, as described in the following *āya*:

“Say: He is Allāh, The One and Only; Allāh, the Eternal, Absolute. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him”. (Q:112)

God testifies the declaration of faith, which has a great importance in Islām, yet also gives juridical prescriptions, in detail, that rule ethical life, and thus the social and political life for each individual of the community. Men must submit to this with an absolute obedience to the sovereign will of God, and accept it as a required norm from God, and to implement it because God says in the Qur'ān:

“But Allāh tells you the truth, and He shows the right way”. (Q33:4)

(ii) Prophethood

All Prophets were given a sign or a miracle so as to prove their prophethood to their people. The Qur'ān mentions many of them, such as the miracle given to the Prophet 'Īsā:

“And appoint him a messenger to the children of Israel, (with this message): I have come to you, with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave: And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead by Allāh's leave . . .”
(Q3:49)

Indeed God says in another verse:

“Ask the children of Israel how many clear signs We have sent them . . .” (Q2:211)

Despite all of these miracles, the majority of people rejected their Prophets:

“Then after him (Noah) We sent many messengers to their peoples: they brought them clear signs, but they would not believe what they had already rejected beforehand. Thus do We seal the hearts of the transgressors”. Q10:74)

For example, the people of Moses:

“Then after them We sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with our signs. But they were arrogant . . . , they said: ‘This is indeed evident sorcery!’” (Q10:75-76)

The disbelievers of Makka were in no way different to disbelievers of previous generations; they rejected the call of the Prophet Muḥammad, instead asking him for many miracles, such as:

“They say: ‘We shall not believe in thee, until thou cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth, or (until) thou have a garden of date trees and vines, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst, carrying abundant water. No we shall not even believe in thy mounting until thou send down to us a book that we could read . . .’” (Q17:90-93)

God, however, anticipated such a reaction and showed them the miracle:

“Even if We did send unto them angels, and the dead did speak unto them, and We gathered together all things before their eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah’s plan. But most of them ignore the truth”. (Q6:111)

(iii) Predictions of the Qur'ān

We shall distinguish the two types of prediction mentioned in the Qur'ān: those of this world, and those concerning the hereafter.

(a) Worldly Predictions

Some predictions were related to worldly events that were to come, such as the victory in the battle of Badr:

“Soon will their multitude be put to flight, and they will show their backs”. (Q54:45)

Or the victory of the Romans against the Persians:

“The Roman Empire has been defeated-In a land close by; but they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious-Within a few years. With Allah is the decision, In the past and in the future: On that Day shall the believers rejoice”. (Q30:2-4)

The eventual conquest of Makka:

“Truly did Allah fulfil the vision for his messenger: You shall enter the sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, with minds secure, heads shaved, hair cut short, and without fear. For He knew what you knew not, and He granted, besides this, a speedy victory”. (Q48:27).

Another prediction was that which mentioned that the Qur'ān will remain unrivalled and inimitable for all of eternity:

“Say: If the whole of mankind and Jinn were to gather together to produce the like of

this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support". (Q17:88)

(b) Predictions on Resurrection and Reward /Punishment

Different types of prediction are mentioned in the Qur'ān, such as the description of the Day of Judgment as part of eschatology, and the description of Heaven and Hell as part of reward and punishment:

"I do call to witness the Resurrection Day". (Q75:1)

"He (man) questions: when is the Day of Resurrection?" (Q75:6)

"At length, when the sight is dazed, and the moon is buried in darkness, and the sun and moon are joined together, that Day will man say: Where is the refuge?" (Q75:7-10)

"Some faces, that Day, will be humiliated". (Q88:2)

"Other faces that Day will be joyful". (Q88:8)

"But if any turn away and reject Allāh, Allāh will punish him with a mighty punishment". (Q88:23-24)

"For, that Day, his chastisement will be such as none (else) can inflict . . ." (Q89:25)

"To the righteous soul will be said: 'O you soul, in complete rest and satisfaction! Enter thou, then, among my devotees!' Yea, you enter My Heaven!" (Q89:27-30)

"O Mankind! If you have a doubt about the resurrection, consider that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a morsel of flesh . . ." (Q22:5)

2.3.5 Creation as a Manifestation of the Divine Revelation

In addition to the explicit knowledge that was communicated to men in days of old by the previous revelations, and incessant reminders by the prophets, the Qur'ān considered all creation to be a manifestation of the divine revelation.

God manifested himself in his creation: the Qur'ān considered that all men and the entire world, including the environment, are signs (*āyas*) of God: when these signs are observed attentively, they give an open access to the greatness and mercy of God. The Qur'ān gives the example of Prophet Abraham who recognised God after he observed and reflected deeply about the signs of God such as the sun (Q6:78), the moon (Q6:77), and the stars (Q6:76). Many *āyas* of the Qur'ān talk about Abraham and confirm that he was a good man, with a pure heart and righteous conduct. He also had a knowledge which led him to recognize God

as mentioned below:

“O my father! To me knowledge has come which has not reached you: so follow me: I will guide you to a way that is even and straight”. (Q19:43)

“We bestowed a foretime on Abraham his rectitude of conduct, and well were We acquainted with him”. (Q21:51)

“Verily among those who followed his Way was Abraham. Behold! He approached his Lord with a sound heart”. (Q37:83-84)

By his sensitivity to his Lord, Abraham recognised the creations of God, such as the Moon, Sun and stars, and the contingent nature of the world. It was only then that he was able to turn his face towards the God of heaven and earth:

“For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allāh”. (Q6:79)

According to Qur'ānic reasoning, the one who is able to understand the signs of the universe will no longer remain a polytheist, but rather he or she will turn towards the one unique God. The Qur'ān always mentions such signs, which have been designed for people who have knowledge, and are able to hear, understand and think about it:

“And among His signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts: verily, in that are signs for those who reflect. For those who know. For those who hearken. For those who are wise”. (Q30:21-24)

“Explain the signs in detail to a people that understand”. (Q30:28)

“See they not that Allāh enlarges the provision and restricts it, to whomsoever He pleases? Verily, in that are signs for those who believe”. (Q30:37)

The direct question ‘do you not understand?’ is frequently asked in the Qur'ān, and emphasises the importance of reason (*al-^laql*) in our continuous search for God as our Creator as well as the creator of the universe. This means that what is demanded is not merely blind faith, but an acceptance that is reflected upon deeply at first, and then determined on an absolute submission to the will of God, which is the logical consequence of the numerous signs of God. For example:

“You people of the Book! Why dispute you about Abraham, when the Law and the Gospel were not revealed till after him? Have you no understanding?” (Q3:65)

I believe that this shows the belief in many gods is totally absurd and illogical.

2.3.6 The Pagans

The Prophet Muḥammad had to face a problem in his debate against the people of Makka, as although they did recognise the existence of God as the creator and the Lord of the universe, they persisted in associating with Him many other gods, following then the inveterate polytheism of the old Arabs. To them it was said:

“The answer will be: This is because, when Allāh was invoked as the only object of worship, you did reject faith, but when partners were joined to Him, you believed! The command is with Allāh, Most High, and Most Great!” (Q40:12)

However, the Qur'ān considers that such ‘associations’ would shift the harmony of the world into chaos, as follows:

“If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! But glory to Allāh, the Lord of the throne: High is He above what they attribute to Him”. (Q21:22)

The belief in many gods was totally absurd, because every creation would eventually be returned to God as the unique Creator, as seen in the following Qur'ānic examples:

“Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one unit of creation, before We clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?

And We have set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them, and We have made therein broad highways (between mountains) for them to pass through: that they may receive guidance”. (Q21:30-31)

“See they not that We have made the night for them to rest in and the day to give them light? Verily, in this are signs for any people that believe!” (Q27:86)

“A sign for them is the earth that is dead: We do give it life, and produce grain there from, of which you eat”. (Q36:33)

As in many other *sūras*, the same topic of unique creator is referred to, such as can be seen in (Q36:34-40), (Q51:20-21), (Q20:53-54), (Q26:6-8), (Q12:105), (Q29:44).

According to the following *āya* of the Qur'ān there is no reason to deny this state of affairs:

“Or, who originates creation, then repeats it, and who gives you sustenance from heaven and earth? Can there be another god besides God? Say: ‘Bring forth your argument, if you are telling the truth!’” (Q27:64)

The helplessness of the venerated divinities is more than obvious, as in (Q7:191-194), (Q16:20), (Q13:16), (Q25:3), and (Q6:71):

“Yet they have taken, besides Him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves

created; that have no control of hurt or good to themselves; nor can they control death nor life nor resurrection". (Q25:3)

Among all creatures, the human race is a particular sign of God's divine power, and the most concrete manifestation of God's action, and this is described by the following *āyas*:

"See they not that it is We Who have created for them among the things which our hands have fashioned, cattle, which are under their dominion?" (Q36:71-72)

"It is Allāh Who made your habitations homes of rest and quiet for you, out of skins of animals, tents for dwellings, which you find so light and handy when ye travel and when ye stop in your travels; and out of their wool, and their soft fibres (between wool and hair), and their hair, rich stuff and articles of convenience to serve you for a time. It is Allāh Who made out of the things He created; some things to give you shade . . ." (Q16: 80-81)

Interestingly, even marriage is considered as a sign of God, as we are admonished by:

"Another of His signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquillity". (Q30:21)

2.3.7 Scientific Facts in the Qur'ān

Nowadays, many books are being written on this topic, such as the famous *La Bible, le Coran et la Science* (The Bible, the Qur'ān and Science)⁹⁰. There are, naturally, many verses of the Qur'ān that can be interpreted as scientific facts according to recent discoveries of the last century, but we should be very careful when dealing with this topic, and always bear in mind that the Qur'ān is neither a scientific book, nor a book open to any scientific discussion, otherwise it would be a restricted book despite the Qur'ān clearly describing itself as a book for providing guidance to mankind. It is for this reason that references to scientific facts are very brief and not descriptive. However, verses on scientific facts are interpreted as miracles of the Qur'ān due to the fact that at the time of the Prophet, these scientific aspects were completely unknown to the Prophet himself and his people. Furthermore, even if such aspects are very brief, they are clear enough to give an understanding of what is described in them, and they conform perfectly well to modern scientific advancements. There are numerous *āyas*, for example, *āyas* describing the formation of human life:

"Verily, We created man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him: So We gave him (the gifts), of hearing and sight". (Q76:2)

⁹⁰Cf. to Maurice Bucaille (1980). *La Bible, le Coran et la Science*. Paris: Seghers.

“Was he not a drop of sperm emitted in a lowly form?” (Q75:37)

“Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a foetus lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature . . .” (Q23:13-14)

There are also *āyas* on the creation of the Heaven and Earth, such as:

“Behold! In the creation of the heaven and the earth, and the alternation of night and day there are signs for men of understanding—Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): Our Lord! Not for naught hast thou created all this!” (Q3:190-191)

There are also *āyas* which describe the creation of the first man, Ādam, by God's own hands:

“O Mankind! Reverence Your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered like seeds countless men and women; reverence to Allāh through whom ye demand your mutual rights and reverence the wombs that bore you: for Allah ever watches over you”. (Q4:1)

Due to the above *āya*, Islam does not believe in the theory of man descending from apes, no matter what proof exists. Therefore, trying to interpret the story of the creation of Ādam and Eve as being a creation of some Neanderthal neo-human species is ‘almost as blasphemous as rejecting the verse in the first place!’ according to Qadhi⁹¹. While I share his view, I would also like to point out that nowadays it has become increasingly common to see modernistic interpreters of the Qur'ān, who are specialists in science but are unaccustomed to interpreting the Qur'ān, giving scientific explanations of certain verses of it, and therefore, their interpretation are far from the proper meaning of the original Arabic text.

Von Denffer mentions that science and scientific truths, thus, cannot be generally accepted as criteria for the genuineness, i.e., authenticity, and non-human origin of the Qur'ān. Muslims consider the Qur'ān to be guidance from Allāh, while science is a human endeavour. Muslims believe the Qur'ān to be guidance from Allāh under all circumstances, irrespective of whether science, which changes continuously, seems to be in support of it or not.⁹²

Bechir Torki⁹³, a specialist nuclear physicist at the University of Tunisia, says that the Qur'ān

⁹¹ Qadhi, Abu Ammar Yasir (1999:281). *An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'ān*. Birmingham: al-Hidāyah Publishing and Distribution.

⁹² Von Denffer (ibid 1983:157)

⁹³ Bechir Torki (cf. Talbi Mohamed and Bucaille, Maurice 1989:58). *Reflexions Sur Le Coran*. Paris: Seghers.)

is clearly a divine revelation and, to an extent, a book of science, so is not composed of scientific equations or theories but, rather, brightened by the nature of science. Likewise, we know that the Qur'ān is a rhetorical and literal miracle: this does not mean that it is a book of rhetoric, but one whose contents are enhanced by the best of rhetorical literature and stylistic mechanisms. The scientific miracle of the Qur'ān is as significant as the rhetorical miracle of the Qur'ān, and for this, he cites the following *āya*:

“Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones? No, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers phalanx”. (Q75:3-4)

The Qur'ān deliberately employs the word ‘phalanx’ because it is the smallest element of the entire body. Furthermore, we know nowadays that using fingerprints is the most reliable way of identifying people (in police investigations etc), and so every fingerprint is unique and cannot be mistaken for another one. The meaning of ‘to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers (phalanx)’ is to reconstitute the same person on the Day of Judgment, as he was before he died, with no risk of confusion. Torki, rethorked whether this is just a coincidence? If yes it is now easier to understand the Qur'ānic text thanks to modern science discovery. Although at the time of the revelation, no one except God would have been able to understand any of it.

To encounter the modern technological advancements and scientific discoveries during the 20th century, Muslim scientists began to focus on whether the Qur'ān contains scientific facts in an attempt to show the Muslim reader that the Qur'ān is compatible with modern times and with science in particular. Thus, we have seen recently new publications such as those by Dr Zakariya Hamimī (*al-ʿIjāz al-ʿIlmī fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*) (Scientific Inimitability in the Qur'ān) in which he provides detailed scientific discussion about geological problems as mentioned by Q52:6 and Q81:1. Similarly, Dr ʿAdnān al-Sharīf's *Min ʿIlm al-Ṭibb al-Qur'āni* (Introduction to Qur'ānic Medicine) which deals with medical matters that are referred to by the Qur'ān as in the different phases of the development of the foetus in the womb, the hearing system, the digestive system, etc.

2.3.8 Admonitions

This section will consider the meaning of admonitions through a few selected *āyas* of the Qur'ān. Indeed, God has already given numerous examples for mankind to use in order to guide himself/herself in this world, and for a better and more successful life in the Hereafter. This is through, for example, teaching mankind about God's omnipotence (*qudrat allāh*), the wrath of God (*ghaḍab allāh*) as well as teaching people about themselves, and conducting oneself well in this life:

“Praise be to Allāh the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds”. (Q1:2)

“They are on true guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper”. (Q2:5)

“Say: ‘O people of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among ourselves, Lord and patrons other than Allāh’; if they turn back, you say: ‘Bear witness that we at least are Muslims bowing to Allāh’s will’”. (Q3:64)

“O Mankind! Fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour of judgment will be a thing terrible!” (Q22:1)

“We have explained things in various ways in this Qur'ān, in order that may receive admonition, but it only increases their flight from the truth!” (Q17:41)

“Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish”. (Q88:21)

“Those who reject Our Signs, We shall gradually visit with punishment, in ways they perceive not”. (Q7:182)

The above can also be seen in various other *āyas*, such as Q57:20, Q10:26-27, and Q88:25-26.

2.4 Major Disciplines of the Qur'ān

In this section, several Qur'ānic notions, known as the sciences of the Qur'ān (*‘ulūm al-Qur'ān*), will be defined: the Speech of God; the inspiration; characteristics of the Qur'ān; Inimitability, Secret Tablet; Parables and similitude; abrogating and abrogation; clear and ambiguous; Makkan and Madinan; language of the Qur'ān.

2.4.1 The Revelation

Religious history has established the fact that the revelation is part of a religion by way of being the result of a divine creation, and not the invention of a human being. When a revelation is denied, then all discourse about God becomes futile. From a religious and phenomenological point of view, revelation, with a theological category, has two meanings: first, it constitutes the possibility of transcendence in expressing itself by auto-unveiling, auto-

manifestation, or auto-communication; secondly, it takes the factual dimension of this possibility into account as well. In other words, it is a realisation of this potentiality. Thus, according to Hagemann, the revelation is the one element of the phenomenology of a religion, and each religion needs to find a particular one.⁹⁴

The fact that God has revealed the Qur'ān himself constitutes an indisputable fact for that book. In this perspective, the contents of the Qur'ān are revealed knowledge. As it began to expose itself as the holy book of Islām, the knowledge that was being revealed would be able to reach human beings in two ways: firstly by the original revelation, then during the course of history and through the preachings of the Prophet.

2.4.2 The Revelation as Speech of God

For the Muslim believer, the Qur'ānic revelation is purely and simply the speech of God (*kalām Allāh*). According to Islamic history, the revelation was communicated word-by-word to the Prophet Muḥammad by the Angel Jibrīl through voices and visions (*waḥy*: verbal inspirations). Its contents correspond to the primordial scripture, which is preserved in the heavens above. As a written consignment of the speech of God in a most authentic way, the Qur'ān is considered to be a divine dictation, and thus assumed to be an absolute authority. Only God, the exclusive author of the Qur'ān is able to produce such a Book:

“Say: If the whole of mankind and jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support”. (Q17:88)

The proof that the Qur'ān in particular is the *kalām* (speech) of Allāh is that Allāh himself has referred to it as His *kalām* in the Qur'ān:

“If one of the Pagans asks thee for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the Word of Allāh . . .” (Q9:6)

“The Word of your Lord doth find its fulfilment in truth and in justice: None can change His Words: For He is the One Who Hears and Knows all”. (Q6:115)

“But the word of Allāh is Exalted to the heights”. (Q9:40)

The belief that the Qur'ān is the *kalām* of Allāh was indeed the belief of all of the companions, and the belief of the scholars after them. In fact no group amongst the Muslims denied this, but the only difference is that concerning the characteristics of this *kalām*, created or uncreated.

⁹⁴ Hagemann, L. (1986:312). ‘Revelation’. In *Encyclopedia Universalis*, pp312-315. Paris: Albin Michel.

There is no clear proof in the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīth* (tradition of the Prophet) and according to the statements of the scholars to say that the Qur'ān has not been dictated by God:

“Is it not His to create and to govern?” (Q7:54)

In the above verse, there is a clear distinction between the words ‘create’, which includes the world and all that is in it, and ‘govern’ which is His speech. The speech is, in essence, the basis of creation:

“For anything which We have willed, We but say the word, ‘Be!’ and it is”. (Q16:40)

It is on this basis, therefore, that Qadhi⁹⁵ claims that Allāh’s speech, by His very own will, is the cause of the creation, so it cannot be created by any other source, for if it were created as such, it would mean that a created characteristic has itself created another object and this is not possible! Only *the* creator (God) has this ability. Moreover, all creations have a beginning and an end; if the speech of God was created then this means that it will stop, but God has described in the Qur'ān His own attributes, among them the speech (*kalām Allāh*), which does not change with time:

“The most beautiful names belong to Allāh: So call on Him by them. (Q7:180)

He is the First and the Last . . .” (57:3)

Moreover, Allāh’s attributes are unique and do not resemble the attributes of His creation, therefore His are eternal and uncreated:

“There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees all things”. (Q42:11)

Due to its divine origin, the Qur'ānic revelations are considered to be infallible and unsurpassable. The Qur'ān is the superior text- a perpetual miracle that holds in itself the indubitable hallmarks of its divine origin: language, style and rhythm of the verses. Furthermore the legitimacy and the authenticity of the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad is established.

2.4.3 The Revelation as Verbal Inspiration from God according to the Qur'ān

In this section, the concept of *waḥy* (inspiration, or to communicate in a non-obvious or non-apparent manner) shall be dealt with. God communicated with all His Messengers through inspiration (*waḥy*), as it was the only method of communication, since the beginning of the world until the last of the Prophets, Muḥammad. God Himself says in the Qur'ān that He chose some of His Prophets and Messengers, and inspired them through His own message, in

⁹⁵ Qadhi, opcit (1999:34)

order to guide mankind:

“Thus He sends inspiration to you as He did to those before you . . . (Q42:3)

We said: ‘Get you down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve’. (Q2:38)

It could thus happen through a messenger:

“It is not fitting for a man that Allāh should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with Allāh’s permission, what Allāh wills . . .” (Q42:51)

This was the case, for example, when the Angel Gabriel (Jibrīl) brought the message to the Prophet Muḥammad. In it, God said:

“Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel - for he brings down the (revelation) to your heart by Allāh’s will, a confirmation of what went before, and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe”. (Q2:97)

A divinely revealed scripture is a holy book or collection of writings believed to have divine, rather than human, origins. Muslims believe God revealed scriptures to certain prophets to communicate His commandments and guidance to humanity. For Muslims, belief in the original scriptures revealed to Abraham (Scrolls), Moses (Torah, including the Ten Commandments), David (Psalms) and Jesus (Evangelium or original Gospel) is an essential component of faith. Indeed, one cannot be considered a Muslim unless one believes in these previous scriptures and their historical role in the spiritual development of humankind. The angel or heavenly Spirit Jibrīl (Gabriel) is believed to have transmitted divine communication from God to human prophets and personages (such as Mary, mother of Jesus). As such, Jibrīl figures prominently in the history of scriptural revelation, culminating with the holy book revealed to Muhammad. In 610 C.E., at the age of 40, while in spiritual retreat in the cave of Hira above Makka, Muhammad was visited by Jibrīl for the first time. During this encounter, Jibrīl revealed the first of many divine verses that would eventually comprise the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān is thus considered by Muslims to be the literal Speech of God given to Muḥammad in the Arabic language. (www.wikipedia.com)

2.4.4 Compilation of the Qur'ān

Jam' al-Qur'ān is the compilation of the Qur'ān. This process, during the Prophet's time, was carried out in two different ways: the first was orally, whereby each person would learn and memorise it. The second one was done by writing the verses on something that could be written on (such as leaves). These would then be compiled together, and according to al-Suyūṭī⁹⁶, the entire Qur'ān was consigned by, and written at the time of, the Prophet Muḥammad. However, it did not resemble a book of one volume, but rather a disorganised compilation of numerous documents.

Al-Ḥākim, in his exegesis *al-Mustadrak*⁹⁷, mentions that the Qur'ān had to be reassembled several times: the first was at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, the second at the time of the Caliphate of Abu Bakr after the battle of Yamāma (12 AH), and the third at the time of the Caliphate of °Uthmān, who declared the version as being the official one. However, the classification of *āyas* and the order of *sūras* were dictated by the Prophet Muḥammad himself, and were memorised by oral transmission at the same time. It is said that the Prophet himself was so fearful of forgetting the verse that was revealed to him, that he started repeating it before Jibrīl had even finished reciting it to him:

“Move not thy tongue concerning the Qur'ān to make haste therewith.

It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate”. (Q75:16-17)

It is also mentioned, in another verse, that the Prophet used to recite the Qur'ān at night with other believers:

“Your Lord doth know that you stand forth to prayer nigh two-thirds of the night, or a third of the night, and so does a party of those with you . . . You read of the Qur'ān as much as may be easy for you”. (Q73:20)

During the later periods, the Prophet also made sure that the Qur'ān was written down, and not just memorised. Al-Bukhārī⁹⁸ reports the following story: ‘when the *āya* (Q4:95) was revealed to the Prophet, he [the Prophet] said: ‘call Zaid b. Thābit for me, and tell him to bring the ink-pot and the scapula bone (i.e., paper and pen). When Zaid came, the Prophet told him: write:

“Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt and those who strive in the cause of Allāh with their goods and their persons . . .” (Q4:95)

⁹⁶cf. Godin, Asmaa (1999: 51). *Les Sciences Du Coran*. Paris: Al-Qalam.

⁹⁷ cf. Godin, Asmaa (ibid)

⁹⁸ cf. Qadhi (1999:131) opcit

At the time of the Prophet, many of the companions had in fact memorised the entire Qur'ān. The Qur'ān was also in written form and was not compiled between two covers but, rather, loose fragments that were owned by different people, such as some of the companions themselves, or the wives of the Prophet. After the death of the Prophet, Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq was chosen to be his successor, and was therefore in charge of Islamic affairs. During the battle of Yamāma, seventy companions, who had memorised the Qur'ān, were killed. Alarmed by such a great loss of life, which could have potentially led to the loss of the entire Qur'ān, it was decided that the fragments should be collected and incorporated into one manuscript. Zaid b. Thābit was responsible for this. The Qur'ān was preserved in its entirety, and it was ensured that none of its verses could ever be lost.

Under the Caliphate of ʿUthmān, unfortunately, the Muslims started to differ amongst themselves in opinion with regards to the recitation of the Qur'ān. For example, Muslims from Syria were reciting the Qur'ān differently from the Muslims from Iraq. Thus, it was further decided that all Muslims should conform to one manuscript, so as to avoid any potential disagreements or disunity. Official copies of the Qur'ān would then have to be written and sent to all provinces, and all other copies would be destroyed, so that the *Umma* (the Muslim nation) would have one standard Qur'ān to follow, which would serve to unite the Muslims through a uniform recitation.⁹⁹

2.4.5 Inimitability of the Qur'ān

The idea that the Qur'ān is the book of God is established in Islam by its inimitability. The origin of *īʿjāz* (inimitability) which is used by the Qur'ān is not different to the *īʿjāz* (impossibility) which comes from the verb *ʿajāza* (to fail). Therefore, the miracles that the Prophets performed are called *muʿjizāt* (singular, *muʿjizāh*), since mankind is incapable of performing such feats. This word¹⁰⁰ is not used in the Qur'ān or *sunnah* (prophetic tradition or speech), nor did the companions use it. However, many other terms in Islamic sciences were coined by later scholars and accepted among the *Umma* (Prophet's Nation). The first person to use this term is presumed to be Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 204 A.H.). *Muʿjizāt* are defined as acts performed by prophets, of a miraculous nature that humans are incapable of imitating. *īʿjāz* is the concept; *muʿjiza* the actual act. An example of a *muʿjiza* can be seen in the transformation of the staff of Moses into a serpent. The Qur'ānic terms for these are *āya*,

⁹⁹ Qadhi, opcit (1989:129-136)

¹⁰⁰ Qadhi, opcit (1999:257-258)

or *bayyina*. When applied to the Qur'ānic sciences, therefore, the term *ī'jāz* is used to denote the inimitable quality of the Qur'ān. In another words, the Qur'ān is set apart from all other books in that it cannot be rivalled or imitated. This is exclusive to the Qur'ān; no other book can claim this. No matter how eloquent a poet is, how knowledgeable a scholar is, or how well-versed a grammarian is, no one can bring forth anything similar to this. The Qur'ān is the speech of God, and the difference between the speech of God and the speech of His Creation is the difference between God and His Creation.

In the eyes of a Muslim, this particular characteristic of the Qur'ān confirms the irrefutability of its transcendence. The inimitability of the Qur'ān is quintessentially based on poetic and literary arguments about the perfection of the Qur'ānic language, which is coherent with the oral universe of old Arabia and the old Middle East, and their attachment to the verbal foundation.¹⁰¹

The proof for *ī'jāz* is mentioned in the Qur'ān itself: whenever God sends a prophet, He gives that Prophet certain miracles and signs to prove his prophethood to his people. These miracles are generally in accordance with the people for whom the miracle is performed. For example, the people at the time of Moses were famous for their art of sorcery and magic practices. The miracles given to Moses were an act of magic amongst the magicians, such as the shinning hand and the splitting of the Nile. Likewise, some people at the time of Jesus excelled in the art of healing and medicine; therefore, the miracles that were given by God to Jesus were of a similar type, as he was also given the ability to cure the sick, heal the leper, and raise the dead. However, during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Arabs were famous in poetry and had reached the peak of eloquence and linguistic/stylistic competence. Each tribe used to compete with the other to see which one could produce the most skilled and eloquent poet. Then, during the annual fair of ʿUkāz, poets from all over Arabia would compete for the honour of having their poem win the top prize: that of being posted on the door of the *ka'ba* until the next fair. Due to the pride that was prevalent among the Arabs, the miracle that was given to the Prophet was of a similar nature: God revealed the Qur'ān in an Arabic that was so emotive and eloquent that the Arabs could clearly see it was a miracle from their Creator. On top of this, God challenged them to bring forth anything similar to the Qur'ān, and told them, in several *āyās*, that such attempts would be futile:

“And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant (Muḥammad), then produce a *sūra* like thereunto; and call upon your witnesses (i.e.,

¹⁰¹ Chebel, Malek (1993:108-109). *L'Imaginaire Arabo-Musulman*. Paris: Puf.

helpers) other than Allāh, if your doubts are true. But if you cannot - and of a surety you cannot then fear the fire whose fuel is men and stones which is prepared for those who reject faith". (Q2:23-24)

Qadhi¹⁰² also lists some aspects of Qur'anic *i'jāz*:

- (i) The placement of a particular word in perfect context, over its synonyms. The connotations given by the chosen word are better than those that would have been given by its synonyms.
- (ii) The unique sentence structure and syntax, which does not follow any one pattern but varies throughout the Qur'ān. Each style is unique, and its rhythm clear and resounding.
- (iii) The use of different tenses (past vs. present; plural vs. singular, etc.) to give deeper meaning to a passage.
- (iv) The pronunciation of a word matches its context. In other words, when discussing topics that are encouraging and bearing glad tidings, it uses words that are easy to pronounce and melodious to hear, and vice-versa.
- (v) The perfect combination of conciseness and detail. When the subject requires elaboration, the Qur'ān discusses the topic in detail, and when a short phrase will get the message across, it remains brief.

I believe that the eloquence and beauty of the Qur'ān is so great that it has become the ultimate authority and reference work for Arabic rhetoric, grammar and stylistics.

2.4.6 Parables and Similitudes

Parables (stories) and similitudes are referred to in Qur'ānic studies as (*al-qaṣaṣ wal-amthāl*). The Qur'ān contains many stories about previous prophets and previous nations, the creation of Heaven and Earth, the building of the *Ka'ba* by Abraham, the flood of Noah, and the virgin birth of ʿĪsā. This was in order to help Prophet Muḥammad to prove to his people his prophethood, as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

We do relate unto thee the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to thee this (portion of the) Qur'ān: before this, thou too was among those who knew it not.
(Q12:3)

Furthermore, the Prophet had spent forty years of his life amongst the people of Makka, and

¹⁰² Qadhi, opcit (1999:268)

he was known to be illiterate, and to have never read a book or studied under any priest or monk during that time. However, he suddenly began informing his people about previous nations, as mentioned in the following *āya*:

“Say: If Allāh had so willed, I should not have rehearsed it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. A whole lifetime before this have I tarried amongst you: Will you not then understand?” (Q10:16)

In another verse, God confirms that it is Him who informed Muḥammad of something he knew not:

“Such are some of the stories of the unseen, which We have revealed unto you: before this, neither you nor your people knew them . . .” (Q11:49)

These stories¹⁰³ illustrate and underline important aspects of the Qur'ānic message, and fulfil their functions in a variety of ways. The following are some of the major common patterns:

- explanations of the general message of Islam'
- general guidance and reminders,
- strengthening the conviction of the Prophet and the believers,
- reminders of the earlier prophets and their struggle,
- indications for the continuity and truth of Muḥammad's message, and
- providing arguments against some opponents of Islam, such as Jews and Christians,

We may distinguish between these stories according to their contents by three different kinds of narrative:

- stories of the Prophets of Allāh, their peoples, their message, their call, their persecution, etc. See, for example, the narratives about Nūḥ (Q26), Mūsā (Q28), 'Īsā (Q19) and many others,
- other Qur'ānic narratives about past people or events, such as the narratives about the companions of the cave, or about Dhul-Qarnain (Q18), and
- references to events that took place during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad, such as the battle of Badr (Q3:13), the battle of Uḥūd (Q3:121-128), the battle of Khandaq¹⁰⁴ mentioned in *sūrat al-Aḥzāb* (Q33:9-27), the *Isrā* (Q17:1), etc.

The Qur'ān employs parables (*qaṣaṣ* – stories) and similitudes (*amthāl*) to provide

¹⁰³ Von Denffer (ibid:56-57)

¹⁰⁴ The Battle of Khandaq: Means the battle of the trench. After the battle of Badr and Uḥūd, al-Khandaq was the third major confrontation between Muhammad and his enemies from Makka. To protect Madina from encroaching Makkans in 5/627, Muhammad on the advice of Salmān al-Farsī, had a trench dug to the North of the oasis. The siege lasted about two weeks and, despite several assaults, the trench successfully guarded the oasis of Madina and the besiegers retired. The siege is of particular significance in that consolidated Muhammad's position and paved the way for the conquest of Makka a few years later. See *sūrat al-Aḥzāb*. (Netton, 1997:145).

admonition. Parables and similitudes are a psychological Qur'anic technique that aims to educate the reader and make him/her aware of the dangers ahead and the benefits available now and in the hereafter. Among the parables in the Qur'ān that are recurrently employed are the parables of Adam-Satan, Moses/Pharaoh, Mary/Jesus, Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Shu'ayb. The parables play a large role, and increase gradually in the Qur'ānic text. In effect, the parables feed the imagination, but are open to different interpretations according to the way in which they are tackled. Therefore, we can claim that the Qur'ān represents a unique corpus which is capable of answering the learning needs of both the literate and the illiterate reader. It offers many different reading styles:

- The first one is phonologic, whereby it can be read with a continuity of simple prosody without any relation to its semantic tissue, as in the case of *tilāwa*¹⁰⁵ (the psalmody recitation of the Qur'ān) and *tajwīd*¹⁰⁶ (the phonetic ornamentation, recitation of the Qur'ān).
- The second style is didactic: the rules are taught to students at school. In general it is only short text, and easier to access in a modern context. On the contrary, exegesis reading is reserved for the erudite, and is composed of commentators and translators; such people can see in the Qur'ānic texts the deployment of a series of legends and short stories whose meaning is always invisible (or sometimes esoteric).

The Qur'ān uses the word *mathāl*, which means 'example' or 'comparison':

“Allāh does not disdain to use the similitude of things, such as a mosquito or what is smaller than it. Those who believe know that it is truth from their Lord; but those who reject faith say: ‘What means Allāh by this similitude?’” (Q2:26)

“By it He causes many to stray, and many He leads into the right path; but He causes not to stray, except those who forsake the path”. (Q2:26)

Similitudes (*al-amthāl*) are metaphorical examples, sometimes archetype, that are also 'patrons' from which the real meaning is spread in the shadow of the manifest meaning. Such connotations are contained in the notion of 'āya' (verse, in pl. *āyas*); this notion is very wide and suggests a polyvalence of ideas, giving many allusions and suggestive associations. The

¹⁰⁵ *Tilāwa* of the Qur'ān is the reading aloud, reciting, portions of the Qur'ān. The reciter is called a *qari*. (Touma 1996, p.153-154). Recitation of the Qur'ān must be done according to rules of pronunciation, intonation, and caesuras established by the Prophet Muḥammad, though first recorded in the eight century CE. The most popular reading is that of Ḥafṣ on the authority of Āsim. Qur'ān reading may be based on one to three tones only. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁰⁶ *Tajwīd* is an Arabic word meaning proper pronunciation during recitation, as well as recitation at a moderate speed. It is a set of rules which govern how the Qur'ān should be read. It is derived from the trilateral root *j-w-d*, meaning to make well, make better, or improve. It is required by *farḍ*. It started just after Muḥammad's death when Abū Bakr ruled. (www.wikipedia.com).

role of the verse is to give proof, and is thus called *al-bayyina* (the demonstrative, the obvious sign or the witnesses). In other words, the apodictic virtue of the verses is inherent and self-sufficient, and the large field of application of the parables in the Qur'ān is explicit: it would make the dictated message of the Prophet more obvious by giving it a polysemous structure (as mythic, cosmologic, spiritual and imaginary structures), so that even the inveterate unbeliever will, upon reading it, be transported into a series of connections that will force him, eventually, to accept the truthfulness of the revelation. It has to be said that the Qur'ān counts on the intelligence of human beings and on their reason, not solely on his *fiṭra* - the natural disposition by which each person is endowed with an original genetic capacity of comprehension and intuition which allows him to understand the innate nature of religious things. Qur'ānic similitudes employ a classic framework of narration to impose themselves on the reader's imagination, as can be seen in the following example:

“Or take the similitude of one who passed by a hamlet, all in ruins to its roofs. He said: ‘Oh! How shall Allāh bring it ever to life, after this its death?’ but Allāh caused him to die for a hundred years, and then raised him up again. He said: ‘How long did you tarry thus?’ He said: ‘Perhaps a day or a part of a day.’ He said: ‘Nay, you have tarried thus hundred years; but look at your food and your drink; they show no signs of age; and look at your donkey: and that we may make of you a sign unto the people, look further at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh.’ When this was shown clearly to him, he said: ‘I know that Allāh has power over all things’”. (Q2:259)

There are numerous similitudes in the Qur'ān. In the same way in which a sign warns sailors in the night about any danger they could potentially face, the similitudes accompany the structure of the Qur'ān by making it clear enough to the reader. The most interesting Qur'ānic similitude is that about light, which is noted in the *sūra*, which has been given the same name, *al-nūr* (the light):

“Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass. The Glass as it was a brilliant star. Lit from a blessed Tree, an olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil is well-nigh Luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allāh guides whom He wills to His Light: Allāh sets forth parables for men; and Allāh knows all things’”. (Q24:35)

This glorious parable about light contains layer upon layer of allegorical truth regarding spiritual mysteries. No writing on it can do adequate justice to its full meaning. Countless volumes have been written on this subject, the most notable being Imām Ghazālī's *Mishkāṭ*

al-Anwār. In this, Ali proposes to explain the simplest meaning of this passage:

‘The physical light is but a reflection of the true Light in the world of Reality, and that true Light is Allāh. We can only think of Allāh in terms of our phenomenal experience, and in the phenomenal world, light is the purest thing we know. But physical light has drawbacks incidental to its physical nature: e.g., (1) it is dependent upon some source external to itself; (2) it is a passing phenomenon; if we take it to be a form of motion or energy, it is unstable, like all physical phenomena; (3) it is dependent on space and time; its speed is 186,000 miles per second, and there are stars whose light takes thousands of years before it reaches the earth. The perfect Light of Allāh is free from any such defects.’

The first three points in the parable centre around the symbols of the Niche, the Lamp, and the Glass:

(1) The Niche (*mishkāf*) is the little shallow recess in the wall of an Eastern house, fairly high from the ground, in which a type of light (before the days of electricity) was usually placed. Its height enabled it to diffuse the light through the room and minimise shadows. The background of the wall and the sides of the niche helped throw the light well into the room, and if the wall was whitewashed, it also acted as a reflector: the opening at the front made the way for the light. This can be seen with the spiritual light: it is placed high, above worldly things; it has a niche or habitation of its own, in revelation and other signs of Allāh; its access to men is by a special way, open to all, yet closed to those who refuse its rays.

(2) The Lamp is the core of the spiritual Truth, which is the real illumination; the Niche is nothing without it; the Niche is actually made for it.

(3) The Glass is the transparent medium through which the Light passes. On the one hand, it protects the light from moths and other forms of low life (lower motives in man) and from gusts of wind (passions), and on the other, it transmits the light through a medium which is made up of, and akin to, the grosser substances of the earth (such as sand, soda, potash, etc.), arranged so as to admit the subtle to the gross through its transparency.

Thus, the spiritual truth has to be filtered through human language or human intelligence to make it intelligible to mankind. The glass itself does not shine, but when light comes into it, it shines like a brilliant star. So men of God, who preach Allāh's truth, are themselves illuminated by Allāh's Light and become the illuminating media through which that light spreads and permeates human life. The olive tree is not a very impressive tree in its outward appearance: its leaves have a dull greenish-brown colour, and in size it is inconspicuous. But its oil is used in sacred ceremonies and forms a wholesome ingredient of food. The fruit has

an especially fine flavour. This mystic olive is not localized. It is neither of the East nor of the West. It is universal, for such is Allāh's Light. (Ali 1998:714-715)

Regis Blachere¹⁰⁷ believes the image used in this verse refers to some common utensils or materials such as lamps, oil and olives. According to him, this chain of ideas must be interpreted as follows: 'It is the faith received by the believer in his breast (the niche) which include inside itself the heart (the Glass) by the grace of the Qur'ānic predication (the Lamp)'. Indeed this idea means that Allāh suggests and guides those whom He wants in the right path. Certainly, the parable, the sign-*āya* (*āya-ishāra*) and the symbol (*ramz*, pl. *rumīz*) are two of the ways towards understanding the meaning of the Qur'ān. Although, from first appearances, they are non-accessible from the first look, they do constitute the ineffable link between the manifest level and the latent level.

2.4.7 The Language of the Qur'ān

We can define *balāgha* (rhetoric, discipline of beautiful language) as a canvas, dense with the permutation of words and ideas whose roots come from the Arabic language and which involve all the techniques of classical Arabic stylistics. One of the aspects of the erudite culture in pre-Islamic Arabic is the language *pure par excellence*. There are numerous stylistic features such as simile (*tashbīh*), metonymy (*kināyah*), and metaphor (*isti'ārah*, literally means 'borrowing') that are permanently fed into the Qur'ānic style; these ornamental or decorative features have eloquently made Qur'ānic discourse inimitable (*mu'jiz*) linguistically and stylistically. Arabic grammarians and rhetoricians have demonstrated that in the Qur'ān, we encounter different types of metonymy:

- (i) the metonymy by ellipsis (*majāz al-ḥadhf*), as in this following example: *jā'a rabbuka* (and your Lord came) (Q89: 22) instead of *jā'a amru rabbika* (the command has come from your lord), admitting the fact that only God could give a command. On the contrary, we have the metonymy by 'addition' (*majāz al-ziyādah*), as seen in the following example: *laisa kamithlihi shai'un* (There is nothing whatever like unto Him) (Q42:11). From this, we can clearly see that the syntax of the sentence has been modified by the particle (*kamithlihi* – like Him): even if it is suppressive or additive, this metonymy is from the first category identified by the rhetoricians.
- (ii) the second corresponds to metonymy (*al-kināya*) which consists of a hypallage

¹⁰⁷ Regis Blachere: cf. to chebel, opcit: (1993:112-113)

(*majāz*), where the part of something stands for the whole of the same thing, or vice versa. Sabbagh (cf. Chebel 1993:114) provides examples of metonymy such as (*huwa 'aynun* - He is an eye). Rhetorically, however, this sentence means: 'He is a spy'.

- (iii) the third category of metonymy shares with metaphor the same notion of 'borrowing' (*isti'āra*) as in: (*ra'aytu asadan yarmī* - I have seen a lion throwing (arrows)). Here, the word 'lion' does not refer to an animal 'lion' but in fact it refers to a 'man'. Indeed, the Arabic metaphor is simply a synthesis between the borrowed meaning and the comparison with something else, as the well-known rhetorician al-Suyūti (cf. Chebel (ibid)) says: (Let the hypallage (*majāz*) and the simile (*tashbīh*) get married and you will obtain the metaphor (*isti'āra*).

In addition, the Qur'ān frequently uses euphemisms (*kināya*). The most famous type is that of the virginity of Mary: *lam yamsasni basharun* (when no man has touched me? (Q3:47, Q19:20)). Although she said that, she actually meant: 'No man has deflowered me.'

As it appears, the symbolic language that is used in the Qur'ān has different functions that stem from the fact that the Qur'ān, as an inimitable text, aims to achieve linguistic and stylistic economy (*al-ʿijāz*), which is a major rhetorical criterion of sublime style. As put by Mohammed Arkoun, the Qur'ān must be understood by its first meaning which is the imaginative consciousness.

For Abdul-Raof (2005), the most striking feature of the language of the Qur'ān is the presentation technique of the four tenets of faith (monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, and reward and punishment). Each *sūra*, whether Makkan or Madinan, introduces one or more tenets of faith, and sometimes all four tenets in a systematic fashion. Some *sūras* introduce one tenet of faith, such as in Q112, which presents monotheism only; Q93 and Q94, however, introduce prophethood only because it is a direct reference to the Prophet Muhammad alone. In Q101, we encounter eschatology in *āyas* 1-5, and reward and punishment in *āyas* 6-11. In some *sūras*, we find monotheism and admonition next to each other, as in Q4:36, where we have (worship Allāh and do not associate anything with Him), followed by moral lessons: (and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbour, the neighbour far away, the companion at your side, the traveller, and those whom your right hand possess.)

2.4.8 Abrogating and Abrogated in the Qur'ān

This notion is known in Arabic as *al-nāsikh wal-mansūkh*, and the two words derive from the same root (n-s-kh). The expression (*nāsikh*) is the active participle which can be translated as abrogating, and *al-mansūkh* is the passive form which can be translated as abrogated. According to Qur'ānic studies, we have the abrogation of an Islamic legal ruling by a ruling that was revealed after it. Therefore, at least two rulings must be involved: the *nāsikh* ruling is the ruling that repeals the *mansūkh* (abrogated)

The notion of *naskh* (abrogation) is referred to in the Qur'ān:

“None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something similar: do not you know that Allāh has power over all things?” (Q2:106)

The message of the Qur'ān, when initially presented, was completely new to the Arabs, and very different from their way of life. It was therefore introduced in stages in order to give them time to change their habits and adjust to the newly prescribed law. An example of this, by way of a gradual prohibition, can be seen in the three verses that concern the drinking of wine, something very widespread at that time; The Qur'ān therefore prohibited it in stages:

“O you who believe! Do not approach prayers with a befogged mind, until you can understand all that you say”. (Q4:43)

“They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: ‘In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit’”. (Q2:219)

“O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, dedication of stones, and divination by arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork: Eschew such abomination, that you may prosper”. (Q5:90)

2.4.9 Clear and Unclear *Āyas*

In Qur'ānic studies, these are referred to as ‘*al-muḥkam*’ (clear) and ‘*al-mutashābih*’ (unclear). We encounter three different, but interrelated, claims by different Makkan and Madīnan *āyas*:

- (i) According to Q11:1 (*kitābun uḥkimat āyātuhu* – This is a Book whose *āyas* are perfected), the entire Qur'ān is clear (*muḥkam*) in terms of:
 - (a) Its linguistic/stylistic excellence,
 - (b) The magnificence of its word order system (*al-naẓm*), and
 - (c) The splendour of its words and their multi-faceted meanings.
- (ii) According to Q39:23 (*allāhu nazzala aḥsana al-ḥadīthi kitāban mutashābihan mathāniya* – Allāh has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is

reiteration), the Qur'ān is unclear (*mutashābih*). However, according to Abdul-Raof (2004), the expression (*mutashābih*) is inaccurately translated as (unclear), and is therefore contrary to what Q39:23 designates. For him, the word (*mutashābih*) means: (1) the structurally similar but stylistically different *āyas*, and (2) the theological (*mutashābih*) which refers to the theological matters that have more than one meaning or different exegetical views such as the names and attributes of God, the taste of the water of the rivers in heaven, the shape and taste of fruits in heaven, etc. Thus, according to Q39:23, the Qur'ān is a colourful display of *āyas* that are linguistically, stylistically and rhetorically identical (*mutashābih*) in terms of their inimitability (*ī'jāz*). Q39:23 stipulate that the whole Qur'ān is inimitable.

