

On the Interpretation of the Demonstrative Pronouns in the Opening Verses of Qur'anic Suras

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Abstract: Dhalik al-Kitab and other similar phrases at the beginning of some Quranic Suras have long been debated by Muslim commentators as to what these demonstrative pronouns refer to. In this study, through comparing the introductory verses of the Suras containing the pronouns it will be demonstrated that these pronouns do not refer to the Qur'anic corpus or the content of the related Sura but rather to the divine knowledge and Lawh Mahfuz which functions as the source of revelation. It seems that the skeptical reactions of the polytheist audience dismissing the Prophet's recitations as satanic inspirations, poetry or "soothsaying" triggered the revelation of these verses.

Key words: Dhalika al-Kitab, Tilka Ayatu al-Kitab, Lawh Mahfuz, Quran's divine origin, divine knowledge

INTRODUCTION

Dhalika Al-Kitab and other similar phrases that have been employed in the introductory verses of a number of Quranic Suras have produced a fairly wide diversity of views on to what these demonstrative pronouns refer, despite the fact that their literal meaning is clear. The most important question that arises here is that whether the Prophet's audience grasped Dhalika/tilka in their true literal sense and understood them to refer to a Kitab other than the same Quran being recited by the Prophet or they understood them in a metaphorical sense, i.e., the same Sura and the following verses to be the antecedent of the demonstrative pronouns Dhalika/tilka.

Seemingly, this diversity of opinions regarding the interpretation of these introductory phrases is in the first place, the result of neglect of other verses with similar structure and content and in the second place the consequence of overlooking all other verses that contain dhalika/tilka.

In this study our attempt is to find the true meaning of these phrases through comparing verses that employ dhalika/tilka to refer to al-Kitab and are somehow of the similar content. It becomes clear then that all these demonstrative pronouns have been employed in their literal meaning and refer to the celestial origin of the Quran.

Literature review: Throughout the Quran, both kinds of the demonstrative pronouns of hadha/hadhihi and Dhalika/tilka have been frequently employed to refer or refer back to the Quran or its content. By construing the demonstrative phrase hadha/hadhihi+Kitab/'Ayat and

other similar phrases as the total corpus of available recitations or the textual components making up the Quran, Muslim commentators are unanimous in their interpretations. There is however a wide divergence of opinions on the interpretation of Dhalika/tilka Kitab/Ayat among them. The major interpretations suggested here are as follows.

Dhalika/tilka refer to the Tawrat and the Injil (Tabrisi, 1993). It seems that this interpretation was drawn heavily upon the definition offered by early commentators such as Mojahed and Qatada. This viewpoint, however, did not gain other commentators favorable response and was rejected as too weak imaginary and unreasonable (Kathir, 1999). Beside, the contents of the Suras that begin with these verses show no traces in support of this viewpoint. Some Christian scholars however primarily due to their ideological beliefs regarded this interpretation valid. Yusuf Haddad is the most prominent among them. His fundamental presupposition is that the Quran is nothing but an Arabic version of the Bible and that the Tawrat is the only book that was sent down through divine revelation. He therefore construes Dhalika/tilka Kitab/Ayat as the Arabic Tawrat.

Dhalika/tilka Kitab/Ayat refer to the content of the previous verse. Their reason is that since the verse has already been revealed and then recited and passed it is in reality the same as something far and must therefore be referred to by Dhalika/tilka (Farra, 1980). But the point is that except for some letter-symbols the preceding verse has no real tangible content that can be referred to.

Dhalika/tilka Kitab/Ayat refer to all verses and chapters that had been revealed until that time, so the distant pronoun can be applied to refer to them (Alusi,

1985). Although, this viewpoint takes notice of the literal meaning of these pronouns, it sounds rather contrived and unnatural and in addition neglects the recitations revealed later on.

Dhalika/tilka refer to the verses that God had promised in the Tawrat and other revelatory books to send down. God, therefore says here that this Quran and its verses are the fulfillment of that promise (Sadeghi, 1986; Haeri and Ali, 1998). This view however, cannot be accepted as true because the Quran was not sent down to the people of the book so that Dhalika/tilka would refer back to the promised verses in the Tawrat although, it is highly doubtful that the Tawrat contains at all such a promise.

