

# I. Viewing Life using the Glasses of Iqra'a

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## A. The Role of Perception in Shaping Our Lives

Perception plays a crucial role in how we interpret and navigate life. Some individuals may view life as a grand party, an opportunity to take advantage of others and indulge in every possible pleasure, believing that this is their only chance to enjoy life. This hedonistic perspective suggests that there is nothing beyond this life, and thus, one should maximize enjoyment while it lasts.

However, because life is fundamentally a matter of perception, what one person sees as good, another may see as bad. This subjectivity means that our experiences and values shape how we perceive events and actions. For instance, a layoff might be perceived as a devastating setback by one person, while another might see it as an opportunity for growth and new beginnings.

This variability in perception extends to our understanding of what is beneficial or harmful to us. We may sometimes hate what is actually good for us and love what is detrimental. For example, a layoff might initially seem like a negative event, but it could lead to better career opportunities and personal growth. Conversely, indulging in unhealthy habits might feel pleasurable in the short term but can have long-term negative consequences.

There are both good and bad perceptions. A good perception involves recognizing and appreciating positive aspects as beneficial and understanding negative aspects as harmful. To cultivate this balanced view, it is essential to set our perception through the lens of read in the name of your Lord, which encourages us to seek knowledge and wisdom. By doing so, we can better discern the true nature of our experiences and make more informed decisions.

## B. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ searching for the truth

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ's search for the truth was driven by his dissatisfaction with the religions and idol worshipping practices around him. He believed that the idols worshipped around the Kaaba were false and that idol worship could never be true. Although he knew that Allah ﷻ was the Creator and Maker, he had many unanswered questions about life and existence.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ pondered over essential questions, such as:

- Who are we? What are we doing on Earth?
- What is the purpose of our creation?
- Is there life after death?

- What does God expect from us, and what should we expect from Him in return?
- Is there a Heaven (Jannah) and a Hell (Hellfire)? Who goes to Heaven and who goes to Hell, and on what basis?
- Why are some people born blind while others are not?
- Why are some born into wealth and others into poverty?
- Why do some people live long lives while others die young?
- Why do some people are born to be princes, princesses and kings while others are born to slavery?
- Is God all-knowing, and did He write our deeds before they took place?
- If God has pre-written our deeds, then how do we have freedom of choice?
- Does God care about us, or did He create us and then let us be?
- Is God a loving and caring God who provides us with our needs or is he out there setting traps for us to get us in trouble?
- Does God care about us or is he self-occupied thinking only about himself and we are too insignificant for him to care about us and our livelihood?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?

To seek answers and free his mind from the corrupt culture of Mecca, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would retreat to the Cave of Hira. He sought seclusion to observe nature, believing that by studying creation, he could learn about the Creator. He knew that Allah ﷻ was the Maker because of the existence of the world around him. He thought that if the product (nature) was good, then the Maker must be good as well. However, observing nature alone was not enough to answer all his questions.

### C. Angel Gabriel Walking into the Cave of Hira.

During one of his retreats, he received his first revelation from Allah ﷻ through the angel Jibriel. While in the cave, he pondered, "Allah ﷻ, tell me about You. I want to know You. How can I reach You?" Suddenly, a handsome man in clean, shiny clothes entered the cave. In those days, it was unusual for a stranger to wear clean clothes, as travelers typically became dirty from their journeys.

The man, who was the angel Jibriel, took a few steps and commanded the Prophet ﷺ to Iqra'a (read). The Prophet ﷺ replied that he did not know how to read. Dissatisfied with his answer, Jibriel hugged the Prophet ﷺ tightly, making him feel as if he might die. After releasing him, Jibriel again commanded him to read, and the Prophet ﷺ repeated that he did not know how. Jibriel hugged him tightly once more.