(iii) According to Q3:7 (*huwa alladhī anzala ʿalaika al-kitāba minhu āyātun muḥkamātun hunna umm al-kitābi waukharu mutashābihāt* – It is He who has sent down to you O Muḥammad) the Book; in it are *āyas* that are precise, they are the foundation of the Book, and others are unspecific (*mutashābih*), the Qur'ān includes both clear (*muḥkam*) and *mutashābih* (the structurally similar but stylistically different) *āyas*. We are also told by the remainder of Q39:23 that since the Qur'ān is the speech of God, only God Himself knows the underlying meaning of the theological (*mutashābih*) *āyas* and expressions, and that Qur'ān scholars (*al-rāsikhūna fī al-ʿilm*) should:

- (1) Believe in what is said in the Qur'ān,
- (2) Not get involved in the interpretation of the theological (*mutashābih*) *āyas* and expressions, and
- (3) Provide personal opinion exegesis to these problems. “If they do not do so, Qur'ān scholars will be similar to those in whose hearts is deviation from the truth “*fī qulūbihim zaighun*” (Q3:7), and whose aim is to falsify the message of the Qur'ān. An example of a *mutashābih āya* is:

“Allāh Most Gracious is firmly established on the throne of authority”. (Q20:5)

The Qur'ān, therefore, also includes another category of *mutashābihāt*. This is concerned with the theological *mutashābihāt*, which includes the names and attributes of God (*asmā' waṣifāt Allāh*), the theological notions of *istiwā'* (the establishment of God over the throne), having eyes, hands, being able to see, hear, and walk. However, traditional exegetes like al-Ṭabari and Ibn Kathīr give non-allegorical, i.e. literal, meanings to these notions and Qur'ānic words,

and they are treated as part of the notion of (*bilā kayf* - without knowing how, but to have a firm belief in them.) Their exegesis is called *al-tafsīr bil-ma'thūr* (traditional exegesis). Other Qur'ān exegetes like al-Zamakhshari adopt an allegorical, i.e. non-literal, meaning to these words and notions, and claim that Allāh does not have eyes or hands, but these words denote metaphorical meanings such as 'power, domination'. Their exegesis is called *al-tafsīr bil-ra'i* (personal opinion exegesis).

In his stylistic analysis of Qur'ānic discourse, Abdul-Raof (2004) provides an exhaustive account of the *mutashābih āyas* in the Qur'ān. Abdul-Raof (ibid), however, has dealt only with the linguistic *mutashābihāt* that have different stylistic patterns. For Abdul-Raof (ibid:9), the Qur'ān displays stylistically distinctive *āyas*, and this stylistic variation is attributed to a number of linguistic and phonetic factors, such as a change in the order of the words of an *āya*. This change of word order is attributed to contextual factors, as in:

inna allāha ghafūrun raḥīm – Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful, Q2:173, 182, 192, 199, 218, 226, 235, Q16:18, and

inna rabbaka ghafūrun raḥīm – Your Lord is Forgiving and Merciful, Q6:145.

This is an example of *mutashābihāt āyas* where the context of situation has influenced the change from the word (allāh - Allāh) to (*rabbuka* – your Lord). For Abdul-Raof (ibid:89), the word (allāh) occurs in the context of divinity and gratitude, and when reference is made to His numerous blessings. However, the word (*rabb* – Lord) occurs in the context of taking care of people, looking after their interests, and the provision of their food and daily needs. Another example of *mutashābihāt āyas* is:

walillāhi junūdu al-samāwāti wal-arḍi wakāna allāhu °alīman ḥakīman – To Allāh belongs the soldiers of the heavens and the earth, and Allāh is ever Knowing and Wise, Q48:4

walillāhi junūdu al-samāwāti wal-arḍi wakāna allāhu °azīzan ḥakīman – To Allāh belongs the soldiers of the heavens and the earth, and Allāh is ever Exalted in Might and Wise, Q48:7

where we have a stylistic change from (°*alīman* – Knowing) in Q48:4 to (°*azīzan* – Exalted in Might) in Q48:7 due to the change of the context in which each *āya* occurs.

According to Von Denffer¹⁰⁸, the notion of clear and unclear *āyas* can be interpreted as follows: the word (*muḥkam*) is derived from the root (*ḥakama*), which means (to decide between two things with the meaning of judgments; decisions), but technically it refers to all clearly decided *āyas* of the Qur'ān, typically those that concern legal rulings. It also refers to the distinction between truth and falsehood. On the other hand, the word *mutashābihāt* is

¹⁰⁸ Von Denffer (ibid 1983:79-80)

derived from the root (*shubbiha*), meaning 'to be doubtful or uncertain'. In technical language, it refers to those *āyas* of the Qur'ān, for which the meanings are not clear or completely agreed upon, but open to two or more interpretations.

An example of a *muḥkam āya* which involves an injunction is:

“O you who believe! When you deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties: let not a scribe refuse to write: as Allāh has taught him, so let him write”. (Q2:282)

2.4.10 Makkan and Madīnan Revelations

In this section, we will discuss the notion of the Makkan and Madīnan revelations. There will only be a brief outline here due to the fact that we will discuss the two kinds of revelation in chapters three and four. The Makkan and Madīnan revelations are two important phases of the Muslim *umma* (nation) because they correspond to the period of revelation of the Qur'ān in Makka, before the *hijra* (migration of the Prophet to Madīna in 622 AD), and to the period of revelation of the Qur'ān in Madina after the *hijra*. The Makkan phase of revelation lasted about thirteen years from the beginning of Muhammad's prophethood, until his *hijra* to Madīna. The message of the Makkan revelations, addressed Quraysh as well as the rest of mankind, concerned mainly the establishment of belief (*ʿaqīda*) through the presentation of theological notions like monotheism, the creation of man and the universe, God's omnipotence, resurrection, reward and punishment, and the right conduct to follow. The Prophet appears in this phase as an announcer and a warner. His message is sharp, musical, and expressed through short rhythmic *āyas*.

The Madinan phase, however, lasted about ten years, from the *hijra* to the death of the Prophet. Although the major themes of the Makkan phase occur again in Madinan revelations, the Prophet was faced with the establishment of a new socio-economic-political system, as well as a different group of people: the *muhājirūn* (migrants) who migrated from Makka to Madina, the *Anṣār* (supporters); who were from Madīna and helped the *muhājirūn*; the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites) who were from Madīna and pretended to support the Muslims; and *ahl al-kitāb* (People of the Book), i.e. the Jews and the Christians, with their respective Scriptures. Thus, new themes such as *jihād*, *āyas* that address the Jews and Christians, *āyas* that tackle hypocrisy and address the hypocrites, *āyas* that refer to punishment for crime and the establishment of law and order, as well as *āyas* on legal injunctions were being unearthed. These subject matters have become features specific to the Madinan phase; also, one can

notice that the Madinan *āyas* are longer than the Makkan *āyas*.

2.4.11 Linguistic Cohesion and Coherence in the Qur'ān

In his attempt to discredit the Orientalists' claim that the *āyas* and *sūras* of the Qur'ān need to be re-arranged and that the language of the Qur'ān is linguistically and stylistically jumbled up, Abdul-Raof's *Consonance in the Qur'ān* (2005) provides an in-depth investigation of Qur'ānic discourse based on text linguistics, through which he has successfully managed to demonstrate, with extensive examples that the Qur'ānic text enjoys cohesive and logical links both at *āya* and *sūra* levels, and that Qur'ānic Arabic is linguistically and stylistically sound. Abdul-Raof's work also aims to validate the claim that the arrangement of *āyas* and *sūras* is done by a divine order through Gabriel, i.e., (*tartīb tawqīfī* – arrangement by divine order) (ibid:27). Thus, he is against the claim made by Western Qur'ān scholars that the companions were responsible for the arrangement of the *āyas* and *sūras*, i.e., (*tartīb ijtihādī* – arrangement based on personal opinion). In chapter two (ibid:38-148), Abdul-Raof provides a detailed discussion of the thematic links between consecutive *sūras* in order to demonstrate the logical connectivity that links one *sūra* with its preceding and following *sūra*. The links that exist between the consecutive *sūras* which Abdul-Raof claims to exist are thematic, i.e., conceptual, and linguistically intertextual. An example of the thematic intertextual links that constitute logical cohesion and conceptual chaining in the Qur'ānic text is Q22 (*sūrat al-ḥajj* – pilgrimage). The reason why I have chosen Q22 is due to the fact that this is a Madinan *sūra* sandwiched between Q21 (*sūrat al-anbiyā'* – the Prophets) and Q23 (*sūrat al-mu'minūn* – the believers), which are both classified as Makkan *sūras* (ibid:76-78):

Q22 (*sūrat al-ḥajj* – pilgrimage) is Madinan, and has thematic links that make this *sūra* logically related to Q21 (*sūrat al-anbiyā'* – the Prophets), such as:

- (i) The threat and warning of the horror of the hour of reckoning and resurrection are expressed vividly by Q21:1, 35, 37-39, 49, 93, 97-98, and 104. This theme is also referred to by Q22:1-2.
- (ii) Paradise and hell as a theme of the tenet of faith, of reward and punishment, is referred to briefly by Q21:98, 101. However, this theme is elaborated on by Q22:19-24.
- (iii) Monotheism as a tenet of faith is expressed by both Q21:22, 25, 92, 108, and Q22:30-31, 34.
- (iv) Eschatology as a tenet of faith is expressed by both Q21:36, 38, and Q22:5-7.

In terms of *sūra* structure, we have:

- (i) The end of Q21 logically linked to the beginning of Q22, as in Q21:97, 109 which concludes with the horror of the hour of reckoning and resurrection being interrelated and thematically linked to the beginning of Q22, as in Q22:1-2, which in turn refers to the convulsion of the hour of judgement.
- (ii) The end of Q21 is also thematically related to the end of Q22, which both refer to Islam and depict the worshipping of the Lord, as in Q21:106, and Q22:77-78, 108.

Additionally, Q22 (*sūrat al-ḥajj* – pilgrimage) is Madinan, and has thematic links that make this *sūra* logically related to Q23 (*sūrat al-mu'minūn* – the believers)? These include:

- (i) The theme of creation, death and resurrection, mentioned by both Q22 and Q23, as in Q22:5-7, and Q23:12-16.
- (ii) The theme of denial and resurrection, occurring in both Q22 and Q23, as in Q22:5, and Q23:35-37, 82-83.
- (iii) The theme of God's omnipotence (*qudrat Allāh*), referred to by both Q22 and Q23, as in Q22:5, and Q23:63, 65, 17-21, 78.
- (iv) Q22 and Q23, which both provide moral lessons to the reader, as in Q22:42-45, and Q23:23, 50.
- (v) Q22 and Q23 both also highlight the tenet of faith of monotheism, as in Q22:30, 34, and Q23:32, 116.
- (vi) The theme of removing stress occurs in both Q22 and Q23, as in Q22:11-13, and Q23:75.

In terms of *sūra* structure, we have:

- (i) The beginning of Q22 being logically linked to the beginning of Q23 through the theme of creation (*al-khalq*), as in Q22:5 and Q23:12-14.
- (ii) The end of Q22, logically linked to the beginning of Q23 through the theme of doing good (*fi'l al-khair*), as in Q22:77 and Q23:1-6.

The examples above are of value to our conclusion and recommendations at the end of the present work. It shows that although a Madinan *sūra* is inserted between two Makkan *sūras*, there is still logical connectivity between the three *sūras*, and also the three *sūras* share, and are joined by, thematic links. This further demonstrates that the place of revelation is irrelevant to the arrangement of the *sūras* or *āyas*. On the contrary, we believe that the decisive criteria in the arrangement of the *sūras* and *āyas* are the thematic links that bind the Qur'ān cohesively, and help to achieve logical flow of argument. We also believe that had the *sūras* or *āyas* been arranged according to their place and time of revelation, the thematic links

would cease to exist, and the Qur'ān would thus not enjoy logical and cohesive connectivity. This, we believe, echoes the fact that the Qur'ān is a Scripture and not man-made.

2.4.12 Intertextuality in the Qur'ān

As the mouthpiece of the Qur'ān, the Prophet Muhammad was the first Qur'ān exegete. Semantic and jurisprudential problems raised by the companions were explained by the Prophet, who would employ Qur'ānic intertextuality (*tafsīr al-qur'ān bil-qur'ān*), as in (*fatḥrīru raqabatin* – there must be the freeing of a slave, Q58:3), where the meaning of (*raqabatin* – slave (literally meaning 'neck') is explicitly explained as meaning (a believing slave) by (*fatḥrīru raqabatin mu'minatin* – the freeing of a believing slave, Q4:92). There are different schools of Qur'ānic exegesis: traditional exegesis (*al-tafsīr bil-ma'thur*) and personal opinion exegesis (*al-tafsīr bil-ra'i*). The latter is subdivided into jurisprudential exegesis (*al-tafsīr al-fiqhi*), historical exegesis (*al-tafsīr al-ta'rikhi*), scientific exegesis (*al-tafsīr al-ilmī*), Sufi exegesis (*al-tafsīr al-ṣūfī*), as well as sectarian exegesis like the Shi'ite exegesis (*tafsīr al-shī'ah*), etc. (al-Dhahabi 1987, 1:35-42).

Muslim exegetes believe that a Qur'ānic expression, or an *āya*, can be explained through reference to other Qur'ānic expressions or *āyas*. It is worthwhile to note that the approach of Qur'ānic intertextuality in exegesis is only adopted by the traditional school of exegesis. According to this school, the Qur'ān can only be explained through reference to three major sources:

- (a) The Qur'ān, where we have Qur'ānic intertextuality,
- (b) The *ḥadīth*, which provides useful information for exegesis, and
- (c) The companions' views, which are based upon the views of the Prophet and his standard practice (the *sunnah*), and thus are important to the exegete.

An example of Qur'ānic exegesis that is representative of Qur'ānic intertextuality (*tafsīr al-qur'ān bil-qur'ān*) is *Aḍwā' al-Bayān fī Ḍāḥ al-Qur'ān bil-Qur'ān*, by al-Shinqīṭī (1996).

Some examples of Qur'ānic intertextuality are:

(1) *wujūhun yawma'idhin nāḍira. ilā rabbihā nāzira* – Some faces on that day will be radiant, looking at their Lord. (Q75:22-23), which intertextually explains the *āya* (*lā tudrikuhu al-abṣār* – Vision does not perceive Him, Q6:103), and illustrates the meaning that (the seeing of God will definitely take place in the hereafter).

(2) *am ḥasibtum an tadkhulū al-jannata walmmā ya'lam allāhu alladhīna jāhadū minkum waya'lam al-ṣābirīn* – Or do you think that you will enter paradise while Allāh has not yet

made evident those of you who fight in His cause and made evident those who are steadfast? (Q3:142) which is intertextually related to Q2:214, Q9:16, and Q29:1-3.

2.4.13 The Qur'ānic Corpus

There are 114 chapters (called *sūra*, plural *sūwar*), which vary in length, six thousand two hundred and nineteen verses (called *āya*, plural *āyas*, which mean 'sign', 'miracle' or 'witness'), which were revealed continually either in Makka, from the first period, or in Madīna, from the second. The *tanzīl* (revelation) began between 610 AD and 612 AD, and took place in a cave situated in Mount Hira, near the city of Makka. The first *sūra* revealed was Q96 *al-ʿalaq* (the Clinging Clot), which is also known as *al-qalam* (the Pen). The first *āyas* revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad were:

Read! In the name of your Lord and Cherisher, who created.

He created man out of a mere clot of congealed blood:

Read! your Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught the use of the Pen.

Taught man that which he did not knew. (Q 96:1-5)

The first written official codex of the Qur'ān was done by Zaid b. Thābit, after he was given the order to do so by the third caliph, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (644-656), around the year 32 of the *hijra* calendar (the equivalent of the year 653 AD). Over a period of twenty-five years, the Prophet reported the words of the Qur'ān, which were memorised by his companions as soon as they heard them, and then recited them occasionally, and also during the war. The revelation stopped with the sermon of farewell (*khutbat al-wadāʿ*) in March 632 AD, ten years after the beginning of the era of *hijra* that was a few months before the Prophet's death, in Madīna, in June 632 AD.

The longest *sūra* is called *al-baqara* (the Cow) which is composed of 286 verses. In contrast, the smallest *sūra* is composed of only three verses, and there are three of them in total: *al-ʿaṣr* (the time, Q103), *al-kawthar* (Abundance, Q108), *al-Naṣr* (the Help, Q110).

The first *sūra* is called *al-fātiḥa* (the Opening) or *um al-kitāb* (the Mother of the Book):

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allāh the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds;

Most Gracious, Most Merciful;

Master of the Day of Judgment.

It is You we worship and You we ask for help.

Show us the straight way.

The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace,

Those whose portion is not wrath, and who do not go astray. (Q1:1-7)

According to Abdul-Raof¹⁰⁹, the above (*al-fātiḥa*) is the first in the Qur'ān in terms of arrangement and not revelation- this view being shared by other major commentators of the Qur'ān. In fact, it opens the Qur'ān, meaning it is the starting *sūra* of the Qur'ān. Furthermore, the main reason why this *sūra* represents the essence of the Qur'ān is because of its contents: alone it summarises the major concept of Islam, which is the belief in the Oneness of Allah and His attributes. It encourages Muslims to beg from no one but Allah, to free themselves from slavery to man, and to be attached to their Lord alone.

The Qur'ān was assembled almost immediately after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad; its contents do not appear today as the same chronological order of the revelation, but rather according to length, in descending order of the *sūras*. To an extent, we could say that we read it from back to front, because the first texts, which are the longest, are, in general, those which were revealed at the end of the predication. The Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic:

We know indeed that they say: 'It is a man that teaches him.'

The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign,

while this is Arabic, pure and clear'. (Q16:103)

The Qur'ān is the holy book that was communicated by the *nabī, rasūl* (Prophet Muḥammad), and is the main source of guidance for the entire Islamic community (*al-umma al-islāmiyya*). The notion of a 'Holy Scripture' is mentioned many times in the Qur'ān:

"That this is indeed a Qur'ān Most Honourable, In a Book well-guarded." (Q56:77-78)

The aim of allusions and allegories is to describe its limits as intangible, as it is for the prophethood (*nubuwwa*) as well. The Qur'ān is considered to be, through the eyes of each Muslim, the incarnation of the revealed speech, a speech which is self-sufficient and whose impeccable status is widely recognised:

"A revelation from the Lord of the Worlds. Is it such a message that you would hold in light esteem". (Q56:80-81)

As the Word of God, the Qur'ān is considered as eternal and inviolable; The Qur'ān, therefore, is authorised only to the 'purified people', i.e., the believers, as we are told by the following *āya*:

"The Qur'ān which none shall touch but those who are clean". (Q5:79)

¹⁰⁹ Abdul-Raof (2001a:1) *The Qur'ān Outlined: Theme and Text*. London: Ta-Ha.

2.4.14 Definitions of *Āya* and *Sūra*

In this section, I shall provide the definitions of the Qur'ānic expressions, (*āya*) and (*sūra*), according to various scholars' views.

2.4.14.1 What is an *Āya*?

An *āya* is a term used to define the smallest independent Qur'ānic speech units, marked by a final rhyme. The Qur'ānic word *āya* (plural *āyāt*), which literally means 'sign', has become the technical term used to denote a verse of the Qur'ān. The word (*āya*), according to al-Suyūṭī, 2000, 1:133, is defined as: 'making a pause no matter how long it is, that's why cryptic letters like *alif-lām-mīm* constitute an *āya*'. This is because you need to make a pause after reading each cryptic letter. Because this definition is phonetically based, it does not provide clear criteria for the definition of an *āya*. Other definitions of an *āya* by various scholars like al-Qurṭubī (1997, 1:103) and Ibn 'Aṭīyah (1991, 1:71), include the following:

- An *āya* is something that human beings are incapable of reproducing.
- An *āya* is a part of the Qur'ān which is separate to what is before it and after it.
- An *āya* is a section among all sections contained in a *sūra*, and it is so called because it is a sign of the truthfulness of its contents, and due to the inability to challenge it.
- An *āya* means 'a group of people', as in (*ji'nā bi'āyātinā*) meaning (We came as a group of people).

However, the length of an *āya*¹¹⁰ is not a major criterion in defining an *āya*. There are short and long *āyas* in the Qur'ān. According to al-Suyūṭī, the most important feature of the *āya* is its complete meaning, whether or not it constitutes a full sentence grammatically. It can therefore be seen that there is no unanimous agreement among Qur'ān scholars about the total number of *āyas*. This is due to the fact that the beginnings of some *sūras* are considered by some scholars to be the first words of an *āya*, while others do not agree. Consequently, we have different opinions that vary between 6000 and 6600 *āyas*. The total number of letters is 823671, with almost unanimous agreement. (See also footnotes ¹¹¹ and ¹¹²).

¹¹⁰ al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn (2000,1: 133). *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. 2 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.

¹¹¹ Tahānawī, Muḥammad Ali b. Ali (d.1158/1745) *Kaššāf Istilahāt al-funūn*, Istamboul, Dār Qahramān (2nd), (1984/1404:105-106) definition of *āya*: *Āya* literally means a sign or an indication or a prodigy. In the religious point of view

Al-Qurṭubī¹¹³ defines an *āya* as the following:

- Something that human beings are incapable of producing with as good a result.
- A part of the Qur'ān that is separate to what was before it and after it.
- A section among all sections contained in a *sūra*, and it is so called because it is a sign of the truthfulness of its content, and it cannot be challenged. (For more details on *āya*, see Jeffery 1986, footnote¹¹⁴).

For Muslim scholars, each *āya* of the Qur'ān is a divine sign and proof of God's omnipotence, and of Muḥammad's prophethood. It is the linguistic guise, particularly poetic code, which substantiates the claim of the Qur'ānic text as being inimitable, and has divine linguistic and stylistic power.

For Abdul-Raof (2001:66), however, an *āya* is a Qur'ānic structure or construction which linguistically conveys many different meanings such as:

- (i) 'miracle', as in (They say: 'Why does he not produce for us a miracle from his Sustainer?') Q20:133,
- (ii) 'sign', as in (A sign of his authority is that there shall come to you the ark of the covenant, . . .) Q2:248,
- (iii) 'ethical message', as in (There is a message indeed for people who are willing to listen) Q16:65,
- (iv) something amazing' as in (We made the son of Mary and his mother a symbol of Our grace) Q23:50, and

this term is used to denote an accumulation of the speech of God but it does not have a name or a title as a *sūra* does. This kind of divisions are put together according to the tradition to form a *sūra*, this is called by the Muslims as *tawqīfī* (arrange by divine order). An *āya* could be compared to a paragraph.

¹¹²al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn (ibid). An *āya* is a part of the Qur'ān that is composed by one or more sentences which are well-defined. The *āyāt* are distinct units and like the *suwar* they are well known, by a knowledge that is transmitted through the generations by an unbroken chain of transmission.

¹¹³ al-Qurṭubī (1997, 1:101). The number of *āyas* is 6,204. For al-Zarkashi (1988, 1:315), the number of letters is 321,000, the number of words is 77,437, and number of *āyas* is 6,218. For al-Qurṭubī (1997, 1:100), the number of letters of the Qur'ān is 340,740. He also refers to the differences in opinion among Qur'ān scholars from Makka, Medīna, Baṣrah, and Kūfah with regards to the number of *āyas* and letters in his book.

¹¹⁴ Jeffery, A. (1986): *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition, vol.1, Brill. Another meaning of *āya* is used for the lights that are used to warn from a danger, this meaning is found in the Qur'ān where the sun and the moon are considered as a sign of the day and the night as in these verses: (Q17:12-13). Similarly the prodigy of the nature are here to prove the existence of God and His power see for example verses: (Q30:20-19) and (Q12:105).

- (v) 'proof', as in (Recite to them the news of Noah. When he said to his people: 'O my people, if my stay with you and my reminding you of the *āyas* (proofs) of Allāh' is hard on you, then I put my trust in Allāh) (Q10:71)

For °Amru al-Dāni (cf. al-Badawi, 1999:42-44)), however, the only word which can by itself constitute an *āya* is the word '*mudhāmmatān*' (Q55:84). However, for other scholars there are many more than this single word which can be called an *āya* as in (*wal-°aṣr*), (*wal-ḍuḥā*) and (*al-qārī°ah*) as well as the cryptic letters with which some *sūras* begin. The longest *āya* in Qur'ān is Q2:282 meaning the 'transactions *āya – āyat al-mudāyanah*' whose words are 228.

For Ibn °Arabi (cf. al-Badawi, 1999:42-44), however, the length of an *āya* is not the major criterion in its definition. There are short and long *āyās* in the Qur'ān. The most important feature of the *āya* for him is the complete as opposed to incomplete meaning of the *āya* and whether it constitutes a full meaningful sentence in terms of grammatical structure. For these reasons, there is no unanimous agreement among Qur'ān scholars as to the number of *āyas*. This is due to the beginning of some *sūras* for which some scholars consider the first words as an *āya* and some others do not. Consequently, we have different results such as 6000 to 6600 *āyas*. Moreover, there is no unanimous agreement among Muslim scholars with regards to the total number of letters and *āyas* in the Qur'ān. al-Qurṭubi (1997, 1:101), for instance, refers to the differences in opinion among Qur'ān scholars from Makka, Medīna, Baṣrah, and Kūfah with regards to the number of *āyas* and letters in the Qur'ān. For al-Suyūṭi (2000, 1:133), the number of letters in the Qur'ān is 823671 and the number of *āyas* is 6616. For al-Zarkashi (1988, 1:315), the number of letters is 321000, the number of words is 77,437, and number of *āyas* is 6,218. For al-Qurṭubi (1997, 1:100), the number of letters in the Qur'ān is 340,740. For al-Qurṭubi (1997, 1:101), however, the number of *āyas* is 6,204, but for al-Zarqāni (1988, 1:338), there are only 6200 plus *āyas*.

2.4.14.2 What is a *Sūra*?

The meaning of the word (*sūra*), commonly translated as 'chapter', is normally a section of the Qur'ān which is composed of a number of *āyas* connected one to another in order to complement each other in meaning. A *sūra* always mentions the subject, and the conclusion is always known. al-Zamakhshari (1995, 1: 103, cf. al-Badawi, 1999:44) and al-Qurṭubi (1997, 1:102) define the word (*sūra*) as a part of the Qur'ān whose contents are fixed in the number of *āyas*, the shortest one contains only three *āyas* (Q110) and the longest 286 *āyas* (Q2). The term *sūra* also means 'wall' meaning each *sūra* is well-protected like a fortified city

surrounded by a wall. The term *sūra* also means 'rank' (*martabah*) or (*manzilah*); in other words, the reader moves on from one rank to another when reading the Qur'ān.

The total number of the *sūras* is 114. The shortest *sūra* is made by only three *āyas* and the longest one by 286. The *suwar* (plural of *sūra*) are defined according to tradition, and their titles were given by the Prophet himself.¹¹⁵ A *sūra* is therefore a literary unit of undetermined length within the Qur'ān, which can often be translated as 'chapter'. In the printed editions of the Qur'ān, and not in the earliest manuscripts, it is marked as such by a title section that provides the name of the *sūra*, followed by a number that defines its place in the sequence of the 114 *sūras* of the entire book. *Sūra* names are not abbreviations of the content but catchwords, taking up a particular lexeme from the text that is either a rare word in the Qur'ān (for example Q80 *'abasa* - he frowned) and thus easier to remember, or a major issue discussed in the *sūra* (for example Q4 *al-nisā'* - Women), or occasionally, the initial word of the *sūra*. There is no complete agreement about the names of the *sūras*, some are known by more than one title. Whereas the naming and the ordering of the *sūra* are later textual adjustments, the arrangement of the text as a sequence of *sūras* goes back to the redaction of the Qur'ān itself, whose existence dates back to the reign of the third caliph 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (23-35/644-656).¹¹⁶

The word *sūra* is used ten times in the Qur'ān, all of which come rather late: the oldest evidence is in

“Say: ‘Bring a *sūra* like it and for assistance call upon whom you can besides God”.

(Q10:38)

This *āya* belongs to the so-called *taḥaddī* (challenge) *āyas*, i.e., is of a polemic discourse about the inimitability of Qur'ānic speech. In Q11:13, which is a challenging *āya*, it demands that ten *sūras*, like the present, be produced. Further on the same challenge is put, but with an important difference between the two, as instead it asks to produce only one *sūra* like this (see Q10:38 and Q2:23). The challenge in (Q11:13) corresponds to a time whereby the verses of the Qur'an were small units, as in the Makkan period, whereas the two other verses correspond at a time where the verse was longer, as in the Madinan period.. The term '*sūra*' is part of that debate, and it reappears in Q11:13 and Q2:23. '*Sūra*' is employed in more general

¹¹⁵ Tahānawī (ibid:658-661)

¹¹⁶ Neuwirth (2006:166-177), '*sūra*' in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, vol 5. Etymologically, the term *sūra* is difficult to trace (see Jeffery, *for vocab*), but may have been derived from Hebrew *shurah*, 'line', as well as Syriac *shuraya*, 'beginning', or short psalms that are sung before the reading of scripture. None of these etymologies, however, is totally convincing. In Arabic, the word makes its first appearance in the Qur'ān itself.

contexts to cover an unspecified text unit of the revelation, mostly in polemical contexts like Q9:64, 86, 124. It is only used once: in place of the more usual *kitāb*, in a hymnal announcement of a revealed text to be communicated (Q24:1).

Thus, the *sūra* certainly has something to do with 'text', but not necessarily a written text. It seems to denote a recited text; more precisely, the quantity that is presented in public on a single occasion. The arrangement of the Qur'ānic text *grosso modo* seems to go back to the oral use of the text in the earliest community, a practice that preceded its codification as a whole. A number of *sūras* display the characteristics of intended literary units, composed as such for recitation.¹¹⁷

For al-Badawi (1999:44)³³, a *sūra* is a part of the Qur'ān whose contents are fixed in the number of *āyas*. The term *sūra* also means 'wall', so that each *sūra* is well protected like a fortified city, surrounded by a wall. The term *sūra* can also mean 'rank' (*martabah*) or (*manzilah*); in other words, the reader moves on from one rank to another when reading the Qur'ān. It is worth noting that the majority of Muslim scholars agree that the *sūras* were divinely arranged; that is to say their arrangement was *tawqīfī* (arranged by divine order). Al-Suyūṭī (2000, 1:28)¹¹⁸ also gives the opinion of several scholars, who believe that the arrangement of the *sūras* was man-made, by the companions after the Prophet passed away. This is called *ijtihādī*. However, he does not share this opinion¹¹⁹.

It is also worth noting that a *sūra*¹²⁰ is wrongly translated by chapter and consequently the reader would be confused when he/she read it. This is because we understand a 'chapter' as a complete text with its beginning and ending assembled according to a theme or topic or its length. However, a *sūra* does not follow this rule; it is assembled according to some specific pattern. Therefore, the use of the term 'chapter' to qualify it is totally wrong and not

¹¹⁷ Neuwirth (ibid). The *sūra* as an entity with a coherent unity has not yet been adequately studied, although there have been, more recently, new approaches, often focusing on Q12, *Sūrat Yusuf* ('Joseph'; see Mir, coherence; the *sūra* as unity; id., the Qur'ānic story of Joseph; Neuwirth, Zur struktur; De Premare, Joseph et Muḥammad; Sells, approaching the Qur'ān; id., Literary approach; Waldman, New approaches).

¹¹⁸ al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn, ibid (2000,1:28)

¹¹⁹ al-Ālūsī, Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd (2001). *Rūḥ al-Ma'āni*. 15 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah. The meaning of the word '*sūra*' commonly translated as *chapter* is normally 'a section of the Qur'ān which is composed of a number of *āyās* connected one to another in order to complement each other in meaning. A *sūra* always mentions the subject, and the conclusion is always known.'

¹²⁰ Robinson, Neal: (1996:257-258) *Discovering the Qur'ān, a Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text*. London: SCM Press Ltd. He claims that the difference between a *sūra* and a chapter was put succinctly by the eighteenth century Indian theologian Shah Wāli-Allāh of Delhi when he wrote, 'the Qur'ān should not be thought of as a book arranged in chapter and dealing with its subject systematically, but rather as a collection of epistles by a king, each written for his subjects according to the requirements of the situation.'

appropriate. Robinson (1996:257-258) also points out that the word *sūra* is specific to the Qur'ān, and is never used as the chapter of a book. Thus, to translate (*sūra*) as (chapter) is to invite confusion. Welch (1986:921-922) has a similar view. For him, the *sūra* is a distinct unit, in comparison with the divisions of the books of the Bible that were divided by some publishers later on. Welch (ibid) reminds the reader that a *sūra* is not a chapter in the same way as a chapter of a book, the latter being divided according to a subject, chronology etc. Therefore, for Welch (ibid), it is more convenient to keep the proper Arabic word *sūra* without translating it, and consider it as a technical term such as 'mishnah', 'seder', 'sutra', 'upanishad', and any other sacred terms that are in use for sacred scriptures that come from different religious traditions and that European language adopted. Thus, a *sūra* is a literary distinct unit that should not be considered as a chapter in an ordinary book. The *sūras* of the Qur'ān have their equivalent in the Psalms of the Bible. The term (*sūra*) appeared nine times in the Qur'ān in a singular form, and once in plural form (*suwar*), probably every time in a Madinan context. In the Qur'ān, the term *sūra* denotes a unity of revelation that makes it a synonym of Qur'ān, *āya* and *kitāb*. A *sūra* can also act as a short unit, as can be seen in (Q9:64), (Q9:86, 124, 127), (Q47:20), which are about specific commandments and information that were given to Muḥammad, but appeared to be shorter than the actual *sūra*.

As for the names of the *sūras*, Robinson (1996:257-258) claims that they are not actually a part of the Qur'ān, as some *sūras* are known by more than one name, such as *sūra* 9 which is known as 'repentance' and 'immunity'. The principal function of the *sūra* names is as a convenient label for identifying the various *sūras*, and for distinguishing them from one another. Often the name is derived from a word which occurs in the first two *āyas* or the last word of the first *āya*, or the name could be a word which occurs elsewhere in the *sūra*, although this is rare in the Qur'ān as a whole (see: the Cow, *sūra* 2). However, the name is not the equivalent of a chapter heading and it does not give indication of the *sūra* contents. The only exception is *sūra* 12, 'Joseph', which is almost entirely devoted to the story of Joseph.

It goes without saying that the majority of Muslim scholars agree that the *sūras* were divinely arranged, i.e. their arrangement was *tawqīfī* (al-Qurṭubī (1997, 1:102), al-Ālūsī 2001, 1:27). Scholars like Abu Bakr al-Anbārī (cf. al-Ālūsī, ibid) and al-Karmānī (cf. al-Ālūsī, ibid) also hold this opinion and claim that Gabriel visited the Prophet Muḥammad twice during the year he passed away and Muḥammad read the whole Qur'ān to Gabriel twice. Thus, the *sūras* were read and arranged under the supervision of Gabriel. Thus, this is called *tartīb tawqīfī*, i.e., arrangement of the *sūras* by divine order. However, other scholars like al-Baihaqī and al-

Suyūṭī (cf. al-Ālūsi, *ibid* :28) are of the opinion that the arrangement of the *sūras* were man-made, i.e. made by the companions after the Prophet passed away. Thus, based on their claim, the arrangement of the *sūras* was *ijtihādī*.

Linguistically, however, the word (*sūra*) is derived from the word (*sūr*) meaning ‘city wall, fence, enclosure’. This is because each (*sūra*) is made up of a number of (*āyas*), i.e., the *āya* constitutes a building block of the ‘wall or fence’. The word (*sūra*) also means ‘fortification’ since the (*sūras*) are revealed to ‘protect the prophethood of Muḥammad’ and each (*sūra*) is ‘a miracle’ of his prophethood (Abdul-Raof 2001:65). The first revealed (*sūra*) in the Qur’ān was Q96 (the germ cell – *al-‘alaq*) and the last one was Q103 (the declining day, the time - *al-‘aṣr*).

According to Abu ‘Ubaidah (1988, 1:1-2), the name (Qur’ān) is called so because ‘it collects all the *sūras* and put them together’. This meaning for Abu ‘Ubaidah (*ibid*) is based on Q75:17 (*inna ‘alainā jam‘ahū waqur’ānah* – Upon Us is its collection (in your heart) and to make possible its recitation) which means (*ta’līf ba‘ḍuhū ilā ba‘ḍ* – collecting and harmonizing its parts). It is also called (Qur’ān) because ‘if We reveal something to you and add it to the rest, you have to believe in it, act upon it, and add it to the rest) (*ibid*). This meaning, for Abu ‘Ubaidah (*ibid*), is based on Q75:18 (*fa’idhā qara’nāhu fattabi‘ qur’ānah* – When We have recited it (through Gabriel), then follow its recitation).

Chapter Three

The Makkan Revelations

3.1 Introduction

To this day, many writers have discussed the topic of Makkan and Madinan *sūras*, however many of their analyses highlight only one major textual feature: those in Makkan *sūras*, which are distinguished by the occurrence of prostration (*al-sajdah*), and Madinan *sūras*, which are characterised by their address to the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians. Aside from this, there are many other distinguishing features, such as the place and the time of revelation, as well as many other textual elements that can be implemented in distinguishing Makkan *sūras* from their Madinan counterparts. When addressing this topic, it is paramount to clarify what we have discussed above so that the reader has an understanding of why the Makkan and Madinan *sūras* differ.

My aim is to analyse what makes a Makkan and a Madinan *sūra*, not in terms of classification, but in terms of similarities and differences with regards to the thematic meanings in the respective *sūra*. In addition, I shall attempt to analyse the significance of the themes contained in the Makkan and Madinan *sūras* and compare them, or discuss their individual characteristics, when looking at certain themes such as morality and admonition (*al-akhlāq wal-waʿz*). I also feel that it is unnecessary to discuss the chronological order of the *sūras* in detail in this study, because many modern scholars of the Qurʾān have attempted to deal with this, albeit with little success. Other scholars have equally found little success due to the complexity of the nature of the subject (cf., for instance, Richard Bell (1953) and Nöldeke (1909) who provided an interesting chronological re-arrangement of Qurʾānic *sūras*). The present chapter will additionally provide an approach that aims to tackle Qurʾānic discourse and Qurʾānic textual progression and its thematic meanings by looking into the conceptual connectivity, as well as the rhetorical and linguistic features.

I am not the first or last person to discuss Makkan and Madinan *sūras* as part of a comparative study: many Muslim scholars since al-Zarkashi, al-Zamakhshāri and al-Ṣuyūṭi, to name a few, have approached this subject with the same methodology that has been discussed above in order to define which *sūras* are of Makkan character and which are Madinan.

Due to constraints on space in my work, it is only practical to include a few *sūra* samples for our analysis. I have therefore selected Q7, Q17, and Q28 from the Makkan *sūras* for a textual analysis that aims to provide the thematic meanings of the *sūra*, and enumerate the tenets of

faith and their moral lessons. From this I will then deduce the language used, and present the results of my research in a tabular form. As previously mentioned, I will begin this study by defining what the Makkan *sūras* are according to al-Ṣuyūṭī (2000) and al-Badawī (1999), and discuss the features and the chronological order of the *sūras* in their works.

3.2 Features of Makkan Revelations

This section will aim to list the major constituent features of the Makkan *sūras* in order to gain a thorough understanding of the topic. Scholars have identified twenty-five approaches to be investigated when dealing with the topic of Makkan and Madīnan *sūras*. However, focus shall only be on the most important features, and I will also provide the specific characteristics of the Makkan *sūras* that distinguish them from the Madīnan ones (cf. °Abd al-Bāqī 1996:721-722).

The following are the main characteristics of the Makkan *sūras*:

1. The Makkan *sūras* and *āyas* are short and succinct, as in Q108 and Q112.
2. Because of this, they enjoy forceful expressions and simple stylistic structures, as in Q100:1-11 and Q87:1-19.
3. They use eschatological words, such as (*al-qārīʿah* – the striking calamity, 101:1) and (*al-huṭamah* – the hellfire, Q104:4).
4. They employ catchy rhymes in order to win the attention of listeners, through the musical feature of assonance (*al-sajʿ*), which I believe is instrumental in the realisation of Qurʾānic cadence (*rakhāmat al-ṣawt*): Q91 is characterized by the long vowel /ā/ assonance (*al-sajʿ*).
5. *Sūras* begin with *al-muqattaʿāt* (disjointed letters), such as *alif-lām-mīm*, with the exception of Q2 (the cow) and Q3 (the family of °Imrān).
6. They have an *āya* of prostration (*sajdat al-tilāwa*).
7. Makkan *sūras* sometimes mention stories of the previous Prophets, as in Q85 (the story of Dhū al-Nūn) and Q11 (the stories of Mūsā, Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ, and Shuʿaib).
8. Expressions of rebuke (*kallā* - no) are employed; such negation particles occur only in the last part of the Qurʾān: Q19:79, 82, Q23:100, Q70:15, 39, Q78:4, Q89:17, 21 and Q104:4. Overall, it occurs in over fifteen *sūras*, which are: Q26:15, 62, Q34:27, Q74:16, 32, 53, 54, Q75:11, 20, 26, Q78:4, 5, Q80:11, 23, Q82:9, Q83:7, 14, 15, 18, Q89:17, 21, Q96:6, 15, 19, Q102:3, 4, 5 and Q104:4.

However, Abdul-Raof (2003:141) adds more Makkan features; these are:

9. The call to worship God alone, i.e. the tenet of faith referred to as *al-tawḥīd* (monotheism).

10. The establishment of the monotheistic belief (*al-ʿaqīdah*).
11. Proving the tenet of faith of eschatology.
12. The tenet of faith of reward and punishment.
13. The Day of Judgement and its horror.
14. Paradise and its happiness.
15. Hellfire and its chastisement.
16. Argumentation with rational anti-thesis: see Q18:32-44 and Q36:77-83.
17. God’s omnipotence and cosmic *āyas* that verify monotheism, as seen in Q6:95-99, are followed by monotheism *āyas* (Q6:100-101).
18. Onomatopoeic sounds intensify the horror of a given Qur’ānic expression that depicts eschatology and reward and punishment, such as: (*al-ṣākhkhah* – the deafening blast, Q80:33), (*al-qārīʿah* – the crushing blow, Q101) and (*wiswās* - whispering, Q114:4, 5).
19. Cryptic letters occur *sūra*-initially, except for Q2 and Q3; scholars, however, are undecided about Q13.
20. Parables of the fate of past nations, except for Q2, such as the parable of Pharaoh (Q20 and Q26) and the parable of Gog and Magog (Q18:94).
21. Admonition and morality, as in the parable of Joseph (Q12) and the parable of Luqmān (Q31).
22. Challenging *āyas*, such as Q75:40, and Q65:16-17, 30.
23. The use of a *sūra*-initial oath, as in Q93, Q95, and Q103.
24. The occurrence of a word referring to prostration (*sajdah*), as in Q17:107, Q32:15, Q19:85, Q96:19.
25. The occurrence of the names Adam and Iblīs, except for Q2.
26. Any *āya* which has (*yā ayyuhā al-nāsu*) and not (*yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū*) is Makkan, except for the last part of Q22:77 which, although it has (*yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū*), is considered as Makkan.

I have also found other interesting characteristic features of Makkan revelations, such as:

27. The call to adhere to good manners, integrity and honesty, as in Q 30:38, Q31:14-19, Q89:17-20.
28. The frequent occurrence of the rhetorical feature of antithesis (*al-muqābalaḥ*) or (*al-ṭibāq*), as in Q53:43-44, Q35:19-22, Q56:88-94, Q69:22-23, and Q88:13-14.
29. The use of polyptoton in short *āya* form, as in Q80:25, 26, where we have (*ṣababnā, ṣabbā* – to pour down in torrents), and Q89:20, 21 where we have (*tuḥibbūm, ḥubbā* – to love something with immense love, *dukkat, dakkā* – to be levelled, pounded and crushed).
30. The use of assonance-based short *āyās*, as in Q75:1-13, Q75:20-40, Q81:1-18, Q84, Q85:1-7, Q97, Q101.
31. The occurrence of assonance based on consonants of short *āyās*, like the final letters (r), (l), (sh), (b), (d), (q), and (s) in Q103/Q108, Q105, Q106, Q111, Q112, Q113, and Q114 respectively rather than long vowels like (ūn) as in (*khālidūm*) or (īm) as in (*ḥakīm, alīm*).
32. The use of psychologically-moving artistic imagery that depicts the horror of the Day of Judgement, as in 69:14-37 and Q101:4-5.
33. Universality of the Qur'ānic message: Islam was announced by the initial phase revelation (see section 4.5) as a universal message to all mankind, as in Q81:27 (*in huwa illā dhikrun lil-alamīn* – This is a message for all people). This universal announcement is repeated by Q12:104, Q38:87, and Q68:52.
34. In Makkan *sūras*, we encounter the occurrence of the word (maryam, Q19:16, 27), or the expression (*ibna maryama waummahu* – the son of Mary and his mother, Q23:50, Q43:57), but not the expression (*ʿĪsā ibnu maryama* – Jesus the son of Mary, Q2:87, 253, Q3:45, Q4:157, Q5:17, 46, Q33:7, Q57:27, and Q61:14), except for Q19:34. This, I believe, is attributed to the fact that in Makka, the Quraysh people were not familiar with the notion of 'Jesus the son of Mary', as opposed to the Christian notion of 'Jesus the son of God', which was known to the Christian community of Madīna.

3.3 Diagnosis of Makkan *Sūras*

In this section, we will account for the different opinions of scholars in determining whether a *sūra* is Makkan or not. For this, we shall focus on three criteria:

- (i) The time of revelation: if it was before the *hijra* (migration to Madīna), the *sūra* or the *āya* is considered as Makkan.
- (ii) The place of revelation: if it was revealed in Makka including Ṭā'if (see the map of Arabia enclosed at the end of the thesis), and the other areas outside of Makka as well, it will be Makkan. Therefore, the *sūras* and *āyas* revealed at Makka during the farewell pilgrimage (*ḥujjat al-wadāʿ*) would be considered as Makkan even though they were revealed after the *hijra*.
- (iii) The addressees in the *āya* or *sūra*: if it was addressed to Quraysh and the polytheists of Makka, it is considered as Makkan.

