

Abraham's rational discourse is an excellent example of this. He contemplated the possibility of stars, the moon, and the sun being divine entities but concluded that their changeability and temporariness contradicted the concept of God's infinitude. He transitioned from the finiteness of celestial bodies to the infiniteness of their creator, the unoriginated universal and unchangeable First Cause. This process demonstrated the rational approach of the Islamic tradition.

Prophets' Use of Logic

Many other Prophets engaged in logical discourse with their people. For example, Prophet Muhammad invited people to rationally reflect upon his character and mission. He asked how someone who had lived among them for forty years without lying or cheating could suddenly lie in the name of an overpowering and irresistible God. This rational approach aimed to make people think logically about the claims of his mission.

Quranic Parables

The Quran used various styles, methods, and mechanisms to make the message of Islam intelligible. It employed logical deductions and moral exhortations to awaken both reason and intellect/mind in humans. The Quranic parables were analytical and logically challenged the powers and divinities of the so-called guardian gods of the polytheists. For instance, the parable of the fly highlighted the inability of the Meccan gods to create or control even the most insignificant of God's creatures.

Reason's Role in Undoing Excesses

Reason played a vital role in undoing the excesses in Christian theology, soteriology (the study of religious salvation), and exousiology (the study of the divine will). The relationships between man and God, man and man, and man and the cosmos were founded on rational foundations. While divine mysteries remained in the supra-rational realm, the dimensions of human existence involving human interactions were brought down to a level of human understanding and comprehension.

Promoting Ethical Transformation

The Quranic approach emphasized moral and logical universals to challenge the simplistic Trinitarian outlook of the Christian faith. It aimed to promote ethical transformation in human life and society. The Quran's emotionally charged rational appeal was always accompanied by moral exhortations to realize ethical transformation.

Preserving Human Intellect

Contrary to claims that rational discourse was a later addition to Islamic thought influenced by Greek philosophy, the Quran itself laid the foundation for rational discussions. It called for dialogue and reasoned debate, reflecting Aristotelian concepts of proof. Muslim theologians like al-Ash'ari, al-Maturidi, al-Ghazali, al-Razi, and Ibn Taymiyyah used Quranic rational arguments to substantiate their theological positions. The Quran elevated

reflection, meditation, and rationalization to the status of religious virtues and duties.²³

Preserving Human Reason

In essence, the preservation of human intellect and reason is one of the fundamental objectives of Islamic teachings. The Quran formulated the Islamic concept of God, man, society, state, cosmos, and salvation on intelligible and rational grounds, urging humans to engage in practical concerns of life while leaving aside theoretical assumptions and paradoxical confusions found in other belief systems.

In summary, reason played a significant role in Islamic thought, serving as a tool for understanding the divine and promoting ethical transformation in society. It was not a later addition but was integral to the Quranic message from the beginning, challenging and surpassing other belief systems in its rational approach.

See www.shaikhzulfiqar.com for more details.

²³ See Shah, Islam's Reformation of Christianity, p. 262ff