

The Qur'an is Complete, Detailed, Sufficient and Understandable

Marwan Boustany

www.detailedquran.com

It has long been the position of most Muslims that in order for one to be a Muslim they needed to follow two sources of Islam. The first was the Holy Qur'an, the second was the Hadith and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. It was stated that the Hadith and Sunnah explained the Qur'an and supplied details where the Qur'an had none.

In short, there was at least an implicit understanding among Muslims that the Qur'an is an incomplete source of guidance. This document will demonstrate that the Qur'an is in fact complete, detailed and sufficient for our guidance.

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنْ أٰهُدًى وَٱلْفُرْقَانِ

"The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong)."

(2:185)

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ ٱلْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعٰلَمِينَ نذِيرًا

"Blessed is He Who hath revealed unto His slave the Criterion (of right and wrong), that he may be a warner to the peoples."

(25:1)

We shall first note that the Qur'an is the Criterion (between right and wrong) and a guidance that Allah has revealed upon humanity, we must therefore analyse the Qur'an to see what it says about its completeness in this regard. To this end we must analyse the relevant ayahs on this topic.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هٰذَا ٱلْقُرْآنِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَىٰ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا

"And certainly We have repeated for humankind, in this Qur'an, every kind of example, but the majority of humankind do not consent to anything but denying."

(17:89)

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هٰذَا ٱلْقُرْآنِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

"We have put forth for humankind, in this Qur'an, every kind of example so that they may remember"

(39:27).

Here, Allah tells us that He has given every kind of example for our Guidance within the Qur'an. Thus, when Allah Himself tells us that every kind of example is within the Qur'an, do we need to look elsewhere for examples?

We must note that the purpose of the Qur'an dictates in what way it is complete and detailed; we are told in the Qur'an:

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

"This Book, there is no doubt in it, it is a guide to those who are God conscious"
(2:2)

Here we must note that since the initial audience of the Qur'an were people living in a desert city 1400 years ago the wordings of some examples may be more relevant to their surroundings. However, the message of these examples is applicable to all times.

In response to those Muslims who say that the Qur'an is not clear and that other books are needed to understand/clarify it, you should read the following ayahs:

الرَّ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَقُرْآنٍ مُّبِينٍ

"A. L. R. These are the verses of a Book, - and a clear/clarifying Qur'an. "
(15:1)

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُّبِينٌ

"We have not instructed the (Prophet) in Poetry, nor is it befitting for him: this is no less than a Message and a clear/clarifying Qur'an"
(36:69)

الر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

"A.L.R. These are the verses of the clear/clarifying Book."
(12:1)

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

"These are verses of the clear/clarifying Book"
(26:2)

طس تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

"Taa seen. These are verses of the Qur'an and a clear/clarifying book"
(27:1)

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

"These are Verses of the clear/clarifying Book."
(28:2)

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

"By the clear/clarifying Book,"
(43:2, 44:2)

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

We have certainly sent down verses that make things clear. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path.

(24:46)

Please also see 65:11

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

"And We have revealed the Book to you, a clarification/explanation of everything, and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit."

(16:89)

There cannot be any words clearer than this. When Allah says EVERYTHING that means EVERYTHING. If the Qur'an itself is supposed to explain/clarify everything, what does it mean to say that the Qur'an can only be explained by other books? It means ignoring the clear words of Allah.

In other words, the above verse is saying that there is NOTHING (Islamically) that is not explained by the Qur'an for our guidance. Any Muslim who says that "not everything is in the Qur'an", must contemplate these verses and reflect on the logical consequences of his/her statement. Further, in the cases of 43:2 and 44:2, the clear and clarifying nature of the Qur'an is mentioned in the form of an oath to bring special attention to this fact.

The Qur'an is a clear guidance to people of all ages and cultures. However, many Muslims refer to unreliable sources that can corrupt their guidance and potentially add partners to Allah. The basic reason behind this attitude is their following of tradition and society. When asked they reply exactly as Allah states:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوْلَوْكَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ
شَيْئاً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ

And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?

(2:170)

We have all heard it, "Are you saying you understand Islam better than all the scholars of the Muslims which all Muslims follow?!" You would think they would just accept the words of Allah.

Muslim should accept now that the Qur'an is a clear book that is not in need of explanation by any other sources, and as per (16:89) that it has all the explanations we need. However, a common reply of more traditional Muslims is to say that the Qur'an lacks details which the Hadith literature is needed for. This, even though Allah tells us that all things have been clarified for us in the Qur'an as well as every example detailed...

