

Tafseer Al-Baqarah [The Introduction]

From the Book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran,

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(Translated)

All-Praise be to Allah (swt), and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah (saw), his family, and those who follow him.

Allah (swt) sent Muhammad (saw) with the message of Islam to take the people from the darkness into the light with the permission of their Lord, to the path of Al-'Azeez Al-Hameed. Allah (swt) said, ﴿الرَّحْمَٰنُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ﴾ **“Alif Lam Ra. [This is] a Book which We have revealed to you that you may bring forth men, by their Lord's permission from utter darkness into light—to the way of the Mighty, the Praised One,”** [TMQ Surah Ibraheem: 1].

Allah (swt) made his [Muhammad] (saw) miracle and the confirmation of his Prophethood a blessed Book from Allah, the Quran al-Kareem, the speech of Allah Al-'Adheem, which, ﴿لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ﴾ **“Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One.”** [TMQ Surah Fussilat: 42].

Allah (swt) sent it down in the language of the Arabs, from the letters of their speech, addressing them with a clear Arabic tongue, calling them to become believers in it, understand it and adhere to it; but they found that it did not recognize for them their desires nor did it give their idols any weight, nor did it give any legitimacy to their wickedness and corruption as they used to do. On the contrary, it ridiculed their idols, condemned their cruelty, oppression and tyranny, bringing equality between the slave and the master, the near and the far, the Arab and non-Arab, except for who is most pious, so he (saw) is purest, and said, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، أَلَا إِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، أَلَا لَافِضٌ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجْمِي وَلَا لِعَجْمِي عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ، وَلَا «O people, truly your lord is one and your father is one. There is not superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, except according to taqwa. Nor for red over black, nor black over red, except according to taqwa.” All of you are from Adam and Adam is from dust. Allah (swt) said, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾ **“O Mankind! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the most pious; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Hujarat:13].

When they heard what the Messenger of Allah (saw) came with, they comprehended and knew that it was from Allah, the speech of Allah (swt) and not the speech of man. They were the people of the language and its masters, it is their tongue and their instinct, it is their product and their goods, and with it in their markets they would compete and with its blades they would debate.

Except that they stopped at that which they heard, then they thought and evaluated, so how could they be equal to their slaves?!... and how can they live without servants?!... then how can they be masters if they are not tyrants and oppressors demonstrating their power, the fierce who does not fear anyone?!... how and how?!...

At this, they denied it, after they had comprehended it. Allah (swt) said, ﴿قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ﴾ **“They said, you are only a man like us, and Ar-**

Rahman did not send down anything, you only lie” [TMQ Surah Yasin: 15], so they turned their backs arrogantly, increasing in their insolence wandering blindly.

They thought that the matter would end at that, as they were greater in number and more vociferous. They will say that what Muhammad brings is only ﴿وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اٰكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَىٰ﴾ **“The stories of the ancients-- he has got them written- so these are read out to him morning and evening”** [TMQ Surah Al-Furqan:5], ﴿وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ﴾ **“And when Our verses are recited to them, they say: We have heard indeed; if we wanted we could say the like of it; this is nothing but the stories of the ancients”** [TMQ Surah Al-Anfal:31], And that they could recite as he recites, then they turned their backs arrogantly laughing.

They did not expect that the proof would be established against them, and who could defeat them?! Instead, who could even debate with them?! If Muhammad said a word, they would say ten. If he raised his voice a little, they would gather for him loud shouting bellowing voices, ﴿وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً صُمُّ بِكُمْ عُمِّيٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ﴾ **“The likeness of those who are kafir is that of someone who yells out to something which cannot hear – it is nothing but a cry and a call. Deaf – dumb – blind. They do not use their intellect.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 171].

They related falsehood to confront the true stories, thinking that with those falsifications the truth would get lost in the crowd.

