

Reform and Its Issues from a Qur'anic Perspective

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Abstract:

Reform in the Holy Quran is a comprehensive process aimed at rectifying corrupt conditions and returning matters to their proper state in accordance with Allah's guidance. This reform encompasses the rectification of belief, the self, society and interpersonal relationships.

This research paper elucidates the essence of this concept using verses from the Quran, taking an analytical and deductive approach to highlight key issues related to it. Our conclusion is that this concept is central to the Quran, manifesting in general and specific forms relating to particular aspects. Furthermore, the essence of the message of all prophets and messengers revolves around reform.

Keywords: Reform, Characteristics of Reform, Dimensions of Reform, Conditions for Reform.

Introduction:

In Islam, reform is considered one of the most important values, as set out in the Holy Quran and the prophetic tradition (Sunnah). It is a comprehensive process that aims to correct intellectual deviations and false beliefs, as well as reforming faulty behaviours, both individually and socially. Reform serves to purify the soul by achieving a balance between the demands of thought, spirit and body, thus cleansing it of flaws. This balance contributes to the development of a well-rounded character capable of fulfilling its role in life, thus realising the desired civilisation and progress.

Islamic reform is characterised by several features: it is divinely sourced and based on divine revelation; it encompasses all areas of life, including belief, worship, ethics, and transactions. It is a gradual process that considers human nature and circumstances, balancing desirable ideals with practical realities.

This research paper will focus on answering the following central research question: What is the concept of reform as understood through Qur'anic contexts? What are the key issues related to it?

Employing analytical, deductive and inductive methodologies, the paper is divided into two sections. The first section addresses the concept of reform and related terms, and the second section presents the most important issues associated with reform.

Section One: The Concept of Reform and Its Related Meanings

Subsection 1: Definition of reform and its relationship to related terms

1. Definition of reform in language:

In Lisan al-Arab, the term ‘reform’ is derived from the verb ‘صلح’. , which indicates a change from a state of corruption — specifically, the removal of corruption from something. Generally, righteousness is the opposite of corruption¹.

In The Standards of the Language, it states: ‘To reform something is the opposite of corrupting it, and the state of being righteous is when something is in a good condition.’ The term ‘mufassir’ refers to someone who engages in activities that benefit themselves or their community².

According to the Munjid in the Arabic Language, a reformer is someone whose ultimate goal is reform. In The Luminous Lamp, ‘to reform’ means to promote goodness and correctness, while ‘to reconcile between them’ means to foster harmony among people. Thus, reform is the antithesis of strife and conflict³.

In summary, the linguistic meaning revolves around the central concept of removing corruption, whether pertaining to actions, objects or relationships.

2. Definition of reform in terminology:

The term ‘reform’ occurs several times in the Quran, often in different forms. Scholars have provided various definitions, including:

- Imam Al-Qurtubi describes reform as the act of doing righteousness, emphasizing that worldly reform is achieved through justice and reform of the hereafter through worship⁴.

- The author of The Beacon Exegesis defines reform as replacing negative actions that affect the soul with positive actions that negate their impact, thereby allowing the soul to regain its purity and readiness for the presence of Allah⁵.

- In Sessions of Remembrance, reform is described as returning something to its balanced state by removing any corruption that has occurred⁶.

It is evident from the above discussions that all these definitions agree on a common theme: reform signifies actions of goodness and righteousness that achieve material and spiritual benefits in various aspects of life, whether in this world or the next.

Further Reflections on the Concept of Reform

Another viewpoint specifies that reform occurs after corruption has taken place, as indicated by several Quranic verses:

‘Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea because of what people’s hands have earned, so that He may let them taste some of the consequences of what they have done, in the hope that they will return.’ (Surah Al-Ma’idah: 33)⁷.

This prevalent understanding stipulates that reform is contingent upon the existence of corruption or wrongdoing. However, reform also encompasses the effort to create goodness, whether by improving what is already good or by bringing goodness into existence.

¹- Ibn Manzur: Lisan al-Arab. Dar Al-Jil, Lebanon, 1st edition, 1988, vol. 3, p. 462.

²- Ibn Faris. Dictionary of Language Measures. Dar Al-Jil, Lebanon, 1st edition, 1991, vol. 3, p. 303.