Here is what Allah says about the detail in His Book:

أَفَعَيِّرُ اللَّهَ أَتُبْغِي حَكْمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا

"Shall I then seek a Ruler other than Allah? When He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) distinctly detailed"

(6:114)

وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَفَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

"And certainly We have brought them a Book, which We have detailed with knowledge, a guidance and mercy for a people who believe"

(7:52)

الرَّكِتَابِ أَحْكَمَتِ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ

"A. L. R. A Book with perfected verses, further explained in detail from One Who is Wise and Well-acquainted"

(11:1)

كِتَابٍ فَفَصَّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

"A Book of which the verses are distinctly detailed, an Arabic Qur'an for people who know"

(41:3)

In the face of these verses, the claims of many Muslims are clearly contradictory to the Qur'anic evidence. Yet, they insist that the Qur'an is not detailed.

Logically speaking, it would not make any sense that a Book that is supposed to clearly explain Islam in a detailed manner is itself in need of explanation and further detail!

This is only logical, as the Qur'an is meant for everyone and not only for a small set of scholars. It must be noted that Allah gives distinction to knowledge, and it is indeed important, but at the same time Allah has supplied the knowledge needed in the Qur'an for our Guidance. There are certainly aspects of the Qur'an that become more illuminated with more knowledge, like historical and scientific issues. All these things are stated clearly and they can be easily accepted as they are and our guidance will not in the least be decreased. But when we do learn about them by Allah's leave we merely appreciate more the Glory of Allah in his revelation. There is of course also the issue of the Arabic language which all Muslims should take time to learn. However, it is possible to gain access to the guidance through translations, just not in its full state.

Further to all the verses above, consider the following verse wherein Allah explicitly clarifies that it is Allah who will explain the Qur'an, not the prophet! This fits in perfectly with the verses that tell us the Qur'an is clear and detailed.

لَا تُحْرِكُ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ۚ فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ۚ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا

بَيَانَهُ

*Do not move your tongue concerning the (Qur'an) to hasten it. We shall be responsible for its collection and its recitation. So when We have recited it [through Gabriel], then follow its recitation. **Then upon Us is its clarification/explanation.***
(75:16-19)

The discussion should end here for if the Qur'an is COMPLETE, DETAILED and EXPLAINED with everything that we need for Guidance, then there is no need to look at another book or other sources for our Guidance. The opinion of the majority of Muslim scholars as well as of the religious population is that the Qur'an is in need of elucidation and detailing by other sources. And they have made these sources as important as the Qur'an, if not more!

Why do I say more? Because if Book A can only be understood using Book(s) B, then Book(s) B become(s) the criterion for the meaning and contents of Book A. It is these other sources that have corrupted the practices of Islam and made the Muslim community one that does not think and is easily led. These sources that have been used to make Muslims accept what they are told and not question, these sources that made the scholar class a religious institution that is solely allowed to declare understanding of the revelation.

It should be remembered that this same thing happened in a more extreme form with Christianity and Judaism. In Judaism the rabbis told the masses that the Torah could only be understood through them and the Talmud, so the Jews now follow the Talmud and use it to understand the Torah. Of course they also changed the contents of the Torah.

The Christians not only changed the words they heard, they even added text (for example by Paul) that is known not to have been said by Jesus (but which was allegedly inspired by Jesus!). The Christians took the church and its scholars as Lords instead of Allah because they followed these people against the word of Allah.

What both have done is that they have taken their scholars and priests, now and in the past, as lords in that they follow what these people say as if it was the word of Allah.

Muslim started to do this a long time ago, they started saying that you could only understand the Qur'an by the help of the knowledge of scholars and the alleged traditions of the prophet. Even when the Qur'an states otherwise.

If the Qur'an is Fully Detailed where are the details for ...?

This is something I come across all the time. It manifests itself in questions like: -

- Where are all the details of salaah?
- Where are all the details of Hajj?
- Where are all the details of the allowed and forbidden foods?
- Where are all the details on how much zakaah to pay?
- Etc etc

The fundamental error in all such questions is that it is assumed that whatever is currently accepted as Islamic practice is necessarily correct or even required. What then happens is that the completeness of the Qur'an is not judged by its own testimony and contents; rather, it is judged by the accepted practices which should have been derived from the Qur'an in the first place! This trend is old, among Muslims and those before them. Muslims

took on practices/beliefs in their religion that had no basis in the Qur'an and then used them to try to justify the need for hadith.