In order to verify these criteria, we need to adopt one of the following two approaches:

- (i) By relying upon reports from the companions of the Prophet, because they specifically state the place and/or time of revelation, or give some information from which the time of revelation can be inferred.
- (ii) By personal reasoning (*ijtihād*), where the *āya*'s meaning and style can be a diagnostic measure as to whether the *āya* is Makkan or Madinan (al-Suyūṭī, 2000, 1:20).

We believe that the first approach is more reliable, as it eliminates any scepticism about the circumstances of revelation and, furthermore, it provides minute details about it. However, the personal reasoning is based on one's own reflection, which opens the door to misunderstanding and possible mistakes, since it is not based upon a reliable chain of narration (*isnād*) which supports it. Consequently, the result cannot be fully determined.

Moreover, as claimed by Mannā^c al-Qaṭṭān (1983:53-54), classical scholars, when dealing with the sensitive topic of Makkan and Madinan *sūras*, would comprehensively verify every single detail and feature in order to distinguish the specific characteristics of each of them. In fact, they would check on an *āya* by *āya*, *sūra* by *sūra* basis in order to ensure that the spelling of each word corresponded with the same spelling of these *āyas* and *sūras* when they were revealed. This work was tackled on three different fronts: (i) by time, (ii) by place, and (iii) by addressee (as we have just mentioned earlier). The criterion of using one out of the three possible elements was not sufficient enough on its own: a mixture of the three was needed in order for the scholar to carry out a detailed examination of the discipline of determining Makkan and Madinan *sūras*. Although it took great effort to make this research a

reality, the Qur'ān scholar needed to examine the reasons for revelation in different ways. He also needed to have recourse to many other *āyas* in order to understand when one particular *āya* was revealed, and then he fixed the place of revelation. It is only after this that he would have analysed the style of the expression used in this *āya* in order to find if it addresses a tribe of Makka or a tribe of Madīna; for this, he would have needed to focus on the subject of the *āya* or the *sūra* to find if its theme concerned an invitation (*da'wah*) to God from the kind of invitation from the Makkan period, or from the kind of invitation that happened in Madīna.

However, when the scholar was in doubt as to whether an *āya* or a *sūra* could be both Makkan and Madinan, he would need to verify if it was more likely to be Makkan in nature or Madinan. If an *āya* was revealed in one place and then transported to another, the scholar was required to mention so in a manner such as the following: 'this *āya* was from Makka but was transported to Madīna', or 'this was from Madīna but was transported to Makka'.

According to al-Nisābūri in his book *al-Tanbīh 'alā Faḍl al-Qur'ān* (cf. al-Qaṭṭān, 1983:53-54), this great task was considered to be the most difficult and honourable among all disciplines of the Qur'ān because it provided useful information about an *āya* or a *sūra*. For example, whether an *āya* or a *sūra* was from Makka or Madīna, whether it was from Makka but addressed the people of Madīna, or whether it was from Madīna but addressed the people of Makka. Furthermore, it provides information concerning the following: Which *āya* that looks like a Makkan revelation inside a Madinan *sūra*, and which *āya* that looks like Makkan in a Madinan *sūra*? Also, which *āyas* or *sūras* were revealed at Juhfa, at Jerusalem, at Tā'if or at Ḥudaybiyya. This classification investigates which *āyas* were revealed at night or during the day, which *āyas* were revealed alone and which were revealed all together. It also deals with the Madinan *āyas* in Makkan *sūras* and the Makkan *āyas* in Madinan *sūras*. The Makkan and Madinan analysis of *āyas* and *sūras* deals with the *āyas* that were transported from Makka to Madīna and from Madīna to Makka; it also deals with the *āyas* or *sūras* for which there is doubt about its place of revelation. All these matters are part of the twenty-five aspects needed to tackle the topic of Makkan and Madinan *āyas* and *sūras*. For al-Naisābūri (ibid), those who ignore them cannot consider themselves as capable of discussing the Book of God.

The Makkan *āyas* in the view of al-Qaṭṭān (1990:63) are often short and also have some stylistic and linguistic particulars such as strong words, rhythm and rhyme, words that are ejected as sparks which will tackle the pledges and the punishment, some satiric words appear

on the beginning of a *sūra*, some *āyas* are challenging the great and majestic state of God, destiny of the previous generations, and to establish the argument that prove the existential fact, rational and mental ones as well.

3.4 Focus of Makkan *Sūras*

Based on the views of al-Ṣuyūṭī, al-Badawī, al-Judai^c and von Denffer, this section will discuss the major thematic focuses of Makkan *sūras*:

(i) Monotheism

Most of the Makkan *sūras* deal with *tawḥīd* (monotheism), which is the call to the pure worship of Allāh (God) alone. This is achieved by affirming His names and attributes (*asmā' waṣifāt* allāh), and rejecting all false deities and idols.

(ii) Faith

Several laws were revealed in the Makkan *āyas* concerning *īmān* (faith) in order to build the moral and spiritual character of the early Muslims, who were a minority and therefore under great pressure from the Makkan pagan/polytheist society in general.

(iii) Belief

Makkan *sūras* predominantly deal with the establishment of *‘aqīdah* (belief) by affirming one's belief in prophethood, the angels, the previously revealed Scriptures, reward and punishment, and the Day of Judgment. The stories of previous generations are ever present in Makkan *sūras* too, with the main aim of warning idolaters of the punishment the earlier nations had received from God. The Makkan *sūras* pose specific questions such as:

- (a) who created the universe?
- (b) who arranged (*yudabbir al-amr*) the matters and events?
- (c) where do we, as humans, come from?
- (d) where are we going after death?
- (e) what is our objective in living? and
- (f) what is the best approach for a happy life?

(iv) Moral Conduct

The Makkan *sūras* and *āyas* aim to establish morality by the call for *akhlāq* (good conduct, social etiquette), such as respecting the property of orphans, justice and equality and treating female infants properly. At this stage, the basic framework of moral conduct was in place. However, laws concerning specific areas such as fornication and drinking had not yet been revealed (see chapter four).

(v) Daily Prayer

The daily prayer (*ṣalāṭ*) was established during this period, as told by Q17:78 (cf. al-Qurṭubi 1997, 10:263).

(vi) Unseen World

Many *āyas* in Makkan *sūras* deal with the unseen world (*al-ghaib*), its wonders, mysteries and horrors, describing paradise and the hellfire. Furthermore, those who refuse to accept the *āyas* concerning resurrection in the Qur'ān are presented with many examples, such as rain falling on the dead earth, subsequently bringing it back to life. In addition to this, some *āyas* mention that the recreation of life would be easier than its initial creation.

(vii) Omnipotence of God

The omnipotence of God (*qudrat Allāh*) is expressed through logical arguments that prove Allāh's existence; such proof was taken from nature and the creatures' common to that society.

(viii) Linguistic Challenge

In order to prove to Quraysh that the Qur'ān was revealed by Allāh and that Muḥammad was a Prophet of Allāh, many *āyas* challenged the eloquent Arabs to imitate the Qur'ān: Q2:23 and Q11:13, for example, highlight the linguistic and stylistic inimitability of Qur'anic discourse.

(ix) Admonition

Makkan *sūras* are a unique example for morality- they make frequent reference, but with brief detail, to Prophets' stories (*qaṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*) and previous nations as moral lessons to enhance the faith of the Prophet and his Companions.

3.4.1 Evidence for God as Creator and Manager of the Universe

The Makkan *sūras* are unique examples for the demonstration of God as the creator and the manager of the universe (*al-khāliq al-mudabbir*). Makkan Qur'ānic discourse follows a presentation technique of fostering and encouraging positive learning which requires the positive employment of one's mental faculties, which enable the individual to reflect and ponder upon the matters raised to him/her and with which he/she is aware in order to arrive at the logical conclusion that there is a creator and manager of the universe of which the individual is a minute element. These subject matters are presented as a jigsaw and the individual is required to work around it. The aim is that once the notion of 'creator and manager of the universe' is established, the individual may believe in the prophethood of Muḥammad. Makkan revelations display the notion of 'creator and manager of the universe' in the following forms:

- (i) Sunrise and sunset, as in (The Lord of the east and the west and that between them, if you were to reason, Q26:28), (When the sun is wrapped up in darkness, Q81:17, and in Q39:5),
- (ii) Change of day and night, as in (All praise is due to God who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light, Q6:1), (He (God) has subjected for you the night and the day, Q16:12),
- (iii) Creation of mankind, as in (It is He (God) who created you from clay, Q6:2), (He created you from one soul, Q39:6),
- (iv) The womb and foetus, as in (He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, within three layers of darkness, Q39:6),
- (v) Animals, birds, and insects, as in (Indeed, in the grazing livestock is a lesson for you, Q16:66), (Do they not see the birds controlled in the atmosphere of the sky?, Q16:79), (. . . like that of the spider . . . , Q29:41),
- (vi) stars, sun, moon, heavens and earth, as in (By the star when it descends, Q53:1), (Indeed, your Lord is Allāh who created the heavens and earth in six days . . . He covers the night with the day, another night chasing it rapidly; and He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command, Q7:53, (He (God) has subjected for you . . . the sun and the moon, and the stars are subjected by His command, Q16:12), (vii) the sea, as in (, Q45:12), and (viii) the universe and Earth are for the individual to enjoy, as in (He (God) has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth; all is from Him. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought, Q45:13).

The Makkan revelations present the above subject matters as (signs – *āyāt*, i.e., reminders or clues) and (*la'ibratun* - a lesson to benefit from) for people who:

- (i) (*liqawmin ya'qilūn* – for a people who reason),
- (ii) (*liqawmin yatafakkarūn* – for a people who give thought),
- (iii) (*liqawmin yafqahūn* - for a people who understand),
- (iv) (*liqawmin yattaqūn* – for a people who fear God),
- (v) (*ulī al-abṣār* – people of vision),
- (vi) (*liulī al-albāb* – people of understanding), and
- (vii) (*li'ulī al-nuhā* – people of intelligence).

3.5 Style in Makkan *Sūras*

Both Makkan and Madinan *Sūras* have their own characteristic stylistic features which distinguish them apart. I believe style can be a distinguishing feature in the diagnosis of Makkan and Madinan *sūras*. However, the approach of Western Qur'ān scholars such as Noeldeke-Shwally (1860) -Blachere (1949-59), Bell-Watt (1953), Berque (1990), Cuypers (1997 and 2004), Neuwirth (1993), and Robinson (1996), as well as Muslim Qur'an scholars such as Islahi-Farahi-Mir (2000), Abdel-Haleem (2000) and Abdul-Raof (2003) are different in their dealing with the features of Makkan *sūras*. They use varying terms such as 'structure', 'register' or 'unity' for their analyses. In our account, we shall employ the word 'style' to refer to both 'register' and 'structure'. The discussion will aim to provide informative details about style in Qur'anic discourse.

Generally speaking, the style of Makkan *sūras* is characterised by short *āyas* with eloquent words, and concise expressions. This may be due to the fact that the Makkans were able to speak in a formal and eloquent manner. Hence, they did not need a guide to understand the hyperbole and the verbosity of the Qur'ānic language. This is also the case, for example, when you address a stubborn person with whom is difficult to debate: you may therefore use strong words that contain the power of pressure to force him/her to resign to your message, to accept it and to discipline somebody, as they say in Arabic (*li kulli maqām maqāl*) which translates as (to each group of people an appropriate language). The following examples from Makkan *sūras* explain this point:

Have you seen? If We do let them enjoy (this life) for a few years, Yet there comes to them at length the (punishment) which they were promised! It will profit them not that they enjoyed (this life)! Never did We destroy a population, but had its warners by way of reminder; and We never are unjust. (Q26:205-209)

These *āyas* show the gravity of the situation and serve as a painful reminder of the tribulations that had afflicted previous generations. Furthermore, they are employed as a reminder to those people who rebel against God's warning, those who associate partners with God, and to those who follow the plots of Satan in the hope that they will not fall into the same trap as their predecessors did:

No evil ones have brought down this Revelation:

It would neither suit them nor would they be able to produce it.

Indeed they have been removed far from even a chance of hearing it. (Q26:210-212)

The Qur'ān also answers people who ask themselves about the revelation as follows:

And they say: 'Tales of the ancients, which he has caused to be written: and they are dictated before him morning and evening.' (Q25:5)

We know indeed that they say: 'it is a man that teaches him'. The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear. (Q16:103)
(al-Badawi 1999:35)

3.5.1 Qur'ānic Rhetorical and Stylistic Features

In this section we shall discuss the rhetorical, stylistic and linguistic features that occurred in the Makkan *sūras* in the view of several modern scholars such as Sabbagh, Abdel-Haleem, Abdul-Raof, and Neuwirth.

3.5.1.1 Simile in Makkan *Sūras*

According to al-Jurjāni¹²¹ (1984:393), a simile (*al-tashbīh*) is an important rhetorical feature of effective word order and eloquence. In this section, we will discuss the rhetorical aspect of Qur'ānic discourse in the Makkan *sūras*, and particularly similes in the Qur'ān according to Şabbāgh (1942), who claims that the importance of the simile is to reflect the nature of the society which creates it. The different forms of simile may not inform us further about people, he claims, but they do give us details of their beliefs and the institutions of society (ibid).

¹²¹ Abū Bakr 'Abdul Qāhir ibn 'Abdur-Rahmān al-Jurjāni (d. 1078) Arabian grammarian, belonged to the Persian school and wrote a famous grammar, the *Kitab ul-'Awdmil ul-Mi'a* or *Kitab Mi'at 'Amil*, which was edited by Erpenius (Leiden, 1617) Ten Arabic commentaries on this work exist in manuscript, also two Turkish.. Another of his grammatical works on which several commentaries have been written is the *Kitab Jumal fin-Nahw*. For other works see Carl Brockelmann's *Gesch. der Arabischen Litteratur* (1898), i.288. (www.wikipedia.com)

According to Hermann Paul (cf. *ibid*: 5), similes translate the diversity of what people are interested in. Vendyes (cf. *ibid*: 5) also claims that the study of similes and what they express leads to understanding the psychology of people, and that it reveals some interesting aspects about the creative personality of the author. Şabbāgh also gives a thorough analysis of the meaning of the simile and deals with different types. He classifies them according to the instrument of comparison which can either be a noun such as ‘mithl - like’ as in Q42:1, or a particle such as (*ka* - like) as in Q11:44, Q36:39, Q18:28, Q25:46, Q22:46, and Q18:43.

In his classification, Şabbāgh enumerated the similes that reflect nature, human beings, animals or the body. In his conclusion, he claims that the Makkan *sūras*, which are divided into three periods by Noldeke, are relevant in describing the evolution of the similes, but the clearest difference is in the last period of Makkan *sūras* and beginning of the Madinan period where the subject matter of the comparison is not same, and at the same time less poetical as it is in the Makkan. Şabbāgh (*ibid*: 45-49) also claims that the use of similes is to replace something by something similar or different in order to give more impact to those to whom the similes are addressed. We can say that this is the reason why, in Makkan *sūras*, the words are stronger and more effective on the listener when describing the hellfire, or God’s wrath, to the unbelievers. On the contrary, when describing paradise, the Makkan words are more beautiful, and impressive imagery is used.

In Madīna, the Qur’ān addressed a different kind of people, the Scripturists, and therefore the use of strong words was not necessary, as the message delivered was itself understood without similes or images. In fact, Madinan *sūras* provide many legal rulings and statements about social life and do not require the special rhetorical images that are found in similes to make them understood by opponents. Furthermore, the similes in Makkan *sūras* are generally used to summarise an idea through an image. However, in the Madinan *āyas*, we notice that the *āyas* are longer because they require clarity and details when explaining the law of God, which is new and unknown to people.

3.5.1.2 Oath in Makkan *Sūras*

According to Abdul-Raof’s views (2003:359), an oath, in Arabic, is a stylistic mechanism that is employed to achieve a sublime style on the one hand, and as a textual ornamentation technique that aims to beautify a statement on the other. Angelika Neuwirth (1993), in her study ‘image and metaphors in the introductory sections of the Makkan *Sūras*’, makes some useful observations concerning the different types of oath that occur in Qur’ānic discourse.

She counts over fourteen oaths, with the exception of Q:37, all belonging to the first Makkan period according to Nöldeke's chronology, and classifies them according to the following three categories:

- Oath clusters of the type *wa'l-fā'ilāt*, which are: Q100, Q79, Q77, Q51, Q37.
- Oath clusters alluding to particular sacred localities, such as: Q95, Q90, Q52.
- Oath clusters resorting to cosmic phenomena and certain time periods of the day and night, such as: Q93, Q92, Q91, Q89, Q86, Q85 (ibid: 4).

Oath clusters of the first kind occupy an exceptional position in the Qur'ān insofar as they apply a type of metaphorical language distinct from that of the rest of the corpus. In fact these oaths do not explicitly name the objects they refer to; they only allude to them by specifying that they have been moved in different successive motions. These oaths have become known to be particularly enigmatic due to their fundamental difficulties: their pronouncedly profane imagery may be found to be little consistent with the general purport of the *sūras* as documents of religious discourse (ibid: 5).

The second type is oath clusters alluding to sacred localities; they are a small group that refer mainly to localities associated with particular theophanies that have played an important role in salvation history. The most frequent locality mentioned is Makka: it appears once alone and twice combined with Mount Sinai, which is the second site. In all three oaths clusters, a direct coherence between the oath formulae and the following text is missing (Neuwirth 1993:12).

The third group is the most common and complicated one, those that refer to particular celestial phenomena- phases of the day and night. As with the second group of oath clusters, this one does not show any immediate coherence between the oath formulae and the following text. Moreover, the oath does not refer to imagined natural phenomena, considered as prototypes of eschatological incidents to come, but refers either to totally abstract items such as time, phases or their visible signs, the celestial phenomena. Furthermore these oaths are to be found within sets of oaths referring to equally abstract subjects (ibid: 17).

In Q85 and Q86, a different tone dominates; their oath clusters presuppose a phase of the night. However, they do not name it directly, but refer to particular stars or celestial phenomena. In these *sūras*, the liturgical experience of the vigils creates a feeling of assurance and confidence not only in the integrity and truth of the revelation, but also in its final victorious nature, providing sufficient strength to provoke the enemies of the Qur'ān and to ward them off by threatening them with eschatological retribution, as per Neuwirth (ibid:24). Neuwirth concludes that the immanent dynamics dominating these *sūras* is due to the accumulation of parallel phrases in the introductory section creating a rhythm of its own;

its structure is due to the anticipation of a solution of the ‘enigma’ aroused in the listener’s mind by the amassed metaphorical elements, not immediately comprehensible or at least plausible to him. It is this dynamisation of the entire *sūra*, worked by the introductory oath clusters, that is the main characteristic of the text group investigated (ibid: 29).

Al-Suyūṭī (2000, 2:259-260) gives a thorough analysis of the different types of oath that appear in the Qur’ān, and divides them into many groups. He claims that the use of oaths was frequent with the Arabs even before Islam, but God has used them in the Qur’ān to express the proof of something or to confirm it, and this is in two ways: either by the *shahāda* or by an oath itself. He also uses them both to show their importance: in (Q3:18) the use of *shahāda*, and in (Q10:53) the use of oath express the same thing:

There is no God but He: that is the witness of Allāh, His angels, and those endued with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no God but He, the Exalted in Power, the Wise. (Q3:18)

They seek to be informed by you: Is that true? Say: ‘Aye! By my Lord! It is the very truth! And you cannot frustrate it! (Q10:53)

Neuwirth (1993) notes that the major kinds of Qur’ānic oath are:

(i) Oath which is by God as in:

Say: ‘Aye! By my Lord! . . .’ (Q10:53)

Say: ‘Yea, By my Lord, ye shall surely be raised up . . .’ (Q64:7)

So by thy Lord, without doubt, We shall gather them together . . . (Q19:68)

Therefore, by the Lord, we will, of a surety, call them to account . . . (Q15:92)

But no, by the Lord, they can have no real faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them . . . (Q4:65)

Now I do call to witness the Lord of all points in the East and the West . . . (Q70:40)

(ii) Oath which is by the creation of God as in:

By the fig and the olive (Q95:1)

By those who range themselves in ranks (Q37:1)

By the sun and his (glorious) splendour (Q91:1)

By the night as it conceals (the light) (Q92:1)

By the glorious morning light (Q93:1)

So verily I call to witness the planets - that recede . . . (Q81:15)

The above oaths must all be understood with the following meaning: ‘by the God of ... these creations or creatures).

(iii) Oaths where God swears by His most beloved creature, the Prophet Muḥammad, as in:

Verily, by your life (O Prophet), in their wild intoxication . . . (Q15:72)

(iv) Oaths by the sacred food which mankind benefit from as in:

By the fig and the olive (Q95:1)

(v) Oaths by the name of things which are sacred places as in:

And the Mount Sinai, and this city of security (Q95:2-3)

(vi) Oaths by things such as mentioned above but completed by a verb as in:

By the firmament and its (wonderful) structure. By the earth and its (wide) expanse. By the soul, and the proportion and order given to it. (Q91:5-7)

By the Mount (of Revelation). By a decree inscribed. (Q52:1-2)

By the star when it goes down. (Q53:1)

(vii) Oaths introduced by a (*lām*) particle as in:

You shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions . . . (Q3:186)

(viii) Oaths introduced by a secondary meaning as in:

Not one of you but will pass over it: this is, with your Lord, a decree which must be accomplished. (Q19:71)

where the secondary-oath expresses ‘*wallāhi*’ (By God . . . this and this will happen) (Neuwirth 1993:29).

3.5.1.3 Shift in Makkan *Sūras*

In this section, we will discuss the stylistic feature of Qur’ānic discourse in the Makkan *sūras*, known as *iltifāt* (shift) in Arabic rhetoric. It is worth noting that *iltifāt* does not have an equivalent stylistic feature in English. Abdel-Haleem (1999:184), in a study of the Arabic term *iltifāt*, compares two different opinions on this matter, the first being the opinion of a Western scholar Nöldeke, and the second, a view of Arab linguist and rhetoricians. In this study Abdel-Haleem assesses Nöldeke’s view who (ibid) observes that the grammatical

person in the Qur'ān keeps changing, in an unusual way, from time to time. Abdel-Haleem claims this is a personal value judgment, in contrast with the opinion of the Arab linguists who see the matter differently based on Arabic stylistic criteria. Ibn al-Athīr, for instance, who has studied this stylistic feature, classifies *iltifāt* amongst some of the most remarkable stylistic features and exquisite rhetorical subtleties that can be found in the Qur'ān. Abdel-Haleem adds that what Nöldeke describes in his study has not occurred haphazardly in the Qur'ān, but rather according to a specific stylistic pattern. By examining how and why shift occurs, we will soon recognise how effective this stylistic technique is, and why Muslim literary critics and exegetes greatly admire *iltifāt* and its related rhetorical features.

According to Robinson (1996:245), *iltifāt* is one of the most disconcerting features of Qur'ānic style, characterised by the frequent occurrence of unexpected and apparently unwarranted shift from one pronoun to another. However, he does not recognise that shift occurs not at pronoun level only, but at other levels, such as the verb and in morphological form. Non-Muslim scholars have tended either to regard these stylistic changes as solecisms, or simply ignore them. However, Muslim specialists in Arabic rhetoric, on the other hand, refer to this phenomenon as *iltifāt*, literally meaning 'conversion' or 'turning one's face to' and define it as:

'The change of speech from one mode to another, for the sake of freshness and variety for the listener, to renew his/her interest, and to keep his/her mind from boredom and frustration, through having the one mode continuously at his ear.'

They also value it as (*shajā'at al-ʿarabiyya* - the audacity of Arabic), and they have attempted to explain the purpose of the various types of shift, he claims (ibid). According to Abdul-Raof (2004:12), the term *iltifāt* is seen as a stylistic feature which is also known as *talwīn al-khiṭāb*, meaning 'to elegantly colour the discourse'.

Examples of the stylistic feature of *iltifāt* in Makkan āyas include:

Q16:70-83: we have the shift from a nominal sentence, i.e., noun initial āya (*allāhu khalaqakum . . . allāhu faḍḍala baʿdakum ʿalā baʿḍ . . . allāhu jaʿala lakum . . .*), to a verbal sentence, i.e., verb initial āya (*yaʿbudūn min dūni allāhi . . . ḍaraba allāhu mathalan . . .*), to a nominal sentence (*allāhu akhrajakum . . . allāhu jaʿala lakum . . . allāhu jaʿala lakum . . .*), and then to a verbal sentence (*yaʿrifūna niʿmata allāhi . . .*).

Similarly, in Q50:28-30, we encounter shift from the third person singular (*qāla* – he said) to first person singular (*ladaiyah* – to me), (*qaddamtu* – I presented) and (*anā* – I) to first person plural (*naqūl* – we say).

Stylistic shift may occur in *āyas* of different Makkan *sūras*, such as Q6:25 (*waminhum man yastami^u ilaika*), where we have the singular implicit pronoun (*huwa* – he) which is within the verb (*yastami^u* – he listens to), compared with the plural pronoun (*hum* – they) which is implicit in the verb (*yastami^u ūna* – they listen) in Q10:42 (*waminhum man yastami^u ūna ilaika*) (Abdul-Raof 2004: 12, 15, 73).

3.5.1.4 Repetition in Makkan *Sūras*

We would like to claim that repetition in Qur'ānic discourse is an important stylistic feature. We can find different forms of repetition, including the repetition of expressions such as (*kadhhabū* – to disbelieve, *takdhīb* - disbelief, as in Q6, and *rahīma* – mercy, as in Q19), phrases such as (*a'ilāhun ma^ua allāh* – Is there a deity with Allāh, as in Q27:60-64) and cohesive devices, in some Makkan *sūras*. This is a linguistic and stylistic feature of the Qur'ānic text in general: we find frequent use of the same expression, such as (*wamin āyātihī* - and of His signs) as in Q30, (*yā banī ādama* - O children of Adam) in Q7 and the frequent use of the same cohesive device like (*idhā* - when) in Q81 and (*am* - when) in Q52. Parables of previous believing and non-believing nations also repeatedly occur in the Qur'ān (Abdul-Raof 2004:245) such as the parable of Noah that have been recurrently referred to twenty-three times in the Qur'ānic text. The repetition of Qur'ānic parables in different places of the Qur'ānic text enriches textuality from a text linguistics point of view because this repetition can improve intertextuality in the Qur'ānic text and establishes conceptual and intertextual links for a specific theme. Repetition in the Qur'ān occurs either as a brief reference to a Prophet's parable or as details about some nation. The parable of Noah, for instance, has been referred to 23 times throughout the Qur'ān. We have been told about this story in both Makkan and Madinan *sūras*, as for the Makkan ones, we find this parable appeared in: Q6:84, Q7:59-64, Q10: 71-73, Q11:25-49, Q14: 9, Q17: 17, Q21: 76-77, Q23: 23-30, Q26: 105-122, Q29:14-15, Q37: 75-82, Q40: 5, Q42:13, Q50:12-14, Q51: 46, Q53:52, Q54: 9-16, and Q71:1-28. It is also interesting to note that a whole Qur'ānic chapter (Q71) is dedicated to this parable. In order to achieve thematic links and intertextuality, the parable of Noah is repeated through various stylistic and linguistic patterns such as elaboration, paraphrase of a previous statement, different syntactic structures, and synonymous expressions. In other words, we do not find the same *āya* said in the same style elsewhere.

The repetition of themes is a stylistic feature of the Qur'ān in order to establish intertextuality. The repetition of themes helps to establish conceptual chaining and sequentiality in Qur'ānic discourse. There are many examples where the *āyas* are stylistically and structurally different

but conceptually identical, i.e., they share the same theme, such as in the examples below:

[Do not kill your children out of poverty. We will provide for you and them. Q6:151] and [Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We will provide for them and for you. Q17: 31]. In these two example above the common leitmotif is killing own children (Abdul-Raof 2004: 203). I believe repetition is adopted in the Qur'ānic discourse instead of narrative because it provides intertextuality which is a technique used to attract the attention of the reader. When a shift occurs from one story to another it concentrates the reader's mind because it represents something new that one does not expect to find there. However when we look at this repetition more deeply we find a link between the verse before it and the one after it, as it fits intertextually and thematically. This observation led me to the conclusion that narrative is abandoned in favour of repetition. In fact narrative according to its own definition means the giving of detail about a story. In the Qur'ānic text most parables appeared in the Makkan phase of revelation and we know that at Makka the addressees who were mainly the polytheists of Makka were not willing to listen to the revelation carefully and thus did not pay much attention to it so the discourse needed to be short and arresting so that the use of the stylistic feature of repetition was more suitable in this context.

3.5.1.4.1 Repetition of Makkan *Āyas* and *Sūras*

An *āya* is sometimes revealed for the second time either to remind the reader and proclaim a message that must have been forgotten, or to be as a response to an earlier question. This can be applied to the end of Q16 and the beginnings of Q30, Q17:85, Q1 and Q9:113. According to al-Zarkashi (cf. al-Ṣuyūṭī 2000, 1:72) an *āya* is revealed twice according to the importance of its meaning or importance of the theme, and also as a reminder of what happened that justified a need for it: For example, Q11:114 was revealed twice:

And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night: For those things, that are good remove those that are evil: be that the word of remembrance to those who remember their Lord. (Q11:114)

It also appears that some *sūras* were revealed twice: once in Makka and once in Madīna, for example both Q11 and Q17, which are Makkan, were revealed in Madīna according to *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*. Some scholars, however, claim that they were in fact revealed twice. Q112 was also revealed once in Makka as a response to the disbelievers of Makka, and once in Madīna in order to answer the People of the Book. This also applies to Q9:113. The reason for the double revelation of these *āyas* and *sūras* was simply either to answer a question, or to

explain something; therefore, for this reason, they were revealed in the same wording as a reminder of their importance (al-Suyūṭi, 2000, 1:72; al-Judai^c 2001:48).

3.5.1.4.2 Parables in Makkan *Sūras*

The stories of previous Prophets are mentioned in Makkan *sūras* more than in Madinan chapters, as a parable, due to the behaviour of the Makkan people. The latter were worshipping idols and rejected the Prophet Muḥammad and his message, as was the case with previous nations. However, these previous nations all perished, so these *sūras* came as a warning to the people of Makka, the idolaters, of the punishment that the earlier nations had received when they refused to believe in their Prophets' message, and to encourage them not to follow the same path.

The morality of these stories is clear: people need to believe in one God, to admit His unity, and not to associate any partner to Him, or they will perish and enter hellfire. The focus of each story is about the bad behaviour of a nation to whom God sends a Prophet in order to show them the true path to be followed and to warn them of a painful punishment which shall happen soon. However, this nation always rejects Him and his message, except for only a few of them who believed, the others perished under chastisement. The message of each Prophet is repeatedly that of the Oneness of Allāh, His mercy, bounty, power and punishment. These chapters on the previous Prophets also warned the Prophet Muḥammad of the hostility of his people towards him, which was exactly the same as that received by previous Prophets when explaining their message to their people, who likewise refused to believe in one God. Furthermore, by quoting the stories of previous nations, the Prophet Muḥammad was able to prove his prophethood to his people, firstly through detailed stories of events that occurred many years before, and secondly because the existence of these stories could actually be made more genuine with the indication of the places where these previous nations had lived, so that they themselves can pay a visit. In addition to the parable issued by these stories, we notice that God always sends to a nation its own Prophet, who speaks the same language: this was the case with Prophet Moses, who was sent to the Egyptians, amongst whom he grew up. His people were famous at the time for their ability in making miracles and using magic, and for this reason, Moses challenged his people by making miracles, and thus proving his prophethood. (al-Sha^crāwi, n.d: 90-91)

Another story is that of Prophet Jesus, who was sent to the Jews- a nation then famous for their knowledge in medicine. Prophet Jesus used medicine to perform miracles and prove his prophethood to his people, for example by curing a man's blindness and giving him back his

sight, helping a disabled man to walk again, and resuscitating a dead person. Generally all *sūras* that mention the stories of the previous Prophets, the story of Adam and the story of creation are parables addressed to the Makkan people.

The Qur'ān does not mention the stories of all the Prophets, although it does mention a few of them, such as Ādam, Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāleḥ, Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl, Ishāq, Lūṭ, Shu'aib, Yūsuf, Yūnus, Mūsā, Hārūn, Dāwūd, Ilyās, Alyasa', Sulaimān, Zakaria, Yaḥyā, and 'Īsā. These stories have all appeared in Makkan *sūras*, except for the story of Ādam and the creation, which is mentioned in Q3, a Madinan. Other parables appear in the Qur'ān, with the cohesive device (mathali - like or kamathali - like).

3.5.1.5 *Mutashābihāt* in Makkan *Sūras*

The *Mutashābihāt* represent a linguistic and stylistic feature of Qur'anic discourse. (For more details, see Abdul-Raof, 2004). However, the *mutashābihāt* expression is usually translated as 'ambiguous *āyas*'. They are those which are either repeated elsewhere, or have an identical linguistic structure, except for minor differences in a preposition or a cohesive device. It is interesting to note that a Makkan *āya* can be *mutashābih* with a Madinan *āya*, and vice versa. For instance, the Makkan *sūra* Q21 has a *mutashābih āya* (Q21:91) with the Madinan *sūra* (Q66:12). These *mutashābih āyas* are:

... Her who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her Our spirit, and We made her and her son a sign for all peoples. (Q21:91)

...Who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into (her body) of Our spirit; and she testified the truth of the words of her Lord. (Q66:12)

It is also possible to find two *mutashābih āyas* within the same *sūra*: see (Q6:40) and (Q6:47):

Say: 'Think you to yourselves, if there come upon you the wrath of Allāh . . . ' (Q6:40)

Say: 'Think you, if the punishment of Allāh comes to you, whether suddenly or openly . . . ' (Q6:47)

Based on al-Iskāfi (1995), the Makkan *sūras* include a number of *mutashābihāt*. For instance, Q6 contains 19 *mutashābihāt āyas*, these are: Q6: 5, 6, 11, 17, 21, 25, 40, 70, 95, 97, 102, 112, 117, 122, 131, 135, 148, 151 and 157. There are *mutashābihāt* in (Q26:6), (Q26:7), (Q27:69), (Q10:107), (Q10:17), (Q10:42,43), (Q6:47), (Q7:50,51), (Q30:19), (Q16:97), (Q40:62), (Q6:137), (Q68:7), (Q10:12), (Q11:117), (Q11:93), (16:35), (Q17:31) and (Q6:152) respectively.

The other types of *mutashābihāt* in the Qur'ān are the *āyas* that have a theological significance, such as (*al-rahmānu °alā al-°arshī istawā* – The Most Merciful who is above the throne established, Q20:5). For instance, (*istawā* – to be established) is a *mutashābih* theological notion. Other *mutashābih* theological notions in the Qur'ān are the names and attributes of God; Muslim scholars have called this problem (*bilā kayf*), meaning that a Muslim is urged to believe in the theological notion without asking why (Abdul-Raof, 2003:196; Qadhi, 1999:214; al-Şuyūṭi, 2000, vol.2:9).

The expression (*mutashābihāt*) can be translated literally as (identical in meaning) or as (unknown). In Arabic, the word *mutashābih* also means something that resembles something else, but slightly differently, although this difference is not easy to detect.

In the Qur'ān, we encounter three *āyas* which are Q11:1, Q39:23, Q3:7 that mention the *mutashābihāt* in comparison with the *muḥkam* (unambiguous).

According to al-Ṭabari, in *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, the *muḥkam* (clear) is an *āya* which has only one meaning, so that it does not allow for more than one interpretation: or further explanation. According to al-Zamakhshari, the *muḥkam āyas* are those for which their meanings are clearly affirmed, in the sense that they are free from similarity to other *āyas* and are not obscure. The clarity of the *muḥkam āyas* lies in their own wording, and they are in no need of extraneous sources, i.e. other *āyas* or prophetic traditions (*aḥādīth*), or linguistic investigation, in order to understand them.

3.6 Themes in Makkan *Sūras*

The Makkan *sūras* are characterised by specific themes. Various Qur'ān scholars have dealt with Qur'anic themes: Nöldeke, Hussein Abdul-Raof and Mohammad Abdel-Haleem. Their approaches are discussed below:

3.6.1 Themes in the Qur'ān according to Nöldeke

Nöldeke¹²², in *Geshiste der Koran* (cf. Welch, 1975:403-404), applies a modern Western approach to define the chronological order of the *sūra*, based on well known historical events

¹²² Theodor Nöldeke (March 2, 1836 - December 25, 1930), German Semitic scholar, was born at Harburg. In 1859 his history of the Qur'ān won for him the prize of the French *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, and in the following year he rewrote it in German (*Geschichte des Korans*) and published it with additions at Göttingen. Nöldeke's range of studies were wide and varied, but the main focus of his work has followed the two lines indicated by his prize essay, *Semitic languages, and the history and civilization of Islam*. While a great deal of his work (e.g. his *Grammatik der neusyrischen Sprache*, 1868, his *Mandäische Grammatik*, 1874, and his translations from the Arabian of Tabari, 1881-1882) is meant for specialists, many of his books are of interest to the general reader. Several of his essays first appeared in the *Encyclopædia*

to date certain events mentioned in the Qur'ān (See also on this topic 3.10 Table 3.2: various chronological arrangements of the *sūra* according to Bell). He also analyses the theme of each *sūra* in order to group together those which possess the same theme, ascribing them to the same period. This is how he finally classifies his own chronological order of the *sūras*: Nöldeke's chronological order of the Makkan *sūras* is divided into three periods: 48 *sūras* for the early Makkan period, and 42 for the second and third ones. This is based on a thematic division, and he ascribes to the *sūras* whose contents have the same or similar topics to the same period and tries to make a chronology of the revelation (*sūras*). This is a different approach to the following approaches adopted by both modern non-Muslim and traditional Muslim scholars.

3.6.2 Themes in the Qur'ān according to Abdul-Raof

According to Abdul-Raof (2001, 2003, and 2005), the Makkan *sūras* are characterised by the frequent occurrence of the four tenets of faith (monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, and reward and punishment), God's omnipotence, and admonition. For instance, the theme of Q112 is monotheism, while the theme of Q93 is prophethood. However, in other Makkan *sūras*, we encounter various themes that highlight the different tenets of faith. Generally speaking, however, the themes tackled in Makkan *sūras* usually focus on warning the disbelievers, then confirming the mission of the Prophet by reminding people of the power of God. The following *āyas*, as examples, are a call to the Prophet to warn the disbelievers about chastisement. These *āyas* also give glad tidings to the believers from their Lord:

So do not call on any deity with Allāh, or you will be among those under the penalty. And admonish your nearest kinsmen, and lower your wing to the believers who follow you. Then, if they disobey you, say: 'I am free (of responsibility) for what you do! And put your trust in the Exalted in Might, the Merciful Who sees you standing forth (in prayer), and your movements among those who prostrate themselves. Indeed, He the Hearing, the Knowing. Shall I inform you upon whom the devils descend? They descend upon every sinful liar. (Q26:213-223)

Britannica, and his article on the Qur'an, with some others, was republished in a volume called *Oriental*. (www.wikipedia.com)

These Makkan *āyas* address people according to their individual religious status, whether they are unbelievers, polytheists or atheists. The major aim of these *āyas* is to instil morality through informing the reader about the truthfulness of God's existence, advising them to avoid the evil of their immoral behaviour of lust and leisure, reasoning with them to believe in one God, encouraging them not to associate with Allāh any other deities, and also warning them about the evil of Satan.

Sūra al-Naba' (Q78) is a particular *sūra*, according to Sayyid Quṭb (1996, 6:3800), who claims that the final part of the Qur'ān, in its entirety, is of great value to the reader, but this *sūra* is unique because of the diversity of its themes, its target audience, rhythm, rhyme, and image, all of which represent the fundamental message with strength. For example, if somebody was asleep or about to sleep, or on the other hand somebody was dancing to very loud music, then that person would be awakened by somebody warning them bluntly: 'wake up, open your eyes, listen, think and imagine!' Although this *sūra* is made up of only two rhymes, /-ūn/ and /-ā/, from the beginning to the end, it highlights one warning only, which is repeated over and over again in order to make the unbelievers realise that there is only one God, blessing from God and submission to God. Additionally there will be reward and punishment- a painful one- as mentioned in the following *āyas*:

The Day that the trumpet shall be sounded, and you shall come forth . . . in crowds. The heavens shall be opened as if there were doors . . . Truly Hell is as a place of ambush for the transgressors a place of destination . . . But they (impudently) treated Our signs as false. And all things have We preserved on record. So taste (the fruits of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, except in punishment. (Q78:17-30)

The *sūra* will then follow another theme, namely the focus of belief (*‘aqīdah*) that we should believe in God and all the Prophets that He has sent to previous nations, to follow their message, and to morally preserve our conduct. We are also ordered to devote ourselves to God and to be faithful to Him, because His reward is much better than any other:

Verily for the righteous there will be a fulfilment of the heart's desires. Gardens enclosed, and grapevines. Companions of equal ages. And a cup full to the brim. No vanity shall they hear therein, nor untruth. Recompense from thy Lord, a gift, amply sufficient. (Q78:31-36)

In his analysis of Qur'anic themes, Abdul-Raof (2001, 2003, and 2005) highlights two themes in addition to the tenets of faith:

(i) God's omnipotence (*qudrat Allāh*), which also occurs as a recurrent theme in Makkan *sūras* (Abdul-Raof 2005:90-91): Q29:19, 44, Q30:11, 19-24, 27, 48, Q31:10, 28-29. Thus, thematic links are established amongst Q29, Q30 and Q31.

(ii) Admonition, i.e. moral lessons (*al-wa'z, al-maw'iza, al-durūs al-akhlāqiyya*) also occurs as themes in Makkan *sūras* (Abdul-Raof 2005:90-92) as in defeat, worldly life, provision, prayer, test and trial and Patience, God's promise, and family. Thus, thematic links are established among Q29, Q30 and Q31 due to the moral lessons provided by these *āyās* in each *sūra*.

However, in his investigation of Qur'anic themes, Abdul-Raof in *The Qur'ān Outlined: Theme and Text* (2001) provides the recurrent themes in each *sūra*, regardless of their intertextual links. In other words, he only provides the themes without emphasis on their links with the themes of the previous *sūra* or the themes of the following *sūra*. Thus, Abdul-Raof does not get involved in his analysis in the thematic links between *sūras*. It is merely an exegetical approach to Qur'anic themes. Examples of Qur'anic themes in Q7 (Abdul-Raof 2001:27) are: arrogance, the struggle between right and wrong, the triumph of truth, man's vanity and learning lessons from past nations. Themes in short Makkan *sūras* such as Q114 are: refuge, trust, and whisper (ibid:153). However, Abdul-Raof's investigation of Qur'anic themes in *Consonance in the Qur'ān* (2005) is entirely hinged upon the logical links (consonance) among the *sūras*. Examples of Qur'anic themes in Q7 (Abdul-Raof 2005:50-51) are: creation, disbelieving the Prophets and the destruction of their relevant nations, mocking messengers, prophethood and tenets of faith. He also notes that these themes are shared by Q6 (Makkan) and Q8 (Madinan); thus, these themes establish cohesive logical links between the three *sūras*.

3.6.3 Theme in the Qur'ān according to Abdel-Haleem

Abdel Haleem¹²³ lists a number of themes that often appear in the Qur'ān:

1) Water

Many *āyas* refer to water, such as (Q21:30) 'We made from water every living thing'. The word 'water' itself appears over sixty times, 'rivers' over fifty and the 'sea' over forty, whereas words such as 'fountain', 'spring', 'rain', 'hail', 'clouds' and 'wind' occur less

¹²³ Abdel Haleem, Muhammad (1999). *Understanding the Qur'ān: Theme and Style*. I.B. Tauris: publishers London. These themes are listed on pages 29-107, 82-92, 89, 90, and 93-106, respectively.

frequently. Water is not seen as merely an essential and useful element; as one of the most precious resources on earth, the Qur'ān speaks of two types of water: fresh water and sea water, one palatable and sweet, the other salty and bitter, as in (Q35:12); (Q56:68-70); (Q15:22); (Q77:27); (Q25:48-49); (Q2:164); (Q6:99); (Q7:57); (Q35:27); (Q22:63); (Q22:5) and (Q67:30). Furthermore, the water in paradise (*janna*) is not stagnant, as in a tank, lake or reservoir, but flowing and gushing in rivers and springs, as we are told by (Q55:50, 66 and Q88:12).

2) Life and beyond/resurrection

In the Qur'ān, life on Earth is inseparable from the afterlife, a fundamental notion in the Qur'ān. Linguistically, it is not possible to talk in the Qur'ān about this life without any semantic reference to the next, since every term used for each is compared with the other. This can be seen with, for example, *al-ūlā* and *al-ākhirā* (the first and the last life), and *al-dunyā* and *al-ākhirā* (the nearer and the further/latter life), and consequently, the frequency of occurrence of these terms in the Qur'ān is the same. In the cases of *dunyā* and *ākhirā*, each appears 115 times. Belief in the afterlife is often referred to alongside a belief in God: 'if you believe in God and the Last Day'. Believers are frequently reminded in the Qur'ān, 'be mindful of God and know that you shall meet Him' (Q2:233). Divine wisdom and justice necessitate the resurrection of the dead, and their judgment in the afterlife, as can be seen in (Q15:85); (Q23:115-116); (Q38:27-28); (Q95:7-8); (Q16:38-39) and (Q75:1-4).

During the Makkan period of the Prophet's mission, a great deal of the Qur'ān was concerned with the three fundamental beliefs of the unity of God, the Prophethood of Muhammad and other prophets before him, and resurrection and judgment. Resurrection in particular seemed incredible to unbelievers: they perceived resurrection as being biologically impossible, questioning it again and again, such as in Q56:47. In rebuttal, the Qur'ān employs a simple and basic argument: if a power that can accomplish something once, it can do it again (Q50:15). Indeed, a second creation, according to the Qur'ān, would be easier than the first one as we are told by (Q30:27); (Q36:77-80); (Q32:13) and (Q50:4). Another rational argument the Qur'ān uses to convince disbelievers is the comparison between the greater act of creation and the lesser act of resurrection as in (Q36:81); and Q40:57): 'Say: it is God who gives you life, then make you die, then He shall gather you to the resurrection' (Q45:25-26). 'Every soul shall taste of death' (Q3:185). Death is the gateway to the return to God (Q6:61-62); by death, man enters the stage of *barzakh*, an intermediate state between this life and the resurrection (Q23:100). The Qur'ān says little about this stage, indicating simply that the soul

shall receive either reward or punishment, as can be seen in (Q3:169-171); (Q16:32); (Q40:45-46) and (Q71:25). ‘At the resurrection the time spent in the grave will appear to men as if it were an hour of the day’ (Q10:45). The state of *barzakh* will end at the Hour, the end of the world, followed by the resurrection. The time of this ‘Hour’ is known only to God as we are told by (Q7:187). The Qur’ān indicates that bodily existence in the afterlife shall be that of a new creation, so that our bodies there will not be the same as those we have here (Q56:35, 61).

