

THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

From Revelation To Recitation & Beyond

THE NEED FOR REVELATION

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THE NEED FOR REVELATION

Allah Ta'ala sent man into this world to test him. Being the best of creation, the entire universe was placed at his service. For this reason, man must do two things:

1. Use the world for his benefit and comfort.
2. While using this world to his advantage, keep the injunctions of Allah Ta'ala in sight and avoid doing what goes against His will and pleasure.

For these two functions, man needs knowledge. Therefore, he needs to know the reality of this world, the properties and dynamics of different things, and the manner in which they can be put to use effectively. Likewise, he requires knowledge on what pleases and displeases Allah Ta'ala in order to be obedient and faithful.

To help man ascertain what is beneficial for him and avoid that which is harmful, Allah Ta'ala granted him the following:

1. The five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch
2. Intellect – the ability to think and reason
3. Revelation (Wahi)

Consequently, man discovers many things through his senses, many others through reason, and the knowledge of things he cannot attain through these faculties are bestowed through Wahi.

USING THE SENSES

The arrangement between these three sources of knowledge is such that each one has its limits within a particular sphere or range, beyond which it does not work. The knowledge of things man acquires through his senses cannot be deduced through bland reason. For instance, one learns by seeing a wall that its colour is white. But, should one close their eyes and try to discover the colour of the wall on the

strength of reason, it would be impossible. Similarly, the knowledge of things that comes through reason cannot be discovered by senses alone. For instance, one cannot discover who made the wall by simply seeing or touching it. Reason is needed to arrive at that conclusion.

In short, reason is not required to give guidance, as long as the five senses work efficiently, and when the five senses reach their limit, reason takes over. But even the guidance given by reason is limited. There are things the knowledge of which can neither be acquired through senses nor through reason. For instance, to find out how that very wall can be used to attain divine reward, neither the senses nor reason can be of use here. The answer to such questions comes from the source that Allah Ta'ala prescribed, what is known as Wahi (revelation). For receiving of Wahi, Allah Ta'ala selects and appoints one of His servants, ordains him as His messenger, and then reveals to him His Word. This Word is Wahi.

WAHI IS THE HIGHEST SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

It should thus be clear that Wahi is the highest source of knowledge for man which offers him the answer to questions about life which cannot be solved by means of reason and the senses but which are nonetheless necessary to know. It should further be apparent that reason and perception alone are not sufficient to show man the way. It is rather all the more necessary, almost inevitable, that divine revelation be there for his guidance. Since Wahi is needed where reason does not function, it is therefore not necessary that everything communicated through Wahi be compulsively comprehended through reason.

On the contrary, as reason is of no help in ascertaining the colour of some object since that is the job of the senses, so is the gracious transmission of knowledge of many religious beliefs the sole prerogative of Wahi and not of reason. Furthermore, trusting reason alone for their comprehension is not sound or correct.

WAHI IS DEPENDENT ON BELIEF

To discuss Wahi with a person who, Allah forbid, does not accept the very existence of Allah Ta'ala is futile. For a person who believes in the existence of Allah Almighty and has faith in His perfect power, it is not at all difficult to understand that Wahi is a rational need, that it is possible, and that it is real. If one has faith in the fact that the universe has been created by a most powerful being and that He is the One who has sent man down here to accomplish some particular mission, how then is it possible to imagine

that He, after once having created man, would leave him in total darkness without explaining to him why he came into the world, what his duties were, where he was destined to go, and how he could realise the purpose of his life? How could a person, sound in intellect, send one of his servants on a trip with a designated mission without ever telling him the purpose of the trip while he is leaving, nor explaining it to him later on through some message? When a man of ordinary reason cannot do such a thing, how then can it be imagined with respect to the most Holy Lord of the Universe under Whose ultimate wisdom the system of all the worlds is functioning? After all, how is it possible that the being that created such a mind-boggling system composed of the moon, the sun, the sky, the earth, the stars and the planets, would remain unable to institute some arrangement of communication with His servants through which human beings could be given guidance about the purpose of their lives?

ALLAH DOES NOT FORSAKE HIS SERVANTS

When a person has faith in the ultimate wisdom of Allah Ta'ala, then it becomes easy to understand and accept that He did not forsake His servants in darkness and ignorance. Surely, He has instituted a system for their guidance. This system of guidance is known as Wahi (revelation) and risalah (prophethood).

It is thus clear that wahi is not only a religious belief, but also a rational need, the rejection of which amounts to a rejection of the ultimate wisdom of Allah Almighty.

Sources: Meanings of the Noble Quran – Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahib and Ma'riful Qur'an





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