The correct question is, "Are the current practices of Muslims derived from the Qur'an?"

These kinds of questions as justifications for hadith found forceful, if fatally flawed, presentation in the works of al Shafi'i: -

One of al-Shafi'i's strongest arguments in favor of the need for Hadith had to do with the details of obligatory religious practices. More than half of Kitab Jima'al-'ilm and much of the Risala are devoted to this issue, and this reasoning has been accepted and used by Muslims ever since.

'Hadith As Scripture', pg. 90, Aisha Y. Musa

I stated earlier that what has happened to Islam is reminiscent of what happened to the Jewish religion, so read the passage below and consider... First some definitions from Judaism's Strange Gods by Michael Hoffman II: -

Mishnah. "Repetition." The first book of the Talmud, it constitutes a six part codification of the formerly oral "tradition of the elders." The Mishnah was written in a Middle Hebrew jargon and completed in Babylon toward the end of the second century A.D. It constitutes the basis of the laws (halakhah) of the religion of Judaism.

Midrash. "To search out." A type of rabbinic literature composed mostly between 400 and 1200 A.D., featuring interpolations and fanciful emendations of Biblical texts. How tall was Adam? Midrash has the answer. What did Cain say to Abel? The Midrash supplies "the missing dialogue." For those curious about how people passed their time during the Flood, the always edifying Midrash informs us that Ham sodomized a dog on board Noah's Ark (Midrash Rabbah 1:292-293).

Talmud. "Instruction." The Talmud is the Holy Writ of the religion of Judaism and constitutes the binding, formerly oral, tradition of the elders, committed to writing in Babylon toward the end of the second century A.D., forming the Mishnah. Subsequent books of the Talmud were composed in Babylon as late as the sixth century A.D. and consist of explanations and illustrations of the Mishnah. There are also numerous later analyses of the exegesis, forming a vast compendium of super-fine, lawyerly distinctions. The Mishnah was written in a variant of Middle Hebrew. The later Talmudic books (Gemara) are written largely in Aramaic (sometimes called "Syriac" by the rabbis).

From page 24-25 in Judaism's Strange Gods by Michael Hoffman II

Like the Talmud, the Midrash upholds the rabbinic fallacy that the Bible is deficient and incomplete; that it requires the intervention of Midrashic traditions concocted between 400 and 1200 A.D. to be understood. Barry W. Holtz, Professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and director of the seminary's Melton Research Center states:

"The Bible is loath to tell us the motivations, feelings, or thoughts of characters. Rarely giving us descriptive details either of people or places, it is composed in a stark, uncompromising style. Hence, in the laconic style of the Bible, we find one significant cause of the necessity of Midrash. "Midrash comes to fill the gaps, to tell us the details the Bible teasingly leaves out: what did Isaac think as his father took him to be sacrificed? The Bible

doesn't tell us, but Midrash fills it in with rich and varied descriptions. "Why did Cain kill Abel? Once again the Bible is silent, but Midrash is filled with explanation. How tall was Adam when he walked in the Garden? "Look to the midrashic materials, not the Bible for such details... "Where the Bible is mysterious and silent, Midrash comes to unravel the mystery. "...the Bible often states matters of law without clarification or detail...Observant Jews today keep separate dishes for milk and meat, but where is that outlined in the Bible? Nowhere in fact. It was the Midrash of rabbinic Judaism, legal Midrash, that defined the laws." **Barry W. Holtz, "Midrash," Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts, (op. cit.), pp. 180-181.**

We even have an indication of this mentality from the New Testament:

"So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to **the tradition of the elders** instead of eating their food with defiled hands?" Mark 7:5 (NIV)

Here the oral traditions that the Pharisees held up with the 'Torah', are the Traditions found in the Mishnah/Talmud now.