3) Judgment

The Qur’ān graphically describes the end of the world, resurrection and judgment. An intrinsic element is the judgment: when the people come to be shown their deeds, each facing judgment alone, no soul shall carry the burden of another. Each will be presented with a book of their personal deeds, such as can be seen in (Q14:16); (Q39:69-70); (Q99:7-8) and (Q28:84). Good deeds can be multiplied as much as seven hundred times (Q6:160; Q2:261). Thus the judgment is vital for man, although God is the most merciful (Q7:156), without the judgment, divine commandments would make no sense: observation and violation, good and evil deeds would all be the same: (Q38:27-28) and (Q23:116).

4) Rewards

There is an obvious interdependence between this life and the afterlife. We have seen how such terms occur, with equal frequency, in the Qur’ān, and how linguistically one cannot utter the name of one without intertextual reference to the other: everything in the judgment is related to action on Earth. Dwellers in paradise or hell sometimes talk about what they did in this world as in (Q52:28) and (Q40:47). Full knowledge of the real nature of the rewards of the righteous, the Qur’ān says, is ‘kept hidden’, and has not as such been given to any human: no soul knows what joys are waiting for them secretly as a reward for what they have done.

5) Paradise and hell in the Qur’ān

Paradise, the abode of the righteous in the hereafter, is called, in the Qur’ān, *al-janna*, meaning: ‘the garden’. It is one of the major themes of the Qur’ān, recurring under this name over a hundred times and under other names, such as *al-firdaws*, the home of peace, the home of the righteous and many more. The Qur’ān, thus, repeatedly produces arguments for the desirability, necessity and possibility of resurrection, judgment, and then the reward. Following the judgment, the righteous are admitted to *al-janna*. The basic meaning of *janna* is

a ‘garden with trees, rivers and fruits’. The garden, with its vitality, abundance and comfort, provides a fitting home for those who ‘believe and do good deeds, especially as it always contrasts in the Qur’ān with hell, the abode of evil-doers’, as seen in (Q52:17-28; Q41:30). The style in which *janna* is presented in the Qur’ān is thus appropriate to addressing people of varying tastes, at different times and places. *Janna* in the eschatological sense occurs in the Qur’ān thirty-five times in the singular, twice in the dual (*jannatān*), and sixty nine times in the plural (*jannāt*). With the exception of a certain few, particularly the final short *sūras*, every *sūra* in the Qur’ān has something to say about *janna*, and in varying degrees of detail. Naturally, *janna* is a very special place, and it is a great privilege to be admitted through its gates (Q39:73). Entering *al-janna* is clearly so important that the word is used fifty-seven times in different derivational forms, for example, ‘enter among My servants’, enter ‘in peace and security’ (Q89:29-30 and Q15:46), and also (Q22:14, 59). The true picture of paradise can be more fully appreciated in light of the contrasting picture of hell (see Q25:15 and Q59:20). Hell is ‘an evil dwelling and an evil resting place’, whereas paradise is a blessed dwelling and a blessed resting-place (Q52:18). Although the Qur’ān does not just describe the state of the righteous in Paradise, it does frequently express their state and feelings directly: (Q34:34-35), (Q52:27) and (Q2:201). Protection from hell is the first reward, but within the *janna* itself, the righteous are further protected from everything that might spoil their joy, as seen in (Q39:61) and (Q10:62). The physical picture one gets from Qur’ānic references to *janna* is that it is vast, ‘as wide as are the heavens and the earth’ (Q3:133 and Q57:21). Its inhabitants can move freely and settle wherever they wish (Q39:74). It is lofty (Q69:22 and Q88:10), and “underneath which rivers flow”.¹²⁴

3.7 Structure of Makkan *Sūras*

I shall provide a detailed analysis of the structure of Makkan *sūras* as analysed by Muslim and Western Qur’ān scholars. However, each scholar has provided a different approach to *sūra* structure.

3.7.1 Neuwirth’s Structure of Makkan *Sūras*

Angelika Neuwirth (1993:2) wanted to examine the *sūra* as a literary new genre that did not exist yet in any literature. Her aim was to adopt the method used in the West, known as the

¹²⁴ Abdel Haleem, Muhammad (1999), pp. 89-107

methods of modern literary study, to the Arabic text. She uses her own definition of the *sūra*, describing it as a unit; this also being the ‘formal medium’ that she ascribed to be the Prophet’s proclamation. She was unable to do her examination of form to the whole Qur’ān, which is why she points the *sūra* out to this medium (used by the Prophet) for her analysis. There are smaller thematic units that can be introduced to the *sūra* on specific occasions, such as ‘*asbāb al-nuzūl*’ (circumstances of revelation), and for the purpose of literary study, it is not the external impact of a theme but rather the formation of the theme and its ordering in total composition that is of interest. Neuwirth (ibid) also tells us why she would emphasise the unit of the *sūra* as a heuristic basis, a unit that is ignored, with the tendency being towards the atomisation that dominates recent investigations. It is the individual *sūra* that will serve as the textual foundation for literary study.

Her study also includes a comparison with the literature of the Old Testament, such as the prophetic books and some of the Psalms. She follows the study of Richter (1971), who also reflects on the methods used for the literary study of the Old Testament. Richter uses his own methodological steps for his analysis, such as literary investigation and investigation of form, genre and redaction. The literary investigation examines the text, in our case the *sūra*, as an isolated unit: that is in terms of its secondary composition. The investigation of form analyses the exterior form, thereby yielding a description on the levels of sentence, word and individual phoneme. It then examines the collective structure of the individual text (*sūra*). The investigation of redaction examines the secondary composition of the text in terms of its literary compilation. In his case this would entail an analysis, on the one hand, of those *sūras* that were not composed by the Prophet himself but were rather assembled during the process of redaction, and on the other hand, of the collection entitled ‘al-Qur’ān’ (cf. Neuwirth, ibid).

Neuwirth’s method is particularly notable in two ways:

Firstly, by the comparison with the text of the Old Testament, which is interesting from the perspective of comparing sacred texts together and secondly, the aim of adopting the literary methods of analysis to analyse the Qur’ānic text. This is not an easy task due to the fact that the *sūras* are, at times, composed of several different subjects. Thus her purpose is to analyse the *sūras* as they are in their secondary composition (as they are nowadays in the standard Qur’ān): the Othmanic codex. Furthermore, she does not analyse the Qur’ān as a whole Book, but rather treats each *sūra* as an independent unit. Consequently, for her, the *sūras* are not related to one another by any logical or chronological means. In my opinion, we have many different approaches to deal with the Qur’ānic text, and although Neuwirth’s is one of them, it

is no more than an attempt at defining the level of sentence used in a particular *sūra*, and at understanding more about the process of redaction and composition of the Qur'ān.

3.7.2 Robinson's Structure of Makkan *Sūras*

Adopting Nöldeke's chronological order of the Makkan *sūras* for his study, Robinson (1996:125) starts his analysis by additionally dealing with the theme of the *sūras*, but his approach was different. He attempts to recompose the structure of the *sūras* on the basis of their form and content. According to him, a *sūra* generally contains more than one theme, which he named as 'section'. A section contains less than twenty *āyas*, and many of these sections are in turn composed of shorter units, which may be a single *āya* to five *āyas*. He identifies the sections and shorter units on the basis of changes in subject-matter and addressee. Nevertheless, Robinson claims that the task must have been easier for the Arabist who can, in addition, detect changes in rhyme, rhythm and the occurrence of different syntactic structures. He adds that he is not certain as to all of these forty-eight *sūras* being early Makkan, but they are the shortest ones, and Nöldeke groups them together on stylistic grounds that make their analysis easier and more convenient, before affording the longer and more intricate *sūras* of the 'later' period.

Robinson notices that in all but five of the forty-eight *sūras*, there is one section, or more, that deals with one of six main subjects: polemic, eschatology, God's personal communication with the Messenger, the signs of God's power and beneficence, lessons from history, and the status and authenticity of the revelation. These sections were also sub-divided into small units, as mentioned earlier. Let us consider now how he combines them in a whole *sūra*:

Robinson gives an account of the overall structure of the *sūra* by using the term 'register'. The term 'register' is suitable to any particular situation, and must therefore have some characteristic which made it immediately distinguishable as such, for example, registers for church sermons, registers for academic lectures, registers for political speeches, etc. He then discovers that in the early Makkan *sūras*, the speaker uses a different register when dealing with each of the six principal subjects, and it may very well be that the *sūra* contains one register or more. The same six principal registers also appear in the forty-two *sūras* which Nöldeke ascribes to the second and third Makkan periods, but in a different way: for example, the eschatological material and sign controversies are embedded in a matrix of polemic. Also, for the *āyas* concerning the status and authenticity of the revelation, they often occur in

personal communications addressed to the Messenger. However, it is relatively easy to isolate the narrative sections: we can distinguish between those *sūras* of the second and third Makkan periods which have extensive narrative sections and those which have little or none. Such divisions and sub-divisions make the task of the analyst much more difficult, which is why, whenever possible, the sections and small units could be identified, but when *āyas* or groups of *āyas* could not be labelled in that way, their contents were simply summarised by Robinson. He adds that his analysis was also the strategy adopted by Angelica Neuwirth, a pioneer in this field, for her analysis (ibid: 99, 125-126).

3.7.3 Abdul-Raof's Structure of Makkan *Sūras*

Abdul-Raof (2003:105-110), however, in *Exploring the Qur'ān*, provides a new *sūra* structure in terms of the four tenets of faith (*mabādi' al-īmān*): monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, and reward and punishment. His approach explains the richness of Qur'anic discourse with these tenets of faith, thus his analysis provides a helpful and easy means of understanding, even by a non-specialist (see 3.4, 3.4.1.1.1, 3.4.1.2.1, 3.4.1.3.1). If we apply Abdul-Raof's (2003) approach to the structure of Q78, we find several thematic units such as eschatology (Q78:1-5), God's omnipotence (Q78:6-16), eschatology (Q78:17-20), reward and punishment (Q78:21-36), monotheism (Q78:37), eschatology (Q78:38-39). Finally, the *sūra* is concluded by the theme of reward and punishment (Q78:40).

3.7.4 Mir's Structure of Makkan *Sūras*

According to Mustansir Mir¹²⁵, all *sūras* of the Qur'ān are unities, and the verses are thus interconnected. This idea of the organic approach of the Qur'anic *sūra* and its atomistic character was also found in the exegesis of al-Rāzi, al-Zarkashi, Thanavi and more recently in an Urdu exegesis of Farāḥi and Iṣlāḥi. Each of these scholars has their own method of analysis, but all lead to the same result, namely the unity of the *sūra*. Zarkashi claims that all verses within the *sūra* are interconnected and are classified as such not haphazardly, but with coherence. This is a well-known science of the Qur'ān called (*ilm al-munāssaba*) or (*al-tanāsub*), which means 'interconnection of *āyas*'. 'Whilst the revelation conditions help with

¹²⁵ For more details see Mir, Mustansir (1993). 'The *Sūra* as a Unity, a Twentieth Century Development in Qur'ān Exegesis'. In *Approaches to the Qur'ān*. Edited by G.R. Hawting and Abdul Kader A. Shareef. London: Routledge. And see also Mir, Mustansir (1986). *Coherence in the Qur'ān*. Indianapolis: American Trust Publications or www.renaissance.com.pk/ for a various article written by Mir through 1997 to 2004.

explaining the chronology of the verses, wiser conditions could determine the order used to organize them', he points out.

Mir (1986) has studied Iṣlāḥī's exegesis, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān*, thoroughly; the following is his explanation of the latter's methodology of analysis of the *sūras*:

The question is: why was the revelatory arrangement abandoned in favour of a compilatory arrangement? Was the latter adopted without any special reason? If so, why was chronology not considered a sound enough basis for arranging the Qur'ān? And is one today at liberty to discover, if possible, the chronological arrangement of the Qur'ān and recite the Qur'ān according to that arrangement? Or, if chronology was not an acceptable guide, why was not some rule that, for example, of dividing the Qur'ān into *sūras* of about equal length, employed. Nor does the principle of the progressive diminution of the size of *sūras* go very far because the diminution is not so progressive: We frequently find that long *sūras* are followed by shorter *sūras* which are again followed by long *sūras* and so on. The question continues to stare one in the face: Why a different arrangement?

Imam Ḥāmid al-Dīn Farāhi (d. 1930) gives another answer to the objection: he maintains that the Qur'ān has a most superb structure. The *āyas* and *sūras* of the Qur'ān, he says, are arranged in a magnificent and impeccable order, and together form a cohesive whole which has a remarkable integration and symmetry. And as beautiful as that structure is, adds Imam Farāhi, it is not merely of incidental value; it is essential to the meaning of the Qur'ān. Nay, it is the only key there is to the meaning of the Qur'ān.

The seminal ideas of Imam Farāhi have been expounded by his most eminent disciple, Mawlāna Amin Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī. Taking his cue from the principles his great teacher had enunciated, Mawlāna Iṣlāḥī has written a commentary (in Urdu) on the Qur'ān, in which he has shown how the Qur'ān is indeed the systematic book that Imam Farāhi has claimed it to be. Mawlāna Iṣlāḥī modestly regards his work as elaborative, but as anyone can see, it is highly original in every respect. Moreover, he is not only the most authentic exponent of Imam Farāhi's thought, he can be said to have new-modelled that thought. Below is a brief statement of his views on the structure of the Qur'ān. These views have been summarised from the Introduction of *Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān* (Reflection on the Qur'ān).

1. Each Qur'ānic *sūra* has a dominant idea, its axis, around which all the verses of that *sūra* revolve. Thus no verse, or no group of verses, stands alone but instead has a direct relation with the axis of the *sūra*, and is part of the coherent scheme of the *sūra*.

2. The *sūras* of the Qur'ān exist in pairs, the two *sūras* of any pair being complementary to each other and, together constituting a unit. There are a few exceptions, however: the first

sūra, *Fātiḥa*, does not have a complement, because it is a kind of a preface to the whole of the Qur'ān. All other exceptions are not exceptions in the real sense of the word, since each of them is an appendix to one or the other *sūra*.

3. The 114 *sūras* of the Qur'ān fall into seven groups: the first group comes to an end at *sūra* 5, the second at *sūra* 9, the third at *sūra* 24, the fourth at *sūra* 33, the fifth at *sūra* 49, the sixth at *sūra* 66, and the seventh at *sūra* 114. Each group contains one or more Makkan *sūras* followed by one or more Madinan *sūras* of the same cast. Like individual *sūras* or each pair of *sūras*, each group has a central theme which runs through all its *sūras*, knitting them together into a distinct body. In each group, the themes of the other groups are noticeable, but as only subsidiary themes.

4. Each group logically leads to the next, and thus all groups become variations on the basic theme of the Qur'ān, which is: 'Allāh's call to man to adopt the right path'.

While speaking of coherence in the structure of the Qur'ān, we must distinguish between connectedness and organic unity. A connection, howsoever bizarre and far-fetched, can be established between any two objects of the universe. Organic unity, however, implies the presence of a harmonious interrelationship between the components of a body or entity, which produces a unified whole- a whole which is over and above the sum total or the components, and has worth and meaning in itself. The verses and *sūras* of the Qur'ān are not simply linked to one another- each one has their place in the total scheme of the Qur'ān, and is related not only to one another, but also to the total framework. The Qur'ān is an organism, of which its verses and *sūras* are organically coherent parts.

Another point to be taken note of is that, as mentioned above, the methodicalness of the Qur'ān is not just an incidental matter in the study of the Qur'ān; it is integral to the meaning of the Qur'ān. In plain terms, since the Qur'ān has an organic structure, every *āya* or group of *āyas*, and every *sūra*, has a definitive context, and interpretation of any portion of the Qur'ān must be based on a correct understanding of that context. The Qur'ān is also one of the most unfortunate Books in the sense that often its *āyas* have been torn out of context to prove some particular juristic opinion or sectarian notion, and all too frequently its terms and phrases have been misconstrued by those who come to it seeking, in some odd *āya*, support for views they have already formed, other than on Qur'ānic grounds. It is indeed a great irony that all heresies have been claimed by their propounders to have their basis in the Qur'ān. If these heresies looked plausible to many, it was because the context of the *āyas* constituting the so-called 'basis in the Qur'ān' was not properly understood.

As Mawlāna Iṣlāḥi has shown, contextualisation gives countless *āyas* a construction different from the one usually placed on them; it throws new light, not only on the doctrinal and creedal aspects of the Qur'ānic message, but also on the methodological aspects of the message. It lends new significance not only to the moral and legal injunctions of the Qur'ān, but also to the stories and parables narrated by the Qur'ān, and it affords a deep insight not only into the Qur'ān's continually changing style and tone, but also into the varied patterns of logic that it employs. (Mir, *ibid*)

3.7.5 Cuypers' Structure of Makkan *Sūras*

Michel Cuypers, in several papers written between 1995 and 2004, primarily concentrates his research on 'rhetorical structure' in some short Makkan *sūras*. His methodology follows the Semitic rhetoric, also used to study the Bible, which is focalised on the composition of the text. This rhetoric is completely different to the Greek rhetoric whereby the ornamentation and stylistic features of the text are focussed upon. The Semitic one, on the contrary, is a new system of writing and structuring the text by following specific rules. Thus the rhetorical analysis of the Qur'ānic text will be the analysis of the text according to these rules in shedding light on the real composition of the *sūra* and the Qur'ān as a whole, and to help understand its meaning, which is the focus of all exegesis.

Furthermore, as per Cuypers, the entire Qur'ānic text is constructed according to the same pattern of the Semitic rhetoric. By eliciting the structure of the composition of the *sūras* their coherence will be better understood, even if the *sūras* are built with pieces from different origins they were not assembled together haphazardly in their final compilation. But their arrangement revealed their meaning. This is why each exegesis of the Qur'ān should begin with the rhetorical analysis (*ibid*).

3.7.6 Johns' Structure of Makkan *Sūras*

Antony Johns (1999 & 2001) has also dealt with the matter of *sūra* structure. His structural analysis, however, is done in terms of thematic periscopes. Johns talks about themes that are central to the Islamic revelation: the oneness and power of God, the role of the prophets, and the coming of a Day of Judgement (1999:18). In his analysis of the Makkan *sūra* Q38, Johns takes the story of Job (Ayyūb), and provides an analysis of the narrative techniques, direct/indirect speech involved in this part of the *sūra*, and the antithesis which he (*ibid*: 4) calls a 'binary structure', such as Job's hardship and pain, as opposed to the nice water that heals him. The assembly of prophets is another periscope for Johns (*ibid*: 5), as can be seen in

Q38:12 (Noah, Hūd, Moses), Q38:13 (Lot and Shu'aib), Q38:17-26 (David), Q38:30-40 (Solomon), Q38:41-44 (Job), Q38:45-47 (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), and Q38:48 (Ishmael, Elisha, Dhū al-Kiflain). Johns (1999: 8 and 15) applies the same *sūra* structure based on periscopes of Q6 and Q21 with regards to the story of Job, and how the 'periscopes are interrelated acoustically, conceptually and thematically' (ibid: 23).

3.7.7 Ḥawwa's Structure of Makkan *Sūras*

Sa'īd Ḥawwa is a modern exegete who has accounted for the structure of both Makkan and Madinan *sūras*. In his work *al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr*, Ḥawwa (2003) divides the *sūra* into a number of thematic units, each of which he calls a '*majmū'ah* – group, unit', before dividing the unit into (*maqṭa'* – section). According to Ḥawwa (ibid:8, 4250-4300), the structure of Q30 is divided into two units and four sections. The first section is subdivided into four units: unit one comprises Q30:1-7, and unit two comprises Q30:8-10.

Section one, in turn, comprises four units:

Unit one involves Q30:11-19

Unit two involves Q30:20-27

Unit three involves Q30:28-32

Unit four involves Q30:33-39

Section two comprises Q30:40-47

Section three comprises Q30:48-53

Section four comprises Q30:54-60

However, Ḥawwa (ibid: 8, 4757-4803) points out that the structure of Q38 is divided into:

Unit one, which he calls the 'introduction', Q38:1-16

Section one comprises Q38:17-64

Section two comprises Q38:65-88 which involves the following units:

Unit one comprises Q38:65-66

Unit two comprises Q38:67-85

Unit three comprises Q38:86-88

3.8 Islamic Legal Rulings in Makkan *Sūras*

Some of the obligatory duties which Muslims have to observe are still a precursor: they were referred to during the Makkan phase of revelation, but were not in fact formally introduced, nor were they obligatory until the Madinan phase. Therefore, these obligatory duties, such as *zakāt* and *ṣalāt* were embryo components of Islam. Our discussion of Islamic legal rulings is not restricted to specific legal rulings. We shall use Islamic legal rulings in their social and religious contexts. The establishment of Islamic law, *sharīʿā*, began in Madīna. However, only a broad sense of *sharīʿah* appears in some Makkan *sūras*. These Islamic legal rulings include:

- (i) The obligation of the formal prayer,
- (ii) *Zakāt* and the feeding of the poor,
- (iii) Certain prohibitions,
- (iv) Ordinance for good conduct, and
- (v) The rights of parents.

(i) The Formal Prayer

According to al-Bukhāri (cf. al-Badawi, 1999:143), the obligation of prayer came during the night journey of the Prophet to the Heaven. It relates to a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, in which he said: ‘it was given to me the obligation of fifty prayers everyday and on my way back to the earth I passed through the other heaven where I met the prophet Moses who asked me for what I was given and I told him fifty prayers a day. Moses advised me to go back to Allāh and to ask for a reduction of prayer that was too much for my nation to do so. It is only after many negotiations that I obtained the obligation for only five prayers a day.’

The Makkan *sūras* frequently mention the obligation of prayer (*ṣalāt*), (see the Madinan phase in chapter five for more details). The Makkan *sūras* use simple words on this subject and do not insist too much, for example, in Q17:78, where the expression (Qur’ān *al-fajr*) is translated as ‘the prayer of dawn’ according to al-Bukhāri, although there are many more *āyas* which also mention it, such as:

And (ask) of the sinners: What led you into hell-fire, they will say we were not of those who prayed . . . (Q74:41-43)

Not so those devoted to prayer those who remain steadfast to their prayer. (Q70:22-23)

See also: Q:31, Q:132, Q:145, Q:72 (ibid; al-Judaī^c:2001:240-241).

(ii) *Zakāt*

There are many references to *zakāt* (legal charity to the poor) in Makkan *sūras*. However, according to al-Qurtūbi (1997, 7:87), it appears that the legal obligation for *zakāt* only came in the second year after the *hijra* (migration to Madīna), during the Madinan period. According to al-Ṭabari (1997, 3:530) and Ibn Kathīr (2000, 2:437), this reference appears in Q6:141 where the expression (and give its due *zakāt* on the day of its harvest) is employed as an indirect reference to *zakāt*. For what is mentioned in the Makkan section of the Qur'ān, there are, for example, references to the benefits that are to be gained when feeding the poor. This can be seen in *sūrat al-Muddaththir* (Q74), one of the earliest Makkan *sūras* which says:

To any of you that chooses to press forward, or to follow behind; Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds... And (ask) of the sinners: What led you into hell-fire, they will say we were not of those who prayed; nor were we of those who fed the indigent...until there came to us (the hour) that is certain. (Q74:37-47)

This was he that would not believe in Allāh Most High, And would not encourage the feeding of the indigent! (Q69:33-34)

In another place, it mentions those who believe in God will be asked, in the hereafter, how they spent their money in this life (to see if they spent it on helping the poor):

And their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy) him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking) (Q5:19)

Not so those devoted to prayer those who remain steadfast to their prayer; And those in whose wealth is a recognized right. For the (needy) who asks and him who is prevented (for some reason from asking). (Q70: 22-25)

In another *sūra*, it appears in the form of an injunction, and announces that those who spend their wealth as follows will be successful on the day of judgement:

See they not that Allāh enlarges the provision and restricts it, to whomsoever He pleases? Verily, in that are signs for those who believe so give what is due to kindred, the needy, and the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the countenance, of Allāh, and it is they who will prosper. (Q30:37-38)

However, concerning the Islamic legal ruling on *zakāt*, scholars do not unanimously agree if the ruling was revealed during Makkan or Madinan period. Some of them claim that it appears in the Makkan *āya* as follows:

It is He Who produceth gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and tilth with produce of all kind, and olives and pomegranates . . . Eat of their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered. But waste not by excess: for Allāh loveth not the wasters. (Q6: 141)

According to al-Qurtubī in *al-jāmi' li ahkām al-Qur'ān* (1997, 8:223-227), the majority of *āyas* in the Madinan *sūrat al-Tawbah* (Q9) are Makkan, but only *āyas* 103 and 111 are Madinan, meaning that *zakāt* is from the Madinan period:

Of their goods, take alms, so that you might purify and sanctify them . . . Allāh has purchased of the believers their persons and theirs goods (Q9:103 and 111)

Al-Badawi (1999:147) claims that the law pertaining to *zakāt* was revealed in the Makkan period, but that there are also various ways of giving *zakāt*, and these are explained in Madinan *āyas*. Ibn Kathīr (2000, 3:918-919) holds a similar view and mentions that the following *āya* deals with the *zakāt* of one's wealth, and it is from a Makkan revelation:

The believers must (eventually) win through...

Who are active in deeds of charity (Q23:1- 4)

Ibn Kathīr also confirms that *zakāt* became obligatory during the Makkan period as mentioned in (Q6:141), and that it also referred to *zakāt* of the soul in the following Makkan *āya*:

By the soul, and the proportion and order given to it

And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right

Truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it! (Q91:7-10)

According to al-Qaraḍāwī in his book on *zakāt* (cf. Badawi 1999:148), the Islamic legal ruling of *zakāt* is briefly mentioned in Makkan *sūras*, but a more detailed analysis is found in Madinan *sūras*, as it will become obligatory only at this time, i.e., after the hijrah.

(iii) Prohibitions

According to Sheikh Muḥammad Abū Zahra (cf. Badawi 1999:141), the Makkan *sūras* do not deal with relationships amongst people because at this time people were polytheists, and it was impossible to establish any Islamic law to coordinate between them. However, the first step was to take them out of their beliefs and encourage them to believe in one God, and only after that, many prohibitions came in order to make them gradually change their way of life. These prohibitions did not come as a formal rule but as advice which is good to be followed. This is how they appeared in the Makkan Qur'ān:

And from the fruit of date-palm and the vine, you get out fermented and wholesome drink and food: behold, in this also is a sign for those who are wise. (Q16:67).

In this example, it appears that people had to take care of what they ate and drank because some food was good for them and some were not, such as fermented drink. However there was no prohibition against it; only a warning existed. Another example concerns interest (*al-ribā*), in *sūrat al-Rūm* (Q30), where it is shown that it is not wise to use it, without any prohibition, as it will just advise not to use it:

That which ye lay out for increase through the property of (other) people, will have no increase with Allah: but that which ye lay out for charity, seeking the countenance of Allāh, (will increase): it is these who will get a recompense multiplied. (Q30:39)

Another example mentions the sacrifice of animals for some being other than Allāh, which was very frequent among Makkan polytheists:

So eat of (meats) on which Allāh's name has been pronounced, if you have faith in His signs. Why should ye not eat of (meats) on which Allāh's name hath been pronounced, when He has explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you - except under compulsion of necessity? But many do mislead (men) by their appetites unchecked by knowledge. Your Lord knows best those who transgress. Eschew all sin, open or secret: those who earn sin will get due recompense for their earnings. Eat not of (meats) on which Allāh's name hath not been pronounced: that would be impiety. But Satan ever

inspires their friends to contend with you if you were to obey them, ye would indeed be pagans. (Q6:118-121)

Ibn Kathir¹²⁶ (2000, 2:425-427) in his exegesis of these *āyas* feels that God emphatically prohibits the eating of meats for which His name has not been invoked, or to eat the meat from an animal that died naturally, but instead only eat meat on which Allāh's name has been read. He also adds that these *āyas* are part of the *sharī'ah*, and are related to the *‘aqīda* (belief), meaning that everything permissible and prohibited is from God only as in:

But say not for any false thing that your tongues may put forth – ‘this is lawful, and this is forbidden’, so as to ascribe false things to Allāh, will never prosper. (Q16:116).

(iv) Ordinance for Good Conduct

As mentioned above, the laws concerning social life, marriage, divorce, etc., are discussed later in the Madīnan *sūras*. However, some minor laws relating to self-conduct and family life appear briefly in some Makkan *sūras*, in order to make people reflect on the wisdom of God's law, such as the unification of two souls, which only become one after the union when fearing and believing in God:

And among His sign is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily, in that are signs for those who reflect. (Q30:21)

This theme will be discussed in more detail in the Madīnan *sūras* (see chapter five). However, in the Makkan *sūras*, ordinance for good conduct urges people to be just, good, kind with their kin, forbid what is bad and order what is good:

Allāh commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that you may receive admonition. (Q16:90). This is also found in Q31:17.

¹²⁶ Ismail ibn Kathir was an Islamic scholar and renowned commentator on the Qur'ān. His full name is Abu Al-Fida, 'Imad Ad-Din Isma'il bin 'Umar bin Kathir Al-Qurashi Al-Busrawi. He was born in 1301 in Busra, Syria. He was taught by the great scholar Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyya in Damascus, Syria and Abu al-Hajjaj Al-Mizzi, (d. 1373), main teacher of Ibn Kathir. Upon completion of his studies he obtained his first official appointment in 1341, when he joined an inquisitorial commission formed to determine certain questions of heresy. Ibn Kathir wrote a famous commentary on the *Qur'an* named *Tafsir ibn Kathir* which linked certain *Hadith*, or sayings of Muhammad, and sayings of the *sahaba* to verses of the *Qur'an*, in explanation. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* is famous all over the Muslim world and among Muslims in the Western world, and is one of the most widely used explanations of the *Qur'an* today. Ibn Kathir was renowned for his great memory regarding the sayings of Muhammad and the entire *Qur'an*. Ibn Kathir is known as a *qadi*, a master scholar of history, and a *mufassir* (*Qur'an* commentator). Ibn Kathir saw himself as a *Shafi* scholar. This is indicated by two of his books, one of which was *Tabaqaat ah-Shafai'ah*, or *The Categories of the Followers of Imam Shafi*. In later life, he became blind. He attributes his blindness to working late at night on the *Musnad* of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in an attempt to rearrange it topically rather than by narrator. Ibn Kathir died in February 1373 in Damascus. (www.wikipedia.com)

Makkan *sūras* also urge people to be faithful in honouring their commitments and pledges, and to avoid treachery:

Fulfil the covenant of Allāh when you have entered into it, and do not break your oaths after you have confirmed them; indeed you have made Allāh your surety; for Allāh knows all that you do. (Q16:91)

In the above example, one notices that what is ordered is not only for the people living in Makka at that time, but for all of mankind, at any time and at any place. Makkan *sūras* highlight the essential and basic behaviour that one needs to follow for a civilised social life, in order to be just, good with one's kin and to avoid what is revolting and obscene, both in public and in secret. I believe that all these measures bring confidence among people and enable people to live in perfect serenity.

(v) The Rights of Parents

The Islamic law of the Makkan period focuses upon the rights of parents, and for sincerity and obedience to them. These are mentioned in many Makkan *sūras*, such as *al-Isrā'* (Q17), *Luqmān* (Q31), and *al-Aḥqāf* (Q46). God has ordered man to believe in Him and to also be kind to parents, particularly when they attain old age, and to ask God to bestow upon them His mercy. The rights of parents are important in Islamic law, and Muslims are advised to behave like this, as God has told us in the Qur'ān:

You Lord has decreed that you worship none but him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, do not say to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour.

And out of kindness, lower them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them thy mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.' (Q17:23-24)

Utmost respect to parents is also highlighted in Makkan *sūras*, and covers the non-believing parents. We are informed about the mother's pregnancy, and that the child, when he/she becomes an adult, has obligations in showing gratitude to their mothers. We are also told that if our parents do not believe in one God, or are disbelievers, they should still be respected; if they force you to disbelieve in the One God, you should not obey them, but one should still be kind to them and treat them with high respect:

And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: In travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), 'show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (your final) goal. But if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them; yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration), and, follow the way of those who turn to me (in love): in the End the return of you all is to Me, and I will tell you the truth (and meaning) of all that you did. (Q31:14-15)

We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years, he says: 'O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for your favour which you have bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as thou may approve; and be gracious to me in my issue. Truly have I turned to you and truly do I bow (to you) in Islam.' (Q46:15)

In al-Badawi's view (1999:151-152), when God ordained the rights of parents, and to ask for bestowing upon them His mercy, he defined the limits which include the perfect behaviour of obedience and kindness, to respect them and to be thankful etc, in order that one must adopt this behaviour towards his parents. But this is only a favour given to them by God. When we have achieved this, we are following the law of God and at the same time obeying him. However, this is not to be considered as an association with God, because this is classed as obedience to parents who are a creation of God: God is the Creator and we must obey Him. God also commands his creatures to thank their parents after thanking Him. These are the first moral laws revealed in Makkan *sūras*, but we will focus more upon this issue in the Madinan period later (see chapter four).

3.9 The Makkan *Sūras* Listed

The Makkan *sūras* are all *sūras* revealed in the Makkan phase, even if it contained *āyas* from the Madinan. Below is the list of Makkan *sūras* according to al-Ṣuyūṭī in his *Itqān*, they are 89 *sūras* (2000, 1: 21):

Q6, Q7, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16), Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28, Q29, 30, Q31, Q32, Q34, Q35, Q36, (Q37), (Q38), (Q39), Q40, Q41, Q42, Q43, Q44, Q45, Q46, Q50, Q51, Q52, Q53, Q54, Q55, Q56, Q61, Q64, Q67, Q68, Q69, Q70,

Q71, Q72, Q73, Q74, Q75, Q76, Q77, Q78, Q79, Q80, Q81, Q82, Q83, Q84, Q85, Q86, Q87, Q88, Q89, Q90, Q91, Q92, Q93, Q94), Q95, Q96, Q97, Q98, Q100, Q101, Q102, Q103, Q104, Q105, Q106, Q107, Q108, Q109, and Q111.

According to Pickthall (1997:563-565), there are Makkan *sūras*, as he includes Q1, Q66, Q99, Q112, Q113, and Q114.

There has been controversy over which are Makkan and which are Madinan, for al-Judai^c (2001:63), the Makkan *sūras* are:

Q6, Q7, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21, Q23, Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32, Q34, Q34, Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38, Q39, Q40, Q41, Q42, Q43, Q44, Q45, Q46, Q50, Q51, Q52, Q53, Q54, Q67, Q68, Q69, Q70, Q71, Q72, Q73, Q74, Q75, Q77, Q78, Q79, Q80, Q81, Q82, Q84, Q85, Q86, Q87, Q88, Q89, Q90, Q91, Q92, Q93, Q94, Q95, Q96, Q97, Q101, Q104, Q105, Q106, Q109, and Q111.

Muslims scholars, however, differ on other *sūras* which they also consider as Makkan, such as Q1, Q13, Q22, Q55, Q56, Q64, Q76, Q99, Q100, Q102, Q103, Q107, Q108, and Q112 (ibid).

Al-Badawī (1999) mentions the opinions of various scholars on this matter. According to al-Ḥaṣār (cf. Badawi 1999:47), the number of Madinan *sūras* is twenty by the unanimous agreement among scholars, and there are twelve *sūras* for which there is doubt about whether they are Makkan or Madinan, these are:

Q1, Q13, Q55, Q61, Q64, Q83, Q97, Q98, Q99, Q112, Q113, and Q114.

However, according to Ibn Sa^cd (cf. al-Badawi 1999:48) there are twenty-seven Madinan *sūras* and the other eighty seven are Makkan. He does not mention which ones they are though; he only claims that (Q13), (Q22), and (Q55) are Makkan but (Q1) is Madinan. In the View of al-Qurṭubī (cf. Badawī, ibid), Q13, Q16, Q22, and Q55 are Madinan. The most controversial *sūra* is Q1 (*al-Fātiḥa*), for which scholars were not sure as to whether it was revealed twice, once in Makka and once in Madina according to *asbāb al-nuzūl* and the *ḥadith* (ibid:49). According to al-Zarkashī (cf. von Denffer, 1983: 58), 85 *surās* are of Makkan origin. There is a difference of opinion as to what was last revealed in Makka: these may be Q29, Q23, or Q83. Some scholars also believe that Q83 is actually Madinan.

3.9.1 Makkan *Āyas* in Madinan *Sūras*

It is worth noting to note that some *sūras* are classified as Madinan but there are some Makkan *āyas* in them. This is explained in the following examples (al-Rāzi 1990; al-Badawi, 1999: 86-137; al-Ālūsi 2001; al-Judai^c 2001:69):

Q8 is a Madinan *sūra*, yet *āya* 64 is Makkan.

Q9 is a Madinan *sūra*, except for *āyas* 128-129, which were revealed in Makka.

Q57 is a Madinan *sūra*, but *āya* 16 is Makkan.

3.9.2 Madinan *Āyas* in Makkan *Sūras*

It is also worth noting that some *sūras* which are classified as Makkan have some *āyas* from the Madinan revelation in them. For the list of them please see section 4.9.2

3.10 Chronological Order of the *Sūras*

The problem of classifying *sūras* in a chronological order is to this day a non-resolved problem. There has been no unanimous agreement among Muslim traditional scholars such as al-Ṣuyūṭī¹²⁷ and al-Zamakhshārī¹²⁸, or non-Muslim contemporary scholars, such Theodore Nöldeke (1860), Friedrich Schwally (1863-1919), Régis Blachère (1949-59) and Richard Bell (1953), who have also dealt with this matter. There is no correct order approved by all as a single authentic model. Muslim scholars have roughly classified them according to the tradition (*ḥadīth*) and circumstances of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*¹²⁹) that lead to a classification. With certain *sūras*, doubt has been expressed as to how to classify them (see 3.3.1). Modern Western scholars, such as Weil (1846) and Nöldeke (1860), instead, opted for a new type of classification according to their own criteria, such as the common themes in different *sūras* and the comparison of historic events that marked the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, for the determination of the *sūras* which are from the same period, 'but this is only a European version for the dating adapted from the traditional one', claims Welch (1975:

¹²⁷ Imam Jalāluddīn al-Suyūṭī (c. 1445-1505 AD) also known as Ibn al-Kutb (son of books) was an Egyptian writer and teacher whose works deal with a wide variety of subjects in Islamic theology. He was precocious and was already a teacher in 1462. In 1486, he was appointed to a chair in the mosque of Baybars in Cairo. (www.wikipedia.com)

¹²⁸ al-Zamakhshārī (1074 or 1075 – 1143 or 1144) was a medieval Iranian and according to some sources his a Turkish [3], Hanafī scholar with Mu'tazilite theological influences. (www.wikipedia.com)

¹²⁹ *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, an Arabic term meaning "occasions/circumstances of revelation", is a secondary genre of Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*) directed at establishing the context in which specific verses of the Qur'ān were revealed. Though of some use in reconstructing the Qur'ān's historicity, *asbāb* is by nature an exegetical rather than a historiographical genre, and as such usually associates the verses it explicates with general situations rather than specific events. (www.wikipedia.com)

419). We cannot rely on the claim that all *sūras* which have the same style are from the same period: Welch (ibid) is unhappy about this and adds that this system was widely accepted in the West, with much more credit than it deserves. Bell (1953) also attempted to classify the chronology of the revelation by locating all the variations that were possible in the text, but he concluded that many of his own suggestions were uncertain or provisional and that it is only new research subsequent to him which will prove if they were right or wrong (cf. Welch 1975:420).

Controversy surrounding the chronology has moved from the approximation of the classical author to the approximation of the modern author: they have all concluded that they could not all demonstrate that their order was the correct one for certain reason. Furthermore, many other authors such as Muir and Wagtendonk (cf. Welch: ibid), Watt (1956) later on tried to find the chronological order but came to different conclusions. I don't think that the real and only one chronological order is really possible to find because one cannot deny the fact that some *āyās* from the Makkan period were added to Madinan *sūras* (see 3.3.1) and similarly *āyās* from the Madinan period were included in Makkan *sūras* (see 3.3.2). Thus how can we establish our chronology research on something that is not chronologically identified? There are exceptions for some *sūras* which were revealed all at once, though I must add that it must have been possible to classify them, but for the other *sūras* which were revealed gradually over a longer period of time, how can we classify them in an absolute chronological order? For this reason, I have selected the chronological order of the *sūras*, according to al-Suyūṭī in his *Itqān*, which also includes the opinion of other scholars of his time. In my view, it is the most elaborate and convincing chronological order that we have at our disposal in comparison with those modern scholars of today. I believe al-Suyūṭī's chronological system is based on earlier authentic sources, and as a comparison, I will also include the chronological arrangement of the *sūras* according to Bell which incorporates the views of various non-Muslims authors such as Muir, Grimme and Nöldeke, compared with the Egyptian standard.

The following table is the chronological order according to al-Suyūṭī (2000, 1:21-22). Notice that the three following *sūras* Q1, Q7, and Q19 are not in the table below; it may be due to the fact that these *sūras* were not classified unanimously as Makkan or Madinan among Muslim scholars; therefore, al-Ṣuyūṭī does not mention them.

Chronological order	Classification in the actual Qurān	Chronological order	Classification in the actual Qurān	Chronological order	Classification in the actual Qurān
1 (Makka)	(96)	38	(72)	75	(69)
2	(68)	39	(36)	76	(70)
3	(73)	40	(25)	77	(78)
4	(74)	41	(35)	78	(79)
5	(111)	42	(20)	79	(84)
6	(81)	43	(56)	80	(82)
7	(87)	44	(26)	81	(30)
8	(92)	45	(27)	82	(29)
9	(89)	46	(28)	83 (Madīna)	(83)
10	(93)	47	(17)	84	(2)
11	(94)	48	(10)	85	(3)
12	(103)	49	(11)	86	(8)
13	(100)	50	(12)	87	(33)
14	(108)	51	(15)	88	(5)
15	(102)	52	(6)	89	(60)
16	(107)	53	(37)	90	(4)
17	(109)	54	(31)	91	(99)
18	(105)	55	(34)	92	(57)
19	(113)	56	(39)	93	(47)
20	(114)	57	(40)	94	(13)
21	(112)	58	(44)	95	(55)
22	(53)	59	(41)	96	(76)
23	(80)	60	(42)	97	(65)
24	(97)	61	(43)	98	(98)
25	(91)	62	(45)	99	(59)
26	(85)	63	(46)	100	(110)
27	(95)	64	(51)	101	(24)
28	(106)	65	(88)	102	(22)
29	(101)	66	(18)	103	(63)
30	(75)	67	(16)	104	(58)
31	(104)	68	(71)	105	(49)
32	(77)	69	(14)	106	(66)
33	(50)	70	(21)	107	(61)
34	(90)	71	(23)	108	(62)
35	(86)	72	(32)	109	(64)
36	(54)	73	(52)	110	(48)
37	(38)	74	(67)	111	(9)

Table 3.1: Chronological order of *sūras* according to al-Suyūṭī

Bell (1953:102-103), however, gives the view of different modern Western scholars of his time, and their method on the topic of chronological order of the *sūra* as follows:

William Muir in his publication *Life of Muhammad* gives his own arrangement of the *sūras*, which is different to the one of Nöldeke, due to the fact that Muir divides a passage dealing with nature and its wonders for Muḥammad's call to be a Prophet. Rodwell, in *Translation of the Qur'ān*, adopts the chronological order of Nöldeke, but modifies the classification of the first subdivision of Makkan slightly. Grimme, in *Muḥammad*, also gives his arrangement of the *sūras*, and divides the two main groups of Makkan origin:

The first one deals with monotheism, resurrection, judgment and future life reward-punishment; men are free to believe or not, and Muḥammad is just a preacher and he does not claim to be a Prophet yet.

The second one deals with (*raḥmān* - Merciful) which is associated, then stories of previous generations and many other intermediate *sūras* which deal with judgment. Hirschfeld in *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Qur'ān* follows Nöldeke initially, but then divides it into many different groups: original revelation or confirmatory, declamatory narrative, descriptive and legislative. His approach is new because he recognises that it is passages rather than *sūras* with which he must deal with; unfortunately his task is not accepted by scholars. Blachère Régis in *Le Coran* bases his arrangement on Nöldeke's. However, he adds more detail on Muslim's worship and direct opposition to the polytheism. He also recognizes that some *sūras* can be divided into portions from different dates.

