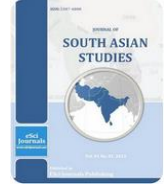




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## UNIVERSALITY IN THE MESSAGE OF QURAN

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### ABSTRACT

The literal meaning of 'Quran' is 'That which is read'. It is the holy book for Muslims and is the final revelation. Every Muslim has firm faith in it. Muslims believe this book as "words of Allah". Muslims believe the Quran was verbally revealed by Allah to Mohammad (SAWW) through angel Gibriel gradually over a period of approximately 23 years. There are total 114 Surah (Chapters) in all out of which 86 are Makki and 28 are Madani. In other words 86 Chapters were revealed in Makka and 28 in Madina, both the holy cities for Muslims across the globe. Quran, has encouraged people of all ages to think about the creature of Allah, to take the lessons from history and to make the present most favorable for human beings. The present paper is an attempt to discuss the Universal message of Quran by giving different instances from the Quranic Text. Descriptive method has been applied to fulfil the purpose to through light on the widespread significance of the Quran.

**Keywords:** Cosmos, Creation, Expansion, Humankind, Lord, Prophet, Surah, Quran, Universality, Worlds.

### INTRODUCTION

The message of Quran is universal in nature. It contains message for people of all ages and times. Quran is significant not only for Muslims but for the whole humankind. To comprehend the universality of the message one should understand the universe and the man, as described in Quran. In the holy book of Muslim i.e. Quran, Allah has stated clearly how he created substances on earth and in the cosmos. Symbolically one of the smallest creatures, ant and the biggest one, the sun contain descriptions in this book. The purpose is to guide humankind in the best way by giving examples from different creatures one can observe in the world. This message gives details about human life, and also explains the realities of life. The stage of man is described in Quran<sup>i</sup> when he (man) was in the womb of the mother<sup>ii</sup> even before when it was just the part of sperm<sup>iii</sup>. It also provides information about the death<sup>iv</sup> and life after death<sup>v</sup> and the day of judgement<sup>vi</sup>.

**Purpose of the Message of Universality in the Holy Quran:** The purpose of the message is to guide people, make them aware about good and evil, so that they could

live peacefully on this earth and here after. For living peacefully on this earth Quran has always encouraged man to be aware of the worlds and all the advancements which are taking place over here. It has encouraged man to think and acquire knowledge in the words of Quran, "And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed the hearing, the sight and the heart-about all those (one) will be questioned"<sup>vii</sup> This verse at one hand warns people of talking without knowing the particular thing and on the other hand encourages people to attain knowledge.

**The Creator is the Lord of all the worlds, and Prophet is a mercy for them:** The universal message of Quran can be understood only when we recognize that Allah is the Lord of the worlds. The first chapter of Quran which is known as Surah al-Fatiha (*The opening*) describes Allah as "Rabbil alamin"<sup>viii</sup>. It means he is the Lord of all universes. In the same way Allah has limned Prophet Mohammad as Rahmatul lil alamin<sup>ix</sup> in Quran. The Quran states at various place that all the creatures praise Allah. At various places including *Surah Juma'ah*, it is mentioned that all the creatures in the earth and in the skies praise Allah. "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting Allah, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Exalted in Might, the Wise"<sup>x</sup>. In this manner

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the message is given that not only human beings but all the creatures eulogize their creator. One can say that almighty Allah is the creator for of all the Universe and his Prophet is a mercy for all.

#### **CREATION OF UNIVERSE AS MENTIONED IN QURAN**

Quran has discussed the creation of this universe in an age when there was either no concept or was very little information about the cosmos. The Bedouin tribes used to think that world is limited to certain territories or boundaries. Their thoughts were restricted to the idols they worship. They were the maker of those idols and the concept of an ultimate creator who created and initiated this universe was far beyond their intellect. In such dark ages Quran enlightened them with the cosmic realities. They were given the message enclosed with the creation of cosmos and their expansion. "And the heavens We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are (its) expander." <sup>xi</sup>

The expansion of universe is at the present a scientific reality and has been affirmed by the science<sup>xii</sup>. People were given this message in the language which they could easily comprehend. The instances were given from their proverbial substance. The message and information Quran contains was significant for all ages. "Then He directed Himself to the heavens while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, "Come (into being), willingly or by compulsion. They said, "We have come willingly".<sup>xiii</sup>

