

The Holy Qur'ān in the Ginānic Literature – An Initial Exploration

This paper seeks to demonstrate the underlying teachings of the holy Qur'ān in the Ginānic Literature, therefore it is essential, first of all to describe the nature of the Qur'ān, as well as that of the Gināns in order to understand better the relationship between them.

The holy Qur'ān is the Divine revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.) and unites the entire Muslim *ummah*. In its own words in Sūrah 26, verses 192 to 195: “It is a revelation of the Lord of the worlds, which the True Spirit has brought down upon your (i.e. Prophet Muhammad's) heart that you may be of the warners in plain Arabic speech.” We further learn from the Qur'ān in Sūrah 56, verses 77-80 that: “This is indeed a noble Qur'ān in the *Kitāb-i makhnūn* or the hidden Book, which none touches except the purified, a revelation from the Lord of the worlds”. *Kitāb-i makhnūn* is also described as the *Kitāb-i munir* (35:25) or the Luminous Book, which is the source of the Books of all the previous Messengers of God, about whom God says: “And We never sent a messenger save with the language of his people or nation (*qawm*), that he might make the message clear for them.” (Sūrah 14, verse 4). These scriptural references establish that the Prophets through their spiritual elevation, which in the case of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.) is described as the *Mi'rāj*, have access to the *Kitāb-i munir* or the *Kitāb-i makhnūn* and then they express their spiritual experiences in the language of their people. The transition from the luminous spiritual dimension to people's language requires that such sublime experiences be couched in the language of parables and allegories, thus the Prophets have to “teach the wisdom of the Book”, technically known as the *ta'wil* or esoteric interpretation. In Shia Imami Ismaili Islam this function of giving the *ta'wil* or inner meaning of the allegories and parables of the Qur'ān is done by the *rāsikhūn fi'l 'ilm* (i.e. those who are firmly grounded in knowledge). When Imam al-Baqir was asked the identity of the *rāsikhūn fi'l 'ilm* mentioned in (3:7), he replied: “The foremost of them is God's Messenger, for God taught him all that was revealed to him of the *tanzil* and the *ta'wil* and he knew the *ta'wil* of everything that was revealed to him, with no exception. After him, the legatees (i.e. his successors, the Imams) are the *rāsikhūn* who know its *ta'wil* in its entirety.”¹

To turn now to the Gināns, the focus of this Conference, in Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir's words: “... the word Ginān itself is quite clearly a local phonetic realization of the familiar Sanskrit word *jñāna* – ‘knowledge’. In the hymns themselves, the term Ginān is in

¹Qazi Nu'mān, *Daf'ā'im al-Islām*, I, 22-23.

fact most frequently used in the basic sense of the higher knowledge to which Ismaili teachings give access.”² Thus, Gināns are a corpus of esoteric literature the main aim of which is to teach *ma`rifat* or Divine recognition. This assumes great significance in the context of the fact that as “*Bāṭiniyyun* or esotericists” Ismailis throughout their history have emphasised the esoteric or *bāṭini* aspect of their faith, harking back to the well-known saying of Hazrat Mawlana Ali (s.a.): “*Man `arafa nafsahu faqad `arafa Rabbahu* = The one who recognises his/her soul recognises his/her Lord”.

At this juncture a few words on the Ismaili *da`wat* may be appropriate. During the course of its history, under the guidance of the Divinely designated hereditary Ismaili Imams, there has been a system of *da`wat*, which at times was openly active and at other times secretly active depending on the historical context. The main purpose of this *da`wat* or system of conversion was to bring people into the fold of the Ismaili *tariqah*, through recognising the Imam of the time in the light of the holy Qur`ān. Thus this *da`wat* was highly sensitive to the cultural and intellectual environment in which it took place. For instance in the Fatimid times, the *da`is* used the language of Neo-Platonism to convey their beliefs whereas in the Persian period Ismaili terminology uses Sufi terms such as Pir, Shah and Jama`at khanah but which have a specifically Ismaili meaning. Similarly, in the Indian sub-continental *da`wat*, the Pirs and Sayyids used the languages, cultures and the religious mythology of the Hindus to convert them to the Ismaili *tariqah*. A very apt reference to this is in the Ginān “*Eji dei gurke vacha heje thir na rahena*” where Pir Tajdin says:

Varan chhatris sur bayetali bhakhiya

Berda kane na sunan ho jirebhai

O brother! Though we have composed Gināns in 36 musical modes and 42 dialects,

The deaf will not listen.

This method of proselytization continued right up to the early times of the 48th Imam, Mawlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (s.a.) who later on brought conversion to an end. The Ismaili system of *da`wat* spanning more than thirteen centuries, in which the essence of the Qur`ān was expressed in diverse languages and different modes, created a rich heritage of diversity within the unity of the faith of Islam. The Pirs and Sayyids mostly of Persian origin were extremely well versed not only in the *tanzil* or *zāhir* of the Qur`ān, but also in its *ta`wil* or *bāṭin*. Inspired by love and devotion for the Imam and confident of the truth of the Ismaili faith, they travelled on foot or animals across high mountains and vast deserts to reach the

² Shackle C. & Moir Z., *Ismaili Hymns from South Asia – An Introduction to the Ginans* (London, 1992), p. 17.

various parts of India to bring the *da`wat-i haqq* or ‘invitation to the truth’, which is the original name of the Ismaili *da`wat*. *Da`wat-i haqq* translates beautifully into *Sat-panth*, the true path or *ṣirāt-i mustaqīm*, “the strait way traced by God’s finger for the eternal happiness of the humblest as of the greatest – Abraham, Jesus, Mohammed” as Mawlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (s.a.) says in his Memoirs.³ In Ismaili belief the pure genius of the Pirs, the equivalent in Arabic is *Hujjats*, is also due to the fact that they are the highest personnel in the *ḥudud-i dīn* or religious hierarchy after the Imam and as such they receive *ta`yīd* (spiritual help) from him, as an Ismaili poet says:

“Az dil-i hujjat ba-hadrat rah buwad;
 Ū ba-ta`yīd-i dilash agah buwad,
 From the heart of the hujjat to the Imam there is a path;
 the Imam is [always] aware of sending ta`yīd to his heart.”⁴

This concept is also expressed in various Gināns. For example in the Ginān “*Bindrare van man sukh chare re gavantri*” Pir Sadardin recounts the story of a cow, who is caught by a lion, but succeeds in persuading him to let her go because her young calf is waiting to be fed. The lion agrees and the cow goes to feed her calf, who enquires why its mother is so pre-occupied and worried. She tells the calf her reason for wanting to return quickly to fulfil her promise to the lion. The calf insists on accompanying the mother and faced with the lion, tells the latter to first eat him. The lion impressed by the impeccable ethical behaviour and the zest for sacrifice of the calf and the cow asks: Who has instructed you thus? They replied: “*Etli re sudh budh chaande suraje didhi*”, that is, they had learnt this lesson from the sun and the moon. Here in this Ginān the sun stands for the Shah or the Imam and the moon stands for the *Hujjat* or Pir who receives the light of the sun of Imamāt directly. This example also demonstrates how the sequence of words in various languages differs. In Arabic and Persian it would be Shah followed by Pir, which is also correct conceptually, that is, sun and moon or *suraj ane chaand*, but in the Indian languages it is contrary to this. In the Ismaili *Jama`at* we are also familiar with the phrase ‘*mata ane pita*’ in the translations, whereas in the English communications of the Imam to the *Jama`at* the sequence is ‘paternal and maternal’. Interestingly, the Qur`ān in Sūrah Qiyāmah (75), verse 9 states: “And the sun and the moon are united”. Whereas the exoteric people await the uniting or joining of the physical sun and moon, which is impossible because the sun’s extreme temperatures would simply consume the moon if by any cataclysm it were to go near the sun, in the esoteric Ismaili *ṭarīqah* in the light of what has been mentioned earlier, it can be interpreted as the joining of the institution

³ Mawlana Sultan Muhammad Shah, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan – World Enough and Time* (London, 1954), p. 177.

⁴ Allamah Nasir Hunzai, *Silsila-yi nur-i Imamāt* (Karachi, 1957), p.49.

of *Piratan* with the institution of Imamatus in the time of Mawlana Sultan Muhammad Shah. Subsequently, the Imam gave the status of Pir only posthumously to his loyal *murids*, such as Pir Sabzali.