Dhalika/tilka+Kitab/Ayat refer to this very Quran available to man showing the grandeur of this book is the point which God is trying to make through employing the distant demonstrative pronoun (Alusi, 1985; Zarkashi, 1990; Javadi, 2014; Makarem, 1995). The advocates of this interpretation, however, offer no real proof to document their view. Moreover, it contradicts the literal meaning of Dhalika/tilka.

Dhalika/tilka make an allusion to Lawh Mahfuz and the divine knowledge the storage and origin of all revelatory books including the Quran. It appears that this view shows a good grasp of the phrase because it is congruent with both the literal meaning of the phrase and the contents of the Suras that are inaugurated with these opening phrases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is an attempt to support and reinforce this last view and on that account, the view of those Christians like H'addad who believes that the demonstrative pronouns Dhalika/tilka refer to the Bible will be criticized and disparaged.

It is worth mentioning that throughout the Quran the demonstratives hadha and hadhihi are applied whenever it is required to point to the Quranic corpus itself for example in the demonstrative hadhihi functions as a backward reference to all the warnings and admonitions mentioned in the previous verses. In also the hostile irreverent attitude of the Quran's audience is unfolded they arrogantly repudiate the Quran's claim to divine authorship and strived desperately to discredit the Quran as (being) sorcery and rendition of monotheistic fairy tales. In and it is declared that the Quran (or the Prophet) is a warner just like the early warners and so the marvel of the audience at this discourse is unreasonable. In after describing the origin of the Quran in preceding verses, the audience's disregard for it is denounced. In also, the

recitations of the Prophet is referred to with hadhihi. Here, also like in hadhihi alludes to the information provided in the same Sura.

Quranic evidences on the divine origin of the Quran: From the very beginning, upon hearing of the angel appearing to the Prophet and providing him with the divine revelations the Prophet's audience incessantly denied it claiming that the Quran had not been brought down by the angels but rather by the devils and jinns. The skeptical polytheists called the Prophet mad and overtaken by jinns throughout the Meccan period because they judged the recitations of the Prophet satanic inspirations. Early and later Meccan Suras alike provide a lot of evidence which testifies to these false accusations. Verses were constantly sent down in order to dismiss these false claims and accusations and explicate the recitation's celestial origin and their unavailability for Satans or jinns. It is emphatically asserted via various verses that the origin of the Quran is the divine knowledge and Lawh' Mafuz and that Ruh or Ruh al-Amin or Ruh al-Qudus accompanied by other angels bring it down to the Prophet. In the introductory verses of Q 68 which according to the traditional Muslim chronology of revelation is one the earliest Suras revealed to the Prophet (the second Sura) his sublime morality and sanity is promulgated. "Presumably, the pagan's reason to accuse the Prophet of being overtaken by jinns was his anomalous speech because they held the view that whenever somebody becomes the devil or jinn's incarnate, the devil or jinn teaches them strange things as they believed that the poems of the poets, the sorcery of the sorcerers and the divination of the fortunetellers were obtained through evil spirits. These verses make allusions to the suspicion of the pagans that the Prophet was related to the devils and jinns and that his recitations are their teachings and inspirations. The recurrence of these accusations caused God's response in (the 7th, according to the traditional chronology) in which it is reiterated that the revelation is mediated by the angels, rather than by the devils. In these verses, it is announced emphatically that the recitation is the word of a noble, mighty, obeyed and trustworthy (in conveying divine revelation) messenger and not the word of an accused Satan and that the Prophet is not mad (or inspired by the devil or jinn) and conveys whatever he receives through divine revelation.

The same concept of revelation and the angel who brings it down are repeated in (the 23rd, based on the traditional chronology). It is firmly stated there that the Prophet has neither gone astray, nor gone amiss and that what he recites is naught but revelation which is taught to him through the mighty power angel.

Q (80:13-16) (the 24th according to the traditional chronology) also gives a brief description of both the way the virtuous and noble angels escort and transmit the divine message to the Prophet and the origin of the Quran which is exalted and purified.

