

G.O.R.A.P.

DAWAH TRAINING COURSE NOTES [9-21]

THE GO-RAP APPROACH

BEFORE WE GO-RAP

G — GOD'S EXISTENCE

O — GOD'S ONENESS

THE LINK BETWEEN GO & RAP

R — REVELATION

P — PROPHETHOOD

SUMMARY & CONTENTIONS



TOPIC 9: The GORAP Approach

The GO-RAP approach to dawah is a very useful tool on which to build and structure your conversations with people about Islam. GO-RAP is an acronym which stands for:

- God's Existence
- God's Oneness
- Revelation
- And Prophethood

HISTORY BEHIND THE GORAