

Why Implementing Quranic teachings is Essential For Human:

الرَّحْمَنُ
عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ
عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

“The most Merciful (Allah) has taught this Qur’an. He it is Who created man (and) taught him speech.” [Qur’an, 55: 1-4]

Every breath we take to stay alive in this world is a favor of Allah SWT, and each one is with His permission. His favors are boundless and beyond human horizon:

وَأَتَاكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ

“Were you to count the favors of Allah, you shall never be able to encompass them...” [Q, 14: 34];

And how can we count them when we don’t even know what they are that He has provided for our existence:

وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“... He creates many things (for you) that you do not even know about.” [Q, 16: 8]

However, the greatest favor of Allah SWT is the Qur’an that guides us towards our humanity:

هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

“This is a plain exposition for people and a guidance and admonition for those who fear Allah.” [Q, 3: 138]

Without this guidance, man would be unable to restrain his own animal vices. Tendencies like greed, jealousy, temptations, power, aggression, invasion, persecution, and barbarism pose barriers to civility. Those who reject moral code

under the influence of ignorance, arrogance, and defiance diminish their own humanity. As observed in every conflict, they observe no limits to their raw animality. Human history is full of injustices, sufferings, and atrocities; and it is getting increasingly barbaric with technology.

Unlike other living beings, man is not just a physical entity. The human life is layered into two components – physical and spiritual. The physical side relates to the tangible strengths of his animality of higher order than other species, and the spiritual aspect relates to the intangible virtues of his humanity specific to him. Both being integral to his construct, each component plays a vital role in maintaining the physical existence of his life and, at the same time, the moral integrity of his personal character. Thus, each needs to be looked after meticulously and excelled to operate at its prime. However, to meaningfully achieve the higher purpose of life, they must be blended together into an integrated composite such that the moral gear is always engaged in a commanding position. Contrary to non-humans, they cannot be separated nor can they be practiced separately. The connection is supremely celestial. All physical pursuits of man are guided by his intelligence (brain) to do things right; while his spiritual impulses are guided by his conscience to do the right things. When both calls are reconciled, he is at his best as a human doing the right things right.

It is the moral conscience in the human character that distinguishes man from the rest and paves the way to his ascension to the best creation with intellectual and spiritual excellence. His physical existence is edified with spiritual veracity to transform him into a personification of characteristics known as human values. Foremost of those values is the sanctity of life and its preservation. Islam came to restore human dignity and enforce good manners in practice, including but not limited to social justice, generosity, perseverance, trustworthiness, civic engagement, and protecting each other's honor, property, and life. All these virtues promote interpersonal relations and conditions for a peaceful co-existence. Faith in Islam is not complete if the neighbor is suffering and is neglected. Surely, spiritual traits induce in a person a specific essence of consciousness, reason, and wisdom.

Partly, it is by imprint of these attributes that man stands out singularly among all species of earthly creatures. He is transcended with specific personality and individuality to project his Creator's attributes on earth:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ
ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا
تَشْكُرُونَ

“He Who excelled in the creation of all that He created. He originated the creation of man from clay; then made his descendants from the extract of a humble fluid; then He duly proportioned him, and breathed into him of His spirit He gave you ears, eyes and heart; yet, you are seldom thankful.” [Q, 32:7-9]

This suggests that man’s merits of knowledge, reflection, cognition, preference, persuasion, judgment, authority, and similar distinctions that define him as an exalted living being are reflections of his Creator’s attributes. These merits have no other source but the Creator Himself:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

“When I have fashioned shaping him and have breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall you (angels) down before him in prostration.” [Q, 15: 29]

Differentially, man is particularly distinguished from all other creatures by three defining features:

(i) Innumerable objects on earth and its environs have been yoked to man’s service and man has been vested with a wide range of abilities so that he can make use of them.

(ii) He has been granted freedom to choose his course in life – whether good or evil. But once he makes the choice, he is enabled, by the nature of things, to pursue his choice and use the resources Allah SWT has created regardless of whether he uses them in obeying Him or in defiance to Him.

(iii) He is inherently inspired by moral consciousness. He is aware of what is good and what is evil with full clarity that good acts merit reward and evil merit punishment. These innate traits indicate that at some point in time, he should be called to account and his voluntary acts be appraised for their consequences.

