

**ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY (4)**

**Prophethood**

**I**

**Chapter 1 of the book “Islamic beliefs”**

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

**Objectives**

* To know about perfection and the meaning of General and Specific Guidance.
* To know about the Prophets of God and their characteristics
* To understand the realm of intellect and to evaluate whether or not the intellect and religious teachings are in conflict
* To understand the meanings of miracles and revelation.

# Towards Perfection

When we look at the world around us, throughout it and within all creatures, we encounter extraordinary harmony and astounding equilibrium. The order and equilibrium that the eye sees induces wonder in every intelligent being.

The Holy Qur’an refers to this matter: that God, the Wise, did not create any phenomenon without purpose.

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاء وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ (38:27)

**We did not create the sky and the earth and whatever is between them in vain. That is a conjecture of the faithless. So woe to the faithless for the Fire! (38:27)**

Another point that should be paid attention to is that the creatures of the world with one general division can be divided into two kinds: first creatures that do not enjoy the power of will such as inanimate objects and plants, and secondly, creatures that have willpower such as humans. These two groups have differences and also, similarities, in the type of perfection that has been determined for them and also in the type of divine guidance in the path for achieving that perfection.

In this chapter we seek to discuss the fact that this wise and knowledgeable God has brought all creatures to this world, whether they enjoy willpower or not, in order for them to achieve their particular aim and realise their perfection and that He guides them in the way of obtaining this perfection. Sometimes this guidance is general, expressed as ‘natural law’ and ‘instincts’ and sometimes it is specific, manifested through ‘human innate nature’, ‘intellect’ and ‘revelation’.

**The Elephant and the Ant**

Have you seen or heard until now that an elephant in its path of development becomes an ant, or a baby ant grows up and becomes an elephant, or a tree, instead of bringing fruit to the world, brings a baby elephant?! Although these questions appear to be silly, but if we consider their answer with care, they can help with the study of perfection. The fact that no ant naturally turns into a powerful elephant is because it does not have the capacity to turn into an elephant. When a baby ant is born, it is full of different talents and capabilities that will flourish in its lifetime and eventually it will turn into a complete ant. In reality, all creatures are like the ant, meaning that with the fulfilling of capacities, they will reach to their perfection and since every creature has specific capacities, its perfection will also be specific to it.

**Think about**

Remember your childhood. Did you have the choice to become either a man, a /woman or something else, like a bird? Why?

The answer lies in the capabilities you possessed. You developed according to your human capabilities whether you liked it or not.

**Simple Question**

All people have seen many times the falling of fruit from trees and have passed by with indifference. This is because it was considered that nothing special has occurred: just a fruit has fallen from a tree to the ground. Among all these people, only one person by the name ‘Isaac Newton’ asked the following simple question: ‘why has the fruit fallen to the ground?’ This simple question paved the way for the discovery of the Earth’s gravity, which then had much effect in following scientific discoveries. The reason for the success of Newton might be that he was not indifferent to his surrounding environment and was after finding the cause behind every occurrence. You have many times been witness to the growth of various creatures; until now have you asked yourself why each creature has its own specific perfection or, in our own example, ‘why does an ant not turn into an elephant?’

**Simple Answer**

By paying a little attention to the creatures that are around you, you are able to give a simple answer to the above question with the phrase: ‘the way they have been created’.

All of the creatures that we see have been created such that each one possesses a series of special capacities and all exert efforts and move towards the fulfilling of those capacities. Consider the eagle that opens its wings and flies in the sky. When this eagle was a baby it then also had wings, but its wings did not have the ability to lift it off the ground. It had the potential for flight but it just needed to realise this potential. In order for this eagle to fly, it must eat well so that its wings become strong. Flight for this bird is considered as one aspect of its perfection and for reaching to this perfection, it must pursue its particular path.

By studying this example and the previous examples, two points become clear to us:

* Every creature has been created in such a way that they have their own specific capacities
* Every creature is inclined to reach to its particular perfection and fulfill its potentialities.

Natural scientists have always tried to discover the laws that govern over nature and the creatures of creation. Laws such as the law of photosynthesis or gravitational pull between planets etc. are termed as natural laws, and natural desires that different creatures have in order for them to arrive at perfection, such as the desire to reproduce and desire for life etc. are termed as instincts. Now that it has become clear that the answer to the question is in the creation of these creatures, an important question arises: ‘who is the creator of them?’ Or, in other words, ‘which person has created these capacities and desires within creatures?’

# General Guidance

He who created these capacities and inclinations within creatures is none other than the wise and powerful God. God has created and manages the cosmos and for the individual components of this system, whether large or small, He has established specific perfections. He has subjected them to natural laws and instincts, only a small part of which are yet known to humans, in order to guide them towards their perfection and advance the world to its best imaginable state. The creation by God of the capacities present in creatures is known as general guidance.

The Holy Qur’an in pointing to this reality, just as it attributes the creation of all creatures to God, also attributes the nurturing and guidance of creatures towards perfection and their ultimate aim, to the wise Lord:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى (20:50)

**He said, ‘Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it.’ (20: 50)**

And in another place it states:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى \* وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى (3-2: 87)

**Who hath created, and further, given order and proportion; Who hath ordained laws. And granted guidance (87: 2&3)**

# Specific Guidance

The second type of guidance is specific guidance and as its name suggests, is particular to specific types of creatures. In reality this type of guidance is especially for creatures such as humans, which have willpower. Humans benefit from this guidance through three means: the human innate nature, the intellect and revelation.

As has been stated, guidance that emanates from the Lord for creatures is of two types, the first of which relates to all creatures and was discussed above. In this section we will discuss the specific type of guidance and its means, i.e. ‘*fitrah* ’, ‘intellect’ and ‘revelation’, which belong to creatures that possess willpower.