Bell (ibid) criticizes Nöldeke's approach, saying that it can be useful for a first approximation, but the criterion used there cannot be relied upon, particularly the criterion of style which was given more importance than it deserved: one cannot assume that the change that occurred is due to the warning of his initial emotion and enthusiasm. Bell also adds that Nöldeke's scheme is a grouping of the *sūras* as unities, recognising that passages of different dates have occasionally found their way into the same *sūra*, but on the whole he has retained the *sūras* in their traditional form. Bell (ibid) describes his own method of defining the chronological order of the *sūras* but he does not give the list; he uses Ibn Hishām's date and references and adapts his dates of the *sūra*. The following tables divided into two (1-70) and (71-114) are the chronological arrangement of the *sūras* according to Muir, Grimme, and Nöldeke compared to the Egyptian standard one according to Bell (ibid):

Othmanic	Muir	Nöldeke	Grimme	Egyptian	Othmanic	Muir	Nöldeke	Grimme	Egyptian
I	6	48	79	5	XXXVI	67	60	61	41(45,Md)
II	94	91(Partslater Mk)	93 (192-6)	87 (281 later)	XXXVII	59	50	60	56
III	108	97 (parts later)	100	89	XXXVIII	73	59	59	38
IV	107	100	101	92	XXXIX	45	80	58	59 (53-5, Md)
V	109	114(parts earlier)	95(1-14 later)	112	XL	72	78	57	60 (58f, Md)
VI	81	89 (91 ?)	89	55 (20,23,91,93, 114,152-4,Md)	XLI	53	71	55	61
VII	91	87 (156-8, Md.)	88 (156-8, Md)	39 (163-9, Md.)	XLII	71	83	80	62 (22-4,26 Md)
VIII	97	95	97	88 (30-37,Md)	XLIII	76	61	76	63 (54,Md)
IX	114	113	114	113 (129f., Mk)	XLIV	58	53	54	64
X	79	84	87	51 (41,94-6, Md)	XLV	57	72	53	65 (13,Md)
XI	78	75	86	52 (15,20,116,Md)	XLVI	64	88	51	66(9,14,34Md)
XII	77	77	85	53 (1,2,3,7,Md)	XLVII	95	96	96	95 (14, Mk)
XIII	89	90	84	96	XLVIII	105	108	112	111
XIV	80	76 (38-42, Md)	50(38-2, Md.)	72	XLIX	113	112	110	106
XV	62	57	48	54	L	56	54	47	34 (37,Md)
VI	88	73(43f.,111-25,Md)	83 (111-,Md)	70 (126-8, Md)	LI	63	39 (24ff., later)	46	67
XVII	87	67	82	50(28,34,35,58,75-82,Md)	LII	55	40 (21,29ff, later)	45	76
XVIII	69	69	81	69 (27,83-101,Md)	LIII	43	28 (23,26-33 later)	44(21-,27-33, later)	23
XIX	68	58	78	44 (59,72,Md)	LIV	48	49	43	37 (44-6,Md)
XX	75	55	74	45 (130f.,Md)	LV	40	43 (7,8 later)	42	97
XXI	86	65	77	73	LVI	41	41 (74ff. ?)	41	46 (70,71,Md)
XXII	85	107(1-24,43-56, 60-65,67-75,Mk)	49(25-42, 76-78, Md.)	103	LVII	96	99	102	94
XXIII	84	64	75	74	LVIII	98	106	106	105
XXIV	103	105	98	102	LIX	102	102	99	101
XXV	74	66	73	42 (68-70,Md)	LX	111	110	105	91
XXVI	61	56	71	47 (197,224-8,Md)	LXI	106	98	104	109
XXVII	70	68	70	48	LXII	101	94	94	110
XXVIII	83	79	69	49 (52-5,Md.,85 on journey)	LXIII	104	104	109	104

XXIX	90	81(1-10,Md.,45?69?)	68(1-12,45-46, Md)	85 (1-10, Md.)	LXIV	82	93	103	108
XXX	60	74	67	84 (16, Md.)	LXV	99	101	107	99
XXXI	50	82 (13f.,11-18?)	65	57 (26-8, Md.)	LXVI	112	109	113	107
XXXII	44	70	64	75 (12-20, Md.)	LXVII	42	63	66	77
XXXIII	110	103	108	90	LXVIII	52	18 (17ff, later)	38	2 (17-33,48-50, Md)
XXXIV	49	85	63	58 (6, Md)	LXIX	51	38	37	78
XXV	66	86	62	43	LXX	37	42	36	79

The remaining *sūras* from 71 to 114:

Othmanic	Muir	Nöldeke	Grimme	Egyptian	Othmanic	Muir	Nöldeke	Grimme	Egyptian
LXXI	54	51	72	71	XCIII	16	13	15	11
LXXII	65	62	52	40	XCIV	17	12	14	12
LXXIII	46	23 (20,Md)	35 (20,Md)	3 (10,11,20,Md)	XCV	8	20	13	28
LXXIV	21	2 (31-4 later)	34 (55 later)	4	XCVI	19	1 (9 f. later)	12	1
LXXV	36	36 (16-9?)	33	31	XCVII	24	14	56	25
LXXVI	35	52	32 (30f.later)	98	XCVIII	100	92	90?	100
LXXVII	34	32	31	33 (48,Md)	XCIX	3	25	10	93
LXXVIII	33	33	30 (37 f.later)	80	C	2	30	9	14
LXXIX	47	31 (27-46 later)	29	81	CI	7	24	8	30
LXXX	26	17	28	24	CII	9	8	7	16
LXXXI	27	27	27 (29 later)	7	CIII	1	21 (3, later)	6 (3, later)	13
LXXXII	11	26	26	82	CIV	10	6	5	32
LXXXIII	32	37	25	86	CV	13	9	4	19
LXXXIV	28	29 (25 later)	24 (25 later)	83	CVI	5	4	3	29
LXXXV	31	22 (8-11later)	23 (8-11later)	27	CVII	39	7	2	17
LXXXVI	29	15	22	36	CVIII	18	5	11	15
LXXXVII	23	19	21 (7, Md)	8	CIX	38	45	92?	18
LXXXVIII	25	34	20	68	CX	30	111	111	114
LXXXIX	14	35	19	10	CXI	22	3	1	6
XC	15	11	18	35	CXII	20	44	91?	22
XCI	4	16	17	26	CXIII	92	46	39?	20
XCII	12	10	16	9	CXIV	93	47	40	21

Table 3.2: Various chronological arrangements of the *sūra* according to Bell (1953)

The Roman numerals give the order in the Othmanic recension, the Arabic ones that in the other arrangements and the numbers in brackets give the *āyās* which are regarded as belonging to a different time from that of the main part of the *sūra*. Md is for Madina; Mk is for Makka. All arrangements place in *sūra* II as the first of the Madinan *sūras*.

Muir has therefore 93 Makkan and 21 Madinan

Nöldeke----- 90----- 24-----

Grimme----- 92----- 22-----

Egyptian----- 86-----28-----

With regard to the Madinan *sūras*, there is a fair amount of unanimity as to their order, though all Western scholars recognise that they contain passages of different dates. The doubtful *sūras* are Q98, which Muir regards as Makkan, Grimme as doubtfully so, and Nöldeke as Madinan; Q22, which Nöldeke classes as Madinan but with a mixture of Makkan passages. Western scholars divide the Makkan *sūras* into groups, within which they do not say that their order is strictly chronological. Muir places 18 *sūras* before the call; thus, like Nöldeke, agreeing with tradition in regarding Q96 as the *sūra* marking the call. His order groups are: 19-22, 23-41, 42-63, 64-91, 92, 93 (Q113, Q114 undated). Nöldeke's groups are: 1-48, 49-69, 70-90. Grimme's groups are: 1-30, Q113, Q114 doubtfully along with these; 41-50, 51-89; Q98, Q112 and Q109 doubtfully with this group (Bell 1953:110-114).

However, in the view of al-A^czami (2003:70), a modern Muslim scholar, the focus on the chronological order of the *sūra* is not compulsory when dealing with the *sūras* of the Qur'an. Rather, it is not necessary to know the chronological order of the *sūra* to understand the proper meaning of the *sūra*. On the contrary, each *sūra* or *āya*, he claims, is independent and can be understood as it is. If we try to find the chronological order, we can be wrong and misunderstand the meaning; this is how he explains this problem:

The Qur'an's unique format allows each *sūra* to function as an independent unit; no chronology or narrative carries over from one to the next, and therefore any change in the sequence of *sūras* is purely superficial. Such were the discrepancies, if indeed they did exist, that the message of the Qur'an remained inviolate. Variations in word order or the sequence of *āyās* would be a different matter altogether- a profound alteration that thankfully not even the best-known variant *Muṣḥaf* can make claims to. Scholars, according to him (ibid: 72), unanimously agree that to follow the *sūra* order in the Qur'an recitation is not compulsory, whether in prayer, recitation, learning, teaching or memorisation. In fact each *sūra* stands

alone, he said, and it is not also necessarily that the latter *sūras* contain greater legal ruling than the ones revealed earlier. Furthermore it can happen that an abrogated *āya* appears in a *sūra* which is subsequent to the *sūra* containing the abrogating *āya* that replaces it.

3.11 The Duration of the Makkan Revelation

The Makkan phase of revelation lasted about thirteen years from the first revelation up to the *hijra*. We can summarise this phase in three main Qur'ānic themes of revelation:

- 1) Allāh and his oneness (*tawḥīd*),
- 2) Resurrection and Day of Judgment,
- 3) Righteous conduct.

In this phase, the Prophet plays the role of an announcer and warner. The Makkan *sūras* also constitute about 11 juz' (divisions) of the text, which is divided into 30 parts in total.

3.12 Qur'ānic Textual Analysis

Abdul-Raof's (2003 and 2005) Qur'ānic textual analysis is a modern approach to Qur'ānic text analysis and *sūra* structure. His textual analysis focuses on two areas: (i) the four tenets (principles) of faith, and (ii) motifs, i.e., themes. I shall attempt to provide a similar account of Qur'ānic textual analysis of some Makkan *sūras* in terms of Abdul-Raof's tenets of faith which we encounter, and also in terms of their themes. This approach, I believe, can provide a detailed analysis, including the number of the *āyas* for each tenet of faith and themes mentioned; however, I will only focus on three selected Makkan *sūras*.

3.12.1 Tenets of Faith in Makkan *Sūras*

Makkan *sūras* focus mainly on the four tenets of faith: monotheism, prophethood, resurrection and reward and punishment. More importantly, we need to discuss the tenets of faith found in Makkan *sūras*. Under the concept of monotheism, the subsequent discourse discusses the oneness of God and also, when dealing with the polytheists (those who associate beings equal to God), which is an indirect reference to monotheism. Under the notion of prophethood, the actual discourse deals with the role of the Prophet Muḥammad either alone or in tandem with the previous Prophets. There is also an indirect reference to the Prophet, for example, your companion is not crazy, or you are not a poet referring to the Prophet Muḥammad, and the Qur'ān which confirms his prophethood. Under the subject of resurrection, there are references to the Day of Judgment, and under the topic of reward-

punishment, there are references to the hereafter. I have selected Q7, Q17 and Q28 for textual analysis in terms of the tenets of faith:

3.12.2 Q7 *al-A^crāf*

*Sūrat al-A^crāf*¹³⁰ (the heights) is one of the longest Makkan *sūras*, and contains 206 *āyas*. It also provides details about the previous stories of the prophets. *Ashāb al-A^crāf*: This is central to this particular *sūra* of the Qur'ān because in *āyas* 46-48, we learn that on the Day of Judgment there will be some people, for whom the scales of their good and bad deeds will be equal. Then they will wait on the *A^crāf* (the heights) prior to them knowing their final destination be heaven or hell. As in most of the Makkan *sūras*, the *sūra* deals with the tenets of faith, as mentioned above. We can find these tenets of faith in this *sūra* through the following textual analysis:

3.12.3 Tenets of Faith in Q7

The table below is a textual analysis of Q7 based on Abdul-Raof's (2003 and 2005) approach to the *sūra* structure in terms of the tenets of faith:

Monotheism	Prophethood	Resurrection	Reward-Punishment
(Q7:29)	(Q7:1)	(Q7:8)	(Q7:8-9)
(Q7:33)	(Q7:2-3)	(Q7:14)	(Q7:18)
(Q7:54)	(Q7:6)	(Q7:24-25)	(Q7:36-51)
(Q7:59)	(Q7:35)	(Q7:32)	(Q7:53)
(Q7:65)	(Q7:43)	(Q7:34)	(Q7:147)
(Q7:70-71)	(Q7:52)	(Q7:53)	(Q7:170)
(Q7:73)	(Q7:53)	(Q7:57)	(Q7:178-179)
(Q7:85)	(Q7:158)	(Q7:158)	
(Q7:140)	(Q7:184)	(Q7:167)	
(Q7:148-149)	(Q7:188)	(Q7:169)	
(Q7:158)	(Q7:203)	(Q7:172)	
(Q7:173)		(Q7:187)	
(Q7:180)			
(Q7:190-197)			
(Q7:206)			

Table 3.3: Tenets of faith in Q7

¹³⁰ *al-A^crāf*: is the fortress that separates The Garden of Paradise from The Fire of Hell. On the Judgement Day, the masses will come toward *al-A^crāf*, none of whom knowing whether they are destined to paradise, or hell. But there will be some people, standing on *al-A^crāf*, who will be recognizing some faces among the crowd and bestowing upon them with salute, while recognizing some others and condemning on them and asking God not to join them with them. In accordance with the definition of these people, the verse 22:78 mentions that if the believers strive as they should do, the Messenger will be a witness to them, and they will be witnesses for the mankind. (www.wikipedia.com)

3.12.4 Q17 *al-Isrā'*

Sūrat al-Isrā' is a Makkan *sūra* and contains 111 *āyas*. It is the first and only *sūra* which provides information about the night journey during which the Prophet Muḥammad was transported from the sacred mosque of Makka to the farthest mosque in Jerusalem, before his ascension to the seven heavens in order to be shown the great power of God. As with most of the Makkan *sūras*, it focusses on monotheism, prophethood and resurrection. In this *sūra*, however, the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad is highlighted through the unique miracle that happened to him. This *sūra* also refers to the miracle quality of the Qur'ān, and challenges all of mankind and the Jinn to produce the likeness of the Qur'ān (Q17, 88 *āyas*).

3.12.5 Tenets of Faith in Q17

The table below is a textual analysis of Q17 based on Abdul-Raof's (2003 and 2005) approach to the *sūra* structure in terms of the tenets of faith (*mabādi' al-īmān*):

Monotheism	Prophethood	Resurrection	Reward-Punishment
(Q17:1)	(Q17:1)	(Q17:13)	(Q17:8)
(Q17:8)	(Q17:9)	(Q17:14)	(Q17:9)
(Q17:17)	(Q17:15)	(Q17:45)	(Q17:10)
(Q17:22)	(Q17:39)	(Q17:49)	(Q17:18)
(Q17:23)	(Q17:41)	(Q17:51)	(Q17:19)
(Q17:39)	(Q17:45)	(Q17:52)	(Q17:21)
(Q17:42)	(Q17:46)	(Q17:58)	(Q17:54)
(Q17:43)	(Q17:47)	(Q17:62)	(Q17:57)
(Q17:44)	Q17:48)	(Q17:71-72)	(Q17:63)
(Q17:46)	(Q17:51)	(Q17:97)	(Q17:71-72)
(Q17:51)	(Q17:54)	(Q17:98)	
(Q17:52)	(Q17:55)	(Q17:99)	
(Q17:54)	(Q17:58)	(Q17:104)	
(Q17:55)	(Q17:60)		
(Q17:56)	(Q17:73)		
(Q17:57)	(Q17:74-82)		
(Q17:93)	(Q17:85)		
(Q17:97)	(Q17:86-87)		
(Q17:108-111)	(Q17:88)		
	(Q17:89-92)		
	(Q17:93)		
	(Q17:94)		
	(Q17:96)		
	(Q17:105-107)		

Table 3.4: Tenets of faith in Q17

3.12.6 Q28 *al-Qaṣaṣ*

Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ (the stories, Q28) is a Makkan *sūra* which contains 88 *āyas*. This *sūra* focuses on monotheism, prophethood and reward-punishment. The title refers to the story of Moses, which is discussed in more detail than in other *sūras*. It also provides details on the rising

from the dead, the corruption and arrogance of men, evil characters, injustice and persecution. It also reminds us of the final return to the hereafter, and that we must show gratitude to God.

3.12.7 Tenets of Faith in Q28

The table below is a textual analysis of Q28, based on Abdul-Raof's (2003 and 2005) approach to the *sūra* structure, in terms of the tenets of faith:

Monotheism	Prophethood	Resurrection	Reward-Punishment
(Q28:30)	(Q28:2-3)	(Q28:37)	(Q28:60-61)
(Q28:38)	(Q28:44-53)	(Q28:39)	(Q28:77)
(Q28:62)	(Q28:56-57)	(Q28:41-42)	(Q28:83)
(Q28:63-64)	(Q28:59)	(Q28:61)	
(Q28:68)	(Q28:65)	(Q28:62)	
(Q28:70-72)	(Q28:85-87)	(Q28:65-66)	
(Q28:74-75)		(Q28:70-72)	
(Q28:87-88)		(Q28:74)	
		(Q28:88)	

Table 3.5: Tenets of faith in Q28

3.12.8 Textual Analysis of Tenets of Faith in Makkan *Sūras*

In this section, we shall summarise, in a table, the results of our textual analysis in terms of the number of times that the tenets of faith appear in the three Makkan *sūras* selected.

Tenets of faith	Q7 <i>al-A'rāf</i> (206 āyās)	Q17 <i>al-Isrā'</i> (111 āyās)	Q28 <i>al-Qaṣaṣ</i> (88 āyās)
Monotheism	15	20	13
Prophethood	11	24	8
Resurrection	12	13	11
Reward-Punishment	7	11	4

Table 3.6: Frequency of the tenets of faith in Q7, Q17, and Q28

It is also interesting to provide another modern approach to the Makkan *sūra* structure. The following is a textual analysis of Q17 provided by Robinson (1996:188-191). Robinson (ibid) divides Q17 into nine parts, these are:

I Liturgical Opening

(Q17 :1): The night journey; signs

Narrative/ Revelation

(Q17:2): The scripture revealed to Moses

(Q17:3): The offspring of Noah

(Q17:4): The prophecy in the Scripture

(Q17:5): The first destruction

(Q17:6): The second chance

(Q17:7): The second destruction

Eschatology

(Q17:9-10): Diptych

II Polemic

(Q17:11): Categorical denunciation

(Q17:12): Night and day are signs

(Q17:13-14): Warning

(Q17:15-17): Destruction of generations after Noah

Eschatology

(Q17:18-21): Diptych

III Divine law

(Q17:22-38): The Commandments

(Q17:39-40): Conclusion: dire warning against polytheism

IV Messenger

(Q17:41): The Qur'ān and their response to it

(Q17:42-44): Allah alone worthy of praise

(Q17:45-46): The Qur'ān and their response to it

Polemic

(Q17:47-48): Their response to the Messenger

(Q17:49-51): Against denial of the resurrection

Eschatology

(Q17:52): Proceeding

V Exhortation

(Q17:53): God's servants to avoid discord

(Q17:54-55): God's knowledge; Prophets; David and Psalms

Polemic

(Q17:56-57): Those invoked fear punishment

(Q17:58): All towns will be destroyed or punished

(Q17:59): Signs would be rejected, witness Thamūd

(Q17:60): The vision and "the cursed tree"

VI Narrative

(Q17:61-65): Adam; Iblīs' rebellion and his influence

Polemic

(Q17:66-70): God alone oversees the journeys of Adam's seed

Eschatology

(Q17:71-72): Proceeding

VII Messenger

(Q17:73-75): Their attempt to make thee compromise

(Q17:76-77): Their attempt to exile thee

(Q17:78-80): Instructions on prayer and Qur'ānic recitation

(Q17:81): The advent of the Truth

(Q17:82): Dichotomy caused by Qur'ān

VIII Revelation

(Q17:83): Humankind's reaction to God's favour

(Q17:84): Humankind's disposition; God's knowledge

(Q17:85): Question about the spirit

(Q17:86-87): Messenger's dependence on divine inspiration

(Q17:88): Inimitability of the Qur'ān

(Q17:89): God's parables in the Qur'ān; humankind's unbelief

Polemic

(Q17:90-93): Against refusal to believe without miracles

(Q17:94-96): Against refusal to accept a human messenger

Eschatology

(Q17:97-98): Proceeding: punishment awaiting the sceptics

IX Polemic

(Q17:99): Signs

(Q17:100): Their niggardliness regarding revelation

Narrative/ Revelation

(Q17:101-103): Moses and Pharaoh

(Q17:104): Settlement in the Land

(Q17:105-106): Qur'ān and Messenger

(Q17:107-109): those who accept the Qur'ān

(Q17:110): Allah and the Most-merciful

Liturgical conclusion

(Q17:111): Allah's sovereign independence.

Cuypers (1995) also provides a structural analysis of Makkan *sūras*. He refers to 'structure' as 'rhetorical structure'. The following is the structural analysis of *sūra* 101 according to Cuypers:

Q101 (*al-Qāri'ah* – the crashing blow)

To illustrate this, let us begin with Q101, identified from its style and content as belonging to the first period of Muḥammad's preaching. It is a dramatic prophet announcement of the last judgement.

(1) القارعة	-A
(2) مَا القارعة	= B
(3) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا القارعة	=
(4) يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ	+ C
(5) وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ	+
(6) فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ (7) فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ	+ C'
(8) وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ (9) فَأَمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ	+
(10) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ	= B'
(11) نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ	-A'

A 1 – THE CRASH!

B 2 = What a crash!

3 = What can you compare with such a crash?

C 4 + The day people are like moths scattered about,

5 + and mountains are like wool blown about.

C' 6-7 + Whoever scores heavy on the scale

will have a life of bliss,

8-9 + Whoever scores light on the scale

will have as his mother the abyss.

10 = What can you compare with such a thing?

A' 11 – A FIRE BLAZING!

Apart from verses 1, 10 and 11, the *āyās* line up in parallel pairs. The first two are synonymous, the third is antithetic.

On a higher level, the whole *sūra* has a chiastic pattern:

- The two extremes (A and A') are apocalyptic words of terror: 'the crash', 'a fire blazing'.
- On the next level (B and B') are questions in the same format. The phrase 'What can you compare with' (literally, 'What makes you know') is a common Qur'ānic means of calling attention to the deeper meaning of certain obscure words.
- On the central level, each section (C and C') has two parallel statements on the Day of Judgment, the first (C) on the cosmic level, and the second (C') on the moral level.

The structure set out above brings out the logic of the *sūra* which, in the first section (ABC), describes the shake-up on the last day ('crash – moths scattered – wool blown'), while the second (C'B'A') describes the judgment following the universal cataclysm ('life of bliss, abyss, fire blazing').

3.13 Admonition in Makkan *Sūras*

Abdul-Raof (2001:12-15), in his book *The Qur'ān Outlined*, provides a detailed list of the Qur'ānic themes of each *sūra*. As with the other *āyas* of Q7, Q17, and Q28, they can be analysed in terms of morality and God's omnipotence, as is listed in the tables below:

Admonition	Admonition	God's Omnipotence
(Q7:4-7)	(Q7:86-139)	(Q7:57)
(Q7:10-13)	(Q7:141-146)	(Q7:189)
(Q7:15-17)	(Q7:150-157)	
(Q7:19-23)	(Q7:159-166)	
(Q7:26-28)	(Q7:168)	
(Q7:30-31)	(Q7:171)	
(Q7:55-56)	(Q7:174-177)	
(Q7:60-64)	(Q7:181-183)	
(Q7:66-69)	(Q7:198-202)	
(Q7:72)	(Q7:204-205)	
(Q7:74-84)		

Table 3.7: Admonition and Omnipotence of God in Q7 *al-A'rāf*

Admonition	Admonition	God's Omnipotence
(Q17:2)	(Q17:34)	(Q17:1)
(Q17:3)	(Q17:35)	(Q17:12)
(Q17:4-8)	(Q17:36)	(Q17:60)
(Q17:11)	(Q17:37-38)	(Q17:66)
(Q17:15)	(Q17:40)	(Q17:88)
(Q17:16-17)	(Q17:48)	(Q17:95)
(Q17:20)	(Q17:50)	(Q17:102)
(Q17:23)	(Q17:53)	
(Q17:24)	(Q17:59)	
(Q17:25)	(Q17:60)	
(Q17:26)	(Q17:61-62)	
(Q17:27)	(Q17:64-65)	
(Q17:28-29)	(Q17:67-70)	
(Q17:30)	(Q17:83-84)	
(Q17:31)	(Q17:90-92)	
(Q17:32)	(Q17:100-101)	
(Q17:33)	(Q17:103)	

Table 3.8: Admonition and Omnipotence of God in Q17 *al-Isrā'*

Admonition	Admonition	God's Omnipotence
(Q28:4-14)	(Q28:54-55)	(Q28:30-32)
(Q28:15)	(Q28:58)	(Q28:69)
(Q28:16-29)	(Q28:67)	Q28:73)
(Q28:33-36)	(Q28:76)	
(Q28:39-40)	(Q28:78-82)	
(Q28:43)	(Q28:84)	

Table 3.9: Admonition and Omnipotence of God in Q28 *al-Qaṣaṣ*

3.13.1 Textual Analysis of Admonition and God's Omnipotence in Makkan *Sūras*

In this section, we have devised a table of results of our textual analysis, in terms of the number of times the moral lessons appear in the three *sūras* selected from the Makkan *sūras*. As it appears, the moral lessons dominate a great part of each of the *sūras* we have analysed, approximately one-third of each *sūra*. The significance of this is that the tenets of faith cannot be dissociated from good behaviour. Those who believe must also control their behaviour and carry out good deeds.

Moral Lessons	Q7al- <i>A'rāf</i> (206 <i>āyas</i>)	Q17al- <i>Isrā'</i> (111 <i>āyas</i>)	Q28al- <i>Qaṣaṣ</i> (88 <i>āyas</i>)
Admonition	21	35	12
Omnipotence of God	2	6	3

Table 3.10: Frequency of admonition and God's omnipotence in three Makkan *sūras*

3.13.2 Admonition and Morality in Makkan *Sūras*

Based on our textual analysis, I shall attempt to list the major themes that we encounter in Q7, Q17, and Q28 in terms of admonition and morality, and also try to find out the number of occurrences of each theme in each of these three *sūras*.

Admonition/ Moral values	To be Followed / To be Avoided	Q7	Q17	Q28
Previous nations were wrongdoers	To be Avoided	*	*	*
Gratitude	To be Followed	*	*	
Arrogance (Satan, Pharaoh, Qarūn...)	To be Avoided	*	*	*
Ingratitude and evil of man	To be Avoided		*	*
Transgressor of God's law	To be Avoided		*	
Mischief of <i>Banū Isrā'il</i>	To be Avoided		*	
Killing infant or adult unjustly	To be Avoided		*	
Walking on the earth with insolence	To be Avoided		*	
Do not touch orphan's property	To be Avoided		*	
Do not approach adultery	To be Avoided		*	
Always fulfill your engagement	To be Followed		*	
Kindness and humility to our parents	To be Followed		*	
Benefit of guidance	To be Followed		*	
Loss of the mischief	To be Avoided		*	
Ask for God forgiveness	To be Followed	*	*	
Give their due to those who deserve it	To be Followed		*	
Do not be a miser	To be Avoided		*	
Ask for God mercy to your parents	To be Followed		*	
Do not be a spendthrift	To be Avoided		*	
Always give full measure, be fairer	To be Followed		*	
Do not concern yourself with anything you have not knowledge	To be Avoided		*	
Dreadful saying of the pagans	To be Avoided		*	
Satan's plot lead to go astray	To be Avoided	*	*	*
Those who had repented shall be successful	To be Followed			*

Table 3.11: Morality and its frequency in Makkan *sūras*

3.13.3 Graph of the three Makkan *Sūras* Analysed above

As for the tenets of faith and admonition in Makkan *sūras*, the following graph illustrates the number of times that each principle of faith and the admonition appear in the three Makkan *sūras* selected above and based on Abdul-Raof (2001):

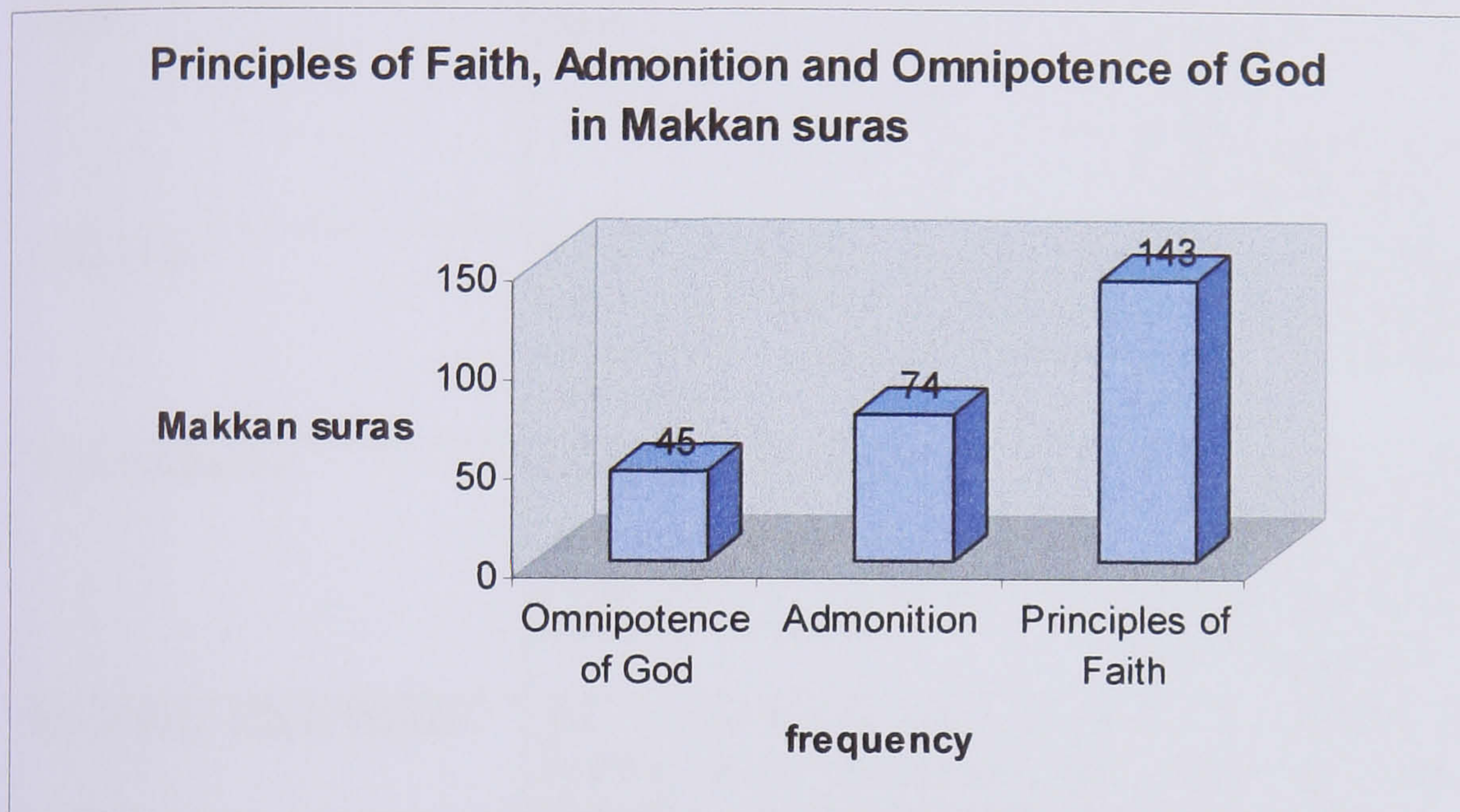


Figure 3.1: Principles of Faith, Admonition and Omnipotence of God in Makkan *Sūras*

3.14 Phase of Makkan *Sūra*

Makkan revelations can be divided into three separate phases (al-Şālih 1997:185)

- (i) Initial phase revelations which include Q96, Q74, Q81, Q87, Q92, Q94, Q100, Q102, and Q53.
- (ii) Middle phase revelations which include Q80, Q95, Q101, Q75, Q77, Q90, and Q15.
- (iii) Final phase revelations which include Q37, Q43, Q44, Q51, Q18, Q14, and Q32.

3.15 Conclusion

There are different positive and negative aspects which result from the various analyses by different scholars of Makkan *sūras* we have discussed above. We can, therefore, classify them through the format of a table. The following is the Makkan *sūra* structural analysis viewed by modern Western scholars such as Robinson, Neuwirth, Nöldeke, Schwally, Blachere, Watt, Bell, and Muslims scholars such as, Suyūṭī, Zarkashi, Mir, Farāhi, Işlāhi, Thanavi, and Abdul-Raof:

Scholars listed:	Positive aspects	Negative aspects
Robinson/ Neuwirth	Divided the <i>sūra</i> as units or sections, and then dealt with each theme that occurs in it.	As each <i>sūra</i> is divided into sections, then each section is divided into units, and then subdivided into smaller units; this approach is confusing to the reader.
Nöldeke/ Blachere/ Shwally, Watt	Based on chronological order of the <i>sūras</i> .	Do not respect the fact that the <i>sūras</i> were not revealed at one time all together. Same theme does not necessarily mean the same period as they claim.
Abdul-Raof	Focus on thematic analysis: four tenets of faith: prophethood, monotheism, reward-punishment, eschatology.	The <i>sūra</i> 's contents are summarised into four containers: the theme is more highlighted than the message itself.
Suyūṭī, Zarkashi	Based on <i>asbāb al-nuzūl</i> , The <i>sūra</i> is presented as more comprehensive according to its context of revelation.	The Qur'ān is meant to be for all mankind. Therefore, it must not be limited to some past contexts and it should also be compatible with our modern daily life.
Mir (Farāhi, Iṣlāḥī) Thanavi	The Qur'ān allows each <i>sūra</i> to function as an independent unit. Therefore, we do not find any chronology or narratives that carry over from one to the next.	It is difficult to deal with the abrogating and abrogated <i>āyas</i> if the order is unknown.
Bell	It is an interesting approach which takes into account the thematic links between <i>āyas</i> and the chronological order of the <i>sūras</i> according to their time of revelation.	Bell is not sure whether his classification was right. He suggests that further research will be required to prove his findings about the right order of the <i>sūras</i> . Secondly, based on chronological order of the <i>sūras</i> following Ibn Hishām's dates, Bell did not pay attention to the fact that the <i>sūras</i> were revealed gradually and not all together at once. Also, his approach fails to prove the thematic links between consecutive <i>āyas</i> and <i>sūras</i> , as well as his claims about grammatical and stylistic errors in the Qur'anic language are inaccurate.

Table 3.12: Aspects of Analyses by Different Scholars

We also notice that the Makkan themes are universal and timeless, when dealing with rights to parents or good conducts to adopt or discussing the creation of the earth. Moreover, by the repetition of *āyas* or a complete *sūra*, we are forced to take note that a message that was revealed at one time to a particular nation can be adapted to other people in another situation. Not only at the time of the Prophet but even until today, fourteen centuries later, there is the potential for it to be perfectly adapted to our daily life as it never appears to be outdated by events or the past.

Whereas the Makkan Qur'ān addresses those who are disbelievers, and also the arrogant and transgressors, the unfair and the stubborn, the language used is aggressive in nature. The nature of the language contains injunctions, strong words, menacing people, the message needs to be understood, it is always aimed at its targeted audience, in order to put these people under pressure and make them discipline themselves. However, for those who believe, and follow the command of his Lord, the Makkan *sūras* mention in many places the examples of the believers and how they were persecuted by their people, but also mention the rewards they will have acquired in this world, and what they will gain in the hereafter, they must not be worried about. Consequently, the linguistic features in this part of the Qur'ān are characterised by oath words like (*wal-fajri*, *wal-^caṣri*), conjunctions such as (*idhā*, Q81) and negation particles such as (*lam*, *lā*, *lan*, and *kallā*) when addressing the disbelievers, rhetorically it is rhythmic and rhymed, and the tone is strong and catchy. Syntaxes: the *āya* are short sentences.

The Makkan *sūras* are also of different types:

- Oaths where God wants to make the unbeliever focus on nature or material things around him by enumerating different kinds of things, then comes the proper message, as in Q68 the ink pot, where people get knowledge from these material things.
- Stories of previous nations where God tells us the story of each Prophet and his people, how they behaved, as for the transgressor God gives them wealth but they were ungrateful rather than thankful. So what was their punishment?
- Moral conduct where God advises us to help the needy and to feed the orphans, to be obedient to him, and not to be arrogant, etc.

All these Makkan *sūras*, even if they appear different from each other, are interrelated with each other. Although we know that the Qur'ān was not revealed in the order it is classified nowadays, we do know that this order was decided by God before the death of the Prophet Muhammad as (*tawqīfī*), and it is not necessary to look for the chronological order to make it

easier to understand, or to know about graduate laws, etc. Each *sūra* is self-sufficient and does not require the help of another *sūra* or *āya* to make it understandable, however for those *āyas* which are considered as unclear or ambiguous, we still have the prophetic traditions or the circumstances of revelation to make them clearer by understanding the context of revelation.

The Arabic language of the Qur'ān is known to be a pluryglossy language, meaning that the same sentence could be understood on different levels and particularly according to people from different countries speaking the same language but in a different dialect. For example, an Egyptian dialect may be compared with a Moroccan dialect: both share the same language, and they are both considered as Arabic people, but in their words and pronunciation they are different; this is why nowadays we have so many different translations of the Qur'ān because everybody understands it with their own glossary. The danger of this is that nowadays everybody could interpret the Qur'ān as they wanted, but we are taught in the Qur'ān itself to be from those who reflect and those who have knowledge, and to actively seek knowledge from them instead of acting wrongly.

Makkan *sūras* are also about the building of a society, as the Bedouins and the *A^crāb* did not have an urban life nor a society life, but a community life with no rules outside the tribes'. The Qur'ān was revealed to guide those people with a new way of life based on morality and good social etiquette.

Most modern Western scholars choose to analyse the *sūras* as unities; we will mention them also in this work because from all parts of Europe and United States, the recent research that has appeared nowadays is quite similar globally, but not in detail. It seems that one must have been influenced by the others to be lead to this result. It is also obvious that those scholars are more direct than earlier scholars and that they want to find an explanation to everything, and when dealing with the *sūra* it is easier to divide the work into unities and to explain each of them instead of the whole *sūra* which is more confusing and more complicated for them. Amongst these scholars are Mir, Işlāḥi, Farāḥi, Robinson, and Neuwirth.

Chapter Four

The Madīnan Revelations

4.1 Introduction

The bulk of this chapter will focus on the Madīnan *āyas* of the Qur'ān. We will begin by defining what the Madīnan *āyas* and *sūras* are, and display the different techniques used to diagnose them. Thus, we will discuss their features, focuses, chronological orders, themes and structures in light of the views of several scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim. We will then introduce our own analytical approach which will be linguistically-based and also on the four tenets of faith. This will be done through demonstrating three Madīnan *sūras*. Due to constraints on space requirements, we will not be able to provide analyses to all Madīnan *sūras*. For a textual analysis, I have, therefore, selected Q2 and Q5. Our textual analysis deals with the People of the Book¹³¹ and for the Islamic legal rulings that are recurrent in them. I have chosen Q24 for good social manners, etiquette and admonition in family affairs. There will be an attempt at providing the thematic meanings of the *sūras*, enumerating the tenets of faith (*mabādi' al-īmān*) as well as the moral lessons included into them, followed by a presentation of my research in a tabular form.

4.2 Features of Madīnan Revelation

In this section, we shall attempt to list the features that characterised Madīnan *sūras* and distinguish them from their Makkan counter parts. The major features of the Madīnan *sūras* are:

- The Madīnan *sūras* and *āyas* tend to be longer than their Makkan counterparts. In fact, there are a number of Madīnan *āyas* which are longer than the whole *sūras* of the Makkan period. The longest *āya* of the Qur'ān is the verse on *ribā*¹³² (interest) in the Madīnan *sūra al-Baqarah* (Q2:282). Thus, the audience at this stage of revelation was quite willing to listen attentively to longer *āyas* teaching the vital laws of Islam (cf. Philips 1997:214).

¹³¹ People of the book: (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) The Qur'ān makes recurrent reference to the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians. The word (*kitāb*) refers to the Scripture of the Jews (the Old Testament) and the Scripture of the Christians (the New Testament). Although the People of the Book occur in various *sūras*, the Qur'ān provides comprehensive details about the Jews in the second *sūra* (*al-Baqarah* - the Cow) while the third *sūra* (*Āl 'Imrān* - the Family of 'Imrān) provides details about the Christians.

¹³² *Ribā*: usury, the charging of interest on a loan. This is forbidden by Islam and condemned in the Qur'ān for example in Q2, in no uncertain terms (Netton, 1997:213).

Abdul-Raof (2003:144) adds more Madinan features; these are:

- Long *āyas* because of the need for elaboration and argumentation such as Q2:281 and Q5:41
 - The call for *jihād*¹³³ and martyrdom such as Q4:74-76, Q5:35, Q8:65-74, Q9:12-14 Q48:11-12
 - Divine ordinance regarding religious duties and worship such as:
 - * Daily prayers, such as Q5:6&12, Q9:18
 - * Fasting, such as Q2:183-185, Q5:95
 - * Alms-giving, such as Q5:12, Q9:18
 - * Pilgrimage, such as Q2:158, Q5:2
 - * Inheritance, such as Q2:180, Q5:106
 - * Social and public relations such as Q5:5, Q5:38, Q2:130
 - Reference to the hypocrites, except for Q29 (*sūra al-ʿAnkabūt*, whose first eleven *āyas* include reference to the hypocrites but is still classified as Makkan) such as Q4:61, Q8:49, Q33:1, Q48:6, Q59:11, and Q63:1-7.
 - Argumentation with the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, as well as calling upon them to join Islam such as Q5:42-49&68, Q3:64-67 and Q3:72-73
- Qadhi 1999:102) also adds that: Every *āya* that mentions a punishment for a crime is Madinan such as Q2:178, Q5:45.

4.3 Diagnosis of Madīnan *Sūras*

The Madinan revelations represent the *āyas* and *sūras* of the Qurʾān which were revealed after the *hijrah*¹³⁴. This includes the *āyas* which were revealed during the battles, the *āyas* that were revealed in Mīna¹³⁵ during and after the farewell pilgrimage as well as those revealed in Makka. All these *āyas* are considered Madīnan because they represent the revelations of the second stage of the revelation, in which the consolidation of the Islamic state took place (Philips 1997:211-218). Further there is a marked difference in the verse content, style and

¹³³ *Jihād* which means "strive" or "struggle" in Arabic, is an Islamic term and is considered a duty by most faithful Muslims. *Jihād* appears frequently in the Qurʾān and common usage as the idiomatic expression "striving in the way of Allāh (*al-jihād fī sabīl Allāh*)". A person engaged in *Jihād* is called a *mujāhid*, the plural is *mujāhidīn*. (www.wikipedia.com)

¹³⁴ *Hijrah*: The migration of the Prophet Muḥammad from Makka to Madina, the starting point of Muslims calendar which took place in AD 622 (Abdul-Raof 2003:143).

¹³⁵ Mīna: is best known for the role it plays during the annual *Hajj* pilgrimage, when its tent cities provide temporary accommodation to hundreds of thousands of visiting pilgrims. Mīna is situated in the suburb of Makka. In the valley of Mīna is the Jamarat Bridge, the location of the Stoning of the Devil ritual, performed between sunrise and sunset on the last day of the *Hajj*. (www.wikipedia.com)

syntax of these two periods, reflecting the different circumstances that the Muslims were in claimed Qadhi (ibid:97).

4.4 Focus of Madīnan *Sūras*

This section is a discussion of the major focuses of the Madīnan revelations. For Philips¹³⁶ (ibid), only four major focuses appear in Madinan revelations which are:

- The *sharī'ah*¹³⁷ (Islamic law)
- *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book)
- The *Munāfiqūn* (The hypocrites)
- *Jihād* (fighting in the cause of Allāh)

We share Philips' view and believe that the Madīnan *sūras* are characterized by recurrent features that constitute the focuses of the Madinan phase of revelation as detailed below:

(i) **Islamic law (*sharī'ah*):** The *sūra* during the Madīnan stage contained many social, economic and theological laws which were necessary for the organization and development of the nascent Islamic state. These laws constitute what is usually referred to as *sharī'ah* (Islamic legal rulings). It was during this period that the last three pillars of Islam¹³⁸: *zakāt* (charity), *ṣawm* (fasting) and *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) were declared and made compulsory. Likewise, it was during this period that drinking alcohol, eating swine and gambling were all made forbidden. The various laws of Islam were revealed over a period of twenty-three years. Some laws canceled earlier ones and other laws were revealed gradually. The laws of the later Madinan period sometimes took the place of earlier laws. For example, alcohol was made forbidden in gradual stages:

- The first law concerning alcohol was simply a warning of its dangers (Q2:219),
- The second law that was revealed warned Muslims away from *ṣalāt* when they were intoxicated (drunk) (Q4:43),
- The third law, however, was a complete prohibition of ever coming near any form of alcohol (Q5:90-91).

¹³⁶ Philips. Abu Ameenah Bilal (1997:211-218). "*Uṣool at-Tafseer*". United Arab Emirates: Dar al-Fatah.

¹³⁷ *Sharī'ah*: is the body of Islamic religious law. The term means "way" or "path to the water source"; it is the legal framework within which the public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Islamic principles of jurisprudence and for Muslims living outside the domain. *Sharī'ah* deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts, family, sexuality, hygiene, and social issues. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹³⁸ *Mabādi' al-Islām*: The five pillars of Islām which are The *shahāda* (Proclamation of Faith), *ṣalāt* (the Prayer), *Ḥajj* (The Pilgrimage to Makka), *ṣawm* (fasting the month of Ramaḍān) and *Zakāt* (charity)

(ii) **People of the Book** (*ahl al-kitāb*): The Qur'ān makes recurrent reference to the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians. The word (*kitāb*) refers to the Scripture of the Jews (the Old Testament) and the Scripture of the Christians (the New Testament). The Qur'ān employs the vocative particle (*yā* - O) as a linguistic tool for respect, as in (*yā banī isrā'īl* - O Children of Israel, Q2:47), and some times the expression (*yahūd*) is employed to refer to the Jews, as in Q2:62. As for the Christians, the Qur'ān employs the expression (*naṣārā*), as in Q2:62 and Q5:14. However, the Qur'ān in its initial *sūra*, *al-Fātiḥah* (the opening), refers to the Jews and (*al-maghdūbi 'alaihim* - those who have evoked the anger of Allāh) and the Christians as (*al-ḍāllīn* - those who are astray). Although the People of the Book occur in various chapters, the Qur'ān provides comprehensive details about the Jews in the second *sūra* (*al-Baqarah* - the Cow) while the third *sūra* (*Āl 'Imrān* - the Family of 'Imrān) provides details about the Christians. (Abdul-Raof). Also, a number of Madinan *āyas* represented answers to the questions raised by *ahl al-Kitāb* (the People of the Book) like the Jews and the Christians such as in Q5:78-82. The Muslims of Madīna also came in contact with the Christians on a larger scale. As a result of that, we find a number of Madinan *āyas* clarifying Christian queries about the Prophet Jesus and Allah. These Madinan *āyas* stressed that the miracles of Jesus, such as bringing the dead back to life, were only by Allah's permission such as in Q5:110. Thus, the Madinan *āyas* provided answers to the Christians that Jesus was not a God nor was he the son of God, and Allah was not the third of the three such as in Q5:116-117.

(iii) **The hypocrites** (*Munāfiqūn*¹³⁹): The Muslims of Madīna were strong and they ruled the city. Thus, we find some people entering Islam in order to benefit from its strength and to oppose it from within. Abdullah Ibn Ubayy Ibn Saḥūl was about to be crowned the king of Madīna when the Prophet Muḥammad arrived. The Prophet was made the ruler of Madīnan and the king's hopes were ruined. Since the Muslims were strong and he could not openly oppose to them, he accepted Islam and worked against it from within. He eventually became the head of the *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites). Thus, the Madinan *sūras* warned the Muslims about the dangers of the hypocrites and taught them how to deal effectively with them.

(iv) **Fighting in the cause of Allāh** (*jihād*): The right to fight against the enemy was given for the first time in Madinan *sūras*. During the Makkan period, the Muslims were forbidden to fight back because they were a minority and could easily have been wiped out. The Makkan

¹³⁹ *Munāfiqūn*: see footnote in chapter one.

period prepared the foundation of the Islamic movement to come. It was during the Madinan stage that a series of battles were fought against the forces of disbelief, until finally Makka was conquered and the whole of the Arabian Peninsula came under the rule of Islam. Therefore, we find a number of the Madinan *āyās* that taught Muslims the Islamic principles of war. They also encouraged the Muslims to prepare themselves with the best weapons and battles gear they could find.