Again, uniquely and by design, man is vested with a creative mind to explore ways and means to meet the needs of his material life by using the faculties granted to him:

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

“...Allah it is Who created you, and gave you the faculties of hearing and sight and gave you the hearts for thinking and understanding... [Q, 67: 23]

He can access the resources needed to accomplish the task. Everything in this world is for his benefit. The purpose behind these faculties and treasures is to see who benefits from them wisely and shows loyalty to his Grantor:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

“...We have made all that is on earth an embellishment for it in order to test people as to who of them is better in conduct.” [Q, 18: 7]

Using the intellectual faculties and available resources man has been able to meet his needs for his physical survival and has already advanced from the Stone Age to the Cyber Age. However, man’s necessities in this world are not confined to subsistence, provisions of shelter, and clothing. His greatest need is self-realization by knowing the right way that would ensure both sound intellectual orientation and the right behavior. He needs to know how to live in this world; how he should utilize the resources of the world that have been placed at his disposal; how he should deal with innumerable human beings he encounters on a daily basis; and how he should connect with the order of the universe as a whole, within which he has to operate. He needs to know all this to ensure that his energies and efforts are channeled in the right direction for his overall well-being. This right way that addresses all such concerns is the path of the ‘truth’ or the ‘true guidance’ that a person of conscience seeks from his Lord:

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

“(O Allah) Direct us on to the Straight Path.” [Q, 1: 5]

Obviously, for its intricacy and transcendental attributes, man is limited in locating that path on his own without help from someone with encircling knowledge. That knowledge resides in the domain of his Creator alone, Who has full awareness of his nature, strengths, and functionalities:

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

“It rests with Allah alone to show you the right way, even when there are many crooked ways. If Allah wanted, He could have guided you all” [Q, 16: 9]

Needless to say, it is inconceivable that Allah SWT, Who cares for man's detailed earthly needs, would have ignored the most fundamental need of his humanity, leaving him stumbling in bewilderment – disarrayed and disoriented in every abyss of darkness cast by extraneous factors.

It is precisely for this reason that the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW for the guidance of mankind:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

“Verily this Qur'an guides to the way that is the straight most...” [Q, 17: 9]

This guidance is the most treasured gift of Allah SWT granted to us for playing our distinct role in shaping this world in accordance with His code of conduct. Adherence to this code is a necessary condition to earn His pleasure for success. The act of providing guidance is an act of mercy itself for those who fear and humble themselves: “

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

...We sent down the Book to you, it makes everything clear, and serves as guidance and mercy and glad tidings to those who submit to Allah.” [Q, 16: 89]

Even a person of meager understanding can appreciate that without the divine guidance contained in the Qur'an, man could not be able to fulfill the purpose of his existence and find the path to ascend to his superior status in the universe. Those who, in disregard to the Divine guidance, have invented religions, developed philosophies, and prescribed laws to govern human life have not done so based on any definite knowledge that they possess. Rather, it is the result of their conjecture and fancy:

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

“Most of them only follow conjectures, and surely conjectures can be no substitute for truth...” [Q, 10: 36]

Likewise, those who follow their religious and worldly leaders do so not because they fully know and understand all that the latter espouses. Again, they follow those leaders merely on the self-serving assumption that whatever is being taught by these people, and whatever has been recognized as 'right' by their forefathers,

must indeed be true. Any sensible person must dismiss such unsubstantiated whims and speculations to avoid the dire consequences of his misplaced faith.

The statement that the Merciful has taught this Qur'an (Q, 55: 1-4) [Mentioned in the very beginning of this article] is a reminder that the revelation of the Qur'an is nothing but Allah's mercy and favor. It provides the knowledge they need to trace their path in this world:

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

“We have bestowed upon you a Book that talks about you...” [Q, 21: 10]

It also warns against the consequences of consciously ignoring that knowledge:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا
فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا
قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا
وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

“...by the soul and Him (Allah) Who perfected it (consciousness); and inspired it with its evil and its piety. He who purifies it will prosper, and he who suppresses it will be ruined.” [Q, 91: 7-10]

The Qur'an spells out in detail what constitutes the fundamental reality, explains the attitude that man ought to adopt, and lays down the way of life that ought to be followed. These details are based on sound knowledge rather than on conjectures and fancy:

وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

“Surely We have brought them a Book which We expounded with knowledge; a guidance and a mercy to those who believe.” [Q, 7: 52]

Its contents are perspicuous enough to show one the right way. Thus, shaping conduct by the moral principles of the Qur'an is a sure way to success in this life and in the life after:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“Whosoever acts righteously – whether a man or a woman – and embraces belief, We will surely grant him a life of purity, and will surely grant such persons their reward according to the best of their deeds.” [Q, 16: 97]

Still, another act of mercy is that Allah SWT has taught man speech and given him the ability to communicate. Speech is a unique quality of humans, which distinguishes them from other species. It is not just the speech; behind this phenomenal capability are the faculties of reasoning and intellect, cognitive functions, thought processes, and judgment. Without these assets, man could not exercise his power of articulation. Communication is the medium for knowledge dissemination, coordination, and moving forward as a society of informed people with shared values and concerns. It is consequential in shaping human culture, opening new frontiers, and advancing civilization.

Since Allah SWT has taken it upon Himself to show man the Right way, He promised to send His Messengers with Books to teach him what he needed to learn:

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“O Children of Adam! If Messengers ... come to you...who narrate to you my revelations, then those who refrain from evil and mend their ways shall have nothing to fear... [Q, 7: 35]

The verbal skill exceptionally granted to humans is an indispensable tool in that learning process and to cultivate the teachings of the Qur’an. Further, the recipients are directed to pass on the good word to fellow humans who are receptive and head:

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ فَذَكَرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَن يَخَافُ وَعَدِيدٍ

“...Admonish with this Qur’an all those who fear My warning.” [Q, 50: 45]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَفُؤَلُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

Always be straightforward and speak nothing but the truth: “Believers, fear Allah and speak the truth ...” [Q, 33: 70]

By all textual standards, intellectual examinations, historical accounts, and unbroken chain of continuity over centuries, the Qur'an is an authentic document:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

“Will they not then ponder in the Qur'an? If it had been from other than Allah they would have found therein much incongruity/discrepancies.” [Q, 4: 82]

Its guidance is exact to mold human conduct in all its aspects worthy of Allah's pleasure and reward:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

“This Qur'an guides to the way that is the straight-most, and gives good news to the believers who do righteous work that a great reward awaits them.” [Q, 17: 9]

Islam gives life a global perspective by bringing all its sectors in perfect unison for its optimal impact on society. The injunctions of the Qur'an, with its immense moral force, are consistent with human rationality:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ

“... And, it is indeed a mighty Book.” [Q, 41: 41]

It has the force of the truth, knowledge, articulacy, eloquence, reasoning, the force of the Creator Who revealed it, and the force of the character of the Messenger who conveyed it. It is with this force that the Qur'an invites mankind to their Lord:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O mankind! Obey your Lord, Who has created you and those before you...” [Q, 2: 21]

Intelligent man by nature is curious. However, there is nothing beyond this elucidating Book available for a person who lacks the motivation to explore the truth:

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

What message can there be after this Qur'an?” [Q, 77: 50]

The message of the Qur'an is not new nor does it contradict any scripture before it. Essentially it articulates and consolidates all of them in a concise format:

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَىٰ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“This Quran is not such as could be produced by anyone other than Allah; in fact, it is the confirmation of that which was before it (Revelation of Torah, Psalms and Gospel) and fully explains the Holy book; there is no doubt in this fact that it is a revealed from the Rabb of the Worlds.” [Q, 10: 37]

Despite some variations in the specifics as they belonged to different ages and climes, all Prophets are designated as one community due to their common core:

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ

“This community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord; so hold Me alone in fear” [Q, 23: 52]

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet SAW. Historically, he is known to be an unlettered person. Nobody in his right mind can ascribe the writings of such an unprecedented caliber to a person who had no schooling – could not read or write. The degree of assertiveness, eloquence, substance, and articulation that pierces the human soul, workings of the cosmos, irrefutable historical and scientific facts, intricacies of life, and human dynamics, rule out any shred of doubt that this mesmerizing text could be the work of a human mind. It has to be from some higher authority – none other than the Creator of the universe Himself.