Yet, the matter came not as they desired, and from where they had not reckoned. It was said to them, if you are truthful in your claims that what Muhammad recites is just a man’s saying; that if you wanted, then you would say like he says; so the arena is in front of you and the battlefield is at your fore. This Quran is a witness, not absent. You hear its verses and comprehend its words. Its letters are from the same letters that you utter, so come on, bring the like of it. If you can do that and bring the like of this Quran, then the matter is as you said. Allah (swt) said, ﴿قُلْ لَنْ يَجْتَمِعَ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا﴾ **“Say: If men and jinn should come together to bring the like of this Quran, they could not bring the like of it, even if they were helpers one of another”** [TMQ Surah Al-Israa’: 88].

But they did not do so. Instead, they turned back on their heels confused. So, from one angle they knew that it was Allah’s words, as was pronounced by the *sadiq al-ameen* (truthful and trustworthy one) (saw), as they were the people of the language and its masters, yet from another angle they were not able to admit to that. For their idols, their dreams, their corrupted and corrupting interests will, if they did that, become as dust blown by the wind in a storm. They would be unable to grab anything of what they had gained. That is the great loss. So, they turned round in a circle and immediately began searching maybe they could find what would lengthen by a few days the period until the announcement of their failing in the challenge, thus delaying the establishment of the proof against them. They found, as was evident in their actions, that bringing the like of the whole Quran is a difficult matter, so the burden was lightened a little when it was said to them, ﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ﴾ **“Or, do they say: He has forged it. Say: Then bring ten forged chapters like it and call upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful.”** [TMQ Surah Hud:13].

However, they could not do that, so they returned to their original remarks. The comprehensive confirmation completely conquered them, ﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ﴾ **“Or do they say: He has forged it? Say: Then bring a chapter**

like this and invite whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful.” [TMQ Surah Yunus: 38].

You and every helper from the creation that you can muster, from wherever and whatever it is.

Yet again, they could not do so. The evidence was the final evidence and the last word, ﴿وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (23) فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا﴾ **“And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful. But if you do not and never shall you do [it], then fear the fire of which men and stones are the fuel; prepared for the unbelievers.”** [TMQ Al-Baqarah:23-4].

You will not only be unable to do it now, but you will never ever be able to do it for all eternity. The Quran is the speech of Allah, Al-Haq (The Truth). The speech of man does not come close to his kingdom, nor do the words of the Jinn ascend to approach it. It is the truth that the falsehood does not come near to, not from the front nor from behind; a revelation sent down from a Wise Praised One.

That was enough for them to become believers, except that Shaytan got the better of them, desires destroyed them, ﴿زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ﴾ **“The love of desires, of women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver and well-bred horses and cattle and tilth, is made to seem attractive to men; this is the provision of the life of this world; and Allah is He with Whom is the good goal [of life].”** [TMQ Surah Aali-‘Imran:14].

They gave a lower status to knowledge, were haughty and stubborn, remaining on their kufr (disbelief) while they knew full well. This compounded their confusion and brought them bewilderment on top of bewilderment.

How could the masters convince the masses that this Quran is not the speech of Allah? How can they turn them away from it, so that they do not follow it?

They gave great importance to the issue and seriously searched for a way out of this predicament. However, their destruction was in their plans, so instead of making clear a way out, their predicament got even worse; ﴿لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا﴾ **“To Him is due the true prayer; and those whom they pray to besides Allah give them no answer, but [they are] like one who stretches forth his two hands towards water that it may reach his mouth, but it will not reach it; and the prayer of the unbelievers is only in error.”** [TMQ Surah Ar-Ra’d: 14].

They entered with kufr and exited with it, establishing the proof against themselves, instead of raising for themselves a proof.

They said: “they are nothing but Muhammad’s words”, but how when Muhammad’s words differ from that which he recites? And how when Muhammad is illiterate while his people read and write, yet they are incapable of bringing the like of it? It is therefore not a valid statement that they are Muhammad’s words, so they put this accusation behind them and left it.

They said: “a man who is not from us teaches him” and mentioned a foreign Christian, yet they had it turned on their heads, ﴿وَلَقَدْ نَعَلْنَا أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ﴾ **“And certainly, We know that they say: It is a man that teaches him.**

The tongue of him whom they incline to is notably foreign, and this is clear Arabic tongue.” [TMQ Surah An-Nahl: 103].