The topic of this paper “The Holy Qur’ān in the Ginānic Literature” was inspired by the *farmans* of Mawlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (s.a.) as well as the resonance of both the Qur’ān and the Gināns in my personal practice of faith over the last three decades. There are some amazing insights in the 48th Imam’s *farmans* regarding the relationship of the Qur’ān and the Gināns. On 5th July 1899 at Zanzibar he said:

તમને પીર સદરદીને જે ગીનાનો રચી આપ્યા છે તેમાં.
કુરઆનનું સાર તત્વ કાઢીને, હિંદુસ્તાનની ભાષામાં સંભળાવ્યા છે.

Which translates as: “Pir Sadardin has composed for you Gināns by extracting the essence of the Qur’ān and stating it in the language of Hindustan.”⁵

On the 13th July 1899, he said:

પીર સદરદીને તમને હકીકતી દીન દેખાડ્યો તે, તરત નહિ
દેખાડ્યો હતો. પહેલા હિંદુ ધર્મની નમ્નિહતો કરી અને ત્યાર બાદ
સતપંથ દીનનો રસ્તો, તેઓના દીન સાથે જોડી દેખાડ્યો, ત્યારે આ
દીનનો ફેલાવો થયો છે.

That is: “Pir Sadardin did not show you (the path of) the *haqiqati* religion all at once. First he explained the counsels of the Hindu faith and subsequently he conflated the path of the *Satpanth* with it, because of which this religion spread.”⁶

In the same *farman* he also said:

તમે જાણો છો કે, પીર સદરદીન કયા ગામના હતા? તમે
તેમની તવારીખ પઠો તો તમને ખબર પડે. તમે હિંદુ હતા, પીર
સદરદીને કુરઆને શરીફની તફસીરભાષી ગીનાનો રચીને તમને
સંભળાવ્યા.

“Do you know which city Pir Sadardin came from? You will know if you read his history. You were Hindus. Pir Sadardin composed Gināns from the exegesis of the Qur’ān-i Sharif for you.”⁷

⁵ *Kalam e Imam e Mubin*, (Mumbai, 1950), Part 1, p. 85.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

And again:

તમારામાં એવા ઇમાનદાર માણસો બેઠાએ, જે, કુરઆને શરીફ
પડ્યા હોય, તેમજ ગીનાનમાં પણ બરાબર વાકેફગાર હોય તો, અમે
તેઓને ગીનાનની એકએક કડી, કુરઆને શરીફમાંથી કાઢી આપીએ,
જે તે, તમને કહી સંભળાવે; પણ એવો કોઈ નથી !

“Were there among you such faithful people who had studied the Qur’ān-i Sharif and who were also familiar with the Gināns, I would have shown them each verse of the Gināns in the Qur’ān, which they could reiterate to you, but there is no such person!”⁸

This brings us to the point of discussing some highly instructive affinity in the verses of the holy Qur’ān and the Gināns:

In the Ginān “*Dur deshthi ayo vanjaro*”, Pir Sadardin states: ‘*Eji sute bethe bhai rah chalanteji Naam Sahebji ko lijiyeji* = Sleeping, sitting O brother or walking along the way, take the Name of the Imam’.

In his composition, Pir Hasan Kabirdin says: ‘*Eji khadiya padiya letiya bethiya mede bhaive, hardam sami rajo sambhariye* = O my brother! Standing or lying down, reclining or sitting, remember Mawla all the time’.

Let us look at the Qur’ānic verses 190-191 in Chapter 3 or *Sūrah Al-i Imran*, which reads: “The men of intellect are those who remember Allah standing, sitting and reclining (*Uli’l- albāb allazina yaz-kurūnallāha qiyāman wa qu’ūdan wa `alā junūbihim ...*).

The similarity in the words is obvious, perhaps what is not so obvious is the fact that the emphasis after the declaration of *qiyāmat* at Alamut was on the esoteric practice of the faith, one pillar of which was to encourage followers to be *da`āimu`z-zikr*, that is to remember God constantly. This is a recurring theme of the Gināns and many will instantly recall Imam Begum’s “*Har dam zikr karna*” and “*Har dam jamo Pir Shah nun jaap, japanta rahiye*”.