The divine origin of the Quran and the go-between role of the angels are reemphasized in and (the 25th revealed Sura) as well. The Quran's claim to derive from a celestial Kitab is further emphasized in Q 85 (the 27th according to the traditional chronology). In the verse that comes immediately before these verses the unbeliever's denial of the Quran is pointed out and now verse 21, states the vanity of their persistence in rejecting the Quran and their claim that it was sorcery, poetry or soothsaying. Contrary to their belief, the recitations of the Prophet are inscribed in a preserved tablet which is the very knowledge of God and will remain safe and unchanged from the hands of the satans and sooth sayers because the knowledge of God is safe from any distortion or alteration.

Once again, further emphasis on the divine origin of the Quran is provided in (the 46th based on the chronology). The phrase for another text, bearing witness to the heavenly source of the Quran) Kitabin Maknun means Lawh Mahfuz or the basic original revelation (Tabrisi, 1993). The recitations are said to be in 'Kitabin Maknun' in its original state, touching of which is possible only for the purified angels. This, then, implies that the satans and jinns are being denied access to the Quranic recitations.

A glimpse of the suras whose introductory verses contain the demonstrative pronouns Dhalika/tilka, reveals that these Suras are parallel both in structure and in content. At the beginning of all these Suras, after the letter-symbols, the Quran and its revelation have been made mentioned of. It seems that these introductory verses (along with the concluding sections of these Suras) come to respond directly to the pagan's skeptical reactions discrediting the Quran as 'poetry', 'soothsaying' or 'sorcery' and calling it the speech of human being and their demand for a book of message written on study (The Suras, thus are as follows: Q 26, 27, 10, 12, 15, 31, 2. Their numerations based on the traditional chronology are: 47, 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, 57, 87 (Mahmud, 1987; Zarkashi, 1990). Q 7 and 11 are also two other Suras with chronological numerations of 39 and 52 that will be discussed later).

A review of the content and structure and of the Suras containing the demonstratives mentioned above, provide support to the interpretation maintained in this study.

Review of the verses containing Dhalika/tilka: The Quranic Suras whose opening verses include the demonstrative pronouns 'Dhalika' and 'tilka (Alusi, 1985; Andulusi and Ghalib, 2002) will briefly be reviewed below according to their chronology of revelation.

The demonstrative tilka at the beginning of Q 26: This Sura is the 48th, based on the traditional chronology and opens with: Ta-Sin-Mim Tilka 'Ayatu Al-Kitabi Al-Mubini The purpose of these opening verses is to reply to the skeptical reactions of the polytheist audience denying the Prophet's recitations as 'satanic inspiration's, accusing him of being a 'poet', a 'soothsayer or a 'madman'. As the first two verses of the Sura testify, the whole Sura aims particularly at consoling the Prophet on these never-ceasing charges and accusations. The subsequent verses which narrates the story of the previous Prophets and their people give further proof of this perception. Apparently, it is because of this fact that some of Muslim commentators have perceived tilka in its very literal meaning as referring to something not near and accordingly interpreted 'Al-Kitab' as Lawh Mahfuz.

The demonstrative tilka at the beginning of Q 27: Q 27 which according to the traditional chronology, is located precisely after the previous Sura (Q 26) begins with these verses: Ta-Sin Tilka 'Ayatu Al-Qurani Wa Kitabin Mubinin (Q 27:1-2) identical with those of Q 26. It appears that the function of these verses is to announce the self-same idea that the Quran originates from the endless knowledge of God and is neither from Man's thought, nor from the satan's inspirations. This point is explicitly stated anew in the subsequent verses. These unequivocal references to the divine origin of the Quran are made in response to the scathing remarks and sarcastic objections of the Prophet's pagan audience, some of which are spoken of in verse 28, against which verse 70, thus appears as a reaction. The Prophet suffered from the denial of the polytheists. Hence, God consoles His messenger and assures him of His support. Verse 76 also testifies to the heavenly source of the Quran by referring to its role in removing and resolving the internal discord and differences among the Israelites; otherwise neither the illiterate Prophet nor the ignorant community were able to settle the conflicts and determine the right and wrong among them. Giving consolation is continued in verses 78 and 79 and in the latter the Prophet is instructed to trust in God.