# Various Inclinations

When newborn turtles move towards the sea, when a human exerts effort to remain alive and eliminates hunger and thirst by eating and drinking, or when he reproduces, they are in reality, performing actions based upon their instincts. Now, the questions arises: when humans by their free will are kind and helpful to each other, or when they have a love for knowledge and are constantly in pursuit of the truth, or when they love beauty and celebrate it, does this also come from instincts? What difference is there between these actions and instinctive actions? The first difference that comes to mind is that the second group of actions can only be performed by humans but the first group is common among humans and animals. That which guides humans towards the performance of these actions is their nature.

# Fitrah

*Fitrah* (i.e. human innate nature) is a human trait that guides the human towards certain matters. All humans possess innate nature, meaning that nature, like instincts, is rooted within creation and therefore does not disappear. Instincts are related to animalistic and material inclinations, which are common between humans and animals. They are related to the human body, such as the desire for food and water and sexual desires, whereas *fitrah* is the tendency of the human towards spiritual perfection and is related to his spirit, like the love of beauty, pursuit of knowledge and recognition of God.

Religion or the desire for religion, is also from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur’an an innate condition and is common among all humans:

**So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the origination of Allah according to which He originated mankind (30: 30)**

Therefore, the tendency towards perfection, moral virtues, worship of God etc. are matters that have been placed within the nature of humans by God in order to guide them towards their creator. The human innate nature is like a mirror; only if it is clean has it the ability to reflect truth and if this mirror becomes darkened due to compliance with worldly desires and the commitment of sin, it is no longer usable. In fact, one of the reasons for the missions of the prophets was to help humans polish this mirror, a matter that will be explained further in future lessons.

**Think about**

History shows that all people in the world have had a kind of inclination towards beauty and have been in search of knowledge and have been seeking God, whether they were successful in finding them or not. In your opinion, what is/are the implications of these inclinations?

# The Intellect

The second means for guidance that God has placed within the human is the intellect. In the religion of Islam, the intellect has been paid special attention to, being introduced as a source that recommends doing what is good. In opposition, humans have worldly and temporal desires which pull them towards evil which are called the al-nafs al-ammārah. God has created the human free and able to judge between good and bad; he chooses which one he wants. In this judgement, the intellect helps the human to recognise right from wrong and to consequently follow the path to prosperity or adversity. The human can find perfection through the will, in material and spiritual dimensions but he can also, by employing his will in the wrong direction, bring upon himself adversity and destruction.

Several questions in this regard come to mind. They are: does the intellect have the ability to make correct decisions in all cases? Does the intellect have the ability to distinguish all things that are beneficial to the human? Or, in other words, what is the extent of the realm of the intellect?

**Reference**

To know more about the status of reason and its different roles read the first and second chapter of “Reason, Faith and Authority” by Dr. Shomali. The article is available at.

[http://www.al-islam.org](http://www.al-islam.org )

## The Realm of the Intellect

With reflection upon the nature of the intellect and observing the profound differences of opinion of past experiences, it is very clear that the intellect alone is not capable of identifying all that is good for the human and it cannot offer a programme that will enable the human to reach all his possible perfections.

Imagine a person whose liver does not work properly and, for this reason, red spots have appeared on his hands. He consults a doctor who does not have sufficient information regarding the liver and its diseases. How probable do you think it is that the doctor would give the correct diagnosis and write him a prescription that would improve his condition? How much can the diagnosis and prescription be trusted? This situation reflects the position of the human intellect. Since the knowledge accessible to the intellect regarding the human spirit and spiritual perfections is extremely limited and general, it can never provide a complete and reliable prescription for his prosperity and perfection.

Regardless of this fact, if we briefly consider the multitude of views in regards to the definition of prosperity and human perfection that have been propounded, and consequently also in regards to the ways for reaching to them, it is apparent that the intellect is not sufficient in providing them. Some consider the observance of moral dos and don’ts to be the guarantor of prosperity. Another group considers achieving the highest satisfaction from lusts and material pleasures to be prosperity, whilst others regard the prosperous society as one providing the most benefit to the most people, and so forth. However, none of them can present a comprehensive and perfect plan for the human’s individual and social perfection. There are always differences of opinion and each day we witness changes in approaches and laws.

**Case Study**

Although reason is recognized as an independent source of knowledge, it has its own limits. There are many things on which reason has no judgment and is silent, because they are beyond its scope. Therefore, there might be many things that we can understand by other ways of understanding such as perception, intuition or revelation that do not fall in the scope of reason.

You cannot really understand through rational arguments how a rose smells or what a mother feels when her child is dead. In respect to religious issues, there are many facts that are not knowable by reason, such as many details of the resurrection. What is important is that there is nothing in Islam that contradicts reason. One must therefore distinguish between what lies beyond one's actual rational capacity and what conflicts with rational standards.

# Revelation (Al-*Wahy*)

It was found that the intellect alone is not enough to guide the human towards perfection. Consequently there is a need for the merciful God who created man and knows all his material and spiritual aspects, and who created the world in order for him to reach prosperity and perfection, to guide him towards these in a way other than through his intellect and instincts.

## God Speaks with Humans

In Arabic, the term ‘al-*wahy’* literally means giving a message quickly and secretly, whether by gesture, in a written form, or by inspiration. There is also a technical sense in which the term *‘al-wahy’* is used to denote ‘the communication of God to the Prophets’.

* The occurrences of divine al-wahy mentioned in the holy Qur’an are as follows: **Natural Instinct:** We always admire the wonderful achievements of small insects, such as the bees, the ants, the spiders and so forth. The same is true about the laws of nature, such as gravity, the movement of atoms, planets, etc. This is all due to a general guidance, provided by God.
* **Inspiration:** Sometimes God suggests certain ideas or courses of action to some people who are not necessarily prophets. For example, we read in the Qur'an that in order to protect Moses, God inspired his mother to put the baby in the river. This inspiration was not convened through an angel and the mother of Moses was not a prophet. Therefore, there is also a kind of general inspiration for all people. For example, the Qur'an tells us that God has inspired mankind with discernment between virtues and vices (91:8). but the technical meaning of the term ‘al-wahy,’ and which it is usually used for, is the communication of God to the Prophets.
* **Prophetic revelation:** This is exclusive to the Prophets and this has been referred to in the Qur'an more than seventy times. This is the highest and the most sophisticated form of divine communication. Since the advent of Islam, the Qur'an introduced itself, and Muslims have considered the Qur'an, as an instance of this phenomenon. According to Islamic beliefs, it is not just the Qur'an but other Divine books: the Torah, the Gospel and the Psalm of Prophet David are other examples of this connection between the Divinity and mankind.