Another theme is in the Ginān of Sayyid Imam Shah: ‘*Uth baythere kiya suta, tera sona bhalera nahin, tera Shah Pir kadi na sove, tuje sona kyun bhava, tera Mawla kadi na sove, tuje sona kyun bhava* = Get up and sit (in meditation/*bandagil`ibādat*), why do you sleep? Sleeping is not beneficial. Your Shah Pir never sleep so why does sleeping please you? Your Mawla never sleeps, so why does sleeping please you?’

This immediately reminds us of the *Āyatu`l-Kursi* which is universally known as the greatest of the Qur’ān’s verses, that is the *a`zamu`l-āyāt*, which runs as follows: “*Allāhu lā ilāha illā*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

hū al-Ḥayyū'l-Qayyūm, lā ta'khuzuhu sinatun wa lā nawm = Allah! There is no God save Him, [He is] the Everliving, the Everlasting, neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him.” (Sūrah 2:255)

The key word *Kursi*, which translates as Pedestal, and in Ismaili *ta'wil* symbolises the Universal Soul is in the above verse. The Qur'ānic word *'Arsh*, which translates as the Throne, symbolising the Universal Intellect, is mentioned twenty-two times in the holy Qur'ān. These purely Arabic words, filled with esoteric meanings appear in the Ginān of Pir Sadardin entitled “*Sakhi maha pad kerī vaat ke ko'ik janere*”, where vernacularising these two words he says: ‘*Sakhi Aras Kurasna kot, ke joya nirkhire, Eva sapt dip navkhand, ke joya parkhire* = Friend, I beheld the place of the lofty Throne and the Pedestal, I recognised the seven islands and nine continents’.

Another theme is the falsity and temporality of this world, both in the Gināns and the Qur'ān. Pir Sadardin says “*Juthire dunya tame kani bhulo* = this world is false, a delusion, do not forget”. Sayyid Muhammad Shah describes the limited nature of this world and says: “*Ugamiya sohi din athamiya, hanre phuliya sohi karmae, chuniya mindar dhali pade, hanre janamiya sohi marjae* = The day which dawns will end, the blossoming flower will wither, the buildings will crumble and everyone who is born will die”. This is mirrored in the Qur'ān in Sūrah Ḥadid, 57, verse 20:

“Know you (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; you will see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from God and (His) Good Pleasure (for the devotees of God). And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception?”

In the Ginān “*Jirewala Satgur sathe gothadi kije*” Pir Sadardin uses the refrain: ‘*Re wala aaj Hari (Ali) mare angane aaviya, sathe anant karod dev laviya; chaud loke vadhaviya* = Ali has come to my threshold accompanied by countless elevated souls”. The holy Qur'ān's equivalent is in Sūrah 89, āyat 22: “*Wa jā'ā Rabbuka wa'l-malaku ṣaffan ṣaffā* = And your Lord shall come with angels rank upon rank.”

Similarly in Pir Hasan Kabirdin's Ginān “*Kalpat jalpat maya e mohi*”, the refrain runs: “*So Allah gun tera, piya gun tera, saheb gun tera, Ya Shah avgun bahot hameraji, sab gune bandeke fazal karo mora Saheb* = O Allah! O Beloved! O Mawla! All praise is due to you,

my faults are innumerable, my sins many, O Lord! Have mercy. Let us juxtapose this with the cry of Hazrat Dhu'n-Nun, better known as Hazrat Yunus: "*Lā ilāha illā anta Subḥānaka, innī kuntu mina 'z-zālimīn!*" = There is no God but You who is free from all attributes, indeed I am among the wrong-doers" (Sūrah 21:87).

The Qur'ān is mentioned by its name in several Gināns. One important reference is Pir Sadardin's "*Eji Allah ek khasam sabuka*" in which verse two reads: '*Eji Nabi Muhammad bujo bhai, to tame pamo Imam, mushri(a)k man to kaffir kahinye, moman dil Qur'ān*'. This resonates in the Qur'ān as "But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge and none deny our revelations save the wrong-doers." (Sūrah 29, verse 49).