4.5 Style in Madīnan *Sūras*

The style of Madīnan *sūras* is characterised by very long verses explaining in detail the individual's duties in this life; this may be due to the fact that the Madinan people were willing to listen and were able to understand easily in a formal and adequate manner. Here in Madīna, the people were from different faiths compared to the unbelievers of Makka; some were already believers, i.e. the Jews and the Christians but also the *muhājirūn*¹⁴⁰ (the emigrants); this is why the Qur'ānic discourse is less poetical and less sophisticated than it was in Makka to attract and convince its people. However, the Madīnan *sūras* are more expressive as they contain new laws to be adopted by the believers and matters of etiquette in society etc.

4.5.1 Qur'ānic Rhetorical and Stylistic Features in Madīnan *Sūras*

In this section, we shall discuss the rhetorical, stylistic and linguistic features that occur in the Madīnan *sūras* in the view of several modern scholars such as Sabbagh, Abdel-Haleem, Abdul-Raof, and Neuwirth.

4.5.1.1 Simile in Madīnan *Sūras*

The language of madīnan *sūras*, as Sabbagh (1942:45-47) describes it is less-poetical as it was in the Makkan phase because Islam is now put into practice on the ground in Madīna and thus the *sūras* do not required flowery language such as frequent images or metaphors. According to al-Jurjāni (1984:393), simile is an important rhetorical feature of an effective word order and eloquence. In this section, we will discuss the rhetorical aspect of Qur'ānic discourse in the Madīnan *sūras* and particularly simile in the Qur'ān according to Sabbagh (ibid) who

¹⁴⁰ *Muhājirūn*: see footnote in chapter one

claims that the importance of simile is to reflect the nature of the society who creates it; the different forms of simile may not inform us more about people, he claims, but it give us details about their beliefs and the institutions of society. Sabbagh (ibid: 45-49) also claims that the use of simile is to replace something by something similar or different in order to give more impact to those to whom the similes are addressed. I believe that in Madīna, the Qur'ān addressed a different kind of people, i.e., the Scripturists, and, therefore, the use of stylistically strong words was not necessary as the message delivered was by itself understood without similes or rhetorical images. In fact, Madinan *sūras* provide many legal rulings and statements about social and family life and did not require special rhetorical images that are used in similes to make them understood by opponents and leave psychological impact on them. Moreover, the similes that were used in Makkan *sūras* were generally for summarizing an idea into an image especially about the tenet of faith of eschatology when the resurrection is compared in a simile to the dead earth but the rain revives it and brings it back to life. However, in the Madinan *āyas*, we notice that the *āyas* are longer because they require clarity and details when explaining the law of God, which is new and unknown to people.

According to Philips (1997:246-253), the expression *mathal* is commonly translated as a simile or metaphor in the context of the Qur'ān. It includes proverbs, and even ideals. For him, there are three types of *mathal*:

(i) The *muṣarraḥ mathal* (stated simile): This simile contains an obvious comparison and is widely used in the Qur'ān, such as in Q2:17-20 quoted below, where a fire and water similes and metaphors are used in reference to the hypocrites who feign Islam:

Q2:17-20: “The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled a fire, and when it lit all about him God took away their light, and left them in darkness unseeing, deaf, dumb, and blind. So they shall not return; or as cloudburst out of heaven in which darkness, and thunder, and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, fearful of death; and God encompasses the unbelievers; the lightning wellnigh snatches away their sight; whensoever it gives them light, they walk in it, and when the darkness is over them, they halt; has God willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Truly God is powerful over everything.”

Another example of *maṭal* is found in Q13:17 quoted below involving fire and water again but concerning the truth and falsehood:

Q13:17: “He sends down out of heaven water, and the *wādis* flow each in its measure, and the torrent carries a swelling scum; and out of that over which they kindle fire, being desirous of ornament or ware, out of that rises a scum the like of it. So God strikes both the true and the

false. As for the scum, it vanishes as jetsam, and what profits men abide in the earth. Even so God strikes His similitudes.”

(ii) **The *kāmin mathal* (hidden simile):** In this form of simile, the terms of comparison is not used. However it conveys Islamic ideals readily acceptable to natural human instincts due to the deep and impressive meanings which they imply, such as in:

Q25:67: “Who are neither extravagant nor stingy when they spend; but between that is a just stand”. Another example of beautiful expression may be found in the concept that hearing is not like seeing, hence Prophet Abraham requested that Allāh show him how he brings life to the dead, Allah says in Q2:260: “Do you not believe?” He replied, “of course (I believe), but (seeing) would put my heart at rest.”, and

(iii) **The *mursal mathal* (formless simile):** This type of simile covers short verses which convey lessons, many of which have become proverbs. Like the *maṭal kāmin*, it has none of the expressions or similes; however, comparisons maybe made or implied. The examples below clearly illustrate this type of *maṭal*:

Such as in Q2:216: “Perhaps you may dislike something which is good for you”.

Such as in Q55:60: “Is the reward for good anything but good?”

Such as in Q2:249: “How often a small group has defeated a larger group by Allah’s permission.”

The benefits gained from the use of the *maṭal* in the Qur’ān are numerous. Intangible concepts are presented in a tangible format in order for them to be more easily grasped and retained. Concepts which may be difficult to grasp on a theoretical basis become quickly and easily comprehensible when put in the terms of everyday human experiences or processes in nature. For example, the idea that one who gives money for show gains no reward is tangibly brought across by the following simile:

Q2:262-264: “Those who expend their wealth in the way of God then follow not up what they have expended with reproach and injury, their wage is with their Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow. Honourable words, and forgiveness, are better than a freewill offering followed by injury; and God is All –sufficient, all –clement. O believers, void not your freewill offerings with reproach and injury, as one who expends of his substance to show off to men and believes not in God and the last day. The likeness of him is as the likeness of a smooth rock on which is soil, and a torrent smites it, and leaves it barren. They have no power over anything that they have earned. God guides not the people of the unbelievers.”

But for those who give money by seeking God’s pleasure they are well rewarded according to these similes:

Q2:261: “The likeness of those who expend their wealth in the way of God is as the likeness of a grain of corn that sprouts seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. So God multiplies unto whom he will; God is All-embracing, All-knowing.”

Q2:265-266: “But the likeness of those who expend their wealth, seeking God’s pleasure, and to confirm themselves, is as the likeness of a garden upon a hill; a torrent smites it and it yields its produce twofold; if no torrent smites it, yet dew; and God sees the thing you do. Would any of you wish to have a garden of palms and vines, with rivers flowing beneath it, and all manner of fruit there for him, then old age smites him, and he has seed, but weaklings, then a whirlwind with fire smites it, and it is consumed?

So God makes clear the signs to you; haply you will reflect.”

4.5.1.2 Oath in Madīnan *Sūras*

According to Abdul-Raof (2003:359), an oath in Arabic is a stylistic mechanism that is employed to achieve a sublime style, on the one hand, and as a textual ornamentation technique that aims to beautify a statement, on the other. It is important to note that the Madīnan *sūras* do not contain any kind of oath; this feature is strictly found in Makkan *sūras*. In my opinion, this is probably due to the fact that Madīnan *sūras* deal with serious and important matters as laws for the Muslims’ daily life, and for this reason, it did not require flowery language. Madīnan *sūras* need to clarify things for the political, economic and social system.

4.5.1.3 Shift in Madīnan *Sūras*

In this section, we will discuss the stylistic feature of Qur’ānic discourse in the Madīnan *sūras*, known as *iltifāt* (shift) in Arabic rhetoric. It is worth noting that *iltifāt* does not have an equivalent stylistic feature in English. According to Abdul-Raof (2004:12-14), the term *iltifāt* is seen as a stylistic feature which is also known as *talwīn al-khiṭāb*, meaning ‘to elegantly colour the discourse’. In Arabic, shift provides psychological comfort to the reader. Shifts involve the alteration in pronouns in terms of person, number, tense, the voice case of verb, and the alteration in the conjunctive elements he claims. Below are some examples of the stylistic feature of *iltifāt* in Madīnan *sūras*:

(i) Person and number shift:

[Tell the believing women to reduce some of their vision...and not expose their adornment (beauty) except to their husbands, their fathers, ... or their sisters' sons, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or the child who is not yet aware of the private aspects of women. Q24:31]

In the example above all the nouns have occurred in the plural form except for the noun (the child) which represents the stylistic shift from the plural to the singular.

(ii) Tense and voice shift:

A case is also found in: [Those who have disbelieved and avert people from the way of God. Q22:5], where the past tense is employed in (they disbelieved) and is followed by a present tense in (they stop).

(iii) Conjunction shift:

[*wa'in kuntum fī raibin mimmā nazzalnā^c alā^c abdinā . . . fa'in lam taf^c alū . . .* – And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our servant . . . But if you do not . . . Q2:23-24]

Where we have a shift from the initial conjunction (*wa* – and) to the next conjunction (*fa* – (it has no equivalent in English)).

(iv) Verbal/ Nominal sentence shift:

This feature involves the shift from a verb-initial sentence to a noun-initial sentence, as in:

[God wants to make clear to you...God wants to accept your repentance...God wants to lighten for you your difficulties... Q4:26-28]

In the example above the first sentence starts with a verb (to want), the second sentence with a noun (God), and the third sentence with a verb (to want), i.e., a verbal sentence, followed by a nominal sentence, then followed by a verbal sentence.

4.5.1.4 Repetition in Madinan *Sūras*

Repetition in Qur'ānic discourse is an important stylistic feature that has a pragmatic function of psychological reassurance and the communicative function of affirmation. The Qur'ān employs repetition of words, expressions, phrases and cohesive devices in some Madinan *sūras*. However, this is a linguistic and stylistic feature of the Qur'ānic text in both Makkan and Madinan *sūras*.

Repetition achieves the rhetorical function of diaphora (*at-tawkīd al-lafẓi*) and epizeuxis (*at-tikrār at-tawkīdī*), claims Abdul-Raof (2004:194), which occurs in different forms in Qur'ānic genre. The stylistic mechanism of repetition has also a linguistic function of lexical cohesion and textual progression. It also fulfils a communicative function which is semantic in nature that designates affirmation (*at-tawkīd*) (ibid). Stylistically, repetition takes various forms in Qur'ānic genre, such as:

(i) The repetition of words, as in:

[Those are the ones, who have disbelieved in their Lord, and those will have shackles upon their necks, and those are the companions of the fire. Q13:5]

In the example above the plural demonstrative pronoun 'those' is repeated three times in the same sentence to achieve lexical cohesion, affirmation and epizeuxis. Also we see in:

[He raised the heaven and imposed the balance, that you do not transgress within the balance, and establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance. Q55:7-9]

The word 'balance' is repeated three time to highlight the significance of the motif of the balance which is a metonymy for justice. Repetition here is therefore employed for the communicative function of exhortation.

(ii) The repetition of fixed expressions or formulas is employs to achieve four different functions:

(a) The communicative function of exhortation where a repeated expression aims to remind the reader of a moral teaching,

(b) The rhetorical function of textual cohesion where a repeated expression aims to make the Qur'ānic text more cohesive rhetorically,

(c) The linguistic function of textual cohesion where a repeated expression aims to make the Qur'ānic text more cohesive lexically, and

(d) The textual function of conceptual and intertextual connectivity and textual progression where a repeated expression provides progression and smooth movement of theme.

The repeated expression is also linked to the context of the *sūra*. Every time a formula is repeated, it provides a different semantic signification matching the context of situation in which it occurs. The repetition of formulas are repeated for contextual reasons and occurs at micro textual level, as in: [To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth...To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth . . . To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth . . . To God belongs whatever

is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth . . . To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Q4:126, 131 twice, 132, and 170)].

In this example, the formula (*lillāhi mā fī al-samāwāti wamā fī al-arḍi* - to God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth) is repeated five times for five different contextual reasons. The context for Q4:126 refers to those who do good deeds. The context for Q4:131 refers to the husband and wife who separate after divorce and are reminded that their future welfare depends upon their righteousness. In Q4:131, the same expression is repeated twice. In the second instances Q4:131 and 132, the context refers to the people of the book who are urged to be righteous. The context for Q4:170 in which the same formula is employed highlights prophethood and the continuity of God's dominion of the whole universe. Through the repetition of these formulaic expressions, a textual progression has been realized.

Another example is in Q5 where the formula (*ittaqu Allāh* - fear God) is repeated ten times for the communicative purpose of exhortation. This expression is used in every exhortation statement or when an Islamic legal ruling is given. Thus, admonition is highlighted through the repetition of this formula and textual progression is achieved. Admonition is also highlighted in Q55 through the repetition of the formulaic expression (so which of the favours of your Lord would you deny?) which has occurred 31 times.

See also in (Q65: 1,2,4,5, and 10) where the expression (*ittaqu Allāh* - fear God) is repeated five times for the communicative function of exhortation. This is required by the macro text of Q65 which highlights the seriousness of divorce. The repetition of formula (to fear God) aims to discourage people from taking such an action. There are many other examples through the Qur'ān we will not mention them all here.

(iii) The repetition of motifs

This is a macro textual stylistic feature (Abdul-Raof 2004:203). This kind of repetition achieves the text linguistic function of intertextuality. The repetition of leitmotifs helps to establish conceptual chaining and sequentiality in Qur'ānic discourse. Examples are numerous where the statements are stylistically and structurally different but conceptually identical, i.e., they share the same leitmotif, such as in the examples below:

[They prostrated, except for Iblīs¹⁴¹. He refused and was arrogant and became of the

¹⁴¹ Iblīs or Iblees The Devil. Made out of fire, he was cast down by God for refusing, alone of all the angels, to bow down and acknowledge God's new creation Ādam who was made out of clay. The story of Iblīs may be constructed from the considerable detail about him which is given in the Qur'ān, especially in Q2,Q7,Q15,Q17...In the Garden of Paradise Iblīs tempted Ādam and Eve and precipitated their downfall. He is also called 'the Satan' (*al-Shayṭān*). There is some debate

disbelievers. Q2:34]

[Except for Iblīs. He refused to be with those who prostrated. Q15:31]

[Except for Iblīs. He was not of those who prostrated. Q7:11] and in:

[Except for Iblīs. He said: “Should I prostrate to one you created from clay?” Q17:61]

Amongst the example above Q2:34 is Madinan and Q15:31, Q7:11, Q17:61 are Makkan but they all share the motif of Satan’s rebellion and disobedience to God’s command. In other words, the above different constructions are conceptually and intertextually related even if they are structurally and stylistically different.

(iv) The repetition of parables in different places in the macro text enhances textuality from a text linguistics perspective. It improves the intertextuality standard of the text and establishes conceptual and intertextual relationship for a given motif (Abdul-Raof 2004:204).

4.5.1.4.1 Repetition of Madīnan *Āyas* and *Sūras*

At times, an *āya* is revealed twice either to remind the reader and proclaim a message that must have been forgotten, or to deliver a response to a question mentioned earlier. This can be applied to Q1 and Q9:113. According to al-Zarkashi (cf. al-Şuyūṭi 2000, 1:72) an *āya* is revealed twice according to the significance of its meaning or its theme, and also it is revealed twice as a reminder of what has taken place that justifies a need for it.

4.5.1.4.2 Parables in Madīnan *Sūras*

In Makkan *sūras*, we find the stories of previous Prophets mentioned more than in Madīnan ones. This can be attributed to the behaviour of the Makkan people. The Qur’ān does not mention the stories of all the Prophets, but it mentions only a few of them, such as Ādam, Nūḥ, Hūd, Şāleh, Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘īl, Ishāq, Lūṭ, Shu‘aib, Yūsuf, Yūnus, Mūsā, Hārūn, Dāwūd, Ilyās, Alyasā‘, Sulaimān, Zakaria, Yaḥyā, and ‘Īsā. These stories have all appeared in Makkan *sūras*, except for the story of Ādam and the creation, which is mentioned in a Madīnan: Q3. Repetition of parables in Qur’ānic genre occurs in the form of either a brief reference to a Prophet’s parable or an elaborated account (Abdul-Raof 2004). The parable of Noah, for instance, has been referred to 23 times throughout the Qur’ān. We have been told about this story in both Makkan and Madīnan *sūras*, as for the Madīnan ones this is the list of where this parable appeared: Q4:163, Q9:70, Q33: 7, Q57:26 and Q66:10. Stylistically the sentences used in the description of this parable employ different grammatical structures. In other

among the commentators as to whether Iblīs should be regarded as an angel or, in agreement with v.50 of *sūrat al-Kahf*, as one of the *jinn* (Netton, 1997:109-110).

words, there are no identical stylistic or structural patterns among these details that occur in different places of the Qur'ān. (ibid:204). Other parables appear in the Qur'ān, with the cohesive device *maṭali* (like) or *kamaṭali* (like) such as in the Madīnan *āya* below:

“They are like one who kindles a fire; then when it lights up what is around him, Allāh takes away his light and leaves him in total darkness I which he cannot see (anything). They are deaf, dumb, and blind; hence, they will never return to the path. Or like a dark rain cloud, thundering and flashing lightning in the sky, (during which) they stick their fingers in their ears from the thunderclap, fearing death. But Allāh surrounds the disbelievers. The lightning almost snatches away their sight, but every time it lights up (the area) for them, they walk, and when it becomes dark, they stand still. If Allāh had willed, He could have taken away their hearing and sight, for certainly Allāh is able to do all things.” (Q2:17-20)

4.5.1.5 *Mutashābihāt* in Madīnan *Sūras*

The *Mutashābihāt*¹⁴² *āyas* represent a linguistic and stylistic feature of Qur'ānic discourse claims Abdul-Raof (2004). However, the *mutashābihāt* expression is usually translated as ‘ambiguous *āyas*’. They are those which are either repeated elsewhere, or have an identical linguistic structure, except for minor differences in a preposition or a cohesive device. It is interesting to note that a Makkan *āya* can be *mutashābih* with a Madīnan *āya*, and vice versa. For These *mutashābih āyas* are:

. . . Her who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her Our spirit, and We made her and her son a sign for all peoples. (Q21:91)

. . . Who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into (her body) of Our spirit; and she testified the truth of the words of her Lord. (Q66:12)

It is also possible to find two *mutashābih āyas* within the same *sūra*: see (Q6:40) and (Q6:47):

Say: ‘Think you to yourselves, if there come upon you the wrath of Allāh . . .’ (Q6:40)

Say: ‘Think you, if the punishment of Allāh comes to you, whether suddenly or openly . . .’ (Q6:47)

Another type of *mutashābihāt* in the Qur'ān is the *āyas* that have a theological significance, such as (*al-rahmānu °alā al-°arshī istawā* – The Most Merciful who is above the throne established, Q20:5). For instance, (*istawā* – to be established) is a *mutashābih* theological notion. Other *mutashābih* theological notions in the Qur'ān are the names and attributes of

¹⁴²*Mutashābihāt*: (sing. *Mutashābih*) literally, ‘ambiguous’, or ‘unclear’. The word has the technical sense, in the exegesis of the Qur'ān, as an epithet applied to those words and passages in the Qur'ān which are not clear or which are obscure, as opposed to those which may be characterized as *Muḥkamāt* (Netton, 1997: 184-185).

God; Muslim scholars have called this problem (*bilā kayf*¹⁴³), meaning that a Muslim is urged to believe in the theological notion without asking why (Abdul-Raof 2003:196; Qadhi 1999:214; al-Ṣuyūṭī 2000, 2:9). The expression (*mutashābihāt*) can be translated literally as (identical in meaning) or as (unknown). In Arabic, the word *mutashābih* also means something that resembles something else, but slightly differently, although this difference is not easy to detect. In the Qur’ān, we encounter three *āyas* that mention the *mutashābihāt* in comparison with the *muḥkam*¹⁴⁴ (unambiguous), which are Q11:1, Q39:23, Q3:7 cited below: Q11:1: “*Alif, Lām, Ra*. [This is] a book with verses which are elaborately formulated and clearly expounded from the Wise, the All-Aware.”

Q39:23: “Allāh has sent down the fairest discourse as a book, both insistent and corroboratory, from which the skins of those who fear their Lord shiver. Then their skins and hearts mellow at the mention of Allāh. That is the guidance of Allah whereby He guides whomever He wishes; and he whom Allāh leads astray will have no other guide.”

Q3:7: “It is He who has revealed to you the Book, with verses which are precise in meaning and which are the Mother of the Book, and others which are ambiguous. As to those in whose hearts there is vacillation, they follow what is ambiguous in it, seeking sedition and intending to interpret it. However, no one except Allah knows its interpretation. Those well-grounded in knowledge say: “We believe in it; all is from our Lord”; yet none remembers save those possessed of understanding!”

According to al-Ṭabari¹⁴⁵, in *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*, the *muḥkam* (clear) is an *āya* which has only one meaning, so that it does not allow for more than one interpretation: or further explanation. According to al-Zamakhshari, the *muḥkam āyas* are those for which their meanings are clearly affirmed, in the sense that they are free from similarity to other *āyas* and are not obscure. The clarity of the *muḥkam āyas* lies in their own wording, and they are in no need of extraneous

¹⁴³ *bilā kayf*: Literally, the phrase means ‘without (asking) how’. It was put forward as a solution in medieval times to the great debate about the attributes of God (*Ṣifāt Allāh*). According to this, Muslims were obliged to believe that God did indeed have real attributes like hands and a face, since these were mentioned in the Qur’ān. Such attributes were to be accepted without asking how they existed. Adherents of this position included al-Ash ‘arī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (Netton 1997: 56-57).

¹⁴⁴ *muḥkamāt*: (Sing. *Muḥkam*) literally ‘strengthened’, ‘precise’. The word has the technical sense, in the exegesis of the Qur’ān, as an epithet applied to those words or passages in the Qur’ān which are ‘clear’ and ‘intelligible’, as opposed to the *Mutashābihāt*. The Qur’ān itself divides its verses into the dual categories of *muḥkamāt* and *Mutashābihāt* in v.7 of sūrat Āl-‘Imrān. The former are described as ‘the essence of the Book’ (*Umm al-Kitāb*) (Netton 1997:177).

¹⁴⁵ al-Ṭabari Abu Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr (839-923) A scholar born in Tabaristan in northern Iran, al-Ṭabari was a prolific writer on the subjects of theology, literature, and history. Two of his works became definitive reference works in their fields: the commentary on the Koran called the *jāmi‘ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* (“The full Exposition of koranic Commentary”), and the universal history of the world from creation until his own times, the *Tarīkh ar-Rusul wa-l-Muluk* (“History of Prophets and Kings”) (The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam, 2001:443).

sources, i.e. other *āyās* or prophetic traditions (*aḥādīth*¹⁴⁶), or linguistic investigation, in order to understand them.

4.6 Themes in Madīnan *Sūras*

In the following sections, we shall discuss the views of various modern scholars, Muslims and non-Muslims, when dealing with the major themes of the Madīnan *sūras* and display their various approaches with regards to the themes in Madīnan *sūras*.

4.6.1 Themes in the Qur'ān According to Nöldeke

Nöldeke, in *Geshiste der Koran* (cf. Welch, 1975:403-404), applies a modern Western approach to define the chronological order of the *sūra*, based on well known historical events to date certain events mentioned in the Qur'ān (See also on this topic 4.10 (Table 2: various chronological arrangements of the *sūra* according to Bell)). He also analyses the theme of each *sūra* in order to group together those which possess the same theme, ascribing them to the same period. This is how he finally classifies his own chronological order of the *sūras*: Nöldeke's chronological order of the Madīnan *sūras* is divided into one period: according to his classification there are twenty-four Madīnan *sūras*, which constitute approximately forty per cent of the Qur'ān. This is based on a thematic division, and he ascribes to the *sūras* whose contents have the same or similar topics to the same period and tries to make a chronology of the revelation (*sūras*). This is a different approach to the following approaches adopted by both modern non-Muslim and traditional Muslim scholars.

4.6.2 Theme in the Qur'ān According to Abdul-Raof

Abdul-Raof's thematic analysis (2001) provides an in-depth exegetical analysis of the various themes of the 114 *sūras* of the Qur'ān. I have selected all the themes suggested by Abdul-Raof of the Madīnan *sūras* and listed them below. However, for a detailed analysis on the themes of each Madīnan *sūra* separately, please refer to Abdul-Raof's 2001. Below are the major themes of the Madīnan *sūras* according to Abdul-Raof's analysis (2001:8-15):

- Monotheism (*Tawḥīd*¹⁴⁷)

¹⁴⁶ *ḥādīth*: (pl. *aḥādīth*) This Arabic word has a large number of meanings including 'speech', 'report', and 'narrative'. It also has the very important specialist sense of 'tradition', i.e. a record of the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions, and as such is regarded by Muslims as a source of Islamic law, dogma and ritual second only in importance to the Qur'ān itself. The subject matter and range of the *ḥādīth* literature are vast and can only be outlined here. A *ḥādīth* is traditionally supported by an *isnād* or chain of authorities. It contains a main text (*matn*) and may conclude with a moral. *Ḥādīths* and their *isnāds* have been subjected to a wide range of types of categorization. A basic one is to classify the *ḥādīth* under one of several major categories of thrustworthiness: *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *ḍa'if* and *saqīm*. The two most famous and revered compilations of *ḥādīth* are those by al-Bukhārī and Muslim b.al-Ḥajjāj. (Netton, 1997:90)

- Islamic legal rulings and Islamic legal rulings related to family affairs
- Rights of women
- People of the Book
- Reliance on Allah
- Matters of War
- Good manners
- Moral values
- Good social practice
- Fighting in the cause of Allah (*jihād*)
- Support for the Prophet Muhammad
- The hypocrites - social relationships in the community
- Social relations with unbelievers
- Self-denial in the cause of Allāh
- Discipline in battle
- Spiritual and social values of Friday prayer
- Divorce
- The Prophet's family affairs
- The blissful joy of the righteous in heaven
- Allah's guaranteed help to the righteous
- Treachery
- Treaties
- The unfaithful
- Secret counsels
- Equality in cases of murder
- Chastity - Illegal sexual intercourse
- Confidentiality
- Mutual respect
- True religion
- Spending-Allah's mercy
- Charity

¹⁴⁷ *Tawḥīd*: is the Islamic conception of monotheism. *Tawḥīd* refers to the act of believing and affirming that God (Arabic: Allāh) is one and unique (*waḥīd*). In Islam, recognition of this principle is achieved by the first of five pillars of Islam, the *Shahāda*. (testification of faith). The opposite of *Tawḥīd* is *Shirk* (polytheism), which means "associating partners" or "making something as comparable" (to God) in Arabic, referring to idolatry. (www.wikipedia.com)

- Victory
- Occult knowledge
- Tranquility
- Conflict between good and evil
- Piety
- Be just and fair witness
- Status of mankind
- Patience
- A set of ethics and good manners
- Alliance
- Worldly gains
- Worship for self-interest
- Man's ignorance
- Humiliation
- Guidance
- Return to Allah
- Forgiveness
- Morality
- Fate
- Gratitude
- Supplication
- Content
- Lying
- Allah is not in need of anyone
- Death
- Generosity
- Interaction with people
- Wife
- Kindness
- Dispute
- Fighting
- Cooperation
- Take care of yourself
- Reliance on Allāh

- Quality
- Unity
- Allah's blessing
- Marching off in Allāh's cause
- Change
- Good and evil
- Worldly life
- Dispute about Allāh
- Weakness
- Return
- Do good
- Slander
- Marriage
- Modesty
- Domestic manners
- Fear of Allāh
- Trust in God
- Slander
- Support
- Protection
- Assemblies
- Oath
- Winners or losers
- Righteousness
- Preference
- Friendship
- Lies
- Dedication
- Action not words
- Worldly interests
- Message
- Charity
- Deflection
- Credit

- Repentance
- Preparation
- Understanding
- Help
- Reward
- Devotion
- Deeds.

4.6.3 Theme in the Qur'ān According to Qadhi

Qadhi¹⁴⁸ provides a different list of themes that appeared in Madīnan *sūras* which are listed below:

- The perfection of the rituals of worship: In the Madīnan *sūras*, the detailed laws of prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage were revealed.
- The establishment of a system of laws governing individual, familial and societal relationships. Included in this are laws for *jihād*, marriage, inheritance, the laws concerning the relationship of the Islamic state in war and peace, the relationship of the Muslims with other religious groups, and the punishments for specific crimes (*ḥudūd*¹⁴⁹).
- The discussion with the Jews and Christians concerning their religions. The Madīnan *āyas* sought to invite them to Islam by exposing the corruption in their books and beliefs, and by explaining the true teachings of Mūsā and ʿĪsā. The Madīnan *āya* included in detail the history of the children of Isrāʾīl and how Allāh dealt with their faithlessness and treachery.
- The exposition of the plots of the hypocrites in Madīnan *sūras*, in order to warn the Muslims against their evils, and caution the Muslims not to become like them.

4.6.4 Theme in the Qur'ān According to Philips

For Philips (1997:211-218), only four major themes appear in Madīnan revelations. These themes have been mentioned as major focuses of Madīnan *sūras*. These are:

- The *sharīʿah* (Islamic law)

¹⁴⁸ Qadhi. Abu Ammaar Yasir (1999:101). *An Introduction to the Sciences of The Qur'ān*. Birmingham: Al-Hidaayah.

¹⁴⁹ *Hadd*: (pl. *ḥudūd*) in law *ḥudūd* has become the technical term for the punishment of certain acts which have been forbidden or sanctioned by punishment in the Qur'ān and have thereby become crimes against religion. The Punishment is the death penalty, either by stoning or with the sword; the cutting of the hand or foot and flogging with various numbers of lashes, their intensity depending on the severity of the crime. They are five of these and they are listed here with the formal punishment in brackets: 1- Fornication or adultery (*Zinā*: stoning or 100 lashes); 2 False accusation of unchastity (*qadhf*: 80 lashes); 3- Wine drinking (80 lashes); 4- Theft (amputation of hands or feet); and 5- Highway robbery (execution if homicide occurs). Some commentators and jurists have added, not quite accurately, apostasy to this list. (Glossary and index of technical terms, 1997:104; Netton 1997:89).

- *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book)
- The *Munāfiqūn* (The hypocrites)
- *Jihād* (fighting)

For more details, see section 4.4

4.6.5 Theme in the Qur'ān According to Monneret

Jean-Luc Monneret¹⁵⁰ provides a 'Qur'ān' according to the themes. He lists more than 100 themes for both Makkan and Madīnan *sūras*. For him, the Qur'ān should be arranged thematically in order to be clear to logical minds. Monneret gathered all the *āyas* that share the same theme. In brief, Monneret's work is an index where each theme is followed by the number of the *āya* and the text itself translated into French.

4.6.6 Theme in the Qur'ān According to Abdel-Haleem

The Madīnan themes according to Muhammad Abdul Haleem¹⁵¹:

1) Marriage and divorce in Islam

A major theme that appeared in the Madīnan Qur'ān is the theme of marriage and divorce such as in (Q30:21). The Qur'ān mainly talks about marriage in general terms giving some recommendations as in (Q2:188); (Q25:54); (Q13:23); (Q52:20-21) and (Q25:74). It is not a detailed text guiding people in the conduct of daily lives, and goes into detail only in the following areas:

- (i) When talking about what is forbidden, or situations that lead to forbidden things,
- (ii) When it talks about people's rights,
- (iii) When it replies to specific questions that have been asked.

Thus, the Qur'ān lists all classes of people that one is not allowed to marry and those that are lawful to marry (Q4:24) it list individuals inheritance rights in great detail (Q4:11-13) and (Q4:176) the rights of women are protected as in (Q4:4 & 24). The Qur'ān recommends that men should consider the importance of piety when choosing a wife as in (Q2:221) polygamy is permitted but it is mentioned only once (Q4:3) so it is neither highly recommended nor obligatory but merely allowed in certain circumstances as in (Q30:21); the couple may repose

¹⁵⁰ Monneret. Jean-Luc (2003:244-347): *Les Grands Themes du Coran* . Paris : De ROY

¹⁵¹ Abdel Haleem, Muhammad (1999:29-107) *Understanding the Qur'ān Theme and Style*. I.B.TAURIS: London.

in each other in an atmosphere of love and mercy. Islam only allows divorce in order to create better marriages. The flexibility of Islamic law in this respect is remarkable. In fact whenever divorce is mentioned in the Qur'ān, revocation is recommended, and whenever revocation is recommended we find the statement. If they can uphold the limits set by God (Q2:229-231). This is conditional upon no harm being caused (Q2:229-231). A continuation of marriage must involve the original objective of affection and mercy, establishing rights and observing the limits set by God. If this is not possible, then it is better for husband and wife to leave each other, and if they separate God will give to each out of his boundless resources something that would be better for them (Q 4:130).

2) War and peace (Abdel Haleem 1999:60-70)

Another theme which occurs in the Qur'ān is war and peace. The Islamic relationship between individual, and nations is one of peace, war is a contingency that becomes necessary at certain times and under certain conditions. Muslims learn from the Qur'ān that God's objective in creating human race in different communities was that they should relate to each other peacefully (Q49:13) war is hateful (Q2:216). The changing of fear into a sense of safety is one of the reward for those who believe and do good deeds (Q24:55) that God has given them the sanctuary of Makka is a blessing for which its people should be thankful (Q29:67). Paradise is the land of peace (Q5:127) war may become necessary only to stop evil from triumphing in a way that would corrupt the earth (Q2:251). Before the permission was given to fight Muslim were persecuted and they were instructed to restrain themselves (Q4:77) and endure with patience and fortitude, pardon and forgive until God gives his command (Q2:109); (Q29:59) and (Q16:42). Permission to fight come as in (Q22:39-41), here war is seen as justifiable and necessary to defend people's right to their own beliefs, and they should not become triumphant or arrogant because the reward are for those who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth or spread corruption as in (Q28:83).

3) *Jihād*

When there is a just cause for *jihād*, which must have a righteous intention it then becomes an obligation for defending religious freedom (Q22:39-41), for self-defence (Q2:190) and defending those who are oppressed: men, women, children who cry for help (Q4:75). For war see also (Q2:190) and (Q2:194).

4) Tolerance in Islam (Abdel Haleem 1999:73-74-80)

The Qur'ān declares 'Muḥammad is but a messenger, before whom other messengers were sent' (Q3:144). These verses (Q3:113-115) mentioned about the people of the book, i.e. Christians and Jews who lived among an overwhelming Muslim magnify. The Qur'ān does not brand them all as dishonest. It says in: (Q3:75).

Similarly the Qur'ān allows Muslims to eat the food of the people of the book and to marry their women who remain Christians and Jews (Q5:5), see also (Q4:123-124)

It instructs Muslims not to argue with the people of the book except in the fairest manner and to say to them: 'We believe in what has been revealed to us and in what has been revealed to you. Our Lord and your Lord is one and the same, and to him we submit ourselves' (Q29:46). Muslims are instructed to appeal to the people of the book through what is common between them and Islam (Q3:64); See also (Q5:48); (Q60:8); (Q49:13); (Q10:99); (Q5:68); (Q5:44) and (Q5:47). Muslims within their own community, are under the obligation to maintain the Qur'ānic injunctions of 'ordering what is good and forbidden what is wrong' (Q16:125) 'call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation'. The guiding principles for Muslims are that 'there is no compulsion in religion' (2:256). 'To you is your religion and to me is mine' (Q109:6). 'Whoever will, let him believe and whoever will not let him disbelieve' (Q18:29).

Muslims are under a religious obligation to co-operate with other people who work to maintain what is good, but not to do what is wrong: 'Aid one another in what is good and pious, do not aid another in what is sinful and aggression' (Q5:2).

Muslims do not have to abandon their religious teaching in order to become tolerant: true tolerance is enshrining in the teaching of the Qur'ān.

4.6.7 Theme in the Qur'ān According to Welch

We shall introduce this section by enumerating some typical theme that appeared in the Madinan period according to Welch (in Encyclopedia of Islam (1975:420), these are:

- The vocation of Muḥammad such as in Q2:143-210
- The incident that is related to his uncle such as in Q111:
'Perish the hands of Abū Lahab¹⁵², and may he perish too;

¹⁵²Abū Lahab: Uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad and an inveterate enemy of Islam in the early days. His name was 'Abd al-'Uzza but he was called by the name Abū Lahab which mean 'Father of flame'. He may be said to have been one of the catalysts which led to the *hijra* of Muḥammad from Makka to Madina: when the Prophet Muḥammad's Uncle Abū Ṭālib, who had been head of the clan of Ḥāshim, died, Abū lahāb assumed the headship, and the protection of the clan of Ḥāshim was later withdrawn from Muḥammad. The tension between Muḥammad and Abū Lahab is reflected in Q111. Abū Lahab died soon after the Battle of Badr in year 3/624. His children converted to Islam. (Netton, 1997:14-15).

Neither his wealth nor what he has earned will avail him anything.

He will roast in a flaming fire,

And his wife will be a carrier of fire-wood,

She shall have a rope of fiber around her neck'

- The immigration to Abyssinia such as in Q19 and Q20

- The Battle of Badr such as in Q3:123:

'Allāh had already given you victory at Badr, at a time when you were still powerless; so fear Allāh that perchance you might be thankful!'

- The preparation for the pilgrimage such as in Q2:196:

'Perform the proper pilgrimage for the sake of Allāh. But if you are prevented, then make whatever offering is available; then do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination. Whoever of you is sick or has an injury in the head can atone for it by fasting, giving alms or sacrificing. When you are secure, whoever combines the lesser pilgrimage and the proper pilgrimage should make whatever offering is available. But if he cannot, then let him fast for three days during the pilgrimage and seven days when he returns. That is a total of ten full days. This is incumbent on him whose family is not present at the Sacred Mosque. Fear Allah and know that His retribution is severe.'

- The politic discourse of Muḥammad such as in Q5:1-2:

'O believers, fulfil your obligations. Lawful to you are the beasts of the flock, except what is being recited to you know: 'Game is unlawful to you while you are on pilgrimage.' Allāh decrees whatever He pleases. O believers do not violate the rites of Allah, or the sacred month, or the sacrificial offerings, or the animals with garlands, or those who repair to the Sacred House, seeking the bounty and pleasure of their Lord. When you are through with the rites of pilgrimage, you can go hunting. And let not the hatred of those who debar you from the Sacred Mosque prompts you to transgress. Help one another in righteousness and piety, but not in sin and aggression. Fear Allāh. Allāh is severe in retribution.'

4.7 Structure of Madīnan *Sūras*

Modern Western scholars such as Neuwirth (1993), Robinson (1996), Abdul-Raof (2003), Iṣlāḥī-Faraḥī-Mir (2000), Abdel-Haleem-Zahniser (2000), Cuypers (1997 to 2004), and Ḥawwa (2003) have provided different approaches to the structure of Madīnan *sūras*. The Qur'ān scholars use different terms and notions like 'structure', 'register', 'tenets of faith', 'periscopes' or 'unity' for their structure analysis. In our account, we shall employ the word

‘structure’ to refer to the different approaches that describe the structure of the Madinan *sūras*. The following sections will provide informative details about these approaches.

4.7.1 Neuwirth’s Structure¹⁵³ of Madīnan *Sūras*

In Madīna, *sūras* not only give up their tripartite scheme, but they also display much less sophistication in the patterns of their composition. One type can be called the “rhetorical” *sūra* or sermon (Q22, 24, 33, 47, 48, 49, 57-66); they consist of an address to the community whose members are called upon directly by formulas such as *yā ayyuhā al-nās* (Q22:1, “Oh people”). In these *sūras*, which in some cases (Q59, 61, 62, 64) are introduced by initial hymnal expressions which are very similar to the biblical Psalms, the Prophet (*al-nabi*) no longer appears as a mere transmitter of the message but as one personally addressed by God (Q33:28, “Oh Prophet”) or as an agent acting synergically with the divine persona (Q33:22, “God and his Prophet”). A particularly clear evidence of the person of the Prophet is Q33, particularly Q33:56. As against these “monolithic” addresses, the majority of the Madinan *sūras* are the most complex of the entire Qur’ān. For Neuwirth (2006), most of the “long *sūras*” (Q2-10) are no longer neatly structured compositions, but appear to be the result of a process of collection that we cannot yet reconstruct. Since we have to understand the Qur’ān’s development as one strain of a double process that will result in both a scripture and a cultus, the long *sūras* are most interesting as milestones of the development of the ritual backdrop of the Qur’ānic communication process. Though their structure may be secondary, Neuwirth argues (*ibid*), their message sheds important light on particular ritual changes whose symbolic value cannot be under-estimated.

Although occasional regulations - mostly concerning cultic matters- do occur in Makkan *sūras*, more elaborate regulations about not only cultic but also communal affairs figure prominently in the Madinan context. Their binding force is sometimes underlined by a reference to the transcendent source: “it is prescribed for you” (Q2:183-7). One important ritual ruling is the ruling of the new direction of prayer (the *qiblah*) towards Makka (Q2:143f). This ruling marks the separation of the community from the Jewish listeners who earlier had been among the receivers of the Qur’ān. Other important rulings concern the three pillars of what was to become Islamic cultus and liturgy: the establishment of a weekly communal service, the *ṣalāt al-jumu‘a* (cf. Q62:9), the implementation of a fast, introduced with reference to the Jewish fast both still preceding the exclusion of the Jews and the

¹⁵³ Neuwirth. Angelica: (2006:169-176), article ‘*sūra*’ in Encyclopedia of the Qur’ān, vol 5, Brill 2006.

introduction of the *hajj* ceremony into the festive canon (Q2:196f., 22:27f.). The Madinan regulations do not display any structured composition, nor do they form part of neatly composed units; they suggest, rather, later insertions into loosely connected contexts. Time, thus, in the Madinan *sūras* becomes structured by an emerging Islamic cultus. Simultaneously, the historical flow of significant events starts to inform the consciousness of the community; indeed, they enter the Qur'ān as part of salvation history that is now perceived as encompassing the emerging Islamic community. A new element appearing in Madinan *sūras* are accounts of contemporary events experienced or enacted by the community, such as the battle of Badr¹⁵⁴ (q.v.; Q3:123), Uḥud¹⁵⁵ (Q3:155-74), the expulsion of the Banū l-Nadir¹⁵⁶ (Q59:2-5), the siege of Khaybar¹⁵⁷ (Q48:15), the expedition to Ṭābuk¹⁵⁸ (Q9:29-35), or the farewell sermon¹⁵⁹ of the Prophet in (Q5:1-3). It is noteworthy that these reports do not display a special artistic literary shaping, nor do they betray any particular pathos. A meta-historical blueprint of the genesis of Islam was constructed only later, through the *sīrah*¹⁶⁰.

4.7.2 Abdul-Raof's Structure of Madinan *Sūras*

According to Abdul-Raof (2003 and 2005), the Madinan *sūras* are characterised by the frequent occurrence of the four tenets of faith (*mabādi' al-īmān*) which are monotheism¹⁶¹,

¹⁵⁴ Battle of Badr: The Battle of Badr (19th ramadhan 2/17th march 623). The first major encounter between the Muslims and the Meccans. Badr lies 90 miles to the south of Medina. The Muslim force numbered 305, while the force of the Meccan was close to a thousand. Muslims fought as a disciplined body with an order of battle. Angels, led by Gabriel, joined the Muslims. The battle amounted to an astonishing victory for the Muslims, and one that gained them political credibility for their cause among other tribes. It became one of the greatest marks of glory survivors to say that they had fought at Badr. (The concise encyclopedia of Islam 2001:79-80).

¹⁵⁵ Mont Uḥud: is the name of a mountain near Madina. It was the site of the second battle between Muslim and Makkan forces. The Battle of Uḥud was fought on 23 March, 625 CE, between a force from the small Muslim community of Madina, in what is now north-western Arabia, and a force from Makka. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁵⁶ Banū al-Nadir: were a Jewish tribe who lived northern Arabia until the 7th century, at the oasis of Yathrib (now known as Madina). They came into conflict with Muḥammad and, having been expelled from the city, later participated in the battles of the Trench and Khaybar. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁵⁷ Khaybar is the name of an oasis some 95 miles to the north of Madina (ancient Yathrib), Saudi Arabia. It was inhabited by Jews before the rise of Islam, and was conquered by Muḥammad in 628 A.D. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁵⁸ Ṭābuk: is the capital city of the Ṭābuk province in north western Saudi Arabia. It has a population of 441,351 (2004 census). Around Ṭābuk, the Battle of Ṭābuk took place in the time of Muḥammad. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁵⁹ Farewell sermon: this is the sermon that was delivered by the Prophet Muḥammad in year 632/10 after the *hijra* during the 'Farewell Pilgrimage' at Makka.

¹⁶⁰ *Sīrah* Rasul Allah (*Life of the Apostle of God*) or *Sīrah* Nabawiyya (*Life of the Prophet*) *Sīrah* is the Arabic term used for the various traditional Muslim biographies of Muḥammad, from which most historical information about his life and the early period of Islam is derived. The name is often shortened to 'Sīra' or 'Sīrah'. (www.wikipedia.com).

¹⁶¹ Monotheism: Declaration of the Oneness (*Wahda*) of God, belief in that Oneness or Unity, monotheism. This is one of the most fundamental Islamic doctrines. (Netton, 1997:248).

prophethood¹⁶², eschatology¹⁶³, and reward and punishment, as well as by other themes such as God's omnipotence (*qudrat Allāh*) and admonition (*maw'izah*). This *sūra* structure approach was developed by Abdul-Raof¹⁶⁴ (2003a) and provides the richness of Qur'ānic discourse with these tenets of faith. Due to the fact that Madinan *sūras* are long, there is only one one-tenet of faith Madinan *sūra* which is Q110 (*sūrat al-naṣr* – Help) whose tenet of faith is prophethood.

However, Abdul-Raof (2001a) talks of 'themes' which are not the same as his 'tenets of faith' in 2003a and 2005. Therefore, it is of value to our discussion here to investigate his approach to Qur'ānic themes in Madinan *sūras*. I have taken Q33 (*sūra al-aḥzāb* - the Coalition) for a thematic analysis based on Abdul-Raof's approach of 2001a. In his investigation, Abdul-Raof (2001a:79-80) lists the following themes of Q33: These include fear of Allah, trust in Allah, gratitude, patience, hypocrisy, the prophet, modesty, and slander. However, as a Madinan *sūra*, I believe there are more themes than what is provided by Abdul-Raof above. The themes I am going to list demonstrate the social etiquettes which the Madinan revelations have attempted to achieve. These include:

- (i) the hypocrites as a danger to the community and especially during the time of war (Q33:1, 12-15, 24, 26, 48, 60-61, 73),
- (ii) social etiquettes, family relations and respect of the husband to his wife (Q33:4-6, 28-37, 49-59),
- (iii) moral divine support to the believers during times of hardship (Q33:9-11), and
- (iv) steadfastness and unwavering on the part of the fighter in the battlefield (Q33:16-20).

These five themes, I believe, echo the unique characteristic Qur'ānic themes of the Madinan *sūras*.