The demonstrative tilka at the beginning of Q 28: Q 28 which is according to the traditional chronology, located precisely after the previous Sura (Q 27), begins with these

verses: Ta-Sin-Mim Tilka 'Ayatu Al-Kitabi Al-Mubini the exactly self-same phrasing which also occurs in. It appears that the true intent of these verses is to describe the celestial origin of the Quran. The ensuing verse is also the evidence which corroborates this interpretation. The phrase Natlu Alayka is a further reference to the heavenly source of the Prophet's recitations. Moreover, the concluding section of the Sura provides more clues that reinforce this reading. The passages 'Inna Al-Ladhi Faraoa Alayka Al-Quran Wa Ma Kunta Tarju 'An Yulqa 'Ilayka Al-Kitabu 'Illa Rah matan Min Rabbika' all testify to the divine authorship of the Quran and reject the pagan's accusations against the Quran. The latter in particular, orders the Prophet not to ignore the Quran after it has been sent to him and not to be of the polytheists. This part follows the sentence 'Fala Takunanna-ahiraan Lilkafirina' and precedes the closing phrase 'Wa La Takunanna Mina Al-Mushrikina'. The polytheists and unbelievers scornfully denied the Quran as poetry, sorcery, fairy tales or satanic inspirations.

The demonstrative tilka at the beginning of Q 10: Q 10 which with the interval of only one single Sura in between on the basis of the traditional chronology, comes after the previous Sura (Q 28), begins with this verse: 'Alif-Lam-Ra Tilka 'Ayatu Al-Kitabi Al-Akimi. The Sura that stands in between, is Q 17 in which the Prophet's nocturnal journey is made mention of. It is generally received that after that journey the Prophet ascended to Heaven and this in turn can be a further clarification of the meaning of the demonstrative pronouns (in the opening verses of different Suras), i.e., the divine knowledge and Lawh Mahfuz. Verse 47 of the same Sura states that the polytheists in order to drive the ordinary people away from the Prophet called him a bewitched man. They came among the audience and listened to the recitations only with the devil purpose of mocking at them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Now coming back to Q 10, it seems that in the introductory verses of this Sura in order to demonstrate the celestial source of the Quran, Law Mafu is alluded to. Thus, the meaning will be: those are the revelations of Lawh Mahfuz which are with God.

The interpretations put by some exegetes on this verse also support such reading: "verse 1 is an answer to the idolater's (unreasonable) demand put forward in verse 15: 'Wa 'Idha Tutla' Alayhim 'Ayatuna Bayyinatina Qala Al-Ladhina La Yarjuna Liqa'ana A'ti Biquranin Ghayri Hadha 'Aw Baddilhu', it is therefore said to them: 'Tilka 'Ayatu Al-Kitabi Al-Hakimi'. Furthermore, this Meccan

Sura, as it is generally accepted was revealed in the early period of the Prophet's ministry when opposition to the Quran and his preaching was started. The telling cues that the Sura itself provides the reader with are numerous enough to uncover the meaning of its first verses and demonstrate that it was revealed as a response to the skeptical reactions of the unbelievers. The main theme that develops throughout the Sura is demonstrating the heavenly source of the Quran against the accusations leveled at it by the unbelievers. The Sura commences with a reference to the denial of the Quran by the polytheists and concludes with an instruction given to the Prophet to follow the revelations. It appears that the clues enumerated below, convincingly justify the interpretation that this article argues for: verse 2 points at the most frequent opposition of the unbelievers who wondered how a man like themselves can receive a message from God and as the concluding part of the verse says, they attribute the phenomenon to sorcery and magic. In the face of polytheist's demand for either bringing another book other than the Quran or changing it, the Prophet is ordered to announce that he cannot do that on his own accord because he has no authority of himself and follows nothing but what is revealed to him. Then there is the next verse in which it is stressed that the Prophet cannot on his own authority, effect any change in the recitations. In addition in the next verse it is stated that the most unjust are those who deny the divine verses. The unbeliever's contempt of the Quran is yet again pointed at in verse 20 they unjustly demand another miracle and their answer is that the invisible world and supernatural affairs belong to God alone. "The letter 'fa' at the beginning of the word 'qul' shows the pagan's mockery and contempt for the Quran and demonstrates that they did not seek to know the truth". The word 'Ghayb' in this verse alludes to the fact that the Prophet's recitations are divine inspirations in origin. Verse 37, indeed, goes back to the first verse of the Sura and announces that it is beyond the realm of possibility for the Quran to have an origin other than God. The Quran as the verse says, cannot be accused of having earthly origin or being inspiration of Satan and his emissaries but it is undoubtedly divinely revealed and comes under His knowledge. The challenge posed in the next verse also serves to emphasize the heavenly source of the Quran. Once more, the pagan's denial of the Quran's celestial origin is touched on in the subsequent verses of 39 and 41. In verse 65, consoling words of God comes to the Prophet, asking him not to be grieved by critical words and scornful remarks of the pagans. In order to show the divine origin of the Quran, verse 94 asks the audience to refer to the knowledgeable people of the Book, if they are in doubt as to the genuineness of what