**Reference**

What are the characteristics of prophetic revelation in Islamic thought? To find the answer, refer to the article ‘Divine Revelation’ from the book *Word of God, p: 14-26* by Dr. Shomali. The article is available at:

<http://www.mashomali.com/revelation.pdf>

## Compatibility of reason and revelation

One of the questions that is frequently asked when revelation is discussed is: are the teachings of revelations compatible with the findings of the intellect? This question was first raised in the Christian world and the reason was that some of the scientific discoveries that scientists were presenting to the world were contradictory to Christian teachings, though this discussion later spread to the other religions.

The answer of Islam to this question is completely clear: reason and revealed teachings are in total agreement and disagreements which appeared between reason and faith in Christianity and some other religions are typically rooted in misunderstandings, superficial understanding of texts and incorrect attribution to religious texts and, in recent centuries, an atmosphere that has given too much value and credibility to empirical science. Of course, to some extent, differing versions of texts and some distortions have also contributed to the problem. However, this matter by no means proves or confirms the incompatibility of the Word of God with reason, because both have been created as a means to find truth; therefore the root of this primitive attack must be sought elsewhere.

According to Islam, the intellect is a divine blessing and at no time sees it as in conflict with revelation, but rather it is the first source for understanding religion and religious teachings. The most fundamental and important teaching of the religion of Islam is the existence of God and monotheism, and it is the intellect before anything else which proves the existence of God and His attributes. The role of the intellect is not even limited to this, as reason also has a role in establishing many doctrinal teachings and even religious commandments. Therefore the intellect and the use of reason are given a high status in Islamic teachings. Āyatullah Mutahharī stated in regards to this:

*‘I see in Islamic texts a great support for reason and in no religion of the world has reason, i.e. authority of the intellect and the authenticity and validity of reason, been established such as it has in Islam.’* (The Collection of the Works of Āyatullah Mutahharī, Vol 23)

Islam believes that religious teachings must not, and cannot, oppose intellectual proof. If a belief is attributed to religion that opposes conclusive intellectual proof, that belief is certainly not correct. However an important point to note here is that some religious teachings are beyond the understanding of the intellect, which does not mean that the intellect rejects them, rather they are outside of the domain of the intellect. Because revelation comes from the perfect and absolute Being, it is natural that the limited intellect of the human is not able to understand some realities, especially matters related to the spirit and spiritual life of man, and thus is unable to comment on these matters.

For a better understanding of the alignment of rational and revelatory proofs, three points are necessary to consider:

Today, that which many scientists refer to as rational poofs, are in reality not merely intellectual proofs, rather they are typically the result of experimental observations and the output of experiments which are performed in scientific laboratories and workshops. What is certain and which these scientists have also acknowledged is that there are deficiencies in these kinds of experiments confirmed by the fact that the advancement of science often entails the annulment of previous theories and their replacement with new theories. This is while rational proofs have been one hundred percent correct, have never had any exceptions and do not change over the passage of time. For example, reason tells us that injustice is bad and this has always stayed true, has never become obsolete or changed. Of course it is possible that man may make a mistake in his determination of an instance of injustice, but the principle of this judgment is general and constant.

Revelation, due to the depth and many layers of meaning that is has, has its own richness and complexities; the scientific analysis and extraction of rulings from which requires much research and precision. This is clear in regard to the Holy Quran, as it has been stated in traditions of the Prophet of Islam (s) and his Household (as) that the Quran possesses different layers of meaning and that humans have been invited to contemplate on its deep meanings. As an example, the public perception at the time of the emergence of Islam (seventh century CE) was that the earth was flat and stationary and the sun goes around the earth. A noteworthy point is that at that time the Holy Quran had subtly referred to the fact that the earth was spherical and has rotational and positional movements so that it would not be subject to denial by the people. It has been mentioned several times in the Quran that the earth has multiple easts and wests; the existence these can only be imagined if the earth is spherical in shape. Anybody who stands anywhere on the earth’s globe and faces towards north, east (meaning the place where the sun is commonly referred to rise from) will be on their right side. It is certain that only if the earth was spherical could there be numerous easts, as, for example, if you compare a point on the earth that you are now at with another point where someone else is on the other side of the planet, you will see that your two easts are completely different from one another, but if the planet was flat, there would only be one east. In the Quran, God has likened the earth to a tamed riding animal: “It is He who made the earth tractable for you; so walk on its flanks…” (67:15). It is clear that the characteristic of a riding animal is its mobility; in other verses such as “Then He turned to the heaven, and it was smoke, and He said to it and to the earth, ‘Come! Willingly or unwillingly!’ They said, ‘We come heartily.’” (41:11) where the quality of the creation of the earth is explained, the transitional movement of the earth is understood. This verse, which is among those verses that indicate the movement of the earth, uses the word “come” to signify in common terms the transitional movement of the earth. Because the people of that time did not accept that the earth would be in movement, they interpreted the outward meaning of the verse to something other than its true meaning. However we, who believe the earth to be in movement, have no need to interpret the verse as something other than its apparent meaning. These are only very simple examples from the Quranic sciences that have been given and the Quran possesses much deeper layers which have resulted in the writing of thousands of volumes of books about the wonders and teachings of the Quran, the mentioning of which is not possible here and to understand some of them would require years of study of the Quranic sciences.

In recent centuries in which the empirical sciences have come to rule over the other sciences, and even fields of knowledge such as philosophy have sometimes wrongly come under their influence, the result has been that some people, upon the occurrence of a scientific theory that conflicts with some divine texts, and also because of inadequately scientific extraction of teachings and rulings from divine speech, make a hasty judgment of the non-conformity of reason and revelation.

The summary of what we have said is firstly, some contradictions between revelation and reason are, in reality, not contradictions between revelation and reason; rather the real contradiction is between revelation and erroneous empirical sciences. Secondly, in many cases the lack of awareness and sufficiently scientific extraction and understanding of religious texts have resulted in the illusion of conflict between revelation and reason. In fact, according to the Islamic view, conflict between revelation and reason, in principle and based on reason itself, is impossible. Revelatory speech and reason are the creations of one creator and both reflect one reality: apparent conflicts between them are rooted in a false understanding of revelation or in the confusion of presumptive empirical proofs with definitive rational proofs.

**Case Study**

**Stages of the Development of a Foetus**

Several years ago, a group of Muslims derived information from the Quran in relation to embryology. Then all the gathered Quranic information was presented to Dr Keith Moore, a professor of embryology and who, afterwards, became known as the father of the science of embryology. It was requested of him that he give his opinion on the information related to embryology in the Quran. Dr Moore, after carefully reviewing the translation of the presented Quranic verses, said: Most of the Quranic content on embryology is excellent, is in accordance with the latest findings of the science of embryology and in no way does it conflict with it. He added: There are also some verses for which I do not have an exact scientific explanation and since the new writings and studies of embryology have also not referred to this content, I cannot give my view on its truth or falsity. As an example, the following verse can be cited: “Read in the Name of your Lord who created; created man from a clinging mass.” The Arabic word for “clinging mass”, *`alaq*, has three meanings:

1 –a leech

2 – a suspended object

3 – a clot of blood

Dr Moore, in this case, in which a foetus initially resembles a leech, had no presumption. In the laboratory, at the initial, microscopic, stage he compared the foetus to a diagram of a leech. He was amazed by the striking similarity of the two, because the foetus, in the beginning, which hangs on the wall of the uterus, has a shape similar to a leech and behaves like a leech, sucking blood and providing its own blood from the placenta of the mother. Also, he deduced from the Quran new information in embryology which until that time he had not known.

Dr Moore answered about eighty questions dealing with embryological data mentioned in the Quran and hadith. Noting that the information contained in the Quran and hadith was in full agreement with the latest discoveries in the field of embryology, Dr Moore said, "If I was asked these questions thirty years ago, I would not have been able to answer half of them for lack of scientific information."

Dr Moore had earlier authored the book, 'The Developing Human'. After acquiring new knowledge from the Quran, he wrote, in 1982, the 3rd edition of the same book, 'The Developing Human'. The book was the recipient of an award for the best medical book written by a single author. This book has been translated into several major languages of the world and is used as a textbook of embryology in the first year of medical studies. In 1981, during the Seventh Medical Conference in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, Dr Moore said, "It has been a great pleasure for me to help clarify statements in the Quran about human development. It is clear to me that these statements must have come to Muhammad---sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam--- from God or Allah, because almost all of this knowledge was not discovered until many centuries later. This proves to me that Muhammad---sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam--- must have been a messenger of God or Allah.

Embryonic stages from the perspective of the Quran:

“Certainly We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him a drop of [seminal] fluid [lodged] in a secure abode. Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators!” (23:12-14)

## Pillars of Wisdom

The Holy Qur’an has many times invited humans to think and reflect and has regarded non-use of the intellect as one of the causes for the deviance of humans. For example:

**And they will say, ‘Had we listened or applied reason, we would not have been among inmates of the Blaze.’ (67: 10)**

**Indeed the worst of beasts in Allah’s sight are the deaf and the dumb who do not apply reason. (8: 22)**

Many Islamic traditions also lay emphasis upon the role of the intellect:

The Prophet (s) stated:

*‘Seek guidance from the intellect, which is a guide for you, and do not disobey its commandment so that you become regretful.’* (Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 1, p. 96; Kanz al*-*fawā'id, p. 194; the content of this hadith has come in *Al-Jami` al-Kabir*, vol. 1, p. 3572,)

Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib (as) stated:

*‘The intellect is the messenger of truth.’* (Ghurar al-Hikam p.15)

Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far al-Kādhim (as) stated:

*‘Allah has two arguments over mankind, an outer one and an inner one. The outer one is the Messengers, Prophets and Imams, and the inner one is the intellect.’* (al-Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 16)

# Characteristics of the Prophets

We have understood that God guides humans with general and specific guidance towards perfection and that human ‘innate nature’ and ‘intellect’, even though they are effective in the pursuit of perfection, without the existence of revelation they cannot deliver the human to his complete perfection. Therefore, from the beginning of creation, and among many nations, God had chosen suitable persons to be prophets. Accordingly, God appointed for every nation a prophet, or prophets, who invited the people towards truth and monotheism. The Holy Quran also refers to this point in numerous verses, including the following:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُواْ الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ هَدَى اللّهُ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلالَةُ فَسِيرُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ فَانظُرُواْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ (36: 16)

“Certainly We raised an apostle in every nation [to preach:] ‘Worship Allah, and keep away from the Rebels.’ Then among them were some whom Allah guided, and among them were some who deserved to be in error. So travel over the land and then observe how was the fate of the deniers.” (16:36)

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَإِن مِّنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ(35:24)

“Indeed We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner; and there is not a nation but a warner has passed in it.” (35:24)

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَوْلآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ إِنَّمَا أَنتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ (13:7)

“The faithless say, ‘Why has not some sign been sent down to him from his Lord?’ You are only a warner, and there is a guide for every people.” (13:7)

This was in order that they deliver the divine message, which includes the program of how to live, reach perfection and secure prosperity for humanity, to different peoples in their different languages. All divine prophets had been monotheistic and guided people towards monotheism. They were prominent among all people for acting based upon the commandments of God and their behaviour had provided the best role model for people. Among their important responsibilities were the education and training of people and the freeing of them from ignorance. The greatest aim of divine messengers was to emphasise the importance of refinement, purification and training of human selves.