4.7.3 Robinson's Structure of Madinan *Sūras*

According to Nöldeke's classification, there are twenty-four Madinan *sūras*, which constitute approximately forty per cent of the Qur'ān. The Madinan *sūras* vary considerably in length, the shortest is Q110 which has only three *āyās* and the longest in Q2 with 286 *āyās*. The Madinan *sūras* also differed considerably in their beginning and contents that is why

¹⁶²Prophethood: According to Abdul-Raof (2003a), prophethood, as a tenet of faith, applies only to (i) implicit or explicit reference to the Prophet Muhammad, and (ii) implicit or explicit reference to the Qur'ān as the Scripture that is revealed to him. Therefore, prophethood does not apply to any reference that is made to other Prophets or their Scriptures.

¹⁶³Eschatology: A belief or a doctrine concerning the ultimate or final things, such as death, the destiny of humanity, the second coming, or the Last Judgment. (<http://dictionary.reference.com>).

¹⁶⁴Abdul-Raof (2003a:105-110) "*Exploring the Qur'ān*". Dundee: Al-Maktoum Institute Academic Press.

Robinson (1996:196-223) did not undertake a detailed analysis of all the Madinan *sūras*, but he instead devote his discussion on the structure and coherence of Q2. He points out that Madinan's *sūras* also begin in a variety of ways as follows:

Sūras Q57, Q59, Q61, Q62 and Q64 have hymnic openings

Sūras Q2, Q3 and Q24 have revelatory openings

Sūras Q8, Q33, Q48, Q58, Q63, Q65, Q66 and Q110 begin with a direct address to the Messenger

Sūras Q9, Q47 and Q98 begin on the contrary with a reference to him

Sūras Q5, Q49 and Q60 begin 'O you who believe'

Sūras Q4 and Q22 begin 'O humankind'

Furthermore Zahniser¹⁶⁵ (2000) in his paper on 'major transitions and thematic borders in two long *sūras*', summarized Robinson's approach of Madinan *sūra* as follows:

Neal Robinson describes the salient features of the Madinan *sūras*, demonstrating these features by laying out the content and structure of Q2 in some detail. Although he is influenced by Iṣlāḥī and draws from his results, Robinson goes beyond a thematic analysis, giving considerable attention to such formal criteria as verse and verse-group types (for example, polemic, eschatology, narrative, and signs); position of verses in a *sūra*; repetition- especially of stock phrases; comparison and contrast; and rhyme clauses containing attributes of God. For example, these latter are not always simply refrains required by the rhyme pattern, but can also mark the end of a *sūra*'s subsection, ground a statement in the divine nature, protect the hearer from misunderstanding, or contribute to the cohesion of a *sūra* or one of its parts. Rare rhyme clauses may even occur in a *sūra* to indicate a relationship between two or more of its thematic units. This line of investigation proves fruitful.

By means of a painstaking analysis, Robinson finds - along with Iṣlāḥī - six sections in Q2. These sections are unified under the theme of creating a Muslim community in the light of the change in the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Makka.

Topics in §1 (vv1-39), his "prologue", include revelation, belief and unbelief, and the story of Adam.

In §2 (vv40-121), often by means of "the metaphor of the bad business transaction", Jews and Christians of Arabia come under criticism. A prominent feature of §2 is a collection of brief narratives about the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses. The next of the six

¹⁶⁵ Zahniser, A.H. Mathias (2000). "Major Transitions and Thematic Borders in Two Long *Sūras*: *al-Baqara* and *al-Nisā* ", in *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'ān*, Curzon, Richmond, éd. J. Boullata, (pp. 26-55).

major sections of the *sūra* (§3) (vv122-152) represents a summons to the children of Israel to unite with the Muslim community around Abraham, the two communities' common ancestor.

In §3, the *Ka'ba* plays an important role, along with the change of *Qiblah*¹⁶⁶. The fourth and longest division of the *sūra* (§4) provides legislation for the newly constituted "middle nation" (v143) of Islam. According to Robinson, §4 extends from v.153 through v.242. Here he differs from Iṣlāḥī who would begin §4 at v.163. The penultimate section of Q2 (§5) (vv.243-283) deals with the process required to liberate the *ka'ba* as a ritual centre for the new community. Finally, the *sūra* ends with an epilogue (§6) (vv.284-286) (Zahniser, *ibid*: 28-29).

4.7.4 Mir's Structure of Madīnan *Sūras*

Mir has attempted to demonstrate the unity and coherence in the Qur'ān by representing the work of the contemporary Pakistani Qur'ān interpreter Amin Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī through his publication: 'coherence in the Qur'ān'. In his book he provided a study of Iṣlāḥī's concept of coherence or *naẓm*¹⁶⁷ in one Madīnan long *sūra* Q2. Summarizing Iṣlāḥī's work, Mir has laid out Iṣlāḥī's method of analyzing a Madīnan *sūra* and his ability to discern a *sūra*'s compositional units and the breaks between them. Explaining how Iṣlāḥī discerns, on the basis of the thematic content of its units, a *sūra*'s core theme that he called *amūd* (pillar). It is the *amūd* which unites the diverse sections of the *sūra* revealing its compositional unity. Mir believes it is precisely Iṣlāḥī's search for thematic links between the various parts of a *sūra* that enables him to discover the compositional unity prevailing in it.

In his *Coherence in the Qur'ān*, Mir summarizes the structure of Q4 and in his chapter "The *sūra* as unity", he has done the same for Q2. Very briefly, he structures Q2 as follows:

§1 Introduction vv.1-39

§2 Address to the Israelites vv.40-121

§3 The Abrahamic legacy vv.122-162

§4 The *Sharī'ah* or Law vv.163-242

¹⁶⁶ *Qiblah*: The direction the Muslims face when performing the *ṣalāh* ("ritual prayer") toward the *Ka'ba* in Makka. The *qiblah* was originally orientated on the temple in Jerusalem, but was changed to the direction of Makka in the 2nd year of the *Ḥijrah*. The *qiblah* is usually marked in mosques by the *miḥrāb* ("prayer niche"). When it is impossible or impractical to determine the *qiblah*, the prayer is performed in any direction, all ultimately valid. ("To God belong the East and the West and wheresoever ye turn, there is the face of God", Q2:115). (The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2001: 371)

¹⁶⁷ *Naẓm*: is the relating of words to one another in a way that would establish them a causal connection. Thus, in Arabic, words may be related to one another in three ways: noun to noun, nouns to verb, and particle to noun and verb, according to Jurjani in *dalā'il al-fjāz*, cf. Mir (1986:14). For more details about Mir's publications visit the following site where they are available <http://www.renaissance.com.pk>

§5 Liberation of the *Ka'ba* vv.243-283

§ 6 Conclusion vv. 284-286

Although Mir does not precisely state the core theme or *'amūd* of Q2, it is clearly something like “preparation for liberating the *Ka'ba*”. Iṣlāḥī divides Q4 into three main sections:

§1 Social Reform vv.1-43

§2 The Islamic community and its opponents vv.44-126

§3 Conclusion vv.127-176.

The *'amūd* unifying these parts is “factors that make for cohesion in a Muslim society”. The reforms lay out in §1 give rise to the opposition dealt with in §2 against a backdrop of the necessity of communal solidarity. Section 3 rounds off the *sūra* by answering questions, amplifying what has already been said, issuing a final warning, and consoling the Messenger (Zahniser, 2000: 27-28).

4.7.5 Zahniser's Structure of Madīnan *Sūras*

Zahniser (2000) has attempted to demonstrate the unity and coherence in two Madīnan long *sūra* Q2 and Q4. He claims that his analysis of Q4 was completed before he had any contact with Iṣlāḥī's work on it. He also found that identifying blocks of verses according to theme yielded the best understanding of the *sūra*'s structure. He identified these thematic units by keywords. For example, he identified a “battle block” made up of vv.71-104 as a basic unit of Q4, based on keywords for fighting in vv.71-93 and other terms associated with fighting in the cause of God in vv.94-104. This theme does not occur in any other part of the *sūra*. Like Robinson, he also considered more formal criteria such as formulas of address and repeated verses. His divisions turned out to be similar to those of Iṣlāḥī, with the major exception that he found two additional major breaks in the discourse as a result of identifying the battle block mentioned above. Zahniser did not try to discover a *'amūd* or central core idea around which the various parts of the *sūra* can be understood to cluster. But he did find meaning in the *sūra*'s overall structure. The biggest problem he faced was deciding on the exact borders of thematic units, and also finding the transitions between two sections: whether by formula of address or *inclusio* and wrap-up units. Taking example from his analysis of Q2 he claims that care must be exercised in identifying formulas of address with the beginnings of major section of a long *sūra*. Excluding the formula “Hast you not considered?” (vv.243, 246 and 258), sixteen verses in Q2 begin with formulas of address (vv.21, 40, 47, 104, 122, 153, 168, 172, 178, 183, 208, 254, 264, 267, 278, and 282). Only three begin sections agreed on by Robinson and Iṣlāḥī as being main divisions. In fact, neither Robinson nor Iṣlāḥī appears to

give much attention to formulas of address as indicators of thematic unit boundaries in their analyses. Both, however, register some sense of the importance of attention to receptors of the discourse.

The last transition in Q2 (vv.283/284) is a simple one with a wrap-up unit and so can be discussed briefly here. It occurs just three verses short of the *sūra*'s end, forming a conclusion or epilogue. Syntactically unconnected with the verse preceding it, v.284 begins with a refrain that has occurred before in Q2 and occurs frequently and at important places in other long *sūras*: "To Allāh belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth". The theme is related to the last verse of the previous section where the faithful are enjoined not to hide testimony in cases of recording debts on a journey, reminding them-based on what was stressed in the rhyme clauses vv.282-283-that God knows everything, keeps accounts of their deeds, and will forgive or punish according to His own will. In other words what is developing in the epilogue of the *sūra* is a wrap-up unit for both the final section of the *sūra* and for the entire *sūra*. The common ground for Iṣlāḥī, Robinson and Zahniser has been the conviction that long *sūras* possess overall unity and meaningful coherence (Zahniser: *ibid*: 29-34).

4.7.6 Cuypers's Structure of Madīnan *Sūras*

In Arabic, the symmetry of the *sūra* is more evident, with a play on words and sounds that cannot be conveyed in translation. In later *sūras* the Qur'ān has longer verses with a more flowing style, but the principle of symmetrical structure is retained. In Q5 *sūra al-Mā'ida*¹⁶⁸ "The Table", which is one of the latest revealed, we can point to verses 9-10 as an example, which resemble the format of Q101, but present a more developed message:

God has promised *those who believe and do good works*
 they will have pardon and a great reward,
 but those who disbelieve and deny our signs
 they will be tenants of Hell.

¹⁶⁸ *al-Mā'ida*: The title of the 5th *sūra* of the Qur'ān; it means 'The Table'. The *sūra* belongs to the Madinan period and contains 120 verses; its title is drawn from the Miracle of the Table which is described in vv.112ff. Here Jesus' disciples challenge Jesus and ask if his Lord can send down a table (covered in food) from Heaven. God agrees to send down the requested table at Jesus prayer, but warns that those who disbelieve thereafter will be severely punished. This *sūra* is a particularly long and rich one: it contains a number of prohibitions, instructions on how to perform the prayer, the story of Adam and references to the *Ka'ba*. (Netton, 1997:158).

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ (9)
 وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ (10)

According to Cuypers¹⁶⁹ Madīnan *āyas* are not different than Makkan ones in term of structure. In fact he claims that a Madīnan *āya* could be structured as a short Makkan *sūras* (as mentioned above), both are constructed in parallel, with rhymes and echoing, where the main idea is exposed in a central position were the beginning and the ending are parallels; For him Semitic rhetoric is completely different to Latin rhetoric and do not follow the same rules at all that is why probably what leaded Blachère to pointed out that the *āyās* of the Qur'ān appeared as they were not organized and not logical. This is in a Latinist point of view but on the opposite claimed Cuypers it follows a particular rhetoric that is very logical in Semitic rhetoric.

The use of the rhetorical analysis for the short and average Makkan *sūra* from the Qur'ān appeared to be the perfect 'ad-hoc' tool to break down its structure. Less sophisticated than other modern linguistic tools, the Semitic rhetoric has the peculiarity of using simple terms from the every day vocabulary (segment, pieces, parts,) easily understood by the non-specialists. Indeed the rhetorical analysis slightly shakes the traditional exegesis method easing its sacred aspect; it does not threaten the holiness of the body of the text, still preserving the integrity of the canonical version. It would only describe the structure in order to understand the meaning.

We still have to demonstrate the relevance of the rhetorical analysis when applied to long *sūras*, which are far more complex and would seem a little more muddled at first glance than short makkan *sūras*. This is indeed the purpose of this research. The *sūra* Q5: "the table" was chosen mainly because of its late dating and known to be, among long *sūras*, the last one revealed (or at least the one before last). It was particularly interesting to check whether this text followed the same principals in terms of structure, such as the short *sūras* do from the beginning of the Qur'ānic revelation. In case this turns out to be correct, one could make the conclusion that the Qur'ān was built in one and unique rhetorical basis. Let us assume that

¹⁶⁹ Cuypers : (1995-1999: pp) In "Structures rhétoriques dans le Coran," *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain du Caire*, and Cuypers : (1995), 107-195; "Structures rhétoriques des Sourates 105 à 114," *Ibid.*, 23 (1997), 157-196; "Structures rhétoriques des sourates 99 à 104," *Annales Islamologiques*, 33 (1999), 31-62.

this will be the result of our research. The use of the word rhetoric may draw the readers' attention, as it is not used in its usual sense; and Qur'ānic studies have developed, since the Islamic culture arise, with the influence of the late Hellenistic rhetoric, a rhetoric conceived as a science of peach embellishment by stylistic device (the use of a metaphor here!). Its attention would be, therefore, focused on the small units: the word, the sentence, or the matter of the structure of the speech. The method of rhetorical analysis set out here only aim to bring out the inner logic of the Qur'ān. It does so not on the basis of subjective intuitions, but on the basis of the elements of expression found in the Qur'ān itself.

4.7.7 Abdel-Haleem's Structure of Madīnan *Sūras*

Abdel-Haleem (1996:158-183) provides an analysis to the structure of Q55. He claims that one of the most relevant approaches to understand the Qur'ān was developed by classical Muslim scholars who take into consideration two major notions: (i) context and (ii) the internal relationships within the *sūra*. For Abdel Haleem, context is crucial for understanding the Qur'ānic discourse. As for the internal relationships they were taken from the dictum: “*al-Qur'ān yufassir ba^c duhu ba^c dan*” (the Qur'ān explains itself) also called in modern linguistic intertextuality, it is argued to provide the most correct method of understanding the Qur'ān through the structure of Qur'ānic material. Abdel-Haleem chooses *sūra al-Raḥmān* Q55 for his analysis of context and internal relationships which led him to demonstrate that some commentators who did not pay attention to these two concepts made erroneous assumptions and contradict the spirit of the *sūra*. Further he examines the views of some Western authors such as Richard Bell, John Wansbrough and Welhausen about this *sūra*: Where some found the whole *sūra* as an imitation of Psalm 136 and some other that material was added to the *sūra* at one stage or another.

Abdel-Haleem also claims that the important contributions of scholars of *balāgha* (rhetoric) was their recognition of the concept of *maqām* (the context of situation) and the ‘*al-^culūm al-mustanbaṭa min al-Qur'ān*’ which are many different sciences based on the Qur'ān that they developed to serve it.

“*ilm al-ma^c āni*” is “*muṭābaqat al-kalām li-muqtaḍā al-ḥāl*” (the conformity of the utterance to the requirements of the situation). The conciseness or expansion in one place or another depends on what the situation requires. Suyūṭī mentions a feature of Qur'ānic style that further illustrates the internal relationships of Qur'ānic passages; namely “*iqtiṣāṣ*” where a single word in one verse is expanded and clarified in another, see for example: Q37:57 with reference to Q34:38 or also Q40:32 with reference to Q7:44. More examples will be met in

the discussion of Q55. The importance of context in determining the meaning of any discourse, Qur'ān or otherwise, is now established beyond doubt. The style of the Qur'ān being self-referential, the importance of internal relationships in understanding the text of the Qur'ān cannot be seriously challenged.

4.7.7.1 *Sūra* Structure of Q55

The *sūra* Q55 consists of 78 short *āyās* beginning with the name *al-raḥmān* and ending with 'Blessed is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Glory and Bestower of Honour'. For Abdel Haleem, Q55 consists of three sections:

Section 1: verses 1-30 deal with bounties in this world, v.13 challenges the addressees (men and jinn) - 'which, then, of your Lord's bounties do you deny?' - repeated afterwards as a refrain.

Section 2: verses 31-45 contain a challenge for the addressees to escape the judgement- the guilty will not be able to escape the punishment whose existence they had denied

Section 3: verses 46-77 deals with bounties in the rewards of two classes of believers.

This *sūra* is unique in the Qur'ān in that it begins with one of the names of God, *al-Raḥmān* standing as it is, as one separate verse which summarises the *sūra* and governs the following material both by its signification and its sound. The context of the *sūra* relates to his bounty 'taught the Qur'ān is used rather than the normal 'sent it down', so the context here governs the choice of vocabulary. The uniform sound in the close succession of rhymes helps transfer the effect of *raḥmān* to Qur'ān to *bayān*, *biḥusbān*, *yasjudān*, etc.

Example of intertextuality: Q55:5 with reference to Q10:5, Q6:96 and Q36:40

Contrast and dualism is the obvious feature throughout. The context of this *sūra* clearly requires the enumeration of the bounties *alā* of *al-raḥmān* that surround the addressees (dual: men and jinn) on both sides, and above and below, so that they are challenged to deny any of them. This context governs the choice of material as well as the meaning of words and expressions.

Bell makes the unexplained and unsubstantiated claim: 'that you may not transgress...skimp not in the balance are later insertions'. However, the equivalent of 'that you might not . . .' can be observed in combination with *māzān* in Q57:25 where it cannot be assumed to be a later insertion, and the emphatic repetition with *māzān* is also observed in such instances as Q11:84-85; Q26:181-183; Q83:1-3.

Example of intertextuality: Q55:7-12 with reference to Q34:9 and Q16:15.

There is a shift “*iltifāt*” here from ‘His’ third person to the noun “your Lord” which is significant and since *rabb*¹⁷⁰ is related to *rabba* (to bring up, to care for) His lordship is caring lordship. In our *sūra* the challenge to men and jinn is made 31 times Bell observed that the refrain occurred first at v.12 then at intervals of two verses, and then from v.23 onwards at intervals of one except at 43-44 which should probably form one verse. Wansbrough states that it produces the effect of a litany, and its similarity to *kile-olam hasdo* which performs the same function in Psalm 136. The role of this refrain in the Qur’ān and elsewhere is that of concluding formula, which does not adequately describe employment of the device in this passage.

This principle of intertextuality helps up to understand how the part of our *sūra* already discussed relates to the next. We often find elsewhere in the Qur’ān that when people are on a journey by sea or on land they are reminded of their final return to God.

P171 Example of intertextuality: Q55:24-25 with reference to Q10:23, Q36:44 and Q43:14.

P173 Another *iltifāt* occurs here it is a shift from talking about god, to himself challenging them speaking, in the first person divine plural makes the challenge awesome and all more effective.

P174 the context requires the introduction of the jinn first since they seem to have more power to penetrate heaven and earth Example of intertextuality: Q55:33-45 with reference to; Q17-88.

P175 the believers are divided into two classes. “Why two, it is not clear?” claimed W. M. Watt. The bounties are shown on two sides of the believers, as an example of perfect bliss suggest Abdel-Haleem.

Second internal relationships in the Qur’ān confirm that two gardens are intended here Q55:46-47

With Q34:15-17 and Q18:32-43.

4.7.8 Ḥawwā’s Structure of Madīnan *Sūras*

In this section, I shall provide a discussion of the Madīnan *sūra* structure based on Sa‘īd Ḥawwā’s approach. I have chosen Q2 and Q13 for this purpose as well as the intertextual thematic relations between these two Madīnan *sūras*.

¹⁷⁰ *Rabb*: The Lord. Strictly speaking, this title should only be applied to God who is also called ‘The Lord of the worlds’ (*Rabb al-‘Ālamīn*) in the Fātiḥa. The ḥadīth literature forbids a slave calling his master ‘My Lord’ (*Rabbi*) (Netton 1997:209).

4.7.8.1 *Sūra* Structure of Q2

Ḥawwā (2003, 1:65-673) has provided a detailed *sūra* structure to Q2 which is given below. He divided the structure of Q2 into an introduction, three major parts, and a conclusion as illustrated below:

Introduction: Q2:1-20. This is sub-divided into:

Section one: Q2:1-5

Section two: Q2:6-7

Section three: Q2:8-20. This is sub-divided into three groups:

Group one: Q2:8-10

Group two: Q2:11-16

Group three: Q2:17-20

Part one: Q2:21-167. This is sub-divided into six main passages:

Passage one: Q2:21-29

Passage two: Q2:30-39

Passage three: Q2:40-123. This passage is sub-divided into:

Introduction: Q2:40-46

Section one: Q2:47-62

Section two: Q2:63-74

Unit one: Q2:75-123. This unit is sub-divided into:

Section one: Q2:75-82

Section two: Q2:83-86

Section three: Q2:87-103

Section four: Q2:104-123

Passage four: Q2:124-141. This is sub-divided into:

Section one: Q2:124-129

Section two: Q2:130-134

Section three: Q2:135-141

Passage five: Q2:142-152

Passage six: Q2:153-167

Part two: Q2: 168-207. This is sub-divided into three main passages:

Passage one: Q2:168-177. This is sub-divided into:

Section one: Q2:168-173

Section two: Q2:174-177

Passage two: Q2:178-182. This is sub-divided into:

Section one: Q2:178-179

Section two: Q2:180-182

Passage three: Q2:183-207. This is sub-divided into:

Section one: Q2:183-187

Section two: Q2:188

Section three: Q2:189

Section four: Q2:190-195

Section five: Q2:196-203

Section six: Q2:204-207

Part three: Q2:208-284. This is sub-divided into two major passages:

Passage one: Q2:208-253. This is sub-divided into:

Section one: Q2:208-220

Section two: Q2:221-225

Section three: Q2:226-242

Section four: Q2:243-253

Passage two: Q2:254-284. This is sub-divided into:

Section one: Q2:254-274

Section two: Q2:275-281

Section three: Q2:282-284

Conclusion: Q2:285-286

4.7.8.2 *Sūra* Structure of Q13

Ḥawwā (2003, 5:2719-2769) also provides an interesting structure framework for Q13 and divides it into three sections:

- (i) Section one: from Q13:2-7 where details about God's omnipotence in Q13:2-4 are provided followed by details about the tenet of faith of prophethood in Q13:5-7.
- (ii) Section two: from Q13:8-25 where details about God's omnipotence are given in Q13:8-13, followed by monotheism in Q13:14-16, and reward and punishment in Q13:17-25.
- (iii) Section three: from Q13:26-43 which deals mainly with the tenet of faith of prophethood.

However, Ḥawwā's division can be thematically more consistent if he provides four sections. He could have made section two from Q13:8-17 where we have reference to God's omnipotence only. Then, section three will be from Q13:18-25 where we have details about reward and punishment. Also, Ḥawwā's division drops the first *āya* (*Alif. Lām. Mīm. Rā*).¹⁷¹ these are the signs of the Book: that which hath been revealed unto thee from thy Lord is the Truth; but most men believe not. Q13:1) which refers to monotheism and I believe it signals the introduction to God's omnipotence. Thus, I believe that Ḥawwā's approach to *sūra* structure can be made more effective if it is complemented by Abdul-Raof's approach to *sūra* structure.

4.7.9 Intertextual Links between Q2 and Q13

In this section I shall provide a textual analysis of both Q2 and Q13. I believe that these two *sūras* share thematic links and are, therefore, intertextually related such as:

- (i) Q2:26 (those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord...) is linked to Q13:1 where we have reference to prophethood in (what has been revealed to from your Lord is the truth . . . , Q13:1).
- (ii) Q2:26 (Allāh is not timid to present an example, that of a mosquito) refers to God's omnipotence which intertextually linked to Q13:2-17 (Allāh erected the heavens without pillars . . . He spread the earth . . . , gardens of grapevines and crops and palm trees . . . watered with one water . . . , lightning . . . , thunder . . . , rain from the sky . . . ,) which are also details about God's omnipotence.
- (iii) Q2:26 (to present an example . . . , what did Allāh intend by this as an example?) is linked to Q13:17 (thus, Allāh presents examples).
- (iv) Q2:26 (Those who believe know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say: 'what did Allāh intend by this as an example?') is thematically related to Q13:7 (Those who disbelieve say: 'why has a sign not been sent down to him (Muḥammad) from his Lord?').

¹⁷¹ Mysterious letters of the Qur'ān: The twenty-nine *sūras* of the Qur'ān begin with single letters, or group of letters, from the Arabic alphabet. They occur after the *basmala* but before any other words. A large number of theories, over the centuries, have been put forward by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars in an endeavour to explain these letters. Such theories include the idea that each letter is the first of an epithet characterizing God (such as K=*Karīm* (noble)), and the idea that each letter has a numerical (mystical) value, among many others. M.S. Seale in his book '*Qur'ān and Bible*' advances the interesting thesis that the 'standing puzzle posed to Islamic scholarship by the initial letters...may be explained by reading them as mnemonics or as abbreviated tables of contents'. However, the comment in the mediaeval Exegesis (*tafsīr*) of al-Jalālayn is one of the most telling as well as one of the most succinct. Following the citation of the five Arabic letters with which *sūrat maryam* commences, the authors of the Exegesis comment: 'God knows best what is meant by this.' (Netton, 1997:187).

(v) Q2:23 (If you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon our servant (Muhammad)...) and Q13:19 (what has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth).

4.8 *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Legal Rulings) in Madīnan *Sūras*

According to al-Rāzi (1990, 2: 80), there are about 600 *āyas* only dealing with Islamic legal rulings; the rest of the Qur'ān deals mainly with the four tenets of faith.

Some obligatory duties, such as *zakāt*¹⁷² (alms giving) and *ṣalāt*¹⁷³ (prayer) were embryo components of Islam in the Makkan phase and were only referred to very briefly as a precursor of the duty itself. However most of the obligatory duties which Muslims have to observe were formally introduced during the Madīnan phase of revelation, and only became compulsory at that time. Our discussion of Islamic legal rulings is not restricted to specific legal rulings. We shall use Islamic legal rulings in their social and religious contexts. The establishment of Islamic law, *sharī'ah*, began in Madīna and it includes:

- (i) *Shahāda*¹⁷⁴ (Proclamation of faith) such as in Q2: 163 & 255
- (ii) *Ṣalāt* (Prayer) such as in Q24:56, Q5:5, 12, 55&58
- (iii) *Zakāt* (Alms giving) such as in Q24:56, Q5:12&55
- (iv) *Ṣawm*¹⁷⁵ (Fasting) such as in Q2:183-185, Q5:95
- (v) *Ḥajj*¹⁷⁶ (Pilgrimage) such as in Q2:158, Q5:2

Apart the five pillars of Islam mentioned above, there are many other duties that are referred to in the Qur'ān in order to give to the Muslims the basic laws to govern their daily life as an individual member of the *umma*¹⁷⁷ (Muslim community). These laws included different

¹⁷² *Zakāt*: meaning 'grow', 'purify', or 'foster' is the Islamic concept of tithing and alms. It is an obligation on Muslims to pay 2.5% of their wealth to specified categories in society when their annual wealth exceeds a minimum level (nisab). *Zakāt* is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. (<http://dictionary.reference.com>)

¹⁷³ *Ṣalāt*: the prayer and its accompanying ritual, performed by the practising Muslim five times a day. It is also one of the five Pillars of Islam. The time of prayer, with their Arabic names are as follows: (1) The Morning Prayer (*al-fajr*), (2) The Midday Prayer (*al-Zuhr*), (3) The Afternoon Prayer (*al-Asr*), (4) The Sunset Prayer (*al-Maghrib*) and (5) The Night Prayer (*al-Ishā'*) (Netton 1997:222-223; Penrice 1988:85).

¹⁷⁴ *Shahāda*: came from the verb *shahida* "to testify", it is the Islamic creed. The *Shahāda* is the Muslim declaration of belief in the oneness of God and acceptance of Muhammad as his final prophet. Recitation of the *Shahāda* is the most important of the Five Pillars of Islam for Muslims and is performed daily. The Proclamation of faith consists of pronouncing the formulae: "I believe that there is no God except Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger". (<http://dictionary.reference.com>).

¹⁷⁵ *Ṣawm*: is an Arabic word for fasting regulated by Islamic jurisprudence. In the terminology of Islamic law, *Ṣawm* means 'to abstain from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse. The observance of *ṣawm* during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, but is not confined to that month. (<http://dictionary.reference.com>).

¹⁷⁶ *Ḥajj*: This is one of the five pillars of Islam. All Muslims provided a number of conditions including good health and financial ability are present, have a duty to make a pilgrimage to Makka at least once in their lifetimes (Netton 1997:91).

¹⁷⁷ *Umma*: Community, people, nation. This was a highly emotive word in early Islamic history in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and remains so among the Arabs, many of whom dream of, or regard themselves as, a single Arab *umma* (Penrice 1988:9; Netton 1997: 253).

matters of life such as:

(vi) all rules regarding family affairs, laws of marriage, divorce, death and inheritance and rights of individual, orphans, parents and children as detailed below:

Marriage such as in Q24:32-33, Q5:5

Illegal sexual intercourse/Adultery such as in Q24:2-3

False accusations such as in Q24:4-5

Divorce such as in Q65, Q2:226-232

Inheritance such as in Q2:180, Q5:106

Death such as in Q2:156-157 Q2:178

Ordinance for good behaviour such as in Q24:27-34

Relation between parents and children such as in Q24:58-59

Feeding of the poor such as in Q2:215

Treating the Orphan properly such as in Q2:220 Q107:2 (Makkan and Madinan)

Thief such as in Q5:38

4.9 Madīnan *Sūras* Listed

According to Abdul-Raof's (2001:8-15) there are 28 Madīnan *sūras* and his view is based also on the views of two Muslim scholars al-Ṭabari (d.310AH/923CE) and Ibn Kathīr (d.774AH/1372CE), and is the list of the *sūras*:

Q2; Q3; Q4; Q5; Q8; Q9; Q13; Q22; Q24; Q33; Q47; Q48; Q49; Q55; Q57; Q58; Q59; Q60; Q61; Q62; Q63; Q64; Q65; Q66; Q76; Q98; Q99; Q110.

However, according to Abdul-Raof (2003:144) there is a difference of opinion among Muslim scholars like Ibn ʿAbbās, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Muqātil, and Atā' about Q1 which they classified as Makkan revelation; while others, like Mujāhid, classify it as Madīnan (al-Zarkashī 1988, 1:251; al-Suyūṭī 1996, 1: 35).

4.9.1 The Makkan *Āyas* in Madīnan *Sūras*

It is interesting to note that there are some Makkan *āyas* that occur in Madīnan *sūras*. For the list of the Makkan *āyas* in Madīnan *sūras* please see section 3.9.1.

4.9.2 The Madīnan *Āyas* in Makkan *Sūras*

It is also interesting to note that some *sūras* which are classified as Makkan have some *āyas* from the Madīnan revelation into them. The following list is based on al-Suyūṭī (2000, 1: 21; al-Rāzi 1990; al-Ālūsi 2001):

Q6 is Makkan except for Q6:151-153 which were revealed in Madīna.

Q16 is Makkan except for Q16:126-128 which were revealed in Uḥud.

Q22 is Makkan except for Q22:19-22 which were revealed in Madīna.

Q26 is Makkan except for Q26:224-228 which were revealed in Madīna.

Q31 is Makkan except for Q31:27-29 which were revealed in Madīna.

Q32 is Makkan except for Q32:16-20 which were revealed in Madīna.

Q39 is Makkan except for Q39: 52-54 which were revealed in Madīna.

Q64 is Makkan except for Q64:16-18 which were revealed in Madīna.

Q73 is Makkan except for Q73:20-21 which were revealed in Madīna.

However, al-Badawī (1999:86-137) adds the following Makkan *sūras* which include Madīnan *āyas*:

Q12 is Makkan except for (Q12:1-3&7) which are Madīnan.

Q14 is Makkan except for (Q14: 28-29) which are Madīnan.

Q15 is Makkan except for one *āya* (Q15: 87) which is Madīnan.

Sūra al-Isrā is Makkan except for (Q17: 26) which is Madīnan.

Āya al-Rūḥ (Q17:85) is Makkan and Madīnan; it was revealed twice.

Q18 is Makkan except for Q18:28 which is Madīnan.

Q19 is Makkan except for Q19: 57 which is Madīnan.

Q20 is Makkan except for Q20:131 which is Madīnan.

Q25 is Makkan except for Q25:68-70 which are Madīnan.

Q28 is Makkan except for Q28:52-55 which are Madīnan.

Q29 is Makkan except for Q29:1-11 which are Madīnan.

Q30 is Makkan except for Q30:17 which is Madīnan.

Q34 is Makkan except for Q34:6 which is Madīnan.

Q36 is Makkan except for Q36:12 which is Madīnan.

Q40 is Makkan except for Q40:56-57 which are Madīnan.

Q42 is Makkan except for Q42:23-27 which are Madīnan.

Q45 is Makkan except for Q45:14 which is Madīnan.

Q46 is Makkan except for Q46:10, 15, and 35 which are Madīnan.

Q50 is Makkan except for Q50:37 which is Madīnan.

Q53 is Makkan except for Q53:32 which is Madīnan.

Q54 is Makkan except for Q54:44-46 which are Madīnan.

Q56 is Makkan except for Q56:81-82 which are Madīnan.

Q68 is Makkan except for Q68:17-33 which are Madīnan.

Q77 is Makkan except for Q77: 47 which is Madīnan.

Q107 is Makkan for Q107: 1-3 and the rest of the *sūra* is Madīnan.

In the view of al-Judai^c (2001:67-69), the following list is the Makkan *sūras* which contain Madīnan *āyas*:

Q11:114, Q16: 126, Q17:85, Q22:11 and 19-22 and 39-40, Q36:12, Q39:53-55 and 67, Q26:27, Q46:10, and Q64:14.

4.10 Chronological Order of the Madīnan *Sūras*

For the list of the *sūras* in their chronological order according to various scholars please see the table 1 in section 3.10.

The first *sūra* that was revealed in Madīna was Q83 while the last *sūra* was Q9 (al-Wāḥidī 1984: 11).

Once the *āya* and *sūra* began to be revealed, the Prophet Muḥammad would tell his companions to place them before or after certain Makkan *sūra* and *āya*. Thus, when the revelation of the Qur'ān was complete, some Makkan *āya* appeared within Madīnan *sūra* and reciprocally. The Prophet Muḥammad classified the *āya* and *sūra* in such order according to Allah's command that is what is called *tawqīfī* (by divine order). The reason for the mingling may have been that the *āyās* were revealed according to the needs of a developing community, whereas the order for the reading purposes was varied to make it clear that the Qur'ān is not a mere historical book. Therefore by divorcing the *āya* from the chronological order of their revelation, the general and universal aspects of their message are emphasized claimed Philips (ibid: 215).

It is of great interest to know what the first and the last revelations were claimed Abdul Raof (2003: 145); however there is no agreement amongst Muslims scholars on this matter:

The first revelation, with almost unanimous agreement amongst Muslim scholars is Q96, then Q74 (see al-Bukhārī 1981, 1/3:4; al-Zarkashī 1988, 1:263; al-Qaṭṭān 1990: 65; al-Suyūṭī 1996, 1:69; Muslim 1998/ 160: 80; al-Askarī n.d.: 82; Ibn Taymiyyāh 1986, 6: 452). Others hold the view that Q74 was first revealed followed by Q96 (ibid). For other scholars, however, the first revelation was Q1 (see al-Zarkashī 1988, 1:264; al-Suyūṭī 1996, 1:71; al-Qaṭṭān 1990: 67); There is also a fourth opinion of some scholars who claim that “*bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*” was the first revelation (see al-Qaṭṭān 1990: 67; al-Suyūṭī 1996, 1:72). Muslim scholars pointed out that Q74 represents the message while Q96 is a declaration of the prophethood of Muhammad (al-Zarkashī 1988, 1:265).

There is also some disagreement among Muslim scholars as to what the last revelation was.

According to Ibn ʿAbbās, Q110 was the last revelation (al-Zarkashī 1988, 1:266). Other scholars, however, had different opinions; for al-Wāhidī (1984: 11) and al-Zarqānī (1988, 1: 98), the last revelation was Q2: 281; al-Zarkashī (1988, 1:266) was undecided between Q2: 281, Q4: 176 and Q9: 128-129; for (al-Qaṭṭān 1990: 70; al-Suyūṭī 1996, 1: 78-81), it was either Q3: 195, or Q4: 93. Abdul-Raof (ibid: 145-146).

According to Welch (1975:417- 418), the following is the chronological order of the Makkan and Madinan *sūras* according to the Standard Egyptian edition (1322/1924):

Q96; Q68 (17-33, 48-50, med.); Q73 (10-11, 20, med.); Q74; Q1; Q111; Q81; Q87; Q92; Q89; Q93; Q94; Q103; Q100; Q108; Q102; Q107; Q109; Q105; Q113; Q114; Q112; Q53; Q80; Q97; Q91; Q85; Q106; Q101; Q75; Q104; Q77 (48, med.); Q50 (38, med.); Q90; Q86; Q54 (54-56, med.); Q38; Q7 (163-170 med.); Q72; Q36 (45, med.); Q25 (68-70, med.); Q35; Q19 (58, 71, med.); Q20 (130-131, med.); Q56 (71-72, med.); Q26 (197, 224-227, med.); Q27, Q28 (52-55, med., 85 during the *hijra*), Q17 (26, 32-33, 57, 73-80, med.); Q10 (40, 94-96, med.); Q11 (12, 17, 114, med.); Q12 (1-3, 7, med.); Q15; Q6 (20, 23, 91, 114, 141, 151-153, med.); Q37; Q31 (27-29, med.); Q34 (6, med.); Q39 (52-54, med.); Q40 (56-57, med.); Q41; Q42 (23-25, 27, med.) Q43 (54, med.); Q44, Q45 (14, med.); Q46 (10, 15, 35, med.); Q51; Q88; Q18 (28, 83-101, med.); Q16 (126-128, med.); Q71, Q14 (28-29, med.); Q21; Q23; Q32 (16-20, med.); Q52; Q67; Q70; Q78; Q79; Q82; Q84; Q30 (17, med.); Q29 (1-11, med.); Q83 ---*HIJRA*--- Q2 (281, revealed later); Q8 (30-36, Mak.); Q3; Q33; Q60; Q4; Q99; Q57; Q47 (13, revealed during the *hijra*); Q13; Q55; Q76; Q65; Q98; Q59; Q24; Q22; Q63; Q58; Q49; Q66; Q64; Q61; Q62; Q48; Q5; Q9 (128-129, mak.). Q110.

It must be noted here that, in the view of Welch, the Madinan *sūras* and their chronological order were determined by their subject matters that reflect Muḥammad's growing political power and the general development of events in Madīna after the *hijra*. New themes and key terms are said to help distinguish these *sūras* from certain late Makkan ones. The Madinan *sūras* are:

Weil (1844-1878): Q2, Q98, Q62, Q65, Q22, Q4, Q8, Q47, Q57, Q3, Q59, Q24, Q63, Q33, Q48, Q110, Q61, Q60, Q58, Q49, Q66, Q9, Q5.

Nöldeke (1860) and Blachère (1949-1959): Q2, Q98, Q64, Q62, Q8, Q47, Q3, Q61, Q57, Q4, Q65, Q59, Q33, Q63, Q24, Q58, Q22, Q48, Q66, Q60, Q110, Q49, Q9, Q5.

Here we can see a combination of excessive dependence on traditional Muslim dating and on

matters of form and style, e.g., in Weil's First Period, the first 34 *sūras*, with just a few exceptions, are in almost the same order as in the traditional Muslim dating (cf. the Egyptian list above).

We can also notice from these chronological orders of Madinan *sūras* by the Western scholars that for Weil, Nöldeke and Blachère's classification, there is an adaptation of the Muslim traditional dating and also the question of style and form are taken in consideration. For example, in Weil's first period of Makkan *sūra* the 34 first *sūras* are almost in the same order as in the Muslim traditional dating. Welch concludes that the system that divided the revelations into four periods that is used by the Western Modern scholars is no more than a European adaptation of the Muslim traditional standard order of classification. For the question of style, it is true to notice that there is a change in the style through the years/time going but there is no reason to assume that all the *sūras* that have the same style are from the same period? The school of the four periods did not show the validity of the historical context of the evolution of ideas and key words that are supposed to be in its system. However, it was well accepted by Western Qur'ān scholars with much more credit than it deserved. Three more systems of classification were produced by Europeans in the beginning of the last century:

- (i) by Grimme in his "Muḥammad" (1892-1895, II, 25sq.) which is a variation of Nöldeke with some differences on the theme of doctrines,
- (ii) by Sir William Muir in "the *coran*: its composition and teaching" (1896, 43-47) who divides his classification into six periods (five Makkans and one Madinan) but in general the critics that were addressed to the system of the four periods was for Muir's system as well, and
- (iii) In 1902, H. Hirschfeld in "new researches" also gives a classification of six periods that he calls as: (1) confirmatory, (2) declamatory, (3) narratives, (4) descriptives, (5) legislatives, and (6) the Madinan ones are not classified under one group but under many titles such as the battle of Badr, the political discourse, the revelations about domestic matters related to Muḥammad and the preparation for the pilgrimage to Makka. Hirschfeld's system of classification has some defaults although it provides some useful details regarding the analysis of the different literary types of the Qur'ān and that we need to deal with individual periscopes more than the *sūra* as a whole.

This method was adopted in further studies to identify and date the original units of the revelations; this is the case for "the Qur'ān, translated with a critical rearrangement of the

sūras”, (2 volumes, 1937, 1939) by Richard Bell who followed this system. (cf. Welch 1975:419). Bell argued that only 24 *sūras* are Madinan in its entirety but that there were many *ayas* from different dates within the same *sura*. Consequently, it is impossible to give a chronological order accurately. It is worthwhile to note that these 24 *suras* were also the *sūras* that Nöldeke considered as Madinan.

4.10.1 The Influence of Chronological Order on Islamic Law

One may wonder how the chronological order of revelation can influence the Islamic legal rulings of the Qur’ān. According to Philips (ibid), by understanding the order in which the *āya* of the Qur’ān were revealed, one can learn the best method of teaching Islam. What Philips means here could be understood in this way: By following the order of the revelation, one could see the gradual phases of each legal ruling, i.e., Islamic law did not come all at once and be imposed on the community. Instead, it was introduced gradually in order to allow the Muslim community change their habits and customs slowly into the law of Islam. Also, by imposing something new upon people, their reaction can be radical and they may reject it completely. Philips also pointed out that most of the important events in the Prophet’s life had been recorded in various *āyās* of the Qur’ān; thus, by knowing the order in which these *āyās* were revealed, it is possible to piece together a large portion of the *sīrah* (biography of the Prophet) which constitutes the best model to be followed by every single Muslim (ibid: 217-218). However, another modern Muslim scholar, al-^cAḏami¹⁷⁸, claims that the chronological order of the *sūras* is not necessary and it can lead to change in the meaning of the *āya* if we have to change it from its proper place. Furthermore, he argues, the order we have now was dictated by the Prophet Muḥammad himself and its impact on the reader is important as it is now. If one would change it, the effect on the listeners will be modified. It is worthwhile to note that the Prophet did not specifically remark whether a verse was Makkan or Madinan, but the companions understood the importance of this topic and carefully preserved and passed on this knowledge, as it was essential in understanding the Qur’ān (Qadhi (1999: 97).

4.11 Duration of Madīnan Revelation

As for Madinan *āyas*, it is easier to date them as the Muslims calendar started with the migration of the Prophet Muḥammad from Makka to Madīna. Also, we have evidence which helps us to date them. For instance, (i) when dealing with battles, we know nowadays the

¹⁷⁸ al-Aḏami, Muḥ. Muṣṭafa (2003: 72-73). *The History of the Qur’ānic Text*. Leicester: UK Islamic Academy.

place where they took place and can therefore date them accordingly, (ii) the divine laws revealed in Madīna were not known in Makka, (iii) the change in the theme and language can be easily recognized, and also (iv) there are not many disagreements among Muslim or non-Muslim scholars about the Madinan *sūras*. All these factors can be a proof of the duration of the Madinan revelations.

Revelations in Madīna lasted about ten years. The foundation of the Muslim state was to be established in Madīna. This required self-denial and sacrifice on the part of Muslims. The establishment of the Muslim social charter was a priority. Therefore, a public relations exercise was a paramount importance in order to keep the channels of communication open with the people of the Book, i.e., the Jews and the Christians, on the one hand, and relations with neighboring countries on the other. The social constitution was laid down; thus, a Muslim code of conduct was set up to regulate relations among the Muslims themselves on the one hand, and within the family on the other. National security was also important for the new Muslim state. The hypocrites, therefore, had to be exposed. All these matters constitute the major themes of the Madinan revelations. Examples of revelations in Madīna which are classified as Makkan because their main theme is an address to the people of Makka are Q60 and Q16: 41-128 (al-Zarkashī 1988, 1: 252) Abdul-Raof (2003: 143).

4.12 Qur'ānic Textual Analysis

Abdul-Raof's (2003 and 2005) Qur'ānic textual analysis is a modern approach to Qur'ānic text analysis and *sūra* structure. His textual analysis focuses on two areas:

- (i) The four tenets (principles) of faith (*mabādi' al-imān*), and
- (ii) Motifs, i.e., themes.

I shall attempt to provide a similar account of Qur'ānic textual analysis of some Madinan *sūras* in terms of Abdul-Raof's tenets of faith which we encounter, and also in terms of their themes. This approach, I believe, can provide a detailed textual analysis, including the number of the *āyās* for each tenet of faith and themes mentioned; however, I will only focus on three selected Madinan *sūras*. In the following sections we will analyse Q2, Q5 and Q24 in terms of tenets of faith and admonition.

4.12.1 Tenets of Faith in Madīnan *Sūras*

We can claim that the Madinan *sūras* also focus on the four tenets of faith: monotheism, prophethood, resurrection and reward and punishment. The concept of monotheism deals with the notion of the oneness of Allāh and also with reference to the polytheists (those who

associate beings equal to God), which is an indirect reference to monotheism. As for the notion of prophethood, the Qur'ānic discourse deals with the role of Muḥammad either alone or in tandem with the previous Prophets. There is also an indirect reference to the Prophet, for example, 'your not crazy', or 'you are not a poet' referring to Muḥammad, and also reference to the Qur'ān which confirms Muḥammad's prophethood. The tenet of faith of eschatology includes references to the Day of Judgment, and for the topic of reward-punishment, there are references to the hereafter. Further, Madīnan *sūras* contain several Islamic legal rulings and references to the People of the Book. These themes will be enumerated in our analysis below. I have selected three *sūras*: Q2, Q5 and Q24 for my textual analysis in terms of the tenets of faith.