So, they put that behind them and left it.

Then, they said: “It is nothing but narrated magic, charming words”, however they found that the proof was established against them, as it was evidence of their inability, such that the book in front of them appeared to be magic due to its strength and greatness. Also, the proof was against them, as magic has a reality well known to them due to their extensive experience with it, and they knew the difference between the utterances of the magician and these great words.

They were about to retract this statement, if they hadn't found that they were able to convince some of the general public with their saying: “don't you see that the entering of a family member into Islam is what makes the son, if he became Muslim, leave worshipping the idols of his father, therefore Islam divides between them, as if it were magic?”

They found that this was more useful for misguiding than other ways, so they relied upon it, ﴿فَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ﴾ **“Then he said: This is naught but enchantment, narrated from others”**. [TMQ Surah Al-Mudathir:24].

However, it was as if they jumped out of the frying pan into the fire.

Whoever listens to Allah's words recited is absolutely certain that what he hears is not magic, therefore they agreed among themselves to come between the people and them listening to the Quran, ﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ **“And those who disbelieve say: Do not listen to this Quran and make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome.”** [TMQ Surah Fussilat:26].

They made noise to disturb it until no-one would hear it from Rasool Allah, rather the situation reached the point where they met with the riders, talking to them about the magic of Muhammad (saw) sometimes with temptation and other times with fear, afraid that they might hear it and realise that it is from Allah, as they themselves had become aware. They did this so that neither the Bedouin Arabs, the travellers nor the residents would become believers; such that they delay, if they could, the emergence of Islam and the raising of its banner. They did it to obstruct, without increasing the army of Ar-Rahman and the elevation of His word, yet they should have known that there is no way for that to come to them, if they were intelligent.

This is how they proceeded; on the one hand they were pulled by their recognition that this Quran is Allah's speech, such that even their leaders would go secretly to the house of Rasool Allah (saw) to listen at night to what was being recited of the verses of the Quran, the Wise Reminder. If they saw some of the others while they were returning, they agreed to never return again, so that the general public would not see them. But they did return, the Quran had captured their hearts, so one of them would say: “It is so graceful, and so sweet, its lowest part is abundant and its highest part is fruitful, confirming that it is not the words of man.”

That is from one side; they were pulled by their recognition that this Quran is Allah's speech. On the other hand, they were pulled by their idols, that which their forefathers were on, their interests and their lusts.

Whoever had a pure nature, an untainted mind, became aware, repented, believed and became pious and fearful.

Whoever's eyes were blinded and he settled lower than low, while his corrupt world ascended for him to the highest levels, remained wandering in his insolence prostrating to and clasping his idols. Like this, he became a believer whoever believed and a disbeliever whoever disbelieved... he raced to Iman (what makes a believer a believer) whoever raced,

and procrastinated whoever procrastinated until the Islamic State was established in Al-Madinah al-Munawwara. Islam was spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula then that light extended to end the oppression of the great states of the time. Persia was shattered, the Romans were cut apart and the Islamic State became great. Justice was spread as a companion of the Jihad, the flag of Islam was raised, the flag of **لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله** “**there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger**”. The conquests widened and the earth radiated with Islam and the army of Islam.

With Islam the best ummah (people) raised from humankind was founded, **﴿عُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ﴾** “**You are the best ummah raised from mankind, you command the good and forbid the evil and you believe in Allah**” [TMQ Surah Aali-Imran 110].

With Islam a state arose that was a guiding light for the world, spreading justice to all corners of the earth. The sovereignty and leadership of this Ummah and this state was for the Book of Allah (swt) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw).