The levels of skies are discussed in Quran. Almost 1400 years back, when there were no observatories, Quran confab about different skies. With the advancement of space science the facts have been established that there is not a single sky. There are numerous galaxies and this earth is just a part of it. "Do you not consider how Allah has created seven heavens (skies) in layers?"<sup>xiv</sup>

In this way Quran established the universal scientific facts. Human beings were also informed that the sky which is seen from the earth is the lowest level of sky. "And He completed them as seven heavens within two days and inspired (i.e. made known) in each heaven its command. And we adorned the nearest heaven with lamps (i.e. stars for beauty) and as protection. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing. We have decorated the lowest heavens with lanterns"<sup>xv</sup>. This verse of Quran illustrates well about the galaxies and stars. The purpose of the lowest sky is also mentioned. Scientific advancements have proved that there lies the ozone layer which is a kind of protector for all the

creatures from the harmful rays originating from the sun. It attests that all the details Quran contains about the creation of Universe and its realities are vital and are explicable.

#### **NARRATIVES OF DIVERSE CREATURES: FROM ANT TO SUN**

The Quran is the book for all human beings and has narratives of different creatures. It contains instances from diverse beings of the creator. The names of the varied chapters and their organization in the Quran also tell us about the different creations in the worlds. It contains the account of several insects, trees and animals. Some of the chapters are named after insects, animals and even celestial objects. Ant (an- Naml), honeybee (an- Nahl), mosquito (ba'ooda), house bee (dhubab), Butterfly (firash), jarad (locusts) spider (An-Ankaboot) etc are either referred in the text or have full chapters named after them. Three chapters are named after the insects. They are as follows:

1. Surah an- Naml, named after ant,
2. Surah an- Nahl named after honeybee and
3. Surah an-Ankaboot, got its name from spider.

These insects are very common and can be found everywhere in the world. Human beings are very much familiar with all these creatures. In the same way there are descriptions of mammals. Cow, horse, cattle, donkey, lion, camel, dog, pig, elephant, sheep, goat, mule, wolf and many more have narratives in Quran. Quranic Chapters are as follows:

1. The Cow (al baqarah),
2. The Cattle (al an'am), and
3. The Elephant (al fil) named after these mammals.

The purpose is to make the message easily understandable. As in case of ants, they have communicated with Solomon (Suleman). Solomon, a prophet, who had been granted kingdom and he could understand the language of almost all the creatures. A miraculous conversation occurred between Solomon and the queen aunt. When the queen aunt saw the army of Solomon is about to arrive she said to other aunts. "Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said "O ant, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his while they perceive on"<sup>xvi</sup>. In the response Solomon smiled. It indicated that he could understand what the aunt is saying. This conversation also encourages people of all ages that Allah has assigned too much courage to an aunt that she could converse with the king and prophet of that time. The

Quran not only quotes the conversation between Solomon and aunt but devoted a whole chapter on aunt. There are chapters named after moon, star and sun. All of them are important, useful and powerful creatures of creator. Chapter no 54 of the Quran *Surah'al-Qamar'* stand for the moon. It is a mixture of exclamatory statements. Moon is beyond this earth and human beings are urged to concentrate on planetary objects. The beginning of this chapter has a discussion about the recording of the deeds. This chapter has directly addressed the unbelievers of Mecca. The beginning verses are a kind of warning for them and for all those who do evil deeds. It reminds us noteworthy incident of split of moon into two pieces by Prophet Mohammad. When, the unbelievers asked him to split the moon into pieces then Prophet Mohammad did so by the direction of his single finger. "The hour has come near and the moon has split (in two)"<sup>xvii</sup>

It illustrates us that with the powers assigned by Allah Holy Prophet could do this miracle. He is a messenger and commander for the entire universe. As Allah is the Lord of all the worlds. In another chapter named after the Sun (al shams), Allah has taken the oath of the Sun and its light. "By the Sun and its brightness. And (by) the moon, when it follows it."<sup>xviii</sup> Quran has revealed the universal realities which were not known to the Arabs of that time. They were proved in the later centuries with the advancement of science. In the above verses of Quran Allah has taken the oath of Sun, its brightness and the moon. About the moon, Allah has informed human beings that when it follows the sun. The advance science has confirmed that moon follows earth and earth follows sun. In this way moon pursue the sun and sun does not follow the moon. In this way Islam has encouraged man to think about universe and planetary objects they observe daily. Quran also enlighten human beings about the orbits of Sun and Moon, which science has discovered in the last century that sun is also rotating in its orbit. It is moving around Milky Way galaxy. "And it is He who created night and day, the Sun and the Moon, in an orbit are swinging."<sup>xix</sup>