The Qur'an itself provides the argument in refutation of any allegation that the Prophet SAW has fabricated the Qur'an:

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

“Tell them If Allah wanted otherwise, I would have not recited this (Quran) to you, nor would I have made you aware of it. Indeed, have spent a lifetime (40 years) among you before this. Do you not, then, use your reason?” [Q, 10: 16]

The character of the Prophet SAW was exemplary. He had grown up right before their eyes in Mecca. His pre-Prophetic life was a testimony that he was a man of honor and character. Proudly they loved to call him trustworthy and a noble person. The allegation of the critics that he himself had composed the Qur'an and then falsely ascribed it to Allah SWT has been repudiated with a challenge:

قُلْ لَّيِّنَ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَن يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ
بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

“If men and Jinn were to get together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they will never be able to produce the like of it, however, they might help one another.” [Q, 17: 88]

A living miracle, the Qur’an bears testimony to its own truth. Its level of articulacy and integration of a multitude of themes is woven sleekly in an interlocking and cross-referencing approach, yet staying on the message, bar any imitation of it or intrusion in it. In Allah’s own Words, the Qur’an is a recorded conversation that took place over a period of 23 years, involving a variety of topics, issues, queries, and scenarios encountered in disciplining a society. The teachings of Islam are not time-specific. All injunctions of the Qur’an are in recurring contexts and, therefore, maintain their currency to all generations. They are timeless and relevant to the concerns of our day with the same moral force. The Qur’an is in the public domain and accessible to all interested in exploring the path to a life worth living.

The theme of the Qur’an can be divided into three sub-themes:

(1) Allah’s Attributes: This includes some of Allah’s unique qualities, such as He is: The Creator, Sovereign, All-Mighty, All-Wise, All-Knowledgeable, Ever-Living, Just, Compassionate, Merciful, Forgiving, and Swift to punish. (2) Historical Events: This reminds us of historical facts that nations, who accepted the teachings of their Prophets and followed them, were elevated to eminence and success; and those who opposed and rejected them were demised. People must take lessons from the fatal mistakes their predecessors made, and follow those who were exalted. (3) Commandments: This includes a body of injunctions the followers must conform to for shaping their conduct worthy of earning Allah’s pleasure.

The sub-theme ‘Commandments’ covers three areas as the focus of the Qur’an:

(1) Tawheed (Unity of Allah):

The universal message of Islam is for the wellbeing of mankind. It is based on an overpowering ideology of ‘One Sovereign Creator.’ Sovereignty means that the Creator shares power with none; is complete within Himself, does not depend on anyone, yet everyone depends on Him; and everyone is accountable to Him, while He is accountable to none. This concept is the bedrock of the Qur’anic dissertation and is consistent with human intelligence and physical evidence.

Perfection, complete coordination, and coherence within each category of objects in this universe and across various categories is in itself an undeniable truth that the Creator of this universe has to be One; and this flawless gigantic system is running under His Supreme Command alone. Had there been others beside Him, there would have been total chaos:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

” If there were Gods beside Allah, then both (the heavens and the earth) would have been disordered...” [Q, 21: 22]

(2) Akhairah (Afterlife):

Death is not the end of human existence, but rather a conduit for a transition from the temporal earthly life to the everlasting world of the Afterlife, termed as Akhairah, which will begin with the Day of Judgment. The concept of accountability is basic to our performance in all functions of life; otherwise, we cannot exist as a society. In a larger context, without accountability, life has absolutely no meaning, which is absurd, to say the least:

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ

“Then do you think that We have created you without any purpose and you will not be returned to us?” [Q, 23: 115]

The teachings of Islam emphasize that man has a purpose and it is this very purpose that distinguishes him from the rest. Further, this life will continue beyond the existing one, and the entire human race will appear before Allah SWT to face a Day of Judgment for accountability. Eternal success or failure in the Akhairah will be determined by our conduct in the present setting. Without belief in the Akhairah, man cannot develop a morally sound character. A lack of fear of Akhairah is the root cause of all mischiefs and disorder on earth:

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ

“...The fact is that they do not fear the Akhairah” [Q, 74: 53]

Thus, it is important to know what the status of man in this world is, and how this universe relates to him.