The Muslims in the time of Rasool Allah (saw) and the time of his companions (ra) used to understand the Quran and the Sunnah with a pure understanding. An understanding that made them glad and satisfied the hearts. If a verse or part of a verse was explained by Rasool Allah as a shariah legal explanation, so the word or verse was given a shariah terminology, they adhered to it and followed it. If he did not give it a shariah terminology they searched for it in their language, the Arabic language, in which it was sent down **﴿فَرَأَانَا عَرَبِيًّا﴾** “**an Arabic Quran**” [TMQ Surah Yusuf: 2] and whose tongue it was **﴿بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ﴾** “**with a clear Arabic tongue**” [TMQ Surah Ash-Shuaraa:195].

Like this, if Rasool Allah (saw) read: **﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ﴾** “**establish Shariah prayer (Salah)**” [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah:43] then explained ‘Salah’ as specific actions and sayings, they followed this shariah terminology in understanding the verse and its performance, thus leaving the linguistic meaning of ‘prayer’ that has the meaning of supplication.

As for when it was read to them **﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ﴾** “**carrion is forbidden for you**” [TMQ Surah Al-Maidah:3] and he (saw) did not give it a shariah terminology; they understood it in their Arabic language as a prohibition to eat carrion, because the tahreem (prohibition) is connected to carrion as is clear in their language.

This is what they used to do. If an explanation was authentically traced back to Rasool Allah (saw), they adhered to it and followed it. If not, they looked for it in their language that the Quran was sent down in. This matter gave them a sound understanding and a straight path that they traveled along, so the Ummah became honoured and the state strong. With that they had a great position.

What increased the purity purer and the clarity clearer was their adding to their understanding of the language of the Quran their understanding of the limits of the human mind that Allah distinguished mankind with. Allah (swt) said, **﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا﴾** “**Allah taught Adam all of the names**” [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah:31].

They understood that the mind is limited in its scope and its capability, so it cannot study except that which has a sensed reality. As for what has no reality, then there is no role for the mind to produce a thought about it, rather every study of what has no reality will not fail to be an instance of imagination.

They thought about Allah’s creation and contemplated His signs. They saw that this universe, man and life, with its limited nature, its incapability and its neediness and its existence with this precise system, indicates definitely that it has a great powerful eternal

creator who limited its existence and organized its sustenance, who is able to end its incapability and secure its needs. So, they believed in Allah, the Creator, the One, Al-Ahad as a result of contemplating His signs and thinking about His creation on the basis of the sensed reality for them.

Then, they believed in the Quran al-Kareem and that it is the speech of Allah (swt), because they failed in the challenge and their inability to bring a surah like it while they are the people of clear speech and eloquence. Their language is the language of the Quran, so their incapability was a definite proof that the Quran is the speech of Allah (swt), so they believed in the Quran that they read or heard its verses, while it was sensed by them, not unseen to them.

Like this it was confirmed that Muhammad is a Messenger from Allah, as he had come to them with the speech of Allah revealed by Him (swt). So, they believed that Muhammad is Rasool Allah while it was sensed by them, not unseen to them.

However, they did not exercise the mind in the unseen that were not sensed by them. So, they did not subject it to an intellectual study, because it is not its domain. Rather, they were satisfied with an-naql (the transmission), i.e. with what came about it in the book of Allah and what they heard of it from Rasool Allah, or was transmitted to them of him (saw).

Therefore, they did not exercise the mind to investigate the Attributes of Allah: are they are created or uncreated? Are they connected to the Essence (dhat) or separate from it?!... This is because, their reality was not sensed by them, so they believed in them as they came by way of transmission from Allah's Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw). The Quran is the speech of Allah, they believed in that and were certain about all that was in it, without doubt or suspicion.

Allah is As-Samee', Al-Baseer, Al-'Aleem, Al-Hakeem, [All-Hearing, All-Seeing, All-Knowing, Most Wise] for Him is the best names. They believed in that and had certainty without any investigation into how are these attributes. Rather, they surrendered to them submissively.

Their Iman in the unseen matters became complete just as the Quran brought it, without increase or decrease, without interpretation or misguidance. They were happy with that and the hearts were satisfied.