has been revealed. The phrase 'Laqad Ja'aka Al-haqqu Min Rabbika Fala Takunanna Mina Al-Mumtarina' in the verse signifies that the recitations are authentic and genuine and there will be no room for any sort of skepticism. Furthermore, the two concluding (before the last) verses, too, look as if they are a reiteration and result of the introductory verses (This Sura is named 'hud' and begins with the verse: 'Alif-Lam-Ra Kitabu 'Ukimat 'Ayatuhu Thumma Furqan Min Ladun Hakimin Khabirin (Q 11:1). This verse has much the same style and content as the introductory verses of the previously mentioned Suras. It talks about the divine origin and revelatory source of the Quran). The phrase 'Qad Ja'akumu Al-Haqqu Min Rabbikum' seems to be a paraphrase of and a reference to the point touched upon in the very opening verse of the Sura, i.e., divine origin of the Quran. Also in the closing part of the Sura, the Prophet is ordered to follow the revelation and remain patient with the scathing remarks and constant harassment of the unbelievers.

The demonstrative tilka at the beginning of Q 12: This Sura also with the interval of only one single Sura in between on the basis of the traditional chronology, comes after the previous Sura. It appears that the opening verses of this Sura, like those of the preceding ones, intended to describe the divine origin and transcendental authenticity of the Quran and its connection to Lawh Mahfuz. The pronoun 'hu' in the phrase 'Inna 'Anzalnahu' in verse 2 refers back to the 'Kitab' spoken of in verse 1. In other words that book which is with God and is the source of all revelatory texts including the Quran, has been expressed in Arabic. The attributive adjectives of 'Al-Mubin' and 'Al-Hakim' for Al-Kitab in Q 10:1 and 12:1, are simply speech variations (i.e., new ways to give expressions to the same idea), characterizing the meaning and significance of what Lawh Mahfuz contains. And then in the next verse, the Quran's being of divine and revelatory origin is firmly asserted. In response to the unbeliever's skepticism, once again in this verse, too much emphasis is put on depicting the celestial origin of the Quran through introducing God as the narrator of the story, revelation as the medium of communication and the Prophet as being unaware of the truth. Furthermore, the Sura's closing verses are yet further support to the interpretation maintained in this article. In verse 109 the Prophet's ministry is listed among other prophetic missions. Next to this verse, comes verse 110 in which to console the Prophet, it is stressed that the divine punishment is awaiting the sinners. And finally, in the last verse the narratives of the Prophets are described as confirmation of what was before it and not as a forged

fiction emanated from the mind of the Prophet (during the age of ignorance, there was a widespread common belief that poets could compose poems because of the relationship they had with the 'jinn' or 'fairie's. So by the word 'majnun', they meant someone who is possessed or influenced by demons or by the spirit of the demons (Mahmud, 1987). The opening as well as the closing verses of the Sura along with other passages coming in between, thus, all testify to this fact that the Quran meant to demonstrate the divine source of the recitations by referring to Al-Kitab or 'Ayat Al-Kitab in the introductory verses of different Suras.