Having read the above passages, consider what Allah says about the revelation given to the Jews in the Qur'an, you find it described similarly to the Qur'an:

ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَالَمِهِمْ
بِلقاءِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Then We gave Moses the Scripture, making complete [Our favour] upon the one who did good and as a **detailed explanation of all things** and as guidance and mercy that perhaps in [the matter of] the meeting with their Lord they would believe. (6:154)

قَالَ يُوسُفُ إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَاتِي وَبِكَلَامِي فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْتُكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ۚ وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَاحِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَأْخُذُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُرِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

[Allah] said, "O Moses, I have chosen you over the people with My messages and My words [to you]. So take what I have given you and be among the grateful." And We wrote for him on the tablets **of all things - instruction and explanation for all things**, [saying], "Take them with determination and order your people to take the best of it. I will show you the home of the defiantly disobedient." (7:144-145)

And yet they felt they needed the Talmud ('Oral revelation' and its explanation) and the words of the Rabbis to explain it and fill in the details. See also Qur'an 5:44-45 which are commands similar to what Muslims were given.

The patterns of ignoring the word of Allah and adding to the religion is an old and powerful one, Muslims fell into it with nearly as much zeal as did the Jews. Truly sad. In fact, as the above quote from the Jewish professor indicates, the same reasons used by Muslims (as

likely pioneered by Shafi'i and his like) can be found in the argumentation of the Talmudic Jews. What follows is an excerpt from "Book of the Wars of YHWH" by Salmon ben Yeruham who was a Karaite (scripturalist) Jew of the 10th century arguing against the Talmudic Jews of his day. A part of this is 'Refutation of Sa'adiah's 7 Arguments' which fit in quite nicely with the series of common questions asked by Muslims seeking to find the Qur'an incomplete.

An excerpt follows: -

*[I] May thy steps be hampered in walking, When thou sayest that my congregation has need of the Mishnah, In order to know the precise measurements of the ordinances of the ritual fringe, the lulab, and the booth
And that this is why they arranged it and set it down in writing.*

*Thou has written lies, for not all ordinances have a definite measurement,
And that is why the length of the fringe is not specified in the Law.
If one should forcefully exhibit this argument, how wilt thou distinguish,
And what answer wilt thou make to him, out of the words of the Divine Testimony?*

*[II] To heap up more lying words, thou has written and set forth further,
And has said, secondly, that the Mishnah is ancient,
Because in it is explained the precise amount of the heave offering,
So that Israel might know what part of what amount they are to give.*

*This argument is identical with the preceding,
And the answer to the former argument applies to the latter as well;
No precise amount or sum has been specified for it;
Rather each person is to give as much as he wishes and will meet with no complaint.*

*[III] Thou has said, thirdly that we have need for the inherited tradition,
In order that we might know what day of the week is Sabbath, so that we might keep it holy.
But the Sabbath is known to all the inhabitants of the world as a day of rest,
From the factual knowledge and reasoning, not merely from reckoning by three, five, and six.*

*[IV] Though has turned from the right road and has labored much,
When thou has said, fourthly, that we need the Mishnah to know which vessel is capable of becoming ritually unclean. But thou has erred,
For thou hast not considered the verse, whatsoever vessel it be, wherewith any work is done (Lev. 11:32)
All such vessels are specified in the Law, if thou wouldst but turn thy heart to it.*

*[V] Still thou holdest fast to broken arguments,
And hast said, fifthly, that there are ordinances which we must observe, and which are not explained in the Law -
Such as prayers, and other ordinances -
Yet the prayers are not mentioned in Scripture.*

*Thy mouth has not considered the verse, and ye shall pray unto me (Jer. 29:12);
And prayers are mentioned also in many other places.
Thus, thou hast not remembered, when thou has spoken, the prayer of Daniel, the man greatly beloved of God.*

Therefore I reject from before me all ordinances and statutes which are not written in the Law.

But where are the details for Salaah? Spoken verbatim by those who promoted the Talmud as a critical source of guidance in Judaism and those who promoted the Hadith as a critical source of guidance in Islam.

The point here is that the pioneers of the hadith movement, like shafi'i and his like used the same arguments, almost precisely as the promoters of the Talmud in the Jewish religion did. It is truly sad and impressive at the same time.

To finish consider these clear verses: -

أَفَعَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكْمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا

“Shall I then seek a Ruler other than Allah? When He it is Who has revealed to you the Book (which is) distinctly detailed”

(6:114)

What is the answer of Muslims? Will they answer “Muhammad, his companions, the later generations and the scholars” or will they answer “No one other than my Lord”.

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you in truth. Then in what statement (Lit. **hadith**) after Allah and His verses will they believe?*

(45:6)

What is the answer of Muslims? Will they answer “The Hadith, Sunnah, fiqh and ijma” or will they answer “Nothing other than your Qur’an my Lord”.