³- Maalouf, Louis. The Munjid in Contemporary Arabic. Dar Al-Mashriq, Lebanon, 2000, p. 848.

⁴- Ibn Al-Imad, Abdul Hayy. Golden Nuggets. Dar Al-Turath Al-Arabi, vol. 3, p. 335.

⁵- Rida, Muhammad Rashid. Al-Manar. Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiya, Lebanon, 1999, p. 450.

⁶- Sessions of Remembrance. Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, Lebanon, 1995, p. 73.

⁷- The Quran, Surah Ar-Rum, verse 41.

Therefore, striving for excellence and achieving improvement are also forms of reform, as reflected in various Quranic contexts.

Some verses convey the concept of reform more generally, without the constraint of corruption. Examples include:

‘Do not cause corruption upon the earth after its reformation.’ (Surah Al-A’raf: 56)⁸.

This verse was revealed to emphasise the goodness with which Allah created the earth.

In summary, in a technical sense, the term ‘reform’ refers to the act of doing good and being righteous, whether by removing corruption, improving what is good or creating it. Righteousness is about being upright and free from faults; a righteous person fulfils their obligations and commitments to the best of their ability.

It is worth noting that the verb ‘to reform’ (‘أصلح’) is transitive, whereas the verb ‘to be righteous’ (‘صلح’) is intransitive. This means that if someone has become upright, it is said that they have ‘صلح’ (reformed themselves). Conversely, when someone is said to have “أصلح” another, it means they have guided them towards the path of righteousness. Thus, the role of the reformer transcends personal self-improvement to encompass others. Reform has a broader meaning than mere righteousness.

In this regard, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali states:

‘It is an obligation upon every Muslim to start with themselves, correcting their behaviour by fulfilling their obligations and avoiding prohibitions. After improving themselves, they should teach their family, then their community, their town and the surrounding areas, and so on until they reach the farthest parts of the world.’⁹

This principle is similar to the words of the noble companion Rabee’ ibn Aamer, who, when asked by Rustam, the commander of the Persians, why they had come from the Arabian Peninsula to his land, responded:

‘Allah sent us to lead those whom He wills from the worship of creation to the worship of Allah, the One and Subduer; from the narrowness of this world to its expansiveness; and from the tyranny of religions to the justice of Islam.’

This beautifully articulates the message of Islam, which is founded on principles of righteousness and uprightness and transforms individuals into righteous beings and reformers.

Examples of reform:

- Educational reform: building a well-balanced Islamic character.
- Material reform: improving the individual and collective circumstances of people.
- Social relationship reform: enhancing social interactions and relationships.

3. Relationship of the term ‘reform’ to other terms

A. Its relationship to the term ‘corruption’

According to Lisan al-Arab, corruption is the opposite of righteousness. It signifies a deviation from a balanced state, whether slight or significant. Various interpretations of the Quran explain that the concept of corruption often refers to disobedience towards Allah. For example, Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari stated that ‘corruption on earth’ refers to acting against what

⁸- The Quran, Surah Al-A’raf, verse 56.

⁹- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid: Revival of the Religious Sciences. Al-Maktabah Al-Asriyah, Lebanon, 1998, vol. 2, p. 401.

Allah has prohibited, neglecting what He has commanded to be preserved, having doubts about one's faith, and siding with those who deny Allah.

In The Compendium of the Laws of the Qur'an, it states that the term 'corruption on earth' signifies public disobedience to Allah. It also refers to corrupting things, causing them to deviate from their intended purpose and become detrimental, ultimately leading to their degradation for unjust objectives¹⁰.

B. The relationship of the concept of reform to the concepts of change and renewal

The concepts of reform, change and renewal are interrelated and overlap; however, there are also fundamental differences between them.

Change: Al-Jirjani defines change as 'the transition of something from one state to another'. Analysing this definition reveals that change can manifest in two ways: it can alter the appearance of a thing without changing its essence, or it can replace it entirely. Thus, change encompasses four categories:

- From bad to good.
- From good to bad.
- From good to better.
- From bad to worse.

All four categories are reflected in the Quran¹¹. Therefore, change can be either positive or negative.

Renewal: Renewal can be understood in two ways: one is to restore something that existed but has become outdated, essentially returning it to its original form. The second is to create or introduce something that did not previously exist.

Abu Al-A'la Al-Maududi, may Allah have mercy on him, states: 'Renewal, in essence, involves purifying Islam from all traces of ignorance and striving to revive it in its purest form. A renewer cannot reconcile themselves with ignorance and cannot tolerate any remnants of it in any part of Islam, no matter how trivial they may be.'¹²

From this, we can conclude that 'change' is a broader term than 'reform', as 'reform' addresses what is corrupted, seeks to improve what is already good, or brings about what is beneficial. Reform specifically transitions from negative to positive, while change can encompass both meanings and their opposites.

The concept of renewal is closely related to restoration and re-establishing the old to its original state. This aligns with the concept of reform, which focuses on removing the corruption that hinders the goodness ordained by Allah.

The proximity of these three concepts has led to them often being used interchangeably, particularly in religious writings and discussions.

C. Reform, worship, succession and stewardship.

The conditional and intrinsic relationship between these four concepts can be summarised as follows: The essence of worship necessitates righteousness and reform, which result in the stewardship of the Earth — an essential duty of humanity. This connection is evident in many verses of the Holy Quran, including:

¹⁰- Al-Kafawi, Abu al-Baqa. The Universals, p. 220.

¹¹- Al-Jurjani. Definitions. Dar Al-Kitab Al-Misri, 1991, p. 143.

¹²- Al-Mawdudi, Abu Al-A'la. Renewing and Reviving Religion. Dar Al-Shihab, Algeria, p. 52.

- “Those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer, give zakah, and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong”¹³ (Surah Al-Hajj: 41).

- ‘And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.’¹⁴ (Surah Adh-Dhariyat: 56) – This signifies that, regardless of a person’s type, nature or gender, their efforts must align with the worship of Allah in all circumstances.

- ‘Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due, and to judge with justice when you judge between people.’¹⁵ (Surah An-Nisa: 58) – This demonstrates that Allah promotes justice and goodness, emphasising the relationship between ethical behaviour and reform.

- ‘It is He who created you from the earth and settled you therein.’¹⁶ (Surah Hud: 61)

‘Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing’¹⁷ (Surah Al-Ankabut: 45). This verse emphasises the role of prayer in promoting reform and maintaining righteousness.

Subsection Two: Reform in Light of Some Qur’anic Contexts

The term ‘reform’ is used in two types of contexts: Specific contexts, which are more common, and general contexts. Below, we will present examples of each type.

1. Specific contexts: Specific instances in the Qur’an where reform is addressed often relate directly to particular communities or situations that require rectification. For example:

- Surah Al-Baqarah (Verse 219): This verse discusses the balance of good and evil in the context of societal behaviour and economic transactions.

General references to reform encompass wider principles that apply to various aspects of life. For instance:

- Surah Al-A’raf (verse 56): This verse emphasises the importance of not spreading corruption on Earth, suggesting that protecting creation is part of human responsibility and reform.

Exploring these contexts in more detail illustrates how deeply embedded the concept of reform is in the Quranic narrative, aligning with the overarching themes of worship, justice, and humanity’s moral duty to cultivate and inhabit the earth effectively and ethically.

Reform in Specific Contexts

Examining the term ‘reform’ as it appears in various contexts within the Holy Quran yields several observations.

The word ‘reform’ appears 41 times across 20 surahs, including 11 Meccan and 9 Medinian. The distribution of the topic of reform between the Meccan and Medinian contexts seems to indicate its nature, necessitating discourse on it in different circumstances of time and place.

Furthermore, the Quran addresses reform comprehensively, encompassing various religious and worldly aspects. In religious matters, it calls for the rectification of beliefs concerning existence, humanity’s origin, destiny and role in life. In terms of worship, the Quran elaborates on the relationship between the believer and their Creator, detailing the

¹³- The Quran, Surah Al-Hajj, verse 41.

¹⁴- The Quran, Surah Adh-Dhariyat, verse 56.

¹⁵- Quran, Surah An-Nahl, 90.

¹⁶- Quran, Surah Hud, 61.

