

Comparison between Quranic and non-Quranic ways of living

Dr Karam Hussain Wadho*

Abstract

Indeed, this is thought provoking to compare Quranic and non-Quranic ways of living. Our current lifestyle is quite different from the one that is propounded by the Holy Quran even as if (the Quran) is not a book to be abandoned but is valid till the Day of Judgment.

The Quran is an everlasting miracle and lots of scientists have benefited from it, so far. In this research paper we will prove pre-eminence of the Quranic way of living over all other lifestyles. It is crystal clear that as compared to others the Creator or Inventor has the right to make the rules and regulations of an invented or created thing because others are ignorant of the needs and requirements of that thing.

Likewise, being the Creator of human being, it is Allah the Almighty Who knows the requirements and needs of humans. The Quran challenges to produce a verse like it. It says: "And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Surah like thereunto." It is also a fact that each and every system or thought has a manifesto and a body of law which is called constitution. Being Muslims, why our way of living is different than mentioned in the Quran when we believe that Islam is a complete code of life and the Quran is its constitution.

The author, in this article, has talked about the importance of Quranic way of living as compared to other lifestyles. It is to be remembered that the Quran elucidates matters scientifically as well as logically. It invites us to use our rational faculties & provides general and specific guidelines for those who are trying to spend their lives according to the teachings of the Quran. It is the responsibility of modern Islamic scholars to interpret the Quran in a way that it provides answers to the contemporary challenges because it (the Quran) is not a book to be forsaken but it is for all times to come and provides guidance to the whole humanity.

Keywords: Islam, Quranic, way of living, sects, values, peace

* Associate Prof/Additional Director (HR), Directorate of College Education Regional Directorate of Colleges Larkana, Sindh..

Introduction

The Quran is the word of God; therefore, whenever guidance is required, Muslims turn to it and consider it as the ultimate Guide that shows them the right path and takes them out of dilemma. Why the Muslims no longer enjoy glory in the world which they enjoyed in the past because they have almost stopped the use of the Quran as a means of guidance by pondering deep its meanings; they only recite it for reward.

When Muslims learn the Quran with understanding it changes them both internally and externally. Each and every verse of the Quran is a pearl, which is unique in every aspect. Thus, reading the Quran with understanding is something required from Muslims. Although, every verse of the Quran holds irrefutable and esteemed place for a Muslim, yet there are few verses, which if a person understands truly, can change his or her life, dramatically.

Quran states that the angel then commanded:

Recite in the name of your Lord who created; created man from a blood clot. Recite, for your Lord is most magnanimous - Who taught by the pen; taught man that which he did not know. (1)

Muslims claim that God warned Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): We shall surely lay upon you weighty speech, and enjoined him to rise up through most of the night in prayer, and remember fervently what he was told to be, "the Lord of the east and the west" (2)

For Muslims this "weighty speech" marked Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the last Messenger of God to humankind; this event was to have a great impact on the course of human history.

The Quran is said to have been communicated to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in two ways. Muslims believe it was communicated through the Angel Gabriel. These communications were revealed in small portions: single verses, groups of verses, and entire chapters or surah over a period of twenty to twenty-two years. The Quran for Muslims is not only words that can be uttered, heard, and recorded; it is also the heavenly archetype of which the recited and written Quran is only an earthly copy. The Quran in its heavenly

archetypal form is for Muslims the source of divine revelation throughout human history and is eternally preserved by God.

It is the covenant of God with humankind which He established with the children of Adam when they were but ideas or essences in the divine realm. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also professed to have experienced this heavenly Quran, in addition to having been the recipient of revelation. He would experience a profound spiritual state, shivering on a hot summer day or sweating on a cold winter day, hearing sounds like the ringing of a bell. These sounds transformed themselves in his consciousness into human words, which he memorized and had recorded.

Muslims also believe that the Quran was also sent down in parts, to Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) heart on the "night of determination"(3), a blessed night for all Muslims. This event sanctified his life and made Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) an example for Muslims to follow. In the Quran, God asked: Am I not your Lord? And those who chose to worship God affirmed as Lord responded with the words: Yes, we bear witness... (4) (The Quran is the seal and testimony to this covenant. Its message is, for Muslims, a powerful affirmation of divine lordship and Muslim commitment.