On the third command, the Prophet ﷺ asked, "What should I read?" Each time, the hug was so tight it felt like his bones might crush. Realizing that saying he could not read was not an acceptable answer, he finally asked, "What should I read?" Angel Jibriel then said,

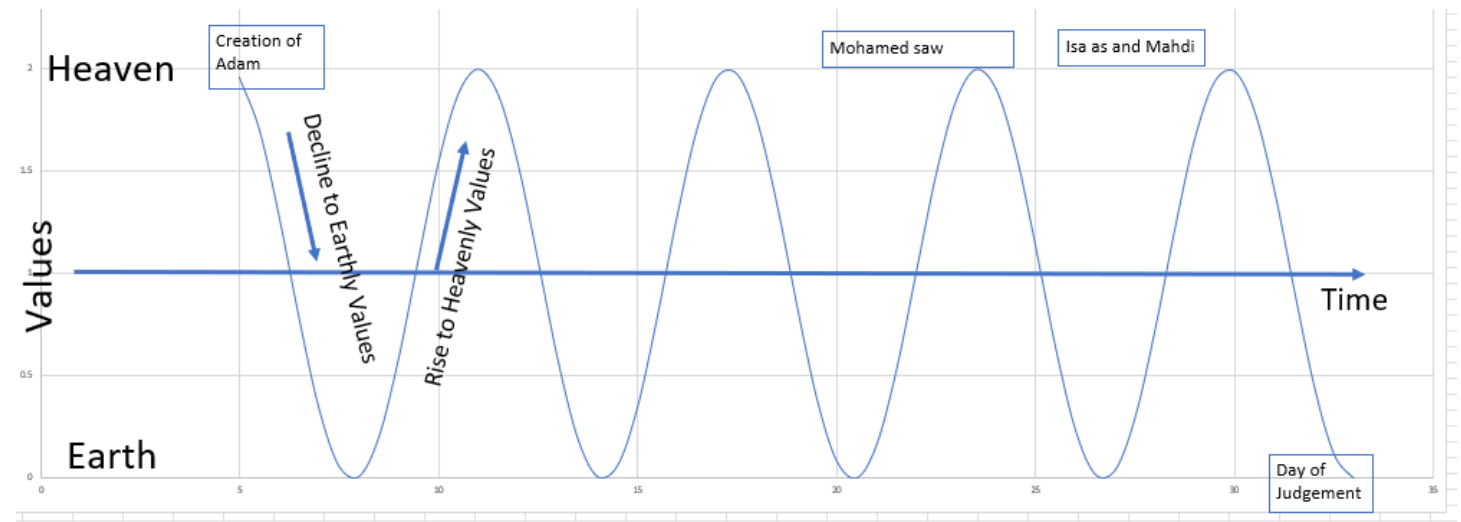
- (1) Iqra'a (read) in the name of your Lord who created.
- (2) Created man from Alaq (leach-like structure).
- (3) Iqra'a, and your Lord is the Most Generous.
- (4) The one who taught with the pen.
- (5) Taught man what he did not know"

This was the first revelation of the Quran.

#### D. Symbolic Meaning of the Hug.

Let's examine the symbolic meanings of this very important incident. The hug signifies a connection between heavens and earth. Jibril is a heavenly Being. And The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is an earthly being when they hug, that's established communications between heavens and earth. And every time Angel Jibril comes with the revelation to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, it is a communication between heavens and earth. Now. What do we need to know about these communications between heavens and earth in order to really understand that, let's look at this curve here.

This curve represents the journey of values from the creation of Adam to the end of time, which is the Day of Judgment. The horizontal axis represents time, starting from the creation of Adam to the day of judgement. The vertical axis represents values, with heavenly values at the top and earthly values at the bottom. When Allah ﷻ created Adam, he was endowed with all heavenly values. These values include kindness, generosity, forgiveness, selflessness, and humility. These heavenly values are derived from the beautiful names of Allah ﷻ, who is the most kind, generous, loving, and caring. Allah



ﷻ desires for us to embody these heavenly manners.

On the other hand, earthly values such as selfishness, stinginess, greed, ego, and arrogance are associated with Shaytan. When Adam was created, he was taught everything he needed to know, including the names of all things. This knowledge was so profound that Adam could even tell the angels their names. However, after Adam's creation, Shaytan began to degrade these heavenly values, gradually leading humanity towards earthly values. This degradation happens over time, with people moving away from kindness and generosity towards meanness, stinginess, selfishness and greed. As corruption increases, life on Earth becomes full of hate and injustice.