An extremely interesting example of the affinity of the Qur'ān with the contents of Gināns is to be found in Pir Shams Ghazi's Ginān "*Ek tirath vend-da*" in verse 5 he says: "*Esa dar mede Saheb rajeda sendada, suide dafe vich hasti mavna, vira mavna* = My Lord Mawla's door is as if the elephant passes through the eye of the needle". Here the Pir uses the common animal of India, the huge elephant passing through the needle's eye to demonstrate how hard it is to follow the *Satpanth*. This is no doubt an allusion to the Qur'ānic verse 40 in Sūrah 7, where it states: "Lo! Those who deny Our revelations and scorn them, for them the gates of heaven will not be opened nor will they enter the Garden until the camel goes through the needle's eye." Remaining with the theme of animals, in *Man samajani* (Edification of the self) it is stated: "The great pundit reads everything. Just like an ass carrying a load of fragrant sandalwood, what can he know of the precious cargo hoisted upon him?"⁹ In the same vein, the holy Qur'ān in Sūrah 62, āyat 5, God says: "The likeness of those who are entrusted with the Law of Moses, yet apply it not, is as the likeness of the ass carrying books."

All the examples I have cited so far show that many themes and teachings of the Qur'ān, if not exactly copied word for word, are reflected in the content of the Gināns. However there is scarcely any mention of the *shari'a* practices of Islam such as *ṣalāt*, *ṣawm*, *ḥajj* etc. Where the Persian equivalents *namāz* and *roza* are used they are very much in the esoteric sense of inner purification and prayer. For example, in the Ginān of Pir Shams, he says: "*Man mera musalla, Allah mera qazi; kaya meri masita. Eji andar beth men namaz gujarun; murakh kiya jane ta`at hamari* = My heart is my prayer carpet, Allah is my judge; my body is my mosque. I sit and perform my *namāz* inside; how can the ignorant understand my *ta`at* or obedience." Similarly in *Man samajani*, Pir Shams describes the *roza* or fasting of all the organs of the

⁹ Virani, Shafique N. "Symphony of Gnosis – A Self-definition of the Ismaili GinĀn Tradition" in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam*, ed. T. Lawson (London, 2005), p. 511.

body, starting with the head, the eyes, nose, mouth, tongue, ears, heart, *nafs* (soul), hands and feet. He says: “*Das roja je dhare bhai, te chhe moman vir re bhai* = Whoever achieves the ten fasts, he/she is the valiant *mu'min*”.

It is important to point out that during the Alamut period of Ismaili history, the most significant event of *'Idu'l-Qiyāmat* transformed the religious practices of the Ismailis who have always been called the *Bāṭiniyyun* or esotericists. The Ismaili *da'wat* emphasised its esoteric or *ta'wili* form, after the declaration of the *qiyāmati* teachings by Imam Hasan *'ala dhikrihi's-salam* (d. 561/1166).

Comparing the difference between the two periods of *tanzil* or *shari'at* and *ta'wil* or *qiyāmat*, Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 672/1274) says that in the former period, obedience is performed within the confines of set timings, and worship is immersed in fixed timings, whereas in the latter time, obedience is performed with the removal of the fixed timings and the entire time is immersed in [a state of] obedience.¹⁰

This difference in the nature of worship and obedience is clearly explained by Imam al-Mustansir bi'llah al-Husayni (d. 885/1480) in his *faramin*. He says:

“The whole year you must fast, just as the *zāhiris* (the literalists) fast one month. The meaning of this fast is *riyazat* (spiritual exercise). Watch yourselves, keep yourselves away from bad qualities, evil and indecent actions and devilish acts, so that the mirror of your hearts may be gradually polished.

Also know that in those thirty days during which the *zāhiris* fast, the *'id* is only for one day. They fast thirty days in order to attain that one day and that again is a symbol. Just as they fast thirty days in order to attain one day, so you must undergo the entire life of difficulties, pain, have patience, do *riyādat* and keep fasting internally in order to attain the beatific vision (*liqā'/didār*) of your Lord.”¹¹

The Imam then explains the *ta'wili* or esoteric fasting. He says:

“The fast of the head means to treat one's own head as the feet of the people, casting out from one's head the desire for superiority, greatness and pride, because these attributes befit only God, Who is everlasting and the Master of

¹⁰ Nasir al-din Tusi, *Rawḍatu't-Taslim*, p. 102.