The Quran as an earthly text has been inextricably bound to Muslim history. It served as an answer to the problems of the Arab society in Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) time. The Quran was also a response to Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) questions about the meaning of human life and the mystery of creation, and was closely linked to the history of the nascent Muslim community in Makkah and, later, in Madina. Many of the Quranic verses are said to have been revealed in answer to specific questions or life situations. The answers given are seen by Muslims to be general principles, moral imperatives, or precepts applicable to all times and places. The family of the Prophet (pbuh), which the Quran directly addressed (5) is seen by Muslims to be a model for all families and all societies in the world.

Arrangement of the Quran

The Quran was subsequently written down and memorized by professing Muslim men and women. Yet, when the Prophet (pbuh) died in 632 CE, ten years after the Hijrah, that is, his migration from Makkah to Madina, the Quran as it is known today, did not exist. The verses and chapters, or suras, were, at that time, scattered fragments of the writings of Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) scribes, preserved on

privately collected pieces of parchment, stone, palm leaf, and leather, in addition to words preserved in human memory.

It was during the reign of the third Muslim caliph (or religious leader) Uthman, who governed the existing Muslim community several generations after Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) death, that the Quran was given its standard form, which remains unchanged to this day. The suras were arranged so that, generally, there would be progression from the longest chapter to the shortest. It is the arrangement that has been preserved as the authoritative version of the Quran.

It is essential for every pious Muslim to memorize as much of the Quran as possible. A Muslim prayer in the solitude of a room or in a congregation begins with the words of the Quran's opening sura (Al-Fatihah). Prayer is considered to be a way for Muslims to appropriate the word of Allah. This divine-human interchange is eloquently expressed in a Hadith Qudsi, a saying of the Prophet (pbuh) quoting God:

Comparison of Quranic life style with non-Quranic life style

The Quran underlies this great diversity and provides a fundamental unity in worship practices, literary expression and popular culture. This paradoxical unity and diversity of Islam and its grounding in the Quran is its perceived strength. The principle of unity of the human family is an important Quranic viewpoint and best principle: advice Humankind, to fear your Lord who created you all from one soul, from it. He created its partner, and from them both He scattered many men and women (6). The principle of diversity is also a Quranic principle.

Difference of race, color, and creed are divinely preordained. Here people say that men and women are equal while the Quran differently bifurcates both even it is in holy Quran that "the male is not like female" the people of low knowledge say that Islam and Quran is ancient culture and civilization; for this point they are saying that:

The Quran has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Muslims in every discipline of knowledge and human endeavor. Devout Muslims claim that it speaks to every situation in the life of Muslim societies as well as to the condition of every Muslim individual. Muslims have insisted that the Quran is applicable to all

situations at all times. Yet, for it to be universal in its scope and meaning, the Quran is read and committed to heart by every Muslim as though it were sent down at that moment and for him or her alone.

It is common view of people that Quranic life style does not reach the standard of people who are witnessing the present-day technology but they have omitted this thing that the Creator of universe including mankind has said:

(1) that “ I have perfected this Religion for you, and completed my favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a Religion”(7)

When we interpret this verse of the Quran we find therein complete code of life because the word ‘perfection’ is a proof of all things i.e. culture, civilization, humbleness and all the God Gifted Qualities.

In non Quranic life style people say that Allah is pleased with people but in the Quranic sense Almighty Allah has said;

(2) that “you are not pleased until Almighty Allah is pleased”(8)

Non Quranic life style considers male and female as equal in dignity and power whereas in Quranic point of view;

(3) “and the male is not like female” (9)

For this point, we have a lot of evidence that according to the Quran the inheritance portion for male is double because of his capacity and responsibility; such kind of decisions were also given by Hazrat Ali. On the basis of Quran, he proved that even the milk of male baby is heavy than female baby.

The people of non Quranic life style give preference to their view on the logic that teaching of the Quran is not quite compatible with the modern day needs because now the ability and power of thinking and pondering has been improved whereas Quranic views are 1450 years old.

(4) The answer to their above-said thought is that if the Quran consists of merely ancient events and stories than why Almighty Allah chose Islam as the best religion and said “ and whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted and he shall be one of the losers” (10)

(5) Another thing they say is, Almighty Allah has omitted them while Almighty Allah has said that “and your Lord not forgetful”

Some people used to raise questions on Almighty why He gives foes of Islam a lot of wealth and resources while believers are poverty-stricken and are lagging behind in all aspects. In fact, they are ignorant from His techniques and wisdom. According to Quranic view (5) “He cannot be questioned concerning what He does and they shall be questioned” (11) because it is decision of intelligence that Sustainer has the right to ask and needy has no right to raise questions or objection on the Giver of reward.