## Our Fellow Humans

The primary feature of the Prophets was that they were also human. They were not angels, jinn or other types of creature. Their attributes were human attributes; they ate food, wedded, and lived among the people. They were confronted with poverty and other social problems. The Qur’an mentions this point:

**Say, ‘I am just a human being like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is the One God. So whoever expects to encounter his Lord —let him act righteously, and not associate anyone with the worship of his Lord.’ (18: 110)**

This matter enabled them to understand well the conditions of the people to whom they had been sent. They were familiar with the people’s difficulties and needs and thus took measured actions in performing their missions. On the other hand, the people did not perceive any distance between themselves and the Prophets and felt close to them. If prophets were chosen from among angels or jinn, it would not have had this result.

## The Number of Prophets

The Prophets came to deliver the message of divine love to people and save them from falling into the fatal abyss of ignorance and error. Hence, throughout history many prophets in various places in the world, and among various peoples, took up the responsibility for the guidance of man towards God. As to the number of prophets, it is known through traditions that in the past many prophets were sent to the people and the Holy Qur’an affirms their multitude. The first of the Prophets was Adam (as) and the last was Muhammad (s). The Qur'an mentions twenty-seven of the Prophets by their names and states that they were many more (40:78).

It has not been possible to determine their number through definitive traditions; however, there is a well-known saying which Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī has narrated from the Holy Prophet, according to which, their number has been set at 124,000. Amongst those mentioned in the Qur'an are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Ezekiel, David, Solomon, Jonah, Zachariah, John the Baptist, Jesus and Muhammad. Among them, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad are believed to be the greatest.

**Biography**

Abū Dharr al-Ghifari: He was the fifth person to embrace Islam. When he converted to Islam the Prophet Muhammad (s) gave him the title of honor, ‘Abdullah’ which means the servant of Allah. He was one of the most sincere and brave companions of the Holy Prophet.

**Web Link**

Find the life story of Abū Dharr at <http://www.al-islam.org>

Books/companion5/

# Divine Law and Holy Books

The Holy Qur'an, other than itself, speaks of revealed books: the Book of Abraham; the Psalms of David; the Torah of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus. A Muslim must believe in all the Holy Books and in all the Prophets. As we will see later, all the Prophets were necessarily infallible and sinless prior to and during their mission. From what can be deduced from the Holy Qur’an, it can be concluded that all the prophets of Allah did not bring divine law. Rather, five of them: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the Prophet Muhammad, are ‘possessors of determination’ (*ulul-'azm)* - those who have brought divine law. Other prophets followed the divine law brought by these prophets. There have been several reasons cited for the large numbers of prophets. The most important of which are given below:

* In ancient times, it was not possible to propagate the invitations of the prophets (as), and it would have been impossible for the entire world to be informed of their message.
* With the passing of time, and due to various factors, the instructions given by a prophet to the people of his time would face alterations and incorrect interpretations, so that after some time the original religion would change into a deviated one.

# Plurality of Religions

Why is there the plurality of prophets and certain differences in some devotional and social instructions of the divine religions?

The conditions of people’s lives in different places and at different times are not the same; such differences can influence the quality as well as the quantity of social rules and regulations. It is therefore necessary in some cases for new regulations to be issued.

**Think about**

Before reading the next section, think about this question:

Why was Prophet Muhammad (s) the last prophet, and after, no new religion was sent by God Almighty?

# The Final Prophet

Although human intellect due to the aforementioned points realizes the rationale behind the plurality of the prophets and the differences between divine religions, it cannot discover the exact formula for the number of prophets and divine religions, and cannot decide when and where a new prophet would be appointed and a new religion introduced. It is, however, understood from the above points that while the conditions of man's life are such that a prophet's invitation can reach all the people of the world and his message can be protected and secured for future generations, and as long as the social regulations do not need any fundamental changes, no new prophet would be necessary.

It is for this reason that the Prophet of Islam had been the final divine prophet. The Holy Quran, which is Prophet Muhammad’s (s) eternal miracle, explicitly mentions this point that Muhammad (s) is the final prophet and after him there will be no other prophet.

مَّا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (33:40)

“Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets, and Allah has knowledge of all things.” (33:40)

## Abrogation of religions

After the advent of Islam, the previous religions were abrogated. Abrogation does not mean that all the teachings and injunctions of the earlier revealed religions are nullified rather it means that the duration of a certain religion, which was clear in God’s knowledge from the beginning, has elapsed. However, a great deal of fundamental beliefs such as the unity of God, resurrection and the saviour as well as a huge number of injunctions (e.g. prayer, fasting, etc.) are to be kept in the subsequent religion.

**Direct Students of God (Possessors of Direct Knowledge from God)**

The responsibility for the guidance of human society was held by the Prophets of God. They needed to possess any knowledge that was useful in the guidance of man. It is apparent that the complexity of the human and the world, and conditions in which he lives in it, requires a prophet to have vast knowledge; the acquisition of this knowledge by normal means is not possible. Therefore, God provided them with direct knowledge and appointed them to prophethood in order to guide humanity. Divinely inspired knowledge (‘*ilm al-ladunnī*) is knowledge that God inspires directly into His servants. This knowledge is not acquired and obtaining it does not require education and study. This knowledge is inspired in some of the faithful directly from the source of all knowledge, as has been mentioned in the Qur’an in relation to Khidr (as):

**[There] they found one of Our servants whom We had granted a mercy from Ourselves, and taught him a knowledge from Our own. (18: 65)**

**Key Terms:**

**Divinely inspired knowledge:** is knowledge which a servant of God receives from Him, without ordinary means. As God bestows this knowledge directly, there is no process of teaching and learning. This type of knowledge was obtained by the Prophets and Imams.

**Can Other than God Possess Knowledge of the Unseen?**

Divinely inspired knowledge from God is not obtainable by material means. Therefore, typically humans do not benefit from this knowledge. This kind of knowledge is called the knowledge of the unseen (‘*ilm al-ghayb*). This knowledge essentially belongs to God, Who has knowledge of everything: nothing is hidden from Him. He gives this knowledge to whoever He considers appropriate. He has given it to some humans, such as the Prophets, who, whenever they will and with the permission of God, can access this knowledge. Since God placed this knowledge at the service of the prophets, and they are infallible in receiving it, making no mistake, there is no kind of contradiction between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the Prophets, which was made available to them with the permission of God. From what was said previously, it is clear that the divine prophets, just as they are in need of God for their very existence, they are also in need of Him for the receiving of this knowledge and have no type of independence.