The demonstrative tilka at the beginning of Q 15: According to the traditional chronology, this Sura was yet again sent down exactly after that Q 12 had been revealed. The opening verse of this Sura is as this: 'Alif-Lam-Ra Tilka 'Ayatu Al-Kitabi Wa Quranin Mubin. It seems that the demonstrative tilka, here, like other cases of the employment of this word in the above-mentioned Suras, also refers to something distant and therefore the word Al-Kitab alludes to Lawh Mahfuz. This verse seems to represent a signboard at the entrance of the Sura, depicting God's reaction to the unbeliever's mockery at and accusations against the Quran. The subsequent verses speak of the unbelievers who having witnessed the torment of the hell in the hereafter, wish not to have denied the Prophet. This verse appears as a preliminary to the subsequent verses in which cases of the pagan's humiliation, ridicule, accusations and skepticism in regard to the Prophet and his recitations have been enumerated. 'Being overtaken by jinn's was one of their unfounded claims made against the Prophet (Though it was only a pretext) and "the phrase 'Innaka Lamajnunun' is an explicit accusation". They even asked the Prophet to bring the angels to them, to testify his truthfulness (there are two kinds of emphasis employed in this verse: a series of 5 emphasis are dealt with for the revelation of the Quran which appear in words/'in/, /na/, /nahnu/, /nazzal//na-al-dhikr/and a series of 5 emphasis are found in the preservation of the Quran in such words as: /'in/, /na/, /lahu/, /la/and/haf_iun/which are obvious in the Arabic literature). The next verse also lays too much stress on divine source of the Quran, declaring that it is certainly God who reveals the recitations (These two Suras are Q 6 and Q 37 which are the 55th and the 56th according to the traditional chronology of revelation, i.e., revealed after Q 15 and before Q 31. The issue of absolute inaccessibility of revelations to all satans and demonic forces is reiterated in these two Suras too. They assert that it is through the angel Gabriel that the Quran is revealed. Throughout Q 6 the unbeliever's denial of the

Quran's divine origin and their mockery of the Prophet and his recitations have been alluded to numerous times (cf. Q 6:4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 21, 25, ...) and then in the subsequent verses, once again, the divine origin of the Quran and the conformity of its content with those of the former Scriptures are underlined. Also in the introductory verses of Q 37, three groups of angels (^aaffat, zajirat, taliyat) whose primary duty is to bring down the revelation and preserve it from all satans are referred to. They bring the divine message to the Prophet without allowing the satans to have any intervention in it. They are prevented from approaching the council of angels and are shot from and cast away on every side (Q 37:6-8, also Q 15:17-18; Q 67:5). The pure revelation is accordingly conveyed to the Prophet. Verses 12-15 and 36 mention the pagan's accusations (giving unjust names such as magic, sorcery and poetry) against the Prophet and the origin of his recitations. In response, it is declared in verse 37 that the one whom they call a mad poet has brought them the truth). Moreover, verses 16-18 provide further explanation of what was said in verse 9. They say that God guards the revelation against every accursed Satan. If jinns one of whom are satans stand to eavesdrop on the revelations, they will be pursued by a clear flame. Verse 87 yet again put further emphasis on the heavenly source of the Quran by reminding the Prophet of this consoling fact that He has bestowed him the grand Quran.

The demonstrative tilka at the beginning of Q 31: Quran 31 which on the basis of the traditional chronology with the interval of two other Suras. In between, comes after the previous Sura (Q 15), begins with these verses: 'Alif-Lam-Mim, Tilka 'Ayatu Al-Kitabi Al-Hakimi. It is particularly evident from these opening verses that this Sura talks about the pagans who lead people astray from the way of God by buying diversionary talk and make them take it in mockery. Lahwa Al-Hadithi means idle or amusing discourse which divert attention from meaningful thought and it seems that describing (the word) Al-Kitab as 'Al-Hakimi' in verse 2, provides a marked contrast to Lahwa Al-Hadithi, i.e., al-Kitab is hakim and of divine wisdom. They purchased Lahwa Al-hadithi in order that they could make the public discredit the Prophet's recitations as (being) rendition of monotheistic fairy tales. Verse 7 provides further evidence on the real intention of those who purchased Lahwa Al-?adithi: when our words of revelation are recited to him, he turns his back disdainfully as if he is deaf and has not heard them. It is because of this fact that the first two verses make mention of the Quran's divine source and heavenly origin, i.e., LawH MaHfuz which is described as Al-Hakim to signify that it is genuine and no falsehood or untruth will ever find way to it.