The non Quranic life style says if people disobey Allah then why He not destroys them while He has power over all His creature? The answer is also there in Quran, which is as under:

(6) “and for every nation there is a doom so when their doom comes they shall not remain behind the least while, nor shall they go before”(12)

Non Quranic style prevents us from generosity and guide towards the greed and vices whereas Quranic life style encourages us to give charity and alms as Almighty Allah Has said that “and spend, it is better for your soul and whoever is saved from greediness of his soul, it is that he is succeeded’. On another occasion, He also advises us to spend from the sustenance given by Almighty Allah before the departure from this world. In another place, Quran says that “Almighty Allah dislikes the wealth [revolving] among the rich people” (13)

(7) People mostly call on their self-created gods while the Quran says that “and those whom you call on besides Allah are in a state of subjugation like yourselves, therefore call on them then let them answer you if you are truthful” (14)

Another matchless quality of Quranic life style, which differentiates it from all other styles is “whom they pray besides Allah, give them no answer but they are like one who stretches forth his two hands towards the water that it may reach his mouth”(15)

If we visit the land, we found therein four types of people in the world;

1. People those obey Allah they are contented. "whoever does good whether male or female and is a believer We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them reward for the best of what they did"(16)

2. People who disobey Allah they are under distress. "and whoever turns away from My Reminder will make his life in distress" (17) now here is the need to rescue ourselves from distress. The method is also there in the Quran as Hazrat Ali said "Seek its assistance [i.e. the Quran's] in your distress, for verily it contains the cure for the deadliest diseases, namely disbelief and hypocrisy, revolt and misguidance.'(18)

3. They are remembering Allah but they are under difficulties and calamities.(19)

4. People who do not remember Allah they are in gleeful position and pleasure.

Quran has described all above kinds of people as under; "But when they neglected that with which they had been admonished we opened for them the doors of all things until they rejoiced in what they were given we seized them suddenly them Lo! They were in utter despair (20)"

"And continue to remind for surely the reminder profits the Believers (21)

The Quran emphasizes that the people who were in this world in ease they will be punished as "surely they were before that made to live in ease and plenty. And they persisted in great violation" (22)

These are signs of people of Left Hand; those whose book of deeds will be given in their left hand they are dwellers of Hell.

Unfortunately a lot of people belonging to Muslim community left the teachings of Holy Quran, and this is why the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will lodge complaint against those that "O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Qur'an as [a thing] abandoned."

Hazrat Ali said in his valuable speech: "Six things are used to test the faith of a man; the strength of his religion, the truth of his conviction, the intensity of his piety, his overcoming vain desires, the paucity of his [worldly] inclinations and his being moderate in what he seeks".(24)

'The worth of a man with respect to his religion is measured by his diligence to keeping up his daily prayers [at their specific times]."(25)

"Shall I teach you four traits by which you will be in no need of any medical treatment?"

Hazrat Ali further said: "Yes," Imam Hasan (AS) answered. Then, 'Ali (AS) said:

Do not sit for food (in order to eat) unless you are hungry; and, do not leave the (table of) food but you still have an appetite for it; chew (your food in your mouth) well; and, when you want to go to bed, (primarily) go to the water-closet to ease nature. If you take these in action, you will be in no need of any medical treatment."(26)

The Quranic life style always depends on the origin of religion that is Islam. It is an all-round movement in the light of belief in Allah and the sense of responsibility for the formation of right thought and faith for the promotion of high principles of the human morality throughout the world for the establishment of good relations among members of the entire society and the elimination of all sorts of undue discrimination. Hence we have to require the Quranic life style for the following reasons.

1. Quran is guideline for practical life

The Quran provides sanction for the principles of morality, like justice, honesty, righteousness, brotherhood, equality, virtuousness, tolerance, sacrifice, help to the needy, and other kindred virtues. These are the virtues without which, not only our life will lose its order and normalcy but it is very likely to plunge into chaos. Of course, it is possible to acquire these moral and social qualities without the aid of religion. But, certainly in the absence of firm religious belief, these values appear to lose their meaning and become a series of mere unbinding recommendations, because in such a case, they are no more than a piece of advice from a close friend, and we are at full liberty to accept or reject these recommendations.

These qualities are rather based on an internal feeling and faith and are naturally beyond the scope of ordinary law.