¹¹ Imam Mustansir billah al-Husayni II, *Pandiyāt-i Jawānmardi*, ed. and trans. W. Ivanow (Bombay, 1950), p. 96.

the kingdom. The fasting of the eye is that he must not cast covetous looks at women who are not lawful to him. The fasting of the ear is that he should abstain from listening to slander. The fasting of the tongue is to avoid uttering abuse or slander. The fasting of the heart is to keep it free from doubt. The fasting of [his] foot is to hold it back from wrong steps. Fasting of [his] hand is to keep it away from treachery. Thus, a *mu'min* (believer) should keep all his body parts in a state of fasting, so that he may not be a wrong-doer (*zālim*).”¹²

Another very significant characteristic of the post-Alamut period, as pointed out in Dr. Steigerwald’s paper¹³, was the emphasis on the role of the Imam and particularly as explained by Sayyidna Nasir al-Din Tusi in *Rawḍatu’-Taslim* (Paradise of Submission), the *uluhiyyat* or the Divinity of the Imam. This message runs throughout the Ginānic corpus and in one Ginān Pir Sadardin warns the believers: “*Eji ek feekar munivar tamari chhe aamane, maanas roope Saheb jano ho bhai ji* = We have one concern about you *mumins*, that you will know Saheb as a human being”. Such a discussion of the humanity of the Prophet is also clear in the Qur’ān, where the disbelievers challenged his human attributes of eating and walking about the markets (see Sūrah 25, āyats 7 and 20). In Sūrah 18, āyat 110, God commands the Prophet to respond and say: *Qul innamā anā basharum mislukum yūḥā`ilay-ya* = Say: I am only a mortal like you. My Lord sends me the *wahy*/revelation.”

To draw together all the points covered so far, the Ginānic Literature reflects both the *tanzili* and the *ta’wili* aspects of the holy Qur’ān. The messages of the Qur’ān are seamlessly woven into the vernacular forms of India and use the local idioms which are familiar to the people. The symbols and similes may be contextual to the environment of India but the Pirs and Sayyids were very faithful to the message of the Shia Ismaili *tariqah*. Mawlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (s.a.) says in a *farman* dated 13th October 1903 at Ahmedabad: “Just as there are the teachings of Pir Sadardin, in the same way there are the meanings of the Mathnawī, but it is in Fārsī, therefore you should learn the meanings.”¹⁴

Further about the meaning of the Qur’ān Mawlana Jalallu’d-din Rumi says in his *Diwān*:

“*Mā zi Qur’ān barguzīdim maghz-rā*

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

¹³ Steigerwald, D. “Gināns in Ismaili Theosophical History” presented at International Ginān Conference, London, 29-30 October, 2011.

¹⁴ *Kalam e Imam e Mubin*, Part I, p. 154.

Ustukhwān pīsh-i sagān andakhtin

Which means: “We have extracted the kernel or essence of the Qur’ān
We have thrown the bones to the dogs”.

To conclude this paper and quoting a Persian poet: “*Mathnawī li’l-Mawlawiyi’l-Ma’anawī; Hast Qur’ān dar zaban-i Pahlawī*”, that is, the *Mathnawī* of Mawlana Rumi is the Qur’ān in Persian, it would not be inappropriate if we say that the Gināns are the Qur’ān in the Indian languages. In fact we can look forward to such esoteric poetry within the Ismaili global *Jama`at* in languages such as Burushaski, Khwar etc.

One very final word is that we often hear members of the Indian sub-continental *Jama`at* say that since the essence of the Qur’ān is included in the Gināns it dispenses them of learning the Final revelation to humankind, the Qur’ān. Such a statement does not hold in the present globalised pluralistic world, where we do need to know the Qur’ān in its original language as well as in translation, both to communicate with the general *ummah* as well as demonstrate the true principles of pluralism by sharing a common heritage of the diverse groups in the Ismaili *Jama`at*. Moreover, if we are today living in a Knowledge Society and we have access to all sorts of technology to help us to learn, we should take every opportunity to learn the foundational Book of the faith of Islam, which as demonstrated in this article will only help the *Jama`at* of the Indo-Pak background to appreciate the Ginān Literature more.

- ❖ *This paper was presented at the International Ginan Conference of the Association for the Study of Ginans in London on 30th October 2011.*
- ❖ *The topic of this paper has necessitated the use of transliteration in three languages. Time constraints have made it impossible to use diacritical marks consistently.*
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