Just as they understood the scope of the language in understanding the Quran, similarly they comprehended the scope of the mind and the transmission in al-iman (belief). So, the Quran is not understood except in the language with which it was sent down, and the mind is not exercised in what has no sensed reality, rather it is transmitted from the Book of Allah and the sunnah of His Messenger (saw) and it is believed in as it is. The limits of the language are not exceeded in understanding the Quran, nor is the scope of the mind that Allah distinguished mankind with exceeded. Their adherence to these two: the language and the mind, and understanding their limits and their domains, was a path to the soundness of the aqeedah (creed) and its correctness, and to the best implementation and perfection of the Shariah rules.

This is what the Muslims were on in the time of Rasool Allah (saw) and the time of his Companions (ra), all of them, and those who followed them in good. Their weapon in understanding their Deen was what was authentically transmitted of Rasool Allah (saw) of explanation, and their comprehending their language, the Arabic language that the Quran was sent down in. Then, their understanding the scope of the mind, its limits and that it has no role in the un-sensed unseen matter, except in proportion to what the mind transmits from the book of Allah and what tawatar (multiplicity in serial narration) from Rasool Allah (saw).

But there came after them successors, who were weaker in their possession of the language and who were confused about matters. So, they delved into explaining the verses

of Allah without the language that it was sent down in, giving meanings to it which it cannot carry. Interpretations became many as they made for the text apparent and hidden meanings. Sects were founded and the people who followed their desires disunited the opinions. This did not stop at exerting effort in the branches, rather it transgressed into the foundations until it extended to the beliefs and the branches of belief.

That which muddied the waters more, was that they did not comprehend the scope of the mind and its limits, so they gave it free reign in what it was not created for. They entered into the intellectual study of Allah's essence, His attributes and the creation of the Quran. The brought investigations that are neither in the Book of Allah (swt) nor in the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw). They busied the people along with them in investigations that Allah did not send down authority for, dividing the Muslims instead of gathering them on the truth that Rasool Allah (saw) and his Companions (ra) were on.

Then, after those successors, came other successors, distancing further from the truth, descending lower than those who came before them in terms of guidance.

Those who came before them had one calamity in that they gave free reign to the mind in other than its domain, then some misfortune in their weakness in possession of the language.

As for those who came after them, the initial calamity remained as it was, so they also gave free reign to the mind in other than its domain, then they completed the previous misfortune [so it became a calamity] by neglecting the language, not giving any value to it. If only they had known that they were on ignorance, for they would have then sought knowledge and learnt it. But they thought that they themselves were knowledgeable, so you see that they were daring with the Deen of Allah. They were asked and gave fatwas (specific legal rulings) while they read the verses of Allah and the narrations of Rasool Allah without understanding or contemplating the language that the Quran was revealed in and the Messenger of Islam (saw) spoke in, without comprehending its sciences and styles.

If you said to them "how do you issue rules from the Book and Sunnah while you don't understand the language of the Quran and the sunnah?!" Or, you said to them "Don't you fear Allah in deriving rules that you are not qualified for, and it is obligatory upon you to concentrate on the language before you issue rules and misguide or be misguided?!"... They reply to you with belittling the standing of the language in understanding the Book of Allah (swt) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw).

They added to this claim of theirs, making matters worse, and increasing more on the two calamities. Then some of the general publics were affected by them, carrying some of their corrupted concepts and erroneous thoughts, so, sects were established upon them, some connected to those who came before and some of them unconnected.

Except that Allah (swt) sent his favour to this ummah with men after men, who were elevated with this Deen to towering heights, with Allah's favour. Allah protected His Deen, so these sects were not able to change its path or destroy its thoughts.

Knowledgeable men stood up, among them the extraordinary. They exerted effort and ability in transmitting this language, the language of the Quran, pure and clean, from its foundations and principles, then they built upon it other sciences in al-usul ul-fiqh (Principles and Jurisprudence). The sciences of the language were a companion to the sciences of the Quran and hadith and were a basis for them.

They protected for us and transmitted how the Arabs used to speak, and how they used to understand the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger with the language in which it was sent down and the language in which the Messenger (saw) recited it.