The well-known philosopher-cum-historian, Will Durant in his book, “Pleasures of Philosophy” says that without the backing of religion, morality is nothing more than arithmomancy, as without it, the sense of obligation disappears

Famous quote about need of religion:

Religion is an important institution. A nation without religion cannot survive (Mustafa Kamal Attaturk)

2. How to confront the difficulties of life

A religious man, with firm belief in Allah and of his munificence does not find himself in utter desperation even in the worst moments of his life because he knows well that he is under the protection of a Being Who is Mighty. With faith in the fact that his every problem can be solved and every deadlock can be restored with His help, he can overcome every disappointment and hopelessness. (27)

That is why religion provides power for facing adversities and serves as a bulwark against undesirable reactions of despair and hopelessness.

The Holy Quran says: “Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah, there will no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve” (28)

3. Source of knowledge and revelation

Religion with its firm and sound teachings can be an effective factor in scientific progress, because its foundation has been laid on the solid bedrock of “freedom of will” and on the fact that everybody is accountable for his own deeds”.

The Holy Quran says: “Everyone is entangled in the outcome of his deeds” (29)

Faith in religion teaches that limitless knowledge is the source of this cosmos, which is like a very grand book, penned by an erudite scholar. Every page of it, nay every line and every word of it, contains a glaring truth, which stimulates us to further study and contemplate.

This attitude towards the cosmos undoubtedly stimulates persistent thinking over the mechanism of creation and consequently helps in the advancement of science and knowledge.

In contrast, if we hold that this universe is the product of sheer mechanical factors having no intellect, there remain no plausible reasons why we should make strenuous efforts to discover its secret.

In principle, a universe which is the outcome of the working of unconscious machinery can neither be well-designed nor mysterious.

A part from given a deadly blow to the advancement of science and knowledge, such conception of cosmos negates every fact that man's instinct is basically routed in religion. Albert Einstein was very true when he pointed out why all great thinkers and discoverers are interested in religion. He said that it was hard to find anyone among the great thinking brains of the world who might not have a sort of religious feeling peculiar to him. That feeling was different from the religion of the man in the street.

It has the form of a delightful wonder at the marvelously accurate system of the universe, which from time to time unveils secrets. This illuminates the path of the life and efforts of a scientist and as he gains success and honor, it keeps him free from the deadweight of selfishness.

4. Fight against discriminations

Religion strongly opposes every discrimination, based on colour, race and class, because it regards all human being as God's creatures and every country as God's country. According to it, all enjoy God's love and kindness equally and hence all are equal.

According to the teachings of Islam, no man can be superior to another on the basis of his color, race descent, language and class.

Islam recognizes only piety and knowledge as the touchstone of superiority.

Allah says:

"O mankind! Lo! We have created you from male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in the conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware. (30)

5. Harmony with nature

Man has been familiar with religion for such a long time that it covers the entire recorded history of human life and goes back into the depths of pre-historic times.

The Holy Quran has described religion as man's innate nature and Allah's established order.

Research, carried out by sociologists and historians, shows that places of worship, either in their simple or elaborate and complex forms, have always had an influence on human life and religion, in their various shapes have been interwoven with history.

The question of religion in the view of philosopher is one of the basic questions of history and psychology. He adds that, from time immemorial, religion has always gone hand in hand with human history.

The idea of piety can never be removed from human heart.

It is obvious that, at a time, when the level of human thinking was low and the sciences had not made any remarkable progress, this internal feeling was in an incredible way mixed with superstition, but gradually with the progress of sciences, on one hand, and persistent efforts and teachings of the prophets on the other, it got purified of adulteration to regain its purity and originality. (31)

Scientific wonders in the Quran

Although the first and basic aim of the Quran, according to what it says itself, is only to guide man to the great road of contentment and prosperity in the life of this world, the world of man. And in pursuit of this aim, it expresses many truths from human knowledge in the natural sciences, in physiology and astronomy. And this is itself another great sign of the wonder of the Quran. For the Prophet (pbuh), according to the definite testimony of the history, had never studied, grew up in an environment completely devoid of human knowledge and science (except literature), and was far from the centres of science –Greece, Rome and Iran of those days.

Now let us see some indications of this wonder:

1. Now metrology is a very new science. The knowledge of former people about the phenomena of cloud, wind, rain and snow did not go beyond conjecture and what they could see, and, generally speaking, it had an air of imaginativeness and chance and was never established on the scientific basis. They had their signs and indications forecasting wind and rain, but they did not really understand these phenomena.

