

Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Awqaf
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The Language of the Qur'an and the Preservation of Our Identity

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, Who says in His Ever Glorious Book, **“A Scripture whose verses are perfectly explained - a Qur'an in Arabic for people who understand.”** I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him, his Household, Companions and upon those who follow their path to the Day of Judgment.

Language is the means that carries meanings and cultures, and it is one of the most important factors for the formation of identity; it is a very influential in the building of personality. One who masters two languages will be opened up to two cultures, and he who speaks three languages will have knowledge of three cultures and reads the product of many minds. However, one's mother tongue remains one of the most important factors in shaping his culture. The one who does not grasp the secrets of his language cannot realize the essence of the culture of his people or understand its depth.

The Arabic language has a great peculiarity. It is the language of the Glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). The great miracle of our Prophet (PBUH) was the Glorious Qur'an with its style and its linguistic and rhetorical secrets. The Almighty Allah says, **"A Scripture whose verses are perfectly explained -a Qur'an in Arabic for people who understand,"** and says, **"We have sent the Qur'an down in the Arabic tongue."** Allah also says, **"So We have revealed an Arabic Qur'an to you, in order that you may warn the capital city and all who live nearby. And warn [especially] about the Day of Gathering, of which there is no doubt."** Allah also says, **"We have sent down to you [people] a Scripture to remind you. Will you not use your reason!"**

The Glorious Qur'an makes a connection between Arabic language and the use of reasoning as Allah said, **"We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you [people] may understand."** Therefore, the Arabs interacted with the Qur'an as they used reasoning and produced a civilization that cannot be ignored. Allah also makes a link between Arabic language and the call for knowledge as He, the Almighty, said, **"A Scripture whose verses are perfectly explained -a Qur'an in Arabic for people who understand,"** urging thereby people to seek knowledge, and acquire piety together. Allah also said, **"In this Qur'an, We have put forward all kinds of illustration for people, so that they may take heed. An Arabic Qur'an, free from any distortion- so that people may be mindful."**

No one can deny that it is not possible to understand our religion correctly, or to derive Shari'ah rulings from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of our Prophet (PBUH) except through the accurate understanding of Arabic language, for Arabic language is the key to understand religion. Abd Allah Ibn Abbas said, "I did not know what the meaning of Allah's saying, '**Praise be to Allah, "Fatir" of the heavens and earth,**' until two Bedouins came to me arguing about a well, and one of them said: I *Fatartuha* meaning "I originated it." So, the meaning of the verse is "Originator" of is the heavens and earth." In fact, Scholars of *Usul al-Fiqh* and *Fiqh* considered that mastering Arabic language and its tools is one of the most important conditions for practicing *Ijtihad*. May Allah bless poet Hafiz Ibrahim who wrote a poem speaking about Arabic language, saying:

I was capable of handling the Book of Allah; words and concepts,
and I was not too narrow to handle verses and sermons.

(That being the case) how would I today be too incapable of describing a
device and new inventions?

I am the Sea, in my depths pearls are hidden,
have they asked the divers about my shells?

Moreover, no one deny that the lack of knowledge of the Arabic language and its indications, the lack of depth in understanding its texts, limiting our understanding to the literal meaning, all this leads to the wrong understanding that may cause one to attack others and kill them.

This is why understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah is an obligation, and this may be done only through the correct understanding of the Arabic language. Umar Ibn al-Khattab once said, "Learn Arabic language, for it is part of your religion." Once he passed by a group of people who were shooting, but they did not shoot well. He blamed them for that, and they replied, "We are educated people." They pronounced the word educated (in Arabic "*Muta'allimin*") in the accusative case, though the correct form is to use the nominative case. Umar commented, "Your grammatical mistake is more heinous than your wrong shooting." Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan said, "Correct your language. A person may borrow clothes or a means of transportation, but he cannot borrow the tongue to speak correctly, and the beauty of a man lies in his eloquence."

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his companions and followers: -

It goes without saying that the language of the Qur'an preserves the scholarly heritage our nation, absorbs the elements of its thought and culture throughout history, and guarantees the survival of this thought. The existence of nations is dependent on the existence of their language; Nations whose languages became distinct lost their culture. This is why caring about language is an indicator of the preservation of identity.

Language is the expression of the unity of purpose, and unity of thought, and language is the most important cultural cover for any nation or culture.

Actually, we strongly need to be aware of and resistant to all attempts to dissolve our identity. We need to work hard to strengthen our civilizational immunity in the face of massive waves of dissolution, by caring about the language of the Qur'an, as it is the key to our identity. To cherish it means to cherish our identity, and to serve it means to serve our religion and our nation.

May Allah protect Egypt from all evils, and protect all other countries of the world!