4.12.2 Q2 *al-Baqarah*

al-Baqarah is the title of the 2nd *sūra* of the Qur'ān; the word means 'the cow' and is drawn from the story of the cow which occurs in vv.67-71: "...Let it be a yellow cow which has a striking colour and which pleases the beholders'..., where Moses was given the order from his Lord to prescribe to the Jews to sacrifice a cow. This was the first *sūra* to be revealed in Madīna just after the *hijra* except for the verse 281 which was revealed at Minā during the farewell pilgrimage of the Prophet Muḥammad in 10/632. With 286 *āyās*, it is also the longest *sūra* in the Qur'ān and it includes 5 *aḥzāb*¹⁷⁹ from the 60 that compose the whole Qur'ān. After beginning with the three of the mysterious letters of the Qur'ān, the *sūra* goes on to deal with the creation of Ādam, the rebellion of Iblīs, Mūsā (including the story of the cow), Hārūt and Mārūt, Ibrāhīm, the change of the *qiblah* from Jerusalem to Makka, the prohibition of eating pork, fasting in Ramaḍān, pilgrimage, divorce, and the prohibition of *ribā*. This *sūra* is also important as it contains the famous verse of the throne (*āyat al-kursī*)¹⁸⁰. (Netton, 1997:52; Boubakeur 1995:57).

4.12.3 Tenets of Faith in Q2

Below is a *sūra* structure analysis of Q2 based on Abdul-Raof's tenets of faith approach. It is worthwhile to note that the same *āya* may involve a tenet of faith or a tenet of faith plus

¹⁷⁹ *Ḥizb*: (pl. *aḥzāb*) A word which is used to mean a 60th part of the Qur'ān. (Netton, 1997:104).

¹⁸⁰ *Āyatul-Qursī* : the Throne verse one of the most famous and beloved of the verses of the Qur'ān, frequently recited as a protection against harm or evil. It is v.255 of *sūrat al-Baqarah* and may be translated as follows: God, there is no God but He, the living, the Eternal. He is not subject to either slumber or sleep. He owns what is in the Heavens and what is on earth. Who can intercede with Him except with His permission? He knows what is in front of them and behind them. They glean nothing of His knowledge except what He wishes. His throne encompasses the Heavens and the earth and He is not burdened by sustaining both in existence. He is the Most High, the Great'. (Netton, 1997 :45).

admonition. It is also worthwhile to note that other elements such as admonition, Islamic legal rulings, and God's omnipotence are sometimes sandwiched into the tenets of faith. Also, we have considered Q2:177-286 as a single piece of admonition although it is punctuated by various tenets of faith:

Monotheism	Prophethood	Eschatology/Resurrection	Reward-Punishment
(Q2:22)	(Q2:2)	(Q2:4)	(Q2:3)
(Q2:116)	(Q2:4)	(Q2:8)	(Q2:5)
(Q2:133)	(Q2:6)	(Q2:28)	(Q2:10)
(Q2:135-136)	(Q2:13)	(Q2:46)	(Q2:24-25)
(Q2:138-139)	(Q2:23)	(Q2:48)	(Q2:39)
(Q2:163)	(Q2:41)	(Q2:62)	(Q2:62)
(Q2:165)	(Q2:75-76)	(Q2:73)	(Q2:80-82)
(Q2:255)	(Q2:91)	(Q2:102)	(Q2:85-86)
	(Q2:97-99)	(Q2:110)	(Q2:90)
	(Q2:101)	(Q2:113)	(Q2:96)
	(Q2:106)	(Q2:123)	(Q2:104)
	(Q2:108-109)	(Q2:126)	(Q2:111-112)
	(Q2:119)	(Q2:130)	(Q2:114)
	(Q2:120)	(Q2:134)	(Q2:119)
	(Q2:137)	(Q2:141)	(Q2:121)
	(Q2:142-151)	(Q2:174)	(Q2:126)
	(Q2:170)	(Q2:200)	(Q2:162)
	(Q2:174)	(Q2:203)	(Q2:167)
	(Q2:176)	(Q2:212)	(Q2:174-175)
	(Q2:252)	(Q2:228)	(Q2:178)
	(Q2:285)	(Q2:232)	(Q2:201)
		(Q2:243)	(Q2:206)
		(Q2:254)	(Q2:214)
		(Q2:259-260)	(Q2:217)
		(Q2:281)	(Q2:221)
		(Q2:285)	(Q2:257)
			(Q2:272)
			(Q2:275-277)
			(Q2:284)

Table 4.1: Tenets of faith in Q2 *al-Baqarah*

4.12.4 Q5 *al-Mā'ida*

Sūra Q5, '*al-Mā'ida*' (the table) belongs to the Madīnan period and contains 120 *āyas*. It takes its title from the request made by the disciples of the Prophet ʿĪsā that he should pray to his Lord to send down a table spread with food from Heaven in *āya* (Q5:112). The *sūra* which focuses on three major subject matters: *tawhīd*, Islamic legal rulings, and the People of the Book, also deals with *Hajj*, foods, prayer and social relations, etc. Referring to the Prophet ʿĪsā, the *sūra* says that on the day of judgment, Allāh will ask him whether he had ever told people to worship him and his mother as Gods besides Allāh. But ʿĪsā would declaim this and say that he had only told them to 'worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord' (Q5:116-117). The *sūra* also refers to the murder of the Prophet Ādam's son Hābīl (Abel) by his brother Qābīl¹⁸¹ (Cain). The *sūra* also contains the very last portion of the Qur'ān (Q5:3) which was revealed to the Prophet during his last pilgrimage while he was addressing the gathering at Arafāt (Khan 2002:22)¹⁸². The *sūra* focuses mainly on three major subject matters which are: monotheism, Islamic legal rulings, and the People of the Book (Abdul-Raof 2001:19).

4.12.5 Tenets of Faith in Q5

The table below is a textual analysis of Q5 based on Abdul-Raof's (2003 and 2005) approach to *sūra* structure in terms of his four tenets of faith. However, as this *sūra*, Q5, deals also with the People of the Book and Islamic legal rulings, we thought it was interesting to add them in our textual analysis in order to highlight their frequencies within the *sūra* compared to the frequencies of the tenets of faiths:

¹⁸¹ Qābīl and Hābīl: The Arabic names for Cain and Abel. These two sons of Ādam are mentioned, though not by these names, in the Qur'ān which tells the well-known story of the first murder (see Q5:27-31). (Netton, 1997:200)

¹⁸² Khan Saniyasain (2002) presents the Qur'ān with a brief introduction to all the 114 chapters of the Qur' ān. Delhi: Goodword Books.

Monotheism	Prophethood	Eschatology	Reward-Punishment
(Q5:1-17)	(Q5:1-4)	(Q5:5)	(Q5:2-3)
(Q5:19)	(Q5:6-9)	(Q5:12)	(Q5:4-5)
(Q5:23-25)	(Q5:11-13)	(Q5:14)	(Q5:9)
(Q5:28)	(Q5:15-16)	(Q5:18)	(Q5:12-13)
(Q5:34-36)	(Q5:19-20)	(Q5:36)	(Q5:29)
(Q5:39-41)	(Q5:33)	(Q5:48)	(Q5:33)
(Q5:43-45)	(Q5:35)	(Q5:64-65)	(Q5:36-37)
(Q5:47-54)	(Q5:40-44)	(Q5:69)	(Q5:41)
(Q5:56-61)	(Q5:48-49)	(Q5:72)	(Q5:56)
(Q5:65)	(Q5:51-58)	(Q5:80)	(Q5:65)
(Q5:67-69)	(Q5:60-62)	(Q5:84-86)	(Q5:69)
(Q5:72-79)	(Q5:64)	(Q5:94)	(Q5:71-73)
(Q5:80-84)	(Q5:67-68)	(Q5:96)	(Q5:85-86)
(Q5:86-96)	(Q5:75-77)	(Q5:98)	(Q5:95)
(Q5:100-106)	(Q5:80-83)	(Q5:101)	(Q5:98)
(Q5:108-117)	(Q5:92)	(Q5:105)	(Q5:115)
(Q5:119-120)	(Q5:99-100)	(Q5:119)	(Q5:118)
	(Q5:104)		
	(Q5:109)		

Table 4.2: Tenets of faith in Q5

4.12.6 Q24 *al-Nūr*

Sūra Q24, '*al-Nūr*' (the light), belongs to the Madinan period and contains 64 *āyas* whose main focus is Islamic legal rulings and good etiquettes which are of great value to the individual and the community (Abdul-Raof 2001:61). Its title is taken from verse 35 which describes God as the Light of the Heavens and the earth in one of the most famous and mystically beautiful of all the Qur'ānic verses, called 'the light verse' (*āyat al-nūr*). The *sūra* lays down a number of legal and other injunctions: for example, 100 lashes are prescribed for adultery; women are to dress modestly; prayer (*ṣalāt*) is to be performed; charity (*zakāt*) is to be paid and the Messenger of God, Muḥammad, is to be obeyed. These are just a few of the subject matters which are laid down in what is a very wide-ranging *sūra* from the point of view of its legal content (cf. Netton 1997:195). With regards to the injunction about false accusation against chaste woman in Q24, there is an indirect reference made to the defamation

against ʿĀ’isha¹⁸³, the Prophet’s third wife. Q24 is the 102nd *sūra* according to the chronological arrangement. It was revealed in Madīna in the 5th year after *hijra*. According to the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, the theologians and philosophers of Islam use the word “*nūr*” either to God’s knowledge of the religious truth or the revelation (*wahy*) and the right way (*hūdā*) showed to men by the Prophet who is also named as ‘the illuminated lamp’ (*sirāj munīr*) (Boubakeur 1995:1109).

4.12.7 Tenets of Faith in Q24

The table below is a textual analysis of Q24 based on Abdul-Raof’s (2003 and 2005) approach to *sūra* structure in terms of his four tenets of faith:

Monotheism	Prophethood	Eschatology	Reward-Punishment
(Q24:17)	(Q24:1)	(Q24:14)	(Q24:11)
(Q24:21)	(Q24:34)	(Q24:19)	(Q24:14)
(Q24:27)	(Q24:46-54)	(Q24:23-25)	(Q24:19)
(Q24:30-31)	(Q24:56)	(Q24:37)	(Q24:23)
(Q24:47)	(Q24:62-63)	(Q24:42)	(Q24:25)
(Q24:51-52)		(Q24:64)	(Q24:38-39)
(Q24:54-55)			(Q24:57)

Table 4.3: Tenets of faith in Q24

4.12.8 Textual Analysis of Tenets of Faith in Madinan *Sūras*

In this section, we shall summarise, in a table, the results of our textual analysis in terms of the number of times that the tenets of faith appear in the three Madinan *sūras* selected.

Tenets of faith	Q2 <i>al-Baqarah</i> (286 <i>āyāt</i>)	Q5 <i>al-Māida</i> ¹ (120 <i>āyāt</i>)	Q24 <i>al-Nūr</i> (64 <i>āyāt</i>)
Monotheism	10	92	10
Prophethood	33	50	14
Eschatology	27	20	8
Reward-Punishment	37	24	8

Table 4.4: Frequency of the tenets of faith in Q2, Q5, and Q24

¹⁸³ ʿĀ’isha bint Abī Bakr: Third wife of the Prophet Muḥammad. Her mother belonged to the Kinana tribe, her father Abū Bakr (Muḥammad successor), was from the clan Taym of the Quraysh tribe. She became the Prophet Muḥammad’s favourite wife and it was in her bedchamber that the Prophet died and was buried. During Muḥammad lifetime while returning from an expedition with him in 5/627 ʿĀ’isha became victim of malicious gossip the Qur’ān refers to this in Q24 (Netton 1997:25).

4.12.9 Textual Analysis of Q33 in Term of Themes in Madīnan *Sūras*

However, Abdul-Raof (2001) talks of ‘themes’ which are not the same as his ‘tenets of faith’ in 2003 and 2005. Therefore, it is of value to our discussion here to investigate his approach to Qur’ānic themes in Madīnan *sūras*. I have taken Q33 (*sūrat al-ʾaḥzāb* - the Coalition) for a thematic analysis based on Abdul-Raof’s approach of 2001. In his investigation, Abdul-Raof (2001:79-80) lists the following themes of Q33: These include fear of Allāh, trust in Allāh, gratitude, patience, hypocrisy, the prophet, modesty, and slander. However, as a Madinan *sūra*, I believe there are more themes than what is provided by Abdul-Raof above. The themes I am going to list demonstrate the social etiquettes which the Madinan revelations have attempted to achieve. These include:

- (i) the hypocrites as a danger to the community and especially during the time of war (Q33:1, 12-15, 24, 26, 48, 60-61, 73),
- (ii) social etiquettes, family relations and respect of the husband to his wife (Q33:4-6, 28-37, 49-59),
- (iii) moral divine support to the believers during times of hardship (Q33:9-11), and
- (iv) steadfastness and unwavering on the part of the fighter in the battlefield (Q33:16-20).

These five themes, I believe, echo the unique characteristic Qur’ānic themes of the Madinan *sūras*.

4.13 Admonitions in Madīnan *Sūras*

Abdul-Raof (2001a:12-15), in his book *The Qur’ān Outlined: Theme and Text*, provides a detailed list of the Qur’ānic themes of each *sūra*. As with the other āyas of Q2, Q5, and Q24, they can be analysed in terms of morality, Islamic legal rulings, and God’s omnipotence. However, as both *sūras*, Q2 and Q5, deal also with the People of the Book and Islamic legal rulings, we thought it was interesting to add them in our analysis in order to highlight their frequencies within the *sūras* compared to the frequencies of admonition and God’s omnipotence. The table below is for the textual analysis of Q2:

Admonition	Admonition	God's Omnipotence	Islamic Legal Rulings	People of the Book
(Q2:7)	(Q2:102)	(Q2:20)	(Q2:3)	(Q2:11-20)
(Q2:9)	(Q2:103)	(Q2:29)	(Q2:43)	(Q2:27-29)
(Q2:11-12)	(Q2:105)	(Q2:148)	(Q2:83)	(Q2:40-81)
(Q2:14-21)	(Q2:107)	(Q2:164)	(Q2:106)	(Q2:85-96)
(Q2:26-27)	(Q2:115)	(Q2:255)	(Q2:110)	(Q2:100-105)
(Q2:30-38)	(Q2:117-118)	(Q2:259-260)	(Q2:148-153)	(Q2:108-109)
(Q2:40)	(Q2:122)	(Q2:284)	(Q2:154)	(Q2:111-114)
(Q2:42-45)	(Q2:124-125)		(Q2:156-158)	(Q2:120)
(Q2:47)	(Q2:127-129)		(Q2:160)	(Q2:122-123)
(Q2:49-61)	(Q2:131-132)		(Q2:163)	(Q2:135-136)
(Q2:63-72)	(Q2:140)		(Q2:168)	(Q2:144-146)
(Q2:74)	(Q2:151-161)		(Q2:172-173)	(Q2:159)
(Q2:77-79)	(Q2:166)		(Q2:177-203)	(Q2:170-171)
(Q2:83-90)	(Q2:168-169)		(Q2:215-245)	(Q2:174-176)
(Q2:92-96)	(Q2:171-173)		(Q2:254)	(Q2:211-214)
(Q2:100)	(Q2:177-286)		(Q2:261-267)	(Q2:246-251)
			(Q2:274-283)	
			(Q2:285-286)	

Table 4.5: Admonition, Omnipotence of God, Islamic legal rulings and the People of the Book in Q2 *al-Baqarah*

The table below is a textual analysis of Q5 based on its themes. As this *sūrah*, Q5 deals also with the People of the book and Islamic legal rulings we have added them into our analysis in order to highlights their frequencies within the *sūrah* compared to the frequencies of the Admonitions and God's omnipotence:

Admonition	God's Omnipotence	Islamic Legal Rulings	People of the Book
(Q5:2-3)	(Q5:11)	(Q5:1-6)	(Q5:5)
(Q5:5)	(Q5:17-19)	(Q5:12)	(Q5:12)
(Q5:8)	(Q5:40)	(Q5:35)	(Q5:14)
(Q5:11-16)	(Q5:54)	(Q5:38-39)	(Q5:45-47)
(Q5:18-34)	(Q5:95)	(Q5:45)	(Q5:51)
(Q5:36)	(Q5:97)	(Q5:55)	(Q5:60)
(Q5:38)	(Q5:116)	(Q5:58)	(Q5:63-66)
(Q5:41-42)	(Q5:120)	(Q5:63)	(Q5:68-75)
(Q5:44)		(Q5:69)	(Q5:77-79)
(Q5:46-53)		(Q5:87-91)	(Q5:82-85)
(Q5:57)		(Q5:93)	(Q5:110)
(Q5:60)		(Q5:95-97)	(Q5:113)
(Q5:62-68)		(Q5:106-108)	
(Q5:70-71)			
(Q5:74)			
(Q5:76-77)			
(Q5:79-80)			
(Q5:82)			
(Q5:87)			
(Q5:89)			
(Q5:91)			
(Q5:94)			
(Q5:98)			
(Q5:100-102)			
(Q5:110)			
(Q5:115)			

Table 4.6: Admonition, Omnipotence of God, Islamic Legal Rulings and the People of the Book in Q5 *al-Māida*

Sūra Q24 does not deal with the People of the Book, so we have focused in our analysis on the major themes of admonition, omnipotence of God, and Islamic legal rulings only. Below is the textual analysis of Q24:

Admonition	God's Omnipotence	Islamic Legal Rulings
(Q24:10-23)	(Q24:43-45)	(Q24:2-9)
(Q24:26)		(Q24:27-33)
(Q24:35-37)		(Q24:56)
(Q24:40-42)		(Q24:58-63)

Table 4.7: Admonition, Omnipotence of God, and Islamic Legal Rulings in Q24 *al-Nūr*

4.13.1 Textual Analysis of Admonition and God's Omnipotence in Madinan *Sūras*

In this section, we have devised a table of results of our textual analysis, in terms of the number of times the moral lessons appear in the three *sūras* selected from the Madinan *sūras*. As it appears, the moral lessons dominate a great part of each of the *sūras* we have analysed, approximately one-third of each *sūra*. The significance of this is that the tenets of faith cannot be dissociated from good behaviour. Those who believe must also demonstrate good behaviour and carry out good deeds. Let us consider the following table:

Moral Lessons	Q2 <i>al-Baqarah</i> (286 <i>āyas</i>)	Q5 <i>al-Māida'</i> (120 <i>āyas</i>)	Q24 <i>al-Nūr</i> (64 <i>āyas</i>)
Admonition	213	67	21
Omnipotence of God	8	10	3
Islamic Legal Rulings	98	27	22
People of the Book	103	29	0

Table 4.8: Frequencies of admonition, God's Omnipotence, Islamic Legal Rulings and the People of the Book in three Madinan *sūras* Q2, Q5 and Q24.

4.13.2 Admonition and Morality in Madinan *Sūras*

Based on our textual analysis, I shall attempt to list the major themes that we encounter in Q2, Q5, and Q24 in terms of admonition and morality, and also try to find out the number of occurrences of each theme in each of these three *sūras*. Let us consider the following table:

Admonition/ Moral values	To be Followed / To be Avoided	Q2	Q5	Q24
Contracts should be honoured	To be followed		*	
It is lawful to eat the meat of livestock with the exception of what is already named	To be Followed		*	
It is lawful to eat seafood	To be followed		*	
It is not lawful to hunt when you are in state of pilgrimage	To be Avoided	*	*	
It is lawful to hunt when pilgrimage is over	To be followed	*	*	
It is not lawful to violate the sacred rights of Allah, the month of pilgrimage, the animals brought for sacrifice, and their garlands	To be Avoided	*	*	
It is not lawful to offend people who come to visit the sacred house	To be Avoided	*	*	
It is not lawful to transgress if you are not allowed to enter the Sacred Mosque	To be Avoided	*	*	
It is not lawful to eat carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, whatever meat over which the name of Allah has not been mentioned, whatever meat or animals that have been strangled, beaten or gored to death, trapped in a pit, that which is partly eaten by a wild animal unless you can slaughter it while it is still alive and all that is slaughtered before idols	To be Avoided	*	*	
It is not lawful to use the casting of lots, etc., to learn fortunes or makes decisions	To be Avoided		*	
It is lawful to eat the meat of anything caught by trained hunting animals or birds of prey	To be Followed		*	
It is lawful to eat the food of the People of the Book	To be Followed		*	
It is lawful to marry chaste Muslim, Jewish or Christian women	To be Followed		*	*
It is unlawful to marry women who associate others with Allah	To be Avoided	*		*
Illegal sexual intercourse: Adultery and Fornication are wrongs act which leads to social and moral decay				*
Alcoholic drinks, gambling, the use of arrows to learn fortunes or make decision, and idolatrous practices are not lawful	To be Avoided	*	*	
Wash faces, hands up to the elbows, feet up to the ankles, and wipe over the head before prayer	To be Followed		*	
Bathe the whole body when in a state of ceremonial impurity	To be Followed		*	
When water is not available, rub the face and hands with clean sand or soil (tayammum) if you are ill, on a journey, have just satisfied a want of nature, or have cohabited with a woman	To be Followed		*	
Husband should not approach his wife sexually during her menstruation	To be Followed	*		
When death approaches someone, take witnesses when drawing up a will	To be Followed	*	*	
Cut off the hands of a thief whether a man or a woman	To be Followed		*	*

Table 4.9: Morality and its frequency in Madīnan *sūras*

4.14 Graph of the three Madīnan *Sūras* Analysed Above

The following graph has been designed to indicate the percentage of tenets of faith, Islamic legal rulings, admonition, omnipotence of God, and People of the Book in the three Madīnan *sūras* selected above for our textual analysis that is based on Abdul-Raof (2001a):

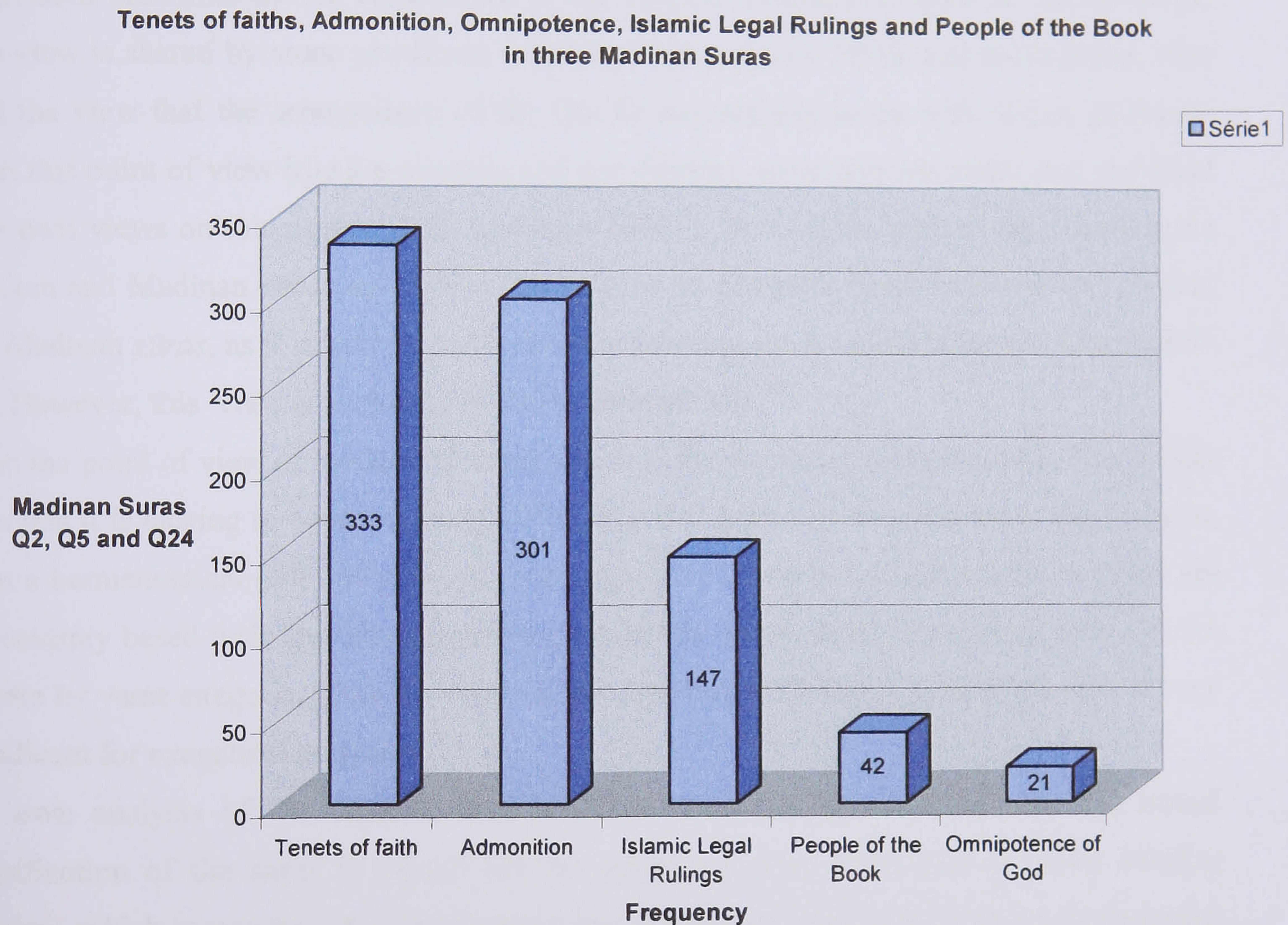


Figure 4.1: Tenets of Faiths Admonition, Omnipotence of God, Islamic Legal Rulings and People of the Book in three Madīnan *sūras*

4.15 The Madīnan Phase

As for the Madīnan revelations, they cannot be divided into three separate phases as the Makkan *sūras* because they are easier to date and their chronological order is well known as they were revealed after the *hijrah* which is the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

4.16 Conclusion

In the classical Muslim view there are two main opinions regarding the arrangement of the suras: Firstly these are those who think that the classification of the suras is “*Tawqifi*” which means that it has been dictated by God through the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad and secondly those who think that the classification of the suras is “*Ijtihadi*” which means that it has been classified by the companions of the Prophet Muhammad after he passed away. This view is shared by some prominent scholars, such as Imām Mālik and al-Bāqillāni, who hold the view that the arrangement of the Qur’ān has nothing to do with divine guidance. From this point of view Muslim scholars and non-Muslim nowadays are undecided and have their own views on this matter as for example: Iṣlāhī’s view of the relationship between the Makkan and Madīnan *sūras* has shown that there is no complete break between the Makkan and Madīnan *sūras*, as it is held by some Western scholars, such as Goldziher (cf. Mir, *ibid*:9-12), However, this view is subject to criticism claimed Mir¹⁸⁴.

From the point of view of modern Western scholars, the dominant view about the Qur’ān has been that it is lacking in coherent composition, and that whatever composition it may have is, from a hermeneutical point of view, not very significant. Muslim scholars such as Iṣlāhī on the contrary based their Qur’ān exegesis predominantly on an atomistic point of view, i.e., on a verse by verse exegesis. Thus the received arrangement of Qur’ānic verses and *sūra* is very significant for exegetical purposes.

My own analysis of the Makkan and Madīnan suras led me to claim that the actual classification of the suras is *tawqifi* (divine guidance) as it is claimed by most Muslim scholars, which means that the classification was dictated by God to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel and thus it is not man made. My claim is supported by the fact that an aya was revealed to fit a situation but its final place was between two other ayas that were revealed much earlier or later to fit in intertextually. How could one know in advance where the final position of an āya would be in the context of a revelation that lasted 23 years?

Furthermore my textual analysis of the Madīnan revelations has shown that the tenets of faith (monotheism, prophethood, eschatology, and reward and punishment) occur with other themes. These themes like Islamic legal rulings and good etiquettes do not occur in the Makkan revelations. Also, as the Madīnan āyas are longer, their linguistic structures have also become different from the Makkan āyas which are characterised by short linguistic structures.

¹⁸⁴ Mustansir Mir (1986:94) *Coherence in the Qur’ān*. Indianapolis: the American trust publications. For a criticism of the orientalist position, see Fazlur, Rahman (1994). *Major Themes of the Qur’ān*: chapter 8.

Due to the current political, military, and socio-economic requirements in Madīna, the descriptive language of the Madinan revelations has become different from that of the Makkan. Consequently, the style, the use of similes and imageries are different in Madīnan *āyas*. Finally I would add that different Qur'ān scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim, have adopted different techniques with regard to the themes of the Madīnan *sūras* and its structure in their analysis, by introducing new themes regarding family affairs, marriage, husband/wife relationships, children, divorce, death, inheritance, rights of the individual, orphans, and interpersonal relationships among people of the community, the Madīnan revelations have become like a social charter. Thus, the type of admonition and morality in the Madīnan *sūras* are completely distinct from those in the Makkan ones.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

Throughout our investigation of the Makkan and Madinan revelations, we can make the following observations:

* 1. We can safely claim that consonance which aims to achieve conceptual chaining and thematic links between consecutive *sūras* and *āyas* is the major criterion for the classification of Makkan and Madinan *sūras* and *āyas*. Our claim is supported by the fact that an *āya* is revealed in Madīna but is placed in a Makkan *sūra* like *āya* number 20 which is a Madinan *āya* but is placed in Q73 which is a Makkan *sūra*. However, this Madinan *āya* meets the criteria of a madinan revelation in terms of length. However, to achieve consonance and a thematic link with the previous *āya*, this *āya* (Q73:20) is placed in its present place within Q73. Q73:20 addresses the Prophet Muḥammad; thus, it is about prophethood. In Q74:1-7, these initial *āyas* also refer to the Prophet Muḥammad. Thus, a thematic logical link is established between the end of Q73 and the beginning of Q74.

The same applies to Q8:30-36. Although these *āyas* were revealed in Makka, they are placed in Q8 which is a Madinan *sūra* in order to achieve consonance between the preceding and following *āyas*. In Q8:27-29, reference is made to the Prophet Muḥammad, his companions, and the disbelievers. These *āyas* are followed by Q8:30-36 which are also a direct reference to the Prophet Muḥammad, his companions, and the disbelievers. Therefore, a thematic logical link is established between the *āyas* 30-36 and the preceding *āyas* 27-29 of Q8.

* 2. If we take assonance, length of *āya*, forceful expressions, reference to the eschatology, reference to reward and punishment, and no reference to injunctions, then Q76 and Q99 should have been classified as Makkan rather than Madinan. However, these two *sūras* are Madinan. This supports our conclusion that the place and time of revelation are not the criteria for the arrangement of the *sūras* and *āyas* of the Qur'ān.

* 3. Length cannot be taken as a major criterion for the classification of Makkan and Madinan *sūras* and *āyas*. If we take the length of the *sūra* or the *āya* as a criterion for the classification of Makkan and Madinan, then Q15 should be a Madinan *sūra* since it is rather long compared to other Makkan *sūras* and also has some long *āyas* that are also longer than expected for a Makkan *āya*.

- * 4. Although the major theme of the Makkan *sūras* is belief (*al-ʿaqīdah*) and the firm establishment of monotheism (*lā ilāha illa allāh* – there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh), this cannot be a decisive criterion in distinguishing between the Makkan and the Madinan *sūras* because belief and the theme of monotheism also occur in Madinan *sūras*.
- * 5 Makkan *sūras* can embody only one or two tenets of faith, as in Q112 which displays monotheism only, Q108 which displays prophethood only, Q99 and Q101 which display two tenets of faith only (eschatology and reward and punishment). This is not the case with Madinan *sūras*. This is attributed to the fact that Madinan *sūras* are much longer than their counterparts, the Makkan *sūras*.
- * 6. Muslim scholars are undecided about whether *sūrat al-raʿd* (Q13) is Makkan or Madinan. If we take the themes of the *sūra* as the criterion for the classification of Makkan and Madinan *sūras*, I believe that Q13 should be classified as a Makkan *sūra* because of the themes which are of Makkan characteristics that have been dealt with by this *sūra*. These themes are like ‘God’s omnipotence’ Q13:2, ‘disbelief of Quraysh in resurrection’ Q13:5, ‘disbelief in the prophethood of Muḥammad’ Q13:7, as well as the *sajda* (prostration) in Q13:15.
- * 7. The dichotomy between Makkan and Madinan revelations has been a controversial problem. Muslim scholars are undecided about whether a given *sūra* is Makkan, Madinan, or a mixture of Makkan and Madinan. A unique example is Q22 (*sūrat al-ḥajj* – the Pilgrimage). For the majority of Muslim exegetes, Q22 is a Madīnan *sūra*. However, for Ibn ʿAbbās, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, and al-Rāzi (1990, 23:3), Q22 is Makkan. For others like Ibn ʿAṭiyya (1991, 10:219) and al-Ālūsī (2001, 9:105), Q22 is both Makkan and Madīnan because it is a mixture of both revelations. It can, therefore, be classified as either Makkan or Madīnan. This also applies to Q29 (*al-ʿankabūt* – the Spider) which can be either Makkan or Madīnan.
- * 8. We believe that the text linguistic notion of context (*al-siyāq*) is a useful tool in the differentiation between the Makkan and the Madīnan revelations. For instance, in Makkan *sūras*, we encounter the occurrence of the word (*maryam*, Q19:16, 27) or the expression (*ibna maryama waummahu* – the son of Mary and his mother, Q23:50, Q43:57) but not the expression (*ʿĪsā ibnu maryama* – Jesus the son of Mary, Q2:87, 253, Q3:45, Q4:157, Q5:17,

46, Q33:7, Q57:27, and Q61:14) except for Q19:34. This, I believe, is attributed to the fact that in Makka, Quraysh people were not familiar with the notion of Jesus the son of Mary as opposed to the Christian notion of ‘Jesus the son of God’ which was known to the Christian community of Madīna.

* 9. In terms of Qur’ānic context, i.e., the occurrence of specific expressions, we can also claim that the word (*ḥanīf* – upright, i.e., inclining toward Him) (i) occurs in both the Makkan and the Madinan revelations, and (ii) occurs with or without the name of the Prophet Ibrāhīm. However, in the Makkan revelations, the word (*ḥanīf*) co-occurs with the expression of (*mushrikīn* - associators) and (*ṣirāṭ mustaqīm* – straight path) as in Q6:79, 161, Q10:105, Q16:120, 123, Q22:31, Q30:30. In the Madinan *āyas*, the word (*ḥanīf*) co-occurs with expressions that are suitable for the Madīna milieu like (*yahūdiyyan (hūdan)* - Jew, *naṣṛāniyyan (naṣārā)* – Christian) as in Q2:135, Q3:67, 95, Q98:5.

* 10. In terms of Qur’ānic context, i.e., the occurrence of specific expressions, we can also claim that the word (*ṭālūt* - Saul) occurs in the Madinan revelations only as in Q2:247, 249. We believe that this is mainly attributed to the Jewish milieu. Thus, we find the name of the King (*ṭālūt*) occurs in the context of the Qur’ānic parable about the Children of Israel in Q2:246.

* 11. In terms of Qur’ānic context, we can also claim that the word (*nutfa* – a sperm-drop) occurs in Makkan revelations only, except for Q22:5 which is regarded as both Makkan and Madinan *sūra*.

* 12. In terms of Qur’ānic context, we can also claim that the expression (*fī qulūbihim maraḍun* – there is disease in their hearts) occurs in Madinan revelations only, as in Q2:10.

* 13. In terms of Qur’ānic context, we can also claim that the expression (*al-munāfiqūm* – the hypocrites) and all its derivative words like the verb (*yunāfiq* – to be hypocritical) and the noun (*al-nifāq* – hypocrisy) occur in Madinan revelations only, except for Q29:11. However, Q29 can be either a Makkan or a Madinan *sūra*.

- * 14. In terms of Qur'ānic parables, we can claim that the story of Thamūd occurs more frequently in Makkan revelations than in Madīnan ones. It occurs 22 times in Makkan revelations but it occurs only twice in Madīnan revelations (Q9:70 and Q22:42).
- * 15. In terms of Qur'ānic parables, we can claim that the story of °Ād occurs more frequently in Makkan revelations than in Madīnan ones. It occurs 24 times in Makkan revelations but it occurs only twice in Madīnan revelations (Q9:70 and Q22:42).
- * 16. In terms of linguistic features, the Makkan revelations are marked by the negation particle (*kallā*) and by the conjunction particle (*idhā* – when, Q81)), while the Madīnan revelations are characterised by the absence of the negation particle (*kallā*) and by the conjunction particle (*idh* – when, Q2).
- * 17. Because some Makkan *sūras* are short, we encounter a one-tenet of faith *sūra*. For instance, Q112 has one tenet of faith only which is monotheism, and Q93 has also one tenet of faith which is prophethood. Although Madīnan *sūras* are generally long, there is only one Madīnan short *sūra* that includes one tenet of faith only as in Q110 which is a Madīnan one-tenet of faith *sūra* where only prophethood is highlighted. However, in other short Madīnan *sūras* like Q99 and Q98, there are more than one tenet of faith. In Q99, we have eschatology (Q99:1-6) + reward and punishment (Q99:7-8), while in Q98, we have prophethood (Q98:1-4) + monotheism (Q98:5) + reward and punishment (Q98:6-8).
- * 18. Although the Madīnan *sūras* are characterised by the occurrence of Islamic legal rulings (*aḥkām*), Q13 is a Madīnan *sūra* but does not have any Islamic legal rulings.
- * 19. The addressee (*al-mukhāṭab*) of the Makkan *sūras* are the polytheists (*al-mushrikūn*) of Makka who worship idols. However, the addressees of the Madīnan *sūras* are the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*) who are invited to monotheism, as in Q2:40, Q3:64-65, 67, Q9:30-31.
- *20. I believe that the Makkan revelations are those which were revealed before the migration of the Prophet to Madīna even though some revelations were made outside Makka such as the revelations which were made during the Prophet's journey to Madīna.

- * 21. I believe that the Madīnan revelations were those that were made after the Prophet's migration to Madīna even though some were made in Makka or in Tabūk such as (*al-yawma akmaltu lakum dīnakum* – this day I have perfected for you your religion, Q5:3) which is Madīnan although it was revealed in the farewell pilgrimage in Makka and (*allāhu ya'murukum an tu'addu al-amānāti ilā ahlihā* – Allāh commands you to render trusts to whom they are due, Q4:58) which is Madīnan although it was revealed in Makka during the year of re-capturing the *ka'ba* from Quraish.
- * 22. Some *sūras* can be either completely Makkan such as Q74, completely Madīnan such as Q3, the majority is Makkan except for some Madīnan *āyas* in it such as Q7 which is Makkan except for the *āya* Q7:163, or the majority is Madīnan except for some Makkan *āyas* in it such as Q22 which is Madīnan except for the four *āyas* Q22:52-55 which are Makkan.
- * 23. The negative word (*kallā* - no) is a feature of the Makkan revelations and it appears in twenty five *sūras* all of which are at the second half of the Qur'ān. For future research in this particular field, we can recommend that text linguistics and *sūra* structure should be investigated more thoroughly and taken as a new approach to analyse the Qur'ān. We recommend that *sūra* structure should also be adopted in Qur'ānic exegesis.
- * 24. The Makkan *sūras* are unique examples for the demonstration of God as the creator and the manager of the universe (*al-khāliq al-mudabbir*). Makkan Qur'ānic discourse follows a presentation technique of fostering and encouraging positive learning which requires the positive employment of one's mental faculties, which enable the individual to reflect and ponder upon the matters raised to him/her and with which he/she is aware in order to arrive at the logical conclusion that there is a creator and manager of the universe of which the individual is a minute element. This theme has been developed in more detail in 4.4.1.
- * 25. The Madīnan *sūras* are unique examples of Islamic legal rulings (*al-sharī'ah*) which constitute Islamic law, and also a unique example of discourse about and with the People of the Book. These themes, I believe, represent the context of the growing Muslim community in Madīna and could not suit the Makkan Polytheist context. However, as we mentioned earlier in 4.8, some of the obligatory duties which Muslims have to observe during the Makkan phase

of revelation were still a precursor: they were referred to briefly, but were not in fact formally introduced, nor were they obligatory until the Madīnan phase. Therefore, these obligatory duties, such as *zakāt* and *ṣalāt* were embryo components of Islam in Makka and not part of the forthcoming *sharīa*.

* 26. The thematic intertextual links between two adjacent *sūras* such as Q22: We have mentioned earlier about the thematic intertextual links that constitute the logical cohesion and conceptual chaining in the Qur'ānic text. However, in 3.4.11, it has been developed in more detail but we just want to highlight here the fact that the logical connectivity does exist whether the *sūras* are Makkan or Madīnan. An example of this is Q22 (*sūrat al-ḥajj* – pilgrimage). The reason why I have chosen Q22 is due to the fact that this is a Madīnan *sūra* sandwiched between Q21 (*sūrat al-anbiyā'* – the Prophets) and Q23 (*sūrat al-mu'minūn* – the believers), which are both classified as Makkan *sūras*. The examples above are of value to our conclusion and recommendations at the end of the present work. It shows that although a Madīnan *sūra* is inserted between two Makkan *sūras*, there is still logical connectivity between the three *sūras*, and also the three *sūras* share, and are joined by, thematic links. This further demonstrates the fact that the place of revelation is irrelevant to the arrangement of the *sūras* or *āyas*. On the contrary, we believe that the decisive criteria in the arrangement of the *sūras* and *āyas* are the thematic links that bind the Qur'ān cohesively, and help to achieve logical flow of argument. We also believe that had the *sūras* or *āyas* been arranged according to their place and time of revelation, the thematic links will cease to exist, and the Qur'ān would thus not enjoy logical and cohesive connectivity. This, we believe, echoes the fact that the Qur'ān is a Scripture and not man-made.

* 27. I have found out that the Makkan and Madīnan *sūras* are not classified accurately by scholars and that there is so far no agreement among them with regards to a unique classification of *sūras*. In 4.9, we dealt with this topic in more detail and would like to refer to the complexity involved in the classification of Makkan and Madīnan *sūras*. In fact there are twelve *sūras* in which there is a difference of opinion amongst Muslim classical scholars whether they are Makkan or Madīnan such as Q1; Q13; Q55; Q37; Q64; Q83; Q97; Q98; Q99; Q112; Q113; Q114 (Qadhi 1999:103). al-Suyūṭī in his *Itqān* and al-Baydāwī (m. 685/1286) (cf. Welch 1975:417) also mentioned a list of *sūras* that are disputed whether they are Makkan or Madīnan. These are: Q13; Q47; Q55; Q57; Q61; Q64; Q83; Q95; Q97; Q98; Q99; Q100; Q102; Q107; Q62; Q63. However, al-Suyūṭī adds 6 more which are: Q49; Q62; Q63; Q77; Q89; Q92. (Welch, *ibid*).

* **28.** Different scholars have provided different analyses of the aspects of Makkan and Madīnan revelations. These analyses have led to negative and positive aspects of their approaches. This means that there is no unanimity among scholars with regards to the analysis of the Qur'anic text.

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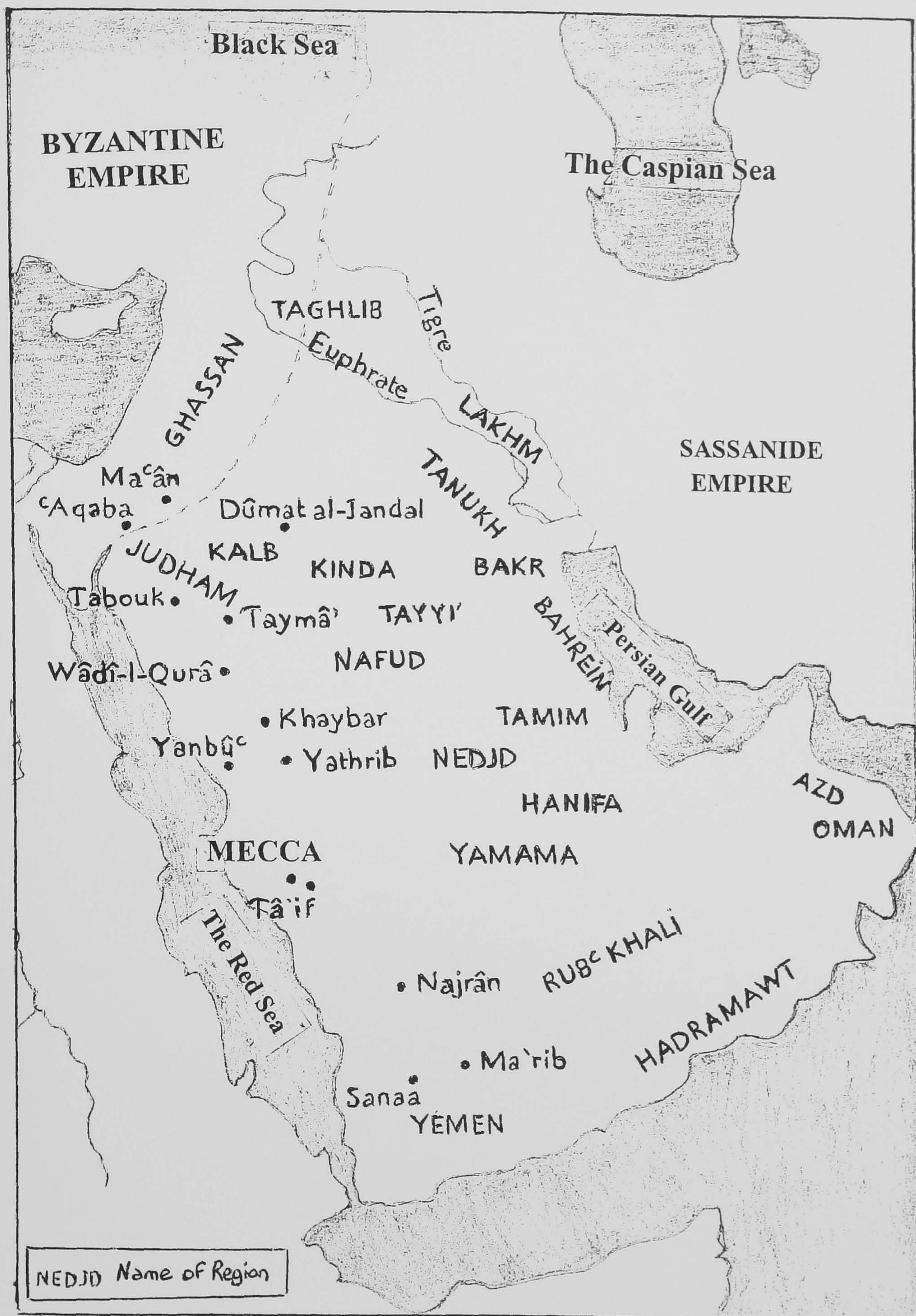
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