To counter this, Allah ﷻ sends Prophets to re-establish communication between heaven and Earth. These Prophets bring revelations that lift humanity back towards heavenly values. The efforts and teachings of the Prophets help to restore kindness, generosity, and other heavenly values. After a Prophet's death, Shaytan resumes his work, and the cycle of degradation begins again. This cycle of rising and falling values has occurred many times throughout history, with 316 messengers and

124,000 Prophets sent to different nations, societies and civilizations. Each cycle represents a period where heavenly values are restored, only to be degraded again over time.

At the very end, Allah ﷻ sent Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to guide humanity. When Allah ﷻ looked at Earth, He saw widespread corruption and earthly values dominating. Very few people were worshipping Allah ﷻ, and those who did were mostly monks following the true version of Christianity, known as Arianism. These monks worshipped Allah ﷻ correctly and respected Him, often hiding in caves to practice their faith in secrecy.

By the time Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was born, only a few of these monks remained. One of them was Bahira, who recognized Prophet Muhammad ﷺ by his signs. Another notable figure is Salman Al-Farisi, whose story we will discuss in the future. Salman was in search of the truth, moving from one monk to another until there were no more monks left to guide him. Finally, he landed in Madina where he met the Prophet ﷺ.

As time passed, life on Earth continued to degrade. This is the period we are living in now, where earthly values have overtaken heavenly values. The world today reflects this shift, with corruption and earthly values prevalent. During the 20th century, approximately 176 million people lost their lives due to political turmoil and conflict. This staggering number includes casualties from World War I and World War II, where millions perished on battlefields and in bombings. Adolf Hitler's regime alone was responsible for the deaths of around 17 million people, including the horrific genocide of six million Jews during the Holocaust. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 resulted in the immediate deaths of tens of thousands, with many more suffering from the long-term effects of radiation. Additionally, there were 72 major wars throughout the century, including the Vietnam War, which caused significant loss of life and suffering. The spread of communism under leaders like Mao Zedong in China and Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union led to further atrocities. Mao's policies and purges resulted in the deaths of millions, while Stalin's regime was marked by widespread repression, forced labor camps, and mass executions. Ethnic cleansing also marked this century, notably the genocide of Muslims in Bosnia during the 1990s. This period of intense violence and political insanity left a profound impact on global history, highlighting the devastating consequences of unchecked power and ideological extremism.

The threat of nuclear war remains a significant concern due to the devastating potential of nuclear weapons. As of 2024, there are over 12,000 nuclear warheads globally. The U.S. and Russia possess the majority, with around 5,100 and 5,580 warheads respectively. The combined arsenals of nuclear-armed countries could cause catastrophic damage. The concept of "overkill" refers to the ability to destroy the planet's population multiple times over, estimated to be seven times.

The coronavirus pandemic serves as a reminder from Allah ﷻ that there is an overwhelming amount of evil and corruption happening globally and in close succession. It is a wake-up call for humanity. Currently, we are experiencing a decline in values. However, Allah ﷻ will eventually send back Prophet Isa (Jesus) and, before him, the Mahdi. Together, they will restore heavenly values to their peak.

After this peak, there will be a gradual decline until the Day of Judgment. This day will arrive when there is no one left on Earth who knows or worships Allah ﷻ. The Quran will be completely forgotten and abandoned, and life will be filled with corruption. The Day of Judgment will come upon the worst generation of humanity, marking the end of time.

### E. Symbolic Meaning of the Pain in the Hug

The painful hug from Angel Jibriel held deep symbolic meanings. The Prophet ﷺ felt as though he might die from the intensity of the embrace. This pain can be interpreted in several ways:

#### 1. The Law of Nature: No Pain, No Gain

The first interpretation is that the pain symbolizes the natural law that significant achievements often come with great struggle. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ endured immense suffering to elevate moral values from earthly concerns to heavenly ideals. He faced numerous hardships, including fighting in wars, sustaining injuries, losing two of his teeth, and being expelled from the city of Al-Tae'f after attempting to preach Islam to its leaders.

#### 2. The Weight of Revelation:

The second symbolic meaning of the pain is the immense responsibility and gravity of the revelation itself. The physical pain experienced by the Prophet ﷺ during the hug can be seen as a reflection of the profound and transformative nature of the divine message he was receiving. It underscores the seriousness and the life-altering impact of the revelations that would follow.