In this way at the time, when there was no sign of astronomy, Quran told us the enormous realities. In the same way, at the age when the geology was not so developed Quran gave the details about mountains and their functions. As mentioned in Quran, "And We placed within the earth firmly set mountains, lest it should shift with them, and We made therein (mountain) passes (as)

roads that they might be guided."<sup>xx</sup>

In the age when there was no sign of ocean logy, Quran described the veracity from the seas. Quran clearly indicates that Fresh water does not mix with salty and bitter water. "And He it is Who has released two seas (i.e. bodies of water), one fresh and sweeter one salty and bitter and He placed between them a barrier and prohibiting partition."<sup>xxi</sup>

#### **HISTORY OF MANKIND**

Quran informs us about the history of human beings. The creation of the first man i.e. Adam is well discussed in Quran. The purpose of his creation is also talked about in Quran as Allah says "And (mention, O Muhammad), when your Lord said to the angels "Indeed I will make upon the earth a successive authority. They said: "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" He (Allah) said "indeed, I know which you do not know."<sup>xxii</sup> This verse informs us the motive of creation of Human beings. The verse also enlightens us about the ultimate knowledge; creator knows which the creatures are not aware. Quran also tells us how the first man was created. "(So mention) when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed I am going to create a human (Adam) from clay. So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My (created) then fall down to him for prostration".<sup>xxiii</sup> It attests that human beings are made of clay of altered smooth mud. It also contains a spiritual aspect, i.e. soul. This spiritual feature of human beings distinguishes them from other creatures. The spirituality is constantly encouraged in Islam. It gives details about the calamities faced by humankind over the span of history. As in case of prophet Nooh the flood is discussed. "And it was said, "O Earth! Swallow up your water, and O sky, Withhold (your rain)". And the water subsided, and the matter was accomplished, and it (i.e., the ship) came to rest on (mountain of) Judiyy. And it was said, "Away with the wrongdoing people".<sup>xxiv</sup>

It is a code of conduct for rulers as well as for ordinary man. It guides both powerful as well as deprived. Quran invites us to gain the knowledge of history of mankind. Stories of different prophets are told in Quran. Some of the prophets were granted kingdom, as David (Daood) and Solomon (Suleman) were granted. "And Solomon inherited David. He said, "O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty."<sup>xxv</sup>

While, there are descriptions of prophets such as

Abraham (Ibrabhim), Moses (Moosa) and Jesus (Isa). These prophets faced hardships on the hands of the cruel rulers of their times. In this way it holds the significance that we should not forget the message of Quran when we gain power and should not lose our passions whenever we face hardships.

**Address to all mankind in Quran:**

Quran is a message for all the mankind. Before going into discussion, the question arises why was the Quran revealed and what is its purpose? Quran itself replies this query. "A Guidance and a mercy for the doers of good."<sup>xxvi</sup> The purpose is to guide people. For this rationale Allah has send thousands of Prophets to guide humankind. Prophets were sent in all the lands and for all the communities. Quran states that each and every place and each community messengers were sent. The message was common, to call people to the righteous deeds, implore one and absolute almighty. It means at every place, tribes and nations prophets were assigned with duties to inform people by Allah. The message was comprehensive. "And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, (saying) "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut." And among them were those whom Allah guided, and among them were those upon whom error was (deservedly) decreed. So proceed (i.e., travel) through the earth and observe how was the end of the deniers."<sup>xxvii</sup>

Quran addresses whole mankind. At numerous places Allah has mentioned the whole mankind as 'bani adam' (Children of Adam). "And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam, and carried them on the land and sea, and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with (definite) preference."<sup>xxviii</sup>

The holy places of Islam also have their significance for human beings. For instance, Ka'ba in Mecca is the sacred place for Muslims. Allah has chosen this central place of faith to guide mankind and remind them about their part in a greater human family. This is the rationale Allah affirmed 'Ka'aba' as the house of security for mankind. It means it is not sacred for Muslims but for whole humankind. "And (mention) when We made the House (i.e. the Ka'bah) a place of return for the people and (a place of) security. And take, (O believers), from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer. And We charged Abraham and Ismael (saying), "Purify My House, for those who perform tawaf and those who are staying (there) for worship and those who bow and prostrate (in prayers)."<sup>xxix</sup>