In summary, from the very outset, two points were mentioned as the main thrusts of this article: first, all the Suras reviewed above have letter-symbols at their beginnings. The immediate impression of these letters on the audience is drawing their attention and getting prepared to listen. Moreover, after the letter-symbols, the Suras follow immediately with some utterances about the Quran and its descending (refers to the the story of Jesus explained in the verses before or Q 3:108 in which the distant demonstrative pronoun is employed to allude to all matters discussed in the previous verses of the same Sura). Second, the circumstances in which these Suras were being sent down, made the rebuttal of the accusations unavoidable. The pagan's skeptical remarks discrediting the Quran as 'poetry', 'soothsaying' or 'sorcery' and calling it the speech of human being are refuted through the introductory verses of the Suras reviewed above. These verses seem to appear as appropriate responses to the pagan's remarks and underline the divine source of the Quran. What the verses like Q (10:1), (12:1) speak of, is a real celestial book whose content is passed on to the Prophet in the form of the Quran. Thus the fact that no other demonstrative pronouns other than dhalika/tilka have been employed in these introductory verses comes as no surprise. It is in view of this fact that Tabatabaii in his comment on Q (15:1) says: "This verse can be considered as a summary of the idea demonstrated in Q (43:1-4)".

Furthermore, it is still worth mentioning that in the Suras revealed at the beginning of the Prophet's mission, no case of dhalika/tilka usage is found to refer to the content of the Quran. For instance, in Q 73:19 or 21:24 the (near) pronouns hadha/hadhehi are employed to refer to the matters of the same Sura or the content of the Quran in general, without making any mention of Kitab or Al-Kitab, just as the cases in later Suras in which the distant demonstratives dhalika/tilka are used to refer to the preceding content of the same Sura.

The demonstrative dhalika at the beginning of Q 2: Despite the fact that according to the traditional chronology another 32 Suras intervened between Q 31 and Q 2, the introductory verses of Q 2 suggest that the circumstances in which this Sura was sent down had not yet improved and the pagan's skeptical reactions dismissing the Quran's divine origin still prevailed. The phrase 'dhalika Al-Kitabu La Rayba Fih' (Q 2:2) is hinting that it is not the satans who bring the Quran down but rather it is only the angels who engage in this awesome task. Muslim commentators however offered different points of view on the interpretation of dhalika in this verse. The major interpretations suggested here are remarkably similar to those which have been brought in

section 2 and are as follows: Dhalika refers to the Tawrat and the Injil (Tabrisi, 1993; Andulusi and Ghalib, 2002) or it refers to the content of the previous verse, here Alif-Lam-Mim. According to Farra' "when the speech of Alif-Lam-Mim' ends, it will be tantamount to something distant and a distant demonstrative pronoun has thus been employed to refer to it. In this case, Alif-Lam-Mim is the subject and 'dhalika Al-Kitabu' is the predicate" (Farra, 1980) or to the verses that God had promised in the Tawrat to send down and this Quran and its verses are the fulfillment of that promise (Sadeghi, 1986) or to all verses and chapters that had been revealed until that time and are therefore, tantamount to something distant. Razi seems to be the only Muslim commentator who tried to argue for the last of these four points of view. He attempts to justify the contradiction between the literal meaning of dhalika and its antecedent (the Quran which is near) by saying that "the root dha which is central to the meaning of this word is simply used for making reference or allusion to something or someone and not indicating nearness or distance. Usage, however, in time made dhalika a demonstrative pronoun specific to distant things". This inference, however, seems to limit the usage of the demonstrative pronouns only to the things near. Not to mention according to some other commentators, dhalika, a distant demonstrative pronoun has been employed to refer to the Quranic corpus, to emphasize its grandeur.

However, considering the other Quranic verses in which the divine source of the Quran is set forth and following properly the literal meaning of dhalika and also in view of the demerits of the suggestions above, some commentators take this word in Q (2:1) as a reference to Lawh Mahfuz. This interpretation appears to be more accurate on the account of what has been said in previous sections. In other words, the word dhalika literally points to distant things and the Quran which is being sent down is not far and besides, nothing remarkable but some letter-symbols have preceded dhalika so as to refer to it. Except for this last view, none of the explanations provided by the commentators about the antecedent of dhalika seem to be thoroughly convincing. It appears that the commentator's confusion of the Quran's content for its source has led to such interpretations. Thus, even if dhalika is here to depict the grandeur of the Quran, the grandeur of its source and origin is intended not of the content. This verse inaugurates the Sura; no special subject was raised in the preceding verse but rather some letter-symbols whose following verse, instead, points to a book in which there is no doubt and is a guidance for the pious and accordingly the first qualification stated in the immediate next verse for the pious is that they believe in the unseen.