The real position of man in the world is that he is here for a predetermined span of time to pass a test by utilizing his capabilities, conscience, freedom, and vast resources at his disposal:

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا
إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

“Verily We created man from the mixed drop to test him: so we gave him the hearing and sight. We showed him the way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)” [Q, 76: 2-3]

Specifically, his test is how he consciously exercises his freedom during this life. The countless scenarios that he encounters in the pursuit of his aspirations in every arena are his challenges. Eventually, the success or failure of all his endeavors will depend on whether he considered himself accountable to his Creator during his life or not. If he seeks the path of righteousness he will be grateful to his Creator. On the contrary, if he lives a life of defiance to his Creator, he will be condemned for betraying the trust of freedom.

The next life is not just possible and logical it is a moral necessity. Allah SWT has created once and He can create again:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“He it is who has created, then He will recreate, and it is easier for Him...” [Q, 30: 27]

Logically, if the earthly life has to have some meaning, there has to be a time for evaluation. History reveals that humanity remains a victim of injustice, aggression, and brutality since life began on earth. Often criminals escape justice, while people of moral courage and character suffer in this world. There is the necessity of a day of judgment for justice to prevail. Akhairah answers that necessity.

(3) Ibadah (Obedience):

Knowing that Allah SWT is our Creator and that one day He will call us to account, obedience to Him is the only logical and sensible course of action for success:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّن بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَإِنَّهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَاحِدٌ فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ

“...your Lord is One Lord; so submit yourselves to Him alone...” [Q, 22: 34]

This requires that we live in this physical world with moral excellence and strive to reach the highest level of perfection possible. We must fulfill our obligations justly, which fall into three categories: **Obligations with respect to Allah SWT, fellow humans, and our own self.** Happiness is in doing your duty with moral diligence. This is possible only if we have a sound moral platform and a sense of responsibility. Worship or obedience in Islam simply means compliance with Allah’s rules outlined in the Qur’an at all times, under all conditions and circumstances. The Qur’an in action is the illustrious life of the Prophet SAW.

The Qur’an provides a roadmap to people how to organize their lives and strive to accomplish the mission of their existence within the confines of four mutually inclusive articles of Islamic teachings, namely: Allah SWT is the Creator and Sustainer of this Universe (see Q, 25: 2); nothing in this universe is without purpose nor is man without mission (see Q, 23: 115); with a sense of right and wrong, the intelligent man has been given freedom of judgment, choice, and action (see Q, 91:7-10); and on the Last Day, he will stand to answer how he exercised his freedom (see Q, 79: 35).

Recapping, the ideology of Islam essentially rests on two underlying affirmations presented by the Qur’an as the absolute Truth: (i) Tawheed, and (ii) Akhairah. The Qur’an emphasizes them time and again because, with these two realities implanted in the human psyche, the rest will fall in place; specifically, the obedience to Allah SWT, which is the central mission of Islam and the purpose of life:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَىٰ وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَن آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Surely, All who believed and those were Jews, Christians or Sabians (Before the advent of Prophet Muhammad)- Those among them believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteous deeds – their reward is surely secure with their Lord; they will have nothing to fear or to grieve.” [Q, 2: 62]

The former simply requires a critical observation of the universe and reflecting on it:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

“Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for man of understanding.” [Q, 3: 190]

Those signs can lead a person to the intrinsic Truth, provided he looks at the phenomenon of the universe critically.

One does not even have to look outside. Just take a peek inside yourself:

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكَافِرُونَ

“Do they not reflect on their own inner-selves...?” [Q, 30: 8]

You will find a whole universe operating within yourself leading to the same conclusion. Given the former, the latter is a logical conclusion as a moral need. Words matter and actions do have consequences. Justice demands a day of reckoning when good and evil must be separated and recognized, rewarded and punished. By the law of nature, it is solely the conviction in the Akhira that influences human behavior. The character integrity, aligned with the moral code of conduct, being objective, the effectiveness of the Qur’anic injunctions rests solely on a sense of accountability. As outrageous as it may sound, without this conviction internalized, mere verbalization of belief in One God, or many, or none makes absolutely no difference.

The institution of the Prophethood has been deployed to explain the message of the Qur’an so that people are inspired to reflect and act accordingly:

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“We raised earlier Messengers with clear signs and Divine Books, and We have now sent down this Message upon you that you may explain to people the teaching that has been sent down for them, and that the people may themselves reflect on it.” [Q, 16: 44]

Note, that bonding with the Qur’an, reflecting on its teachings, and internalizing them in action will be consequential: “The Qur’an will be a testimony for you or against you.” [Muslim]