Thus things went on for thousands of years, till, in the seventh century A.D, the thermometer, and in the 19th century the telegraph and gradually other things necessary for metrology were invented and discovered. In their turn, scientists settled down research, till, in

the first half of the 20th century, the Norwegian scientist Byerkness succeed in discovering the general laws of the formation and movement of clouds and the occurrence of storms and rains in all places.

The huge edifice of our, the Muslims, glory collapsed when we stopped putting the commands of this heavenly Book into the practice. So we fell down, we were satisfied only with the name of Islam.

Our departed glory will return when we leave this crooked way, become new Muslims and make the Quran as source of guidance, as the Prophet (pbuh) said;

“When calamities encompass you like the darkness of the night, reach for the Quran”(32)

The Quranic life style is being identified through its orders and advices. These are thousands but we are unable to interpret all these advice. However, in this paper we concisely discussed some of them, draw a line between the Quranic life style and non Quranic life style which is away from reality and right path. Below are some Quranic orders:

1. “Pardon them and ask pardon for them and take counsel with them in the affairs when you decided then place your trust on Almighty Allah”(33)

2. “Those who rein their anger and pardon men and Allah loves doers of good” (34)

3. “And serve Allah and do not associate anything Him and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbor of your kin” (35)

4. (Allah) said: "(O Iblees) get down from this (Paradise); it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out, for you are of those humiliated and disgraced." (36)

5. Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e. don't punish them). (37)

6. "And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear Allah." (38)

7. "And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice (braying) of the ass." (39)

8. And (made him) sympathetic to men as a mercy (or a grant) from Us, and pure from sins (i.e. Yahya (John)) and he was righteous, (40)

9. "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you are dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour".(41)

10. And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a fahishah (i.e. anything that transgresses its limits (a great sin)), and an evil way (that leads one to Hell unless Allah forgives him).(42)

11. And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neither neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty. (43)

12. And follow not (O man i.e., say not, or do not or witness not, etc.) that of which you have no knowledge (e.g. ones saying: "I have seen," while in fact he has not seen, or "I have heard," while he has not heard). Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned (by Allah). (44)

13. O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Satan). Verily, he is to you an open enemy. (45)

14. And if the debtor is in a hard time (has no money), then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay, but if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you knew. (46)

15. Whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden Riba (usury).(47)

16. And eat up not one another's property unjustly (in any illegal way e.g. stealing, robbing, deceiving, etc.), nor give bribery to the rulers (judges before presenting your cases) that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property. (48)

17. (the quality of) the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans,

and to Al-Masakin (the poor), and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, performs As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and gives the Zakat, and who fulfill their covenant when they make it, and who are As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.) in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people of the truth and they are Al Muttaqoon. (49)

18. Then let there be a pledge taken (mortgaging); then if one of you entrust the other, let the one who is entrusted discharge his trust (faithfully), and let him be afraid of Allah, his Lord. And conceal not the evidence for he, who hides it, surely his heart is sinful. And Allah is All Knower of what you do. (50)

19. And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth (51)

20. Verily! Allah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which He (Allah) gives you! Truly, Allah is Ever All Hearer, All Seer. (52)

21. You who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin (53)

22. For women from what is left by parents (54)

Conclusion

In the outcome of this research paper it is proved that the Quran has given us a proper life style. We can make reforms easily by the dint of principles and advices told by this heavenly Book.

This life style depends on the verses of surah The Apartments which is full of injunctions like good deeds and moral character. For example, it prevents from suspicion [zann] because in some cases it is sin besides this tells us the harm of backbiting and counts the sin of it as the eating of flesh of a dead brother.

It also forbids from relying on the major sinner if anyone from you listen the news you must scrutinize it; if it is correct then accept it.

Meanwhile, it is also stated in this surah that piety is best quality for men and women. In the sight of Almighty Allah the most respectable are pious people.

Concisely it is suggested to Muslim Ummah to follow these above-mentioned instructions of the Quran while non Quranic life style does not indicate the better attitude of life.

If a comparison is drawn between the two life styles then all the systems of world will not guide us because the creator of other life style is man while the introducer of Quranic life style is Allah the Almighty Who has all knowledge of humanity and its needs.

The Quran loudly says that the character is flourished with the piety and the kernel of piety is human justice. The definition of justice is quietly different from equality because equality means distribution of things in equal parts while the justice is meant to keep things on their right place.

That is why Almighty Allah says that if you are not sure of justice between them [wives], then you must avoid polygamy; for example if your first wife is little and the other is tall, then according to equality, you will have to give cloths both of them equal while justice says that you should give them according to the measurement and as per need.