Some have thought that this knowledge is only for God and no one else has access to it; however, the Holy Qur’an rejects their opinion. By studying carefully different verses of the Qur’an, it will become very clear that there are two groups of verses dealing with the knowledge of the unseen:

First group: verses that identify the knowledge of the unseen as being particular to God and denying it for others. For example:

وَعِندَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لاَ يَعْلَمُهَا إِلاَّ هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِن وَرَقَةٍ إِلاَّ يَعْلَمُهَا وَلاَ حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الأَرْضِ وَلاَ رَطْبٍ وَلاَ يَابِسٍ إِلاَّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ (6:59)

**With Him are the treasures of the Unseen;no one knows them except Him. (6: 59)**

This signifies that the knowledge of hidden realities is only for God.

Second group: verses that clearly state that divine saints (*al-awliya*) have some knowledge of the unseen, such as:

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا \* إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَى مِن رَّسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا (27-26: 72)

**Knower of the Unseen, He does not disclose His Unseen to anyone, except to an apostle He approves of. Then He dispatches a sentinel before and behind him... (72: 26-27)**

This knowledge essentially belongs to God; however, He shares His knowledge with whomever He sees appropriate.

**Case Study**

A woman named Sarah, who was related to one of the tribes of Mecca, came from Mecca to the Prophet (s) in Madina. The Prophet (s) asked her: Have you become Muslim and come here? She replied, no. The Prophet then asked: Have you migrated here? She again replied, no. So then the Prophet asked her: So, why have you come here? She said: You are of our clan and all of our guardians have gone. I have become very needy and I came to you so that you would give me something. The Prophet ordered the children of Abdul Muttalib to give her clothes, a riding animal and travel expenses; this was while the Prophet (s) was preparing to conquer Mecca. At the same time, a person by the name of Hatib ibn Abi Balta`ah came to Sarah and gave a letter to her; he told her to give it to the people of Mecca and also gave her 10 dinars and a piece of cloth. In his letter were secrets and information related to the plan for the conquering of Mecca. Sarah took the letter and set out towards Mecca. The angel Gabriel informed the Prophet (s) of this incident. Consequently, the Prophet (s) commanded Ali (as), Ammar, Omar, Zubair, Talha, Miqdad and Abu Marthad to quickly take the letter from the woman. They set out to find her, and in the same location that the Prophet (s) said she was, they found Sarah. They requested the letter from Sarah but she swore she did not have a letter with her. They inspected the items she had with her but did not find anything. Therefore, they all made the decision to return back, except Ali (as), who opposed this decision, and said: The Prophet (s) did not lie to us and we are not lying. That moment he drew his sword and continued: Bring out the letter; if not I swear to God I will strike your neck. Sarah, when she realized the seriousness of the matter, brought out the letter, which had been hidden in her hair. They took the letter and gave it to the Prophet (s). The Prophet then asked for Hatib and requested an explanation from him. Hatib gave has reason for doing this action and the Prophet (s) then forgave him.

When the Quraysh lost hope in killing the Prophet (s), they decided to write a treaty between themselves, place it inside the Ka’ba and to put it into practice until their deaths. The treaty contained many provisions, including the stopping of buying and selling with the Muslims, the cut in marital and family relations with the Muslims and support for the opponents of Muhammad (s) in all fields. After the treaty was written out it was signed by the Quraysh. On the other hand, Abu Talib requested his relatives to support the Prophet (s) in all areas and asked everyone to take refuge in a valley situated between the mountains of Mecca, known as She’eb Abi Talib. There, Abu Talib placed observation posts in various parts in order to prevent sudden attacks by the Quraysh. The Muslims were placed under heavy pressure by the complete siege; however the crying of children, which, among other things, was due to their hunger, had no effect on the Quraysh. They lived on eating one date, or even half of one, each day and only in the holy months could the Muslims enter the city and transact trade. These conditions lasted for three years. In this time the Prophet (s) still continued to preach Islam. After three years had passed, God sent a message to the Prophet (s) through Gabriel that the whole of the treaty had been eaten by termites except for the name of God. Along with Abu Talib the Prophet (s) gave this news to the Quraysh and after they looked at the treaty, they discovered that what the Prophet told them was true.

# Iron Will

One of the distinguishing features of the Prophets was their iron will, patience and exemplary perseverance in the achievement of their divine goals. Among the Prophets, the five major prophets (ulul-'azm) hold a special position and so therefore they have been called the ‘possessors of determination’. Their will and determination was such that the Holy Qur’an has introduced them as the best examples of will and determination:

So be patient just as the resolute among the apostles were patient (46: 35)

All the great prophets faced bitter, ignorant and stubborn enemies, but they exhibited great perseverance in their missions. They coped with all the difficulties and battled with falsehood until the very end. We will mention some examples of the great efforts and patience of these prophets.

**Key Terms**

'azm (Determination): means that someone, after having certainty that an action is correct, performs that action in earnest and is patient when faced with any difficulties until that action is completed.

Prophet Noah (as) guided people towards God for 950 years and in this time only 80 people became believers. This means on average, one every 12 years. The verses of the Qur’an recall his persistence and hopefulness in guiding his people. Even, people did not want to listen to his words and covered their ears with their hands; however he did not cease his efforts trying to save and guide people.

Prophet Abraham (as) was one of the prophets who invited people to the worship of God with much patience and soft language. When Prophet Abraham was about to be thrown into the fire, he became frightened and only sought help from God. After he was saved from this fate, he still did not give up on the guidance of his people.

Another divine test he faced was that he was ordered to leave his only beloved son, who God had miraculously given him at an old age, all alone with the child’s mother in a hot barren desert. Years later, he yet again faced another divine challenge: he was ordered to sacrifice this same son, who was now a young adult and whom he loved very much.