¹⁷- Quran, Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 45.

obligatory acts of worship and their corresponding rewards in this life and the next. In worldly matters, the Quran specifies regulations concerning family, inheritance, financial transactions and punishments for crimes, among other issues.

It is also noteworthy that the term ‘reform’ appears in five different forms, including as a noun, verb and participle. Approximately two-thirds of the occurrences in the Quran appear as verb forms in various tenses — past, present and imperative — indicating that the verb forms comprise a substantial portion. This highlights two key points:

1. Continuity: the implication of ongoing action rather than stagnation aligns with the continuous necessity of reform until Allah inherits the earth and all that is upon it.

2. Timeless relevance: the term’s fluctuations across different tenses suggest that the topic of reform is significant and intertwined with human life — past, present and future — indicating that it is a timeless yet ever-relevant issue.

By returning to the Quran, we find that the agents of reform can be categorised into two types:

1. Divine reform: This is overseen by Allah, reflecting his greatness, omnipotence, majesty, perfection and mercy towards his creation. This is evident in the creation of humanity, the infusion of souls, the prostration of angels, and the guidance of Prophet Adam through divine inspiration and teachings.

2. Human reform occurs through human action as part of our stewardship and cultivation duties. This is beautifully manifested in the creation of all things, including the skies, the earth, animals, the seas, the stars and the planets.

Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of the contexts in which the term ‘reform’ is used reveals that it is employed specifically in relation to matters such as the improvement of relationships between siblings, spouses, heirs, and orphans. These meanings are articulated in sound Quranic verses, such as:

Upon careful reflection on the contexts in which the term reform (islāh) appears and its various occurrences in the Qur'an, it becomes evident that it is employed with several specific meanings and within particular contexts, such as reconciliation between brothers, reconciliation between spouses, reconciliation among heirs, and the rectification of matters concerning orphans. All these meanings are clearly stated in definitive Qur'anic verses.

For instance, Allah the Almighty says: "Indeed, the believers are but brothers, so make reconciliation between your brothers"¹⁸ (Surah Al-Hujurat: 10), indicating the obligation of reconciliation among believers.

He also says: "There is no good in much of their private conversation except for those who enjoin charity, kindness, or reconciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking the pleasure of Allah – We will grant him a great reward"¹⁹ (Surah An-Nisa: 114).

Regarding reconciliation between spouses, Allah says: "And if a woman fears ill-treatment or desertion from her husband, there is no blame upon them if they seek reconciliation between themselves, for reconciliation is best. And human souls are prone to

¹⁸- Quran, Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 10.

¹⁹- Quran, Surah An-Nisa, 114.

selfishness. But if you do good and are mindful of Allah, then indeed Allah is well aware of what you do²⁰" (Surah Al-Baqarah: 220).

Commenting on the phrase "reconciliation is best", the scholar **Al-Qurtūbī** states that this expression is general and absolute, indicating that genuine reconciliation—through which hearts find tranquility and disputes are resolved—is good in every sense.

Concerning the rectification of matters related to orphans, Allah says: "And they ask you about the orphans. Say: improvement of their condition is best. And if you mix your affairs with theirs, they are your brothers. And Allah knows the corrupter from the reformer. Had Allah willed, He could have made it difficult for you. Indeed, Allah is Almighty, All-Wise²¹" (Surah Al-Baqarah: 220).

He also says: "Give the orphans their property and do not substitute the defective for the good, and do not consume their wealth along with your own. Indeed, that would be a great sin"²² (Qur'an 4:2).

In conclusion, the presence of the term 'reform' in various Quranic contexts signifies a nuanced understanding of its implications across personal, familial and communal dimensions, highlighting its vital role in nurturing harmony, justice and balance within society.

2. Reform in its general context

Reform can appear in the following forms and similar expressions:

- 'And do not cause corruption on the earth after its reformation.'²³ (Surah Al-A'raf: 56)
This verse emphasises the importance of maintaining the natural order established by Allah, as well as the conditions for reform.

- Enjoining good and forbidding wrong – This principle is central to Islamic teachings, emphasising the moral responsibility of individuals.