Quranic evidences on preserving and upholding the fundamental contents of all the other Divine books:

In the concluding verses of Q 87, it is stated that this (these teachings) has also been mentioned in the former Scriptures, the Scripture of Abraham and Moses. Likewise, verses such as Q 10:37; 12:111 and all other verses which say that the Quran confirms other divine books and Prophets demonstrate that the origin and the most basic teachings of them all are identical. It seems that it was based on this notion that commentators like Qatadeh and Mujahed construed the demonstrative pronouns tilka/dhalika as referring to the Tawrat and the Injil. They were cognizant of the fact that there is an intertextual relationship between the Quranic verses and those of the Bible and thus regarded the Quran as a source to remove ambiguities arising from the latter. The interpretation made by these early Muslim commentators, thus did not mean an Arabicized version of the Tawrat and the Injil as intended by haddad but rather they meant that the Quran tends to the completion of the Bible. All heavenly Books confirm each other; their differences lie only in the conciseness and details of their contents.

Moreover, the Quran constantly refutes the notion that it has been a borrowing from the heavenly books prior to it and asserts strongly that these are of the tidings of the unseen which God reveals to him and neither the Prophet nor his people knew them. In other words, the news referred to in these verses has not been expounded before whatever by the Bible or those who had seen it or the later historians. This information is news from the invisible world revealed to the Prophet (although, the stories of Joseph, Mary had been mentioned in the Bible and naturally the people of Arabia, more or less, knew something about them but in most cases, they never knew the whole event properly and in detail. It goes without saying that the verses describe the news as 'the news from the invisible, not from the Bible. Likewise, through the very initial Suras, it is declared that the origin of the Quran is the revelatory recitations brought down by the angels Inna Sanulqi Alayka Qawlaan Thaqilaan: we shall send down to you a weighty word (Q 73:5) this verse belongs to the early period of Quranic recitations and the phrase Qawlaan Thaqilaan is the Quran. In Q 26:192-197 it is once more, stated explicitly that it is Ar-Ruhu Al-Aminu, the trustworthy spirit (the Gabriel) who brings down the recitations. The verse Nazala Bihi Ar-Ruhu Al-Aminu (Q 26:193) and particularly the attributive adjective of Al-Amin seem to clearly imply that the recitations are not the satans inspirations and that the satans and jinns are being denied access to them and also that the truthful angels read and deliver the recitations to the Prophet without making any alteration or manipulation

whatsoever to them. Angels have no authority except to follow and obey the Divine command. Besides, Q 42:52 affirms that before his divine mission, the Prophet did not know the details of faith and the minute points of monotheism and that the Quran made everything clear to him. Whatever the Holy Prophet did or said was as directed by God he was taught and educated by God Himself.

Furthermore, in order to assert the genuineness of the divine words revealed to a man who did not receive any type of education from any mortal and also to put an end to doubts and speculations, forever that it could be the fabrication of any human mind, the Quran mounts a serious challenge to the audience for making an effort to compose something of the like.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of what has been presented above, a detailed comparison made between the Suras whose introductory verses contain the demonstrative pronouns, shows that these pronouns have been employed in their true literal sense and that they do not refer to the Quranic corpus or the content of the related Suras but rather to the divine knowledge and Lawh Mahfuz the celestial provenance of all heavenly Books. Apparently, the skeptical reactions of the pagans dismissing the Prophet's recitations as satanic inspirations, poetry or soothsaying, triggered the revelation of these verses. It is due to this fact that no such verses are found in the earliest Suras. It seems that as the opposition became fiercer and more vehement to the Prophet's recitations at the outset of several Suras and prior to a new revelatory context the

divine source of that new context is emphasized further through using the demonstrative pronouns dhalika/tilka and introducing Lawh Mahfuz as the origin of these recitations.

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