Prophet Moses (as) also experienced a life of struggle. He lived during the period of rule of dictatorship and repression of the Pharaoh, who regarded himself as a God. Prophet Moses (as) was appointed by God to fight against the polytheism and infidelity of the Pharaoh. He was never intimidated by the threats of Pharaoh and called his companions to patience and promised them victory. In the way of God, he tolerated all their harassment and complaints.

**Reference**

Read section 12, Qārūn and Musa from the book Anecdotes for Reflection: Part 1 to know more about the life of Prophet Moses (as).You can find the book at:

http://www.al-islam.org/

Prophet Jesus (as) stood against the deviations of his time and was the subject of much persecution until they decided to crucify him; but in the end he was rescued by divine miracle.

The Prophet of Islam (s) had a life of ups and downs, filed with hardship, to the extent that he himself said:

“No prophet suffered as much as I have.” (kashf al-Ghumma vol. 2, page 537 & al-Jāmi‘ al-Kabīr Vol. 1)

His father died before his birth and his mother and his grandfather, (who was his guardian), passed away before he was ten years old. After he was appointed a prophet, he constantly faced threats, harassment, unjust accusations and economic blockade, the losing of dear ones and children, the facing of enemies in imposed wars, the treason and conspiracy of hypocrites and many other incidents meant that, from the beginning until the end, he underwent much hardship and difficulty. However, the Prophet always had only one answer to these difficulties which was patience and tolerance.

**Reference**

To know more about the willpower of the holy Prophet of Islam (s) read pages 73, 74 from the book of The Life of Muhammad by B.S. al- Qurashi.

# Conclusion

The world has always been a place where truth and falsehood, and the supporters of truth (the pre-eminent ones being the Divine Prophets) and falsehood have clashed. Difficulties can only be overcome with patience and endurance. A study of the lives of the Prophets shows that the greatest difficulty that these persons encountered was the ignorance of people. The eradication of ignorance and the growth of knowledge were their biggest objectives and they went through much hardship in achieving these goals. Accordingly, the majority of historians – religious and non-religious – have attributed knowledge, civilization, culture and advancement in human societies, to the campaigns of the Divine Prophets against ignorance and superstition.

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# Infallibility

One of the most significant features of prophets is the fact that they are infallible. They had infallibility throughout the entirety of their lives and were immune from all types of major and minor sins (whether intentionally or unintentionally) and also from errors (like forgetfulness, inadvertence, etc.). The same is true with regard to revelation. They are infallible in a threefold style with regard to revelation:

* In receiving the revelation
* In preserving revelation
* In passing the message to the people.

The infallibility of the prophets does not merely mean the absence of committal of sin, because it is possible for an ordinary person not to commit sins during his life particularly if he/she has a short life. It rather means that the person should have an innate power, which protects him against committing sins even in the hardest situations. Such a power is the result of a perfect and permanent awareness of the disgracefulness of sin and having a strong will to control his own manly desires. Since such ability is only formed by God's help, its functioning is assigned to Him. However, it is not correct to think that God forcefully protects a person against committing sin and as a result deprives him/her of freedom. The infallibility of those who perform their heavenly responsibilities like the prophets (as), and Imams (as) is related to God in one more way, that is: God has guaranteed their immunity.

**Intellectual Reasons for the Infallibility of Prophets (as)**

There are many arguments for the infallibility of the prophets. Among them two intellectual reasons are more popular.

The first intellectual reason for the necessity of the prophets’ immunity against committing sin is that the main objective for their mission is to guide man towards the truth and teach him how to perform the duties God has assigned to him. Moreover, the prophets are in fact the representatives of God among men and must guide them towards the right path. However, if such representatives and missionaries do not obey the divine instructions themselves and their behaviour contradicts their mission, people will find the contrast between their words and behaviour contradictory and, therefore, the objective of their mission will not be thoroughly fulfilled. Thus, God’s wisdom and kindness necessitates that the prophets be pure and innocent, and for them to refrain from committing any undeserving action.

The second intellectual reason for such infallibility is that in addition to relaying the content of revelation to and guiding the people, they also are responsible for their purification and refinement; they are to practically take those with the necessary capacity to the highest levels of perfection. In other words, in addition to having to educate and giving them guidance, they also have to train and help them actually traverse the path. This has to be done in an all-encompassing manner, such that even the most elite and outstanding of individuals are subject to it. Such a responsibility can only be carried out by those who have achieved the most complete levels of human perfection, bearing the highest human faculty of *‘ismah*.

# Immunity of revelation

After recognizing that God's messages should reach people through one or more mediator/s so the possibility of their voluntary perfection and God's objectives for man's creation become realized, it will on the basis of God's perfect qualities, be proved that such messages are in fact immune from intentional and unintentional alterations. Therefore, if He does not intend His message to be delivered to His servants in the most accurate form, it will be against His wisdom, and His wise will denies it. It will also contradict His endless knowledge if God does not know how and through whom to send His message to His servants to keep it intact. Furthermore, it will be against His infinite power if He cannot choose the suitable mediators.

Therefore, since Almighty God is aware of everything, it is improbable to think that He has chosen a mediator while He has not been aware of his wrong doings. Moreover, according to His endless power it is improbable to suppose that God has not been able to protect His revelation against Satan or any kind of unintentional alterations or forgetfulness. Similarly, with reference to His wisdom, it is unacceptable to suggest that He has not intended to immunize His message against wrong doings. Thus, it is the requisite for God's knowledge, power, and wisdom to deliver His message to His servants in the most accurate and perfect form.

Through this discussion, the immunity of the angels of revelation and also the immunity of the prophets in receiving revelation and their infallibility against intentional or unintentional alteration and forgetfulness in delivering God's message are proved.

 **Think about**

If revelation was not immune from errors and alteration and was open to doubt about the sender or mediators or the messengers, what would be its consequence.

# How One’s Prophethood Is Established

One of the important issues of prophethood is how can the truthful claims of real prophets and the false claims of non-prophets be proven?

If a person is immoral and is contaminated with sin and the intellect understands their evilness, undoubtedly this person would be untrustworthy. Given the condition of infallibility of the Prophets, the falsity of their claim can be proven, especially if they encourage people to do an action which is opposed to a human’s innate nature and intellect, or if there are contradictions in their speech.