- All that pertains to humanity's stewardship and cultivation of the Earth – This reinforces the idea that human beings are entrusted with caring for and improving the world.

- Every action that brings about benefit – This broad definition encompasses various positive actions that serve the greater good of society or the individual.

- Inviting people to Allah and His religion – This highlights the spiritual dimension of reform, where promoting faith and righteousness is key.

In summary, reform, in its broader context, encompasses any action that yields benefit and goodness for humanity, whether material or spiritual.

Subsection Two: Some Issues Related to Reform

In this section, we will address the characteristics of Islamic reform and the qualities of reformers in the first subsection, followed by relevant issues in the second.

Subsection One: Some Characteristics of Islamic Reform and Qualities of Reformers

The characteristics of reform are derived from the very essence of Islam and can be summarised as follows:

²⁰- Quran, Surah An-Nisa, verse 128.

²¹- Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 220.

²²- Quran, Surah An-Nisa, verse 2.

²³- Quran, Surah Al-A'raf, 56.

- Divinity in Source and Purpose: The foundation of reform is rooted in divine guidance, with the aim of bettering individuals and society in accordance with Allah's will.
- Comprehensiveness: Islamic reform covers all aspects of life, including the spiritual, moral, social and economic spheres.
- Pragmatism: Reform is grounded in the realities of human existence and people's circumstances.
- Gradualism: Reform proceeds in stages, allowing for incremental improvements that respect human nature.
- Flexibility and wisdom: reform adapts to changing situations and uses wisdom to overcome challenges.
- Alignment with human nature: Reform resonates with the innate values instilled in humanity by the Creator.

1. Some qualities of reformers:

As a central figure in the reform process, the reformer embodies essential traits. Historical and contemporary reformers have significantly shaped its values. A prime example is Umar ibn Al-Khattab's famous wish for companions like Abu Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah and Muadh ibn Jabal, which highlights the importance of strong, righteous individuals in the reform mission.

2. Key qualities of reformers include:

Sincerity to Allah: The heart of a reformer should be dedicated to serving Allah, exercising patience and accountability in their endeavours.

- Comprehensive knowledge and insight: Reformers should possess a deep understanding of their context and the issues at hand.
- Leadership and impact: The ability to influence and motivate others is crucial for effective reform.
- Moral exemplification and commitment: Reformers should exemplify ethical behaviour and demonstrate dedication to their mission.

Personal integrity: the reformer's own righteousness and self-improvement are foundational to their efforts in reforming others.

These qualities empower reformers to navigate the complexities of societal challenges and contribute effectively to meaningful change.

Subsection Two: Some Issues Related to Reform

1. Capability and Willingness in Reform

In Surah Hud, Allah, through His prophet Shu'ayb, says:

'I intend only to reform as much as I am able. My success comes only from Allah. I have relied upon Him, and to Him I return.'²⁴ (Surah Hud: 88).

Reform must be aligned with an individual's ability and capability. This involves achieving and enhancing benefits, or at least minimising harm, while considering the specific interests at stake. True benefit is defined as that which rectifies people's affairs, ensuring their religious and worldly matters are in order.

²⁴- Quran, Surah Hud, 88.

However, a pertinent question arises: What does ‘capability’ mean? Where do its limits lie, indicating that an individual has exerted their utmost effort in a particular task? In other words, does ‘capability’ refer to material aspects, such as wealth, or does it also encompass non-material aspects, such as time and knowledge?

A reformer should consider the following aspects to understand the extent of their capability:

- Assessment by Islamic standards: assessing ability in light of Sharia (Islamic law).
- Identifying types of reform: understanding the kind of reform their ability is suited to.
- Prioritising areas of reform: recognising the priorities in the hierarchy and stages of reform, and knowing where to focus their efforts before addressing other areas.

In the previous verse, the phrase ‘as much as I am able’ can be interpreted in three ways:

- Duration: it refers to the period during which I am capable of reforming something, i.e. for as long as I am able to do so.
- Substitutive interpretation: it acts as a substitute for ‘reform’, indicating the extent to which I can implement reform.
- Purpose: It expresses intent, meaning ‘I wish to reform to the best of my ability.’

All three interpretations suggest that reform is closely tied to the timing of actions, the methods used and the extent to which a reformer engages in rectification and combats corruption.