### 3. Expressing seriousness of the task:

Sometimes, to make someone realize the importance of a message, you might squeeze their hand firmly and say, "Listen to me." The pressure on their hand emphasizes the need for their attention. When a message is accompanied by pain, it captures your focus. The pain signals that the message is significant. Imagine holding someone's hand tightly or grasping their ears and saying, "Look at me. Are you listening?" This physical discomfort ensures that the person understands the importance of what you're saying. The pain serves to highlight the message, making it clear and ensuring the recipient recognizes its significance.

#### F. Significance of the choice of a cave for the meeting:

The meeting was done in a cave. Bare cave with no furniture or any kind of decoration. The meeting could have happened in a fancy hall or a decorated temple. But the choice of a cave instead of a fancy place for such a significant event indeed carries profound symbolism. It emphasizes simplicity and humility, showing that true value and importance are not found in material decorations or luxurious settings. The meeting between Angel Jibriel and Prophet Mohammed ﷺ in a bare cave highlights that spiritual and divine encounters transcend physical appearances and material wealth. This setting underscores the idea that Allah ﷻ values sincerity and purity over outward appearances. It serves as a reminder that the essence of faith and spirituality lies in simplicity and authenticity, rather than in elaborate displays or decorations. This message can inspire us to focus on the core values of our beliefs and to seek depth and meaning beyond superficial appearances.

#### G. The Symbolic meaning of Iqra'a (Read) in the Name of Your Lord.

The symbolic meaning of "Iqra'a (Read)" in the Name of Your Lord is indeed profound. The first revelation to Prophet Mohammed ﷺ emphasizes the importance of knowledge and understanding through the lens of the Names of Allah ﷻ. Viewing Life Through Faith can be metaphorically referred to as "wearing the glasses of Iqra'a". It suggests that believers should interpret, explain and understand life through the perspective of Allah ﷻ's Names and guidance. This means seeing the world with an awareness of divine wisdom and purpose.



The command to read “in the Name of Your Lord” implies that all knowledge should be pursued with a consciousness of Allah ﷻ’s presence and attributes. This holistic approach integrates faith with intellectual pursuits, ensuring that learning is aligned with spiritual values.

The command to “Read” as the first word in the Quran highlights the importance of seeking knowledge. It encourages believers to pursue learning and understanding as a fundamental aspect of their faith. It implies rejection of Materialism by focusing on spiritual insight rather than material appearances, the concept of the glasses of Iqra’a encourages a deeper, more meaningful engagement with life. It promotes the idea that true understanding comes from recognizing the divine in all aspects of existence.

#### H. Examples of how wearing the glasses of Iqra’a make a substantial difference.

##### 1. Theory of evolution:

The first Name for Allah ﷻ is mentioned right after “Iqra’a in the Name of Your Lord” is The Creator. Viewing theory of evolution using the glasses of Iqra’a means interpreting the origins of humanity through the glasses of His Names rather than evolutionary theory. This perspective holds that Adam and Eve were miraculously created directly by Allah ﷻ, without the process of evolution. It should be noted that Islam is okay with the broad principles of the theory of evolution except with the issue of Adam and Eve. This makes the story of the cave man and woman not true.

##### 2. The story of the widow with five children.

The story of the woman who lost her husband and was left to care for her five young children is a powerful testament to unwavering faith and trust in Allah ﷻ's provision. The ones who came to console her expressed concerns about her source of income. Her response to them was that the one who died is a consumer but the provider is ever living. This answer was because she was wearing the glasses of Iqra’a. If she was not wearing these glasses, then she would be scared and despaired. Her answer reflects a deep sense of peace and assurance in Allah ﷻ's care. Instead of succumbing to despair, she finds solace in her faith, which provides her with the strength to face her new reality. This attitude can be a source of comfort and strength for others who are experiencing similar losses. It demonstrates that faith in Allah ﷻ's provision can provide a sense of stability and hope, even in the most challenging circumstances.

## The Ant and Divine Providence: A Tale of Trust and Wisdom

### 3. The story of the wise ant.

In a tale that beautifully illustrates the profound trust in divine providence, we encounter an ant who teaches a valuable lesson about faith and reliance on a higher power. This story begins with Prophet Sulaiman, who, curious about the sustenance needs of an ant, asked her how much grain she required to survive for a year. The ant confidently replied that she needed only one grain.