On the other hand, it is possible for the record of someone to be sound so that an impartial person would have surety in their honesty and their mind would readily accept their claims. It is also possible for a prophet to have been predicted and introduced by another prophet, so that for those in pursuit of the truth there would be no doubt in their minds.

However, if a people did not have any reassuring indications and there was no approval from another prophet, naturally there needs to be another way to prove the prophethood of a claimant. God, the Wise, has provided this way by means of miracles, which prove the truthfulness of prophets.

**Conclusion**

The truthfulness of the claims of genuine prophets can be proven in three ways:

1 – From reassuring indications, such as the person’s honesty, and consistency in pursuing truth and justice throughout their life. However, these traits are very difficult to verify.

2 – Introduction by a previous or contemporary prophet. This is also limited, to those people who have known a previous prophet and have knowledge of their approval of the current claimant. This way would also not be suitable in the case of the first prophet.

3 – Presentation of a miracle, which can also have a wide and ever-lasting impact. This way will be discussed in more detail.

## The Definition of a Miracle

A miracle is defined as: an extraordinary phenomenon, which by the will of God, is presented by a claimant of prophethood and is a sign of the truthfulness of his claim.

This definition informs us of three matters:

1 - Extraordinary phenomena do not come into existence by ordinary means.

2 - Some of these extraordinary matters, by the will and special permission of God, emanate from prophets.

3 - These extraordinary matters can be a sign of the truthfulness of the claim of a prophet, and in this case, they are termed miracles.

We will provide an explanation for each of the three points contained within the definition. They are as follows:

## Extraordinary Phenomena

Phenomena which appear in this world usually occur by causes that, by way of experiment, can be recognised, as is the case in the majority of physical, chemical, biological and psychological phenomena. However in rare instances, some phenomena take place where all their causes cannot be known by sensory experiment; in such cases there is another kind of cause, such as in the amazing acts of yogis. Experts of different scientific fields have testified that these acts are not performed based on material and empirical scientific laws. These phenomena are known as being extraordinary.

## Divine Extraordinary Phenomena

Extraordinary phenomena can be divided into two general groups:

* Phenomena that, although they do not have ordinary causes, but their extraordinary causes are, more or less, within the control of humans, who can master them with learning and special training; for example, the acts of ascetics.
* Extraordinary phenomena that are realized by the special permission of God. The ability to perform these acts is entrusted only to those who have a close connection with God and therefore they possess two features. Firstly, they are not able to be taught or learned; secondly, they are not affected by a stronger force. This type of extraordinary phenomena only emanate from those chosen by God and never from those who have gone astray or follow their own desires.

**Characteristics of the Miracles of Prophets**

If an extraordinary phenomenon, by the permission of God, is presented by a person who has a claim of prophethood, it is called a miracle and can be a proof for his prophethood.

These miracles are not against natural laws rather they follow the natural causes just like other phenomena yet their causes are hidden from human beings. For instance, the Prophet of Islam (s) has been narrated to have offered a large number of miracles, which are mentioned in historical books; however the greatest and the permanent miracle of the Prophet is the Holy Qur’an. The Qur’an challenges all who are familiar with Arabic to bring even one chapter like the chapters of the Qur’an; no one was able to, and no one will be able to, as the Qur’an itself promises.

It is noteworthy that these extraordinary phenomena are not only presented by prophets, but also, with the permission of God, by divine saints (*al-awliyā’*). In the next section, the difference between the phenomena emanating from these two groups will be examined.

**Reference**

More information about miracles is provided by S.A. Rizvi in his book “Prophethood” in chapter four. The book is available at:

<http://www.al-islam.org>

**Conclusion**

Every miracle that occurs with the permission of God must possess all the conditions below in order for it to be regarded as a miracle and to confirm the truthfulness of a prophetic claim:

1 - It must be an extraordinary phenomenon.

2 - It should not be able to be taught to anyone else.

3 – Nothing else has the capability to oppose it.

4 – The person presenting the miracle should have the claim of prophethood

5 - The person presenting the miracle should be just, and not commit sins or be corrupt

## Al-Karamah

Extraordinary phenomena, in addition to prophets, can also emanate from some of God’s saints (*al-awliyā’*). These saints do not have a claim to prophethood and therefore these extraordinary things presented by them are not called miracles; they are technically called ‘*al-karamah*’.

Therefore the term ' *al-karamah* ' (munificence) refers to all of the divine extraordinary acts performed by non-prophets. Nevertheless, there are some unusual acts, which at times are rooted in human or satanic desires, such as magic, divination, etc. which should not be confused with miracles or *al-karamah* because these acts do not enjoy the criteria of miracles or *al-karamah*; these acts can be taught, learned or overcome by other, stronger powers. It is also possible to determine the unholy nature of such acts by referring to the corrupt beliefs or behaviour of those who perform such acts.

**Reading Comprehension**

1) According to the Holy Qur’an, all beings have been created with a purpose. What is this purpose which the Qur’an speaks about? Does the Qur’an’s message concern only beings that possess will power, such as humans, or does it cover a broader spectrum of God’s creation?

2) Is the desire for religion an innate desire of man? Bring Qur’anic proof to support your claim.

3) What is the intellect and what role does it play in the life of man? Does the intellect possess the capacity of flawless reasoning? If so, explain how. If not, explain the intellect’s capacity in reasoning.

4) Briefly explain general and specific guidance and state what benefit or benefits each one brings for creatures.

5) Considering what has been taught in this lesson, state whether the intellect can, alone, develop for humans a comprehensive way of living. Why? Also, explain how there is no conflict between reason and revelation.

6) Explain why prophets, for the guidance of people, must possess divinely inspired knowledge.

7) Why is there a plurality of prophets and certain differences in some devotional and social instructions of divine religions?

8) Explain why, based on reason, divine prophets must be infallible.

9) Considering the three criteria for a miracle mentioned and the definition given for one, state what characteristics a miracle possesses.