Willingness in Reform

The willingness to pursue reform is the driving force behind it and can be divided into two categories: Determined will and indeterminate will. Determined will leads to action when the capacity exists; if capability is present, the will should also be firm. However, if the will is not resolute, actions may remain incomplete. Allah says:

“And a man came running from the farthest part of the city. He said, ‘O my people, follow the messengers.’²⁵” (Surah Ya-Sin: 20).

The phrase ‘the farthest part of the city’ suggests that this sincere believer was undeterred by distance in carrying out his duty to reform and spread the faith by following the messengers. Despite the challenges of travelling a long distance, his willingness remained strong.

The Quran uses various phrases to emphasise and encourage determination, such as:

‘Rush towards forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous²⁶’ (Surah Al-Imran: 133).

This rushing requires a determined will and strong resolve, providing motivation to attain Paradise, which is prepared for the righteous who achieve the highest levels of piety.

Additionally, Allah says:

‘Hold firmly to what We have given you, and remember what is in it, that perhaps you may fear Allah.’²⁷ (Surah Al-Baqarah: 63).

²⁵- Quran, Surah Ya-Sin, 20.

²⁶- Quran, Surah Al-Imran, verse 133.

²⁷- Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, 63.

This verse emphasises the importance of strength and commitment in pursuing righteousness and reform.

2. Its Relationship to the Jurisprudence of Priorities

Jurisprudence of priorities is defined as the knowledge of legal rulings that should take precedence over others, based on an understanding of their ranks and the circumstances that necessitate them²⁸. Thus, it involves placing everything in the correct order of precedence in terms of rules, values and actions, and prioritising what is most important based on correct legal standards illuminated by divine revelation and reason. Accordingly, the most important should be prioritised over the important, and the preferable over the less preferable — never the reverse. This is based on the understanding that values, rulings, actions and obligations differ significantly in terms of their level and circumstances — they do not all occupy the same rank.

In the context of reform, therefore, recognising the issues that deserve primary attention enables them to receive the necessary time and effort. This implies handling matters according to their level of significance. Ultimately, understanding the jurisprudence of priorities enables reformers to discern which issues warrant greater attention than others.

3. Its relationship to the jurisprudence of reality

Professor Abdul Majid Al-Najjar asserts that ‘the reformer does not operate in a vacuum; rather, they act within a reality that carries the truth of divine revelation, calling them to reform’. As a fundamental requirement, they must understand the reality they wish to influence based on revelation, analysing it deeply and exerting significant effort. The more comprehensive and profound their understanding, the greater their ability to adapt it according to the demands of revelation, thereby discovering the points that facilitate alignment with the essence of religion.²⁹

4. The Purposeful Dimensions of Reform

In his book *Maqasid Al-Sharia*, the jurist Ibn Ashur states that the general objective of legislation is to preserve the system of the community and sustain the righteousness of its controlling element: human beings. This includes the righteousness of the mind, actions, and relationship with worldly possessions. He also states that ‘the highest purpose of any legislation is to reform individual, collective and civil conditions so that, by following its teachings and acting according to its rules and guidance, a person can embody its values and pursue its objectives and goals’. This enables them to establish their society on a solid foundation and build their civilisation on enduring principles.’

In summary, the purposeful dimensions of reform can be distilled into the preservation of five fundamental values: religion, life, intellect, wealth and lineage.

5. The fruits of reform

- Attainment of Forgiveness and Mercy

Allah says:

²⁸- Waqili, *Jurisprudence of Priorities*, 1st ed., International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1997, p. 16.

²⁹- 'Stability and Change in Legal Rulings', *Al-Sirat Magazine*, no. 15, p. 13.

“Then indeed, your Lord, for those who committed wrong in ignorance and then repented and corrected themselves, will be Forgiving and Merciful thereafter.³⁰” (Surah Al-Anfal: 53).

- Salvation from Destruction: Allah states:

“And your Lord would not destroy the cities unjustly while their people were reformers.³¹” (Surah Al-Anfal: 51).

And:

‘By time, indeed, mankind is in loss, except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds, and advised one another to truth and patience.’ (Surah Al-Asr: 2–3).