Intrigued by her response, Prophet Sulaiman decided to test this claim. He placed the ant in a bottle with a single grain of wheat and sealed it, promising to return after a year to provide another grain. A year later, when Prophet Sulaiman opened the bottle, he was surprised to find that the ant had consumed only half of the grain. Puzzled, he asked the ant why she had not eaten the entire grain as she had initially claimed she would need.

The ant's response was both insightful and profound. She explained that when she was free, she relied entirely on Allah ﷻ, the divine provider, who never forgets His creations. In her natural state, she would eat until she was full, without any worries about the future, trusting that Allah ﷻ would always provide for her needs. However, when Prophet Sulaiman placed her in the bottle, he became her provider. Recognizing that humans, unlike the divine, are fallible and might forget, she adopted a cautious approach. She ate only half a grain, fasting every other day, to ensure her survival in case Prophet Sulaiman forgot to provide for her.

This story highlights the ant's wisdom and her ability to discern the difference between divine and human provision. It underscores the limitations of human control and the boundless care of the divine. The ant's faith in Allah ﷻ's providence allowed her to live without fear when she was free, but her cautious behavior in the bottle reflected her understanding of human limitations.

### 4. Prophets that were killed.

When examining the stories of the Prophets, one often encounters narratives where Prophets are killed by malevolent individuals. At first glance, without the perspective provided by the "glasses of Iqra'a," it may appear that the villains are victorious and the Prophets are defeated. This perception

arises because the bad guy succeeds in killing the Prophet, seemingly making the villain the winner and the Prophet the loser.

However, when we don the glasses of Iqra'a, our understanding deepens. We begin to see that this earthly life is merely the first round. There is a second round, which takes place on the Day of Judgment. If we focus solely on the first round, it might seem that the Prophet is the loser and the criminal is the winner. But this is not the full picture. The second round reveals the ultimate truth: the Prophet will emerge as the true winner, and the criminal who killed him will be the ultimate loser.

Through the glasses of Iqra'a, we recognize that the most significant life is the one in the hereafter, the second round. The pleasures and successes of this worldly life are fleeting and often come with their own set of problems. They do not bring lasting happiness and are temporary at best. In contrast, the life in the hereafter is eternal and far more meaningful.

By viewing life through the glasses of Iqra'a, we understand that the second round is what truly matters. It is everlasting and far superior to the transient pleasures of this world. Thus, we see that the Prophet, despite his earthly suffering, is the true winner, and the criminal who caused his suffering is the true loser.

### I. The Dual Nature of Knowledge: Reading not in the Name Allah ﷻ.

Reading is a fundamental tool for acquiring knowledge. It opens the doors to understanding, innovation, and progress. Ideally, the knowledge gained through reading should be harnessed to ease human endeavors, improve quality of life, and foster societal advancement. However, the history of the 20th century starkly illustrates how knowledge, when not guided by ethical and moral principles, can lead to devastating consequences.

The 20th century, often referred to as the "century of mega death," witnessed unprecedented advancements in science and technology. These advancements were not always used for the betterment of humanity. Instead, they often led to the creation of destructive technologies, epitomized by the development and use of nuclear weapons. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 are grim reminders of how scientific knowledge, when divorced from ethical considerations, can result in catastrophic loss of life and suffering.

This period also saw the rise of other forms of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, which further contributed to the century's grim moniker. The knowledge that led to these inventions was not inherently evil; rather, it was the application of this knowledge without a moral compass that resulted in such dire outcomes. When knowledge is pursued and applied without a sense of responsibility and without being anchored in ethical values, it can lead to the creation of tools of death and destruction.

In contrast, knowledge pursued in the Name of Allah ﷻ, or with a sense of divine accountability, encourages the use of wisdom for the greater good. It promotes the idea that knowledge should serve to uplift humanity, alleviate suffering, and contribute to the overall well-being of society. This perspective emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of acquiring knowledge is to benefit others and to act as stewards of the world.

The 20th century serves as a powerful lesson in the dual nature of knowledge. It underscores the importance of coupling intellectual pursuits with ethical and moral guidance. As we move forward, it is crucial to remember that the true value of knowledge lies not just in its acquisition, but in its application for the betterment of all. By aligning our quest for knowledge with ethical principles, we can ensure that our advancements lead to a more just, peaceful, and prosperous world.