After recounting Ka'ba a place for security for whole humankind Quran confer the message of universal brotherhood. The message of Quran is for whole human race. Racism, regionalism and caste system are against humanity and are the enemy of brotherhood. Quran in addition, discourages all these ills of society. This is the basis, Allah has clearly stated how he created human beings from single parents. "O Mankind, Indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is knowing and aware."<sup>xxx</sup> This verse illustrates that all human beings are the son and daughters of common parents. It gives the message of a larger universal family. Each and every human being is a part of it. The purpose of diverse nations, tribes and clan is also mentioned, that is just for the recognition and for convenience of populace. The parameter on which Allah likes people is also well explained in this message. People are encouraged to do righteous deeds and avoid evil. The memorandum of universal brotherhood and unity was given in the last Hajj sermon of Prophet Mohammad. "All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action"<sup>xxxi</sup>. This part of the final address of Prophet Mohammad clearly point towards the equality of all human beings. Their colour, region, tribe contains no matter of superiority over one another.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion we can say that Quran contains the universal message for human beings. The creation of Universe, man, and its purpose is well discussed in Quran. All human beings are part of a larger human community. This community is universal in nature, and the message for humanity is also complete and wide reaching. People are directed and commanded in the best way. Allah had send prophets for all lands and people; each and every community is guided by them. Islam discourages discrimination on the basis of colour, caste or creed because all are human being and are equal in respect to their physical appearances. It only distinguishes people on behalf of their deeds. They are believers or non-believers, good doers or evil doers. They are either guided or mislead. All human beings can

find guidance from Quran, as it contains guidance for all. It is not restricted to a specific religion, caste, community or region. It has best guidance for the children of Adam, i.e. for the whole mankind. To make message more comprehensible there are instances from different creatures. Even, honey bee, house bee and mosquitoes have been discussed in Quran. The purpose of such discussions is to urge people to apply senses and take lessons from them. As, discussed above, the purpose of Quran is guidance, and this purpose has been

fulfilled in the most familiar way. Since its revelation, Quran has always attracted the attention of intellectuals, that is the reason it has been translated in almost all the world languages and numerous commentaries have been written with the purpose of explaining the message it contains. Still there is open invitation from Quran to think and acquire knowledge to all and the endless process of familiarization, acquaintance and understanding of the divine message of Quran is on the way of progress.

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<sup>i</sup> All the translation of the verses have been referred from the "The Quran: An Authentic, Accurate And Clear English Translation" published by Al Muntada Al Islami Trust, English Meaning and notes by Saheeh International.

<sup>ii</sup> Al Quran (53: 32).

<sup>iii</sup> Al Quran (23:12-14).

<sup>iv</sup> Al Quran (10:56).

<sup>v</sup> Al Quran (57: 13).

<sup>vi</sup> Al Quran (7:187).

<sup>vii</sup> Al Quran, (17:36).

<sup>viii</sup> Al Quran (1:1).

<sup>ix</sup> Al Quran (21: 107).

<sup>x</sup> Al Quran, 62:1.

<sup>xi</sup> Al Quran, 51:47.

<sup>xii</sup> For more details kindly see "The Expanding Universe." The Expanding Universe. Accessed April 9, 2014. <http://skyserver.sdss.org/dr1/en/astro/universe/universe.asp>.

<sup>xiii</sup> Al Quran, 41:11.

<sup>xiv</sup> Al Quran, 71:15.

<sup>xv</sup> Al Quran 41:12.

<sup>xvi</sup> Al Quran, 27:18.

<sup>xvii</sup> Al Quran 54:1

<sup>xviii</sup> Al Quran 91:1-2.

<sup>xix</sup> Al Quran 21:33.

<sup>xx</sup> Al Quran 23:31.

<sup>xxi</sup> Al Quran, 25:53.

<sup>xxii</sup> Al Quran, 2:30.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Al Quran, 38:71-72.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Al Quran, 11:44.

<sup>xxv</sup> Al Quran, 27:16.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Al Quran, 31:3.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Al Quran, 16:36.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Al Quran, 17:70.

<sup>xxix</sup> Al Quran, 2:125.

<sup>xxx</sup> Al Quran, 49:13.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon: A Final Admonition." - The Religion of Islam. Accessed June 9, 2014. <http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/523/>.