- Reward for good deeds: the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

“Whoever guides someone to a good deed will have a reward like that of the person who performs it.³²”

- Establishment of the Community’s Goodness: Allah says:

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah.³³” (Surah Al-Imran: 110).

- Security and peace of mind: Allah says:

‘Those who believe and do good deeds will have no fear and will not grieve.³⁴’ (Surah Al-Baqarah: 62).

- Reform in the Calls of the Prophets

Reform occupies a significant space in the Qur’an and serves as a prominent model for those engaged in reform efforts. Prophethood is granted by Allah primarily in times of widespread corruption; thus, each prophet is sent with a methodology to guide people towards improving their circumstances. Al-Razi states, ‘Know that when the prophets see their people inclined towards corruption, their habit is to first stop them.’

We will briefly discuss five exemplary prophets: Ibrahim, Musa, Shu’ayb, Lut and Muhammad (peace be upon them all)³⁵.

6. Reform in the Call of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham)

The hallmark of the call of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was reform of belief and intellectual deviation. He lived in a polytheistic society where idols were erected for worship. Therefore, rectifying thought and belief was a priority in his mission.

Political reform was also a key aspect of the call of Prophet Musa (Moses).

The story of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) occupies a significant portion of the Quran, spanning 44 surahs and comprising 563 verses, accounting for approximately 9.3% of the total. His call can be summarised in three phases:

- Phase One: The period of his upbringing and development from birth in the royal palace until he fled Egypt for Midian following a murder.

³⁰- Quran, Surah An-Nahl, verse 110.

³¹- Quran, Surah Hud, 11:117.

³²- Quran, Surah Al-Asr.

³³- Hadith narrated by Tirmidhi.

³⁴- The Quran, Surah Al-Imran, verse 110.

³⁵- The Quran, Surah Al-An'am, verse 48.

- Phase Two: The political struggle against the ruling authority, represented by Pharaoh and his officials. This phase began with his return from Midian and ended with the collapse of the Pharaoh's regime.

- Phase Three: The internal struggle with his followers, which lasted from the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt until his death. Thus, Prophet Musa addressed issues of intellectual and political tyranny.

Reform in the Call of Prophet Shu'ayb (Jethro)

Economic issues are fundamental to individuals and communities in their daily lives. The message of Prophet Shu'ayb (peace be upon him) prominently highlights economic reform. He called for fair trade practices and prohibited cheating and dishonesty in commercial transactions.

Moral Reform in the Call of Prophet Lut (Lot)

The Qur'an does not shy away from addressing the enormity of lust and its power. It features a prophetic school where the Prophet Lut (peace be upon him) was the teacher. His story reveals serious deviations from human nature, focusing on the moral corruption experienced by his people.

Reform in the Call of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Allah says:

"Indeed, Allah has conferred a favour upon the believers by sending a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His verses, purifies them, and teaches them the Scripture and wisdom, although before this they were in clear error.³⁶" (Surah Al-Imran: 164).

Beliefs and perceptions were shrouded in darkness, leading to deviations in worship and customs and resulting in corruption in social, political, economic and ethical behaviour. The Prophet Muhammad's mission involved addressing these doctrinal and intellectual imbalances, correcting behaviours and reforming acts of worship and life systems. His methodology emphasised cultivating individuals by rectifying their thoughts and beliefs, improving their morals and social relationships, and reforming the economy and various life systems.

Conclusion:

Reform is a foundational concept in the Holy Quran that appears in numerous verses and chapters. It has two dimensions: a general aspect and a specific aspect. The general dimension is connected to human nature, qualifying individuals to undertake reform. This begins with the individual rectifying their thoughts, beliefs, behaviours and relationships with others. Such efforts are integral to the concept of stewardship (khilafah) and are manifestations of servitude to Allah.

In contrast, the specific aspect relates to particular issues, such as the reform of orphans and reconciliation between spouses, as well as other specific areas of societal improvement.

Furthermore, it is emphasised that the mission of all prophets and messengers is fundamentally one of righteousness and reform within the human realm. Islam, the final

³⁶- Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 164.

message, serves as a model for effective reform practices that can be emulated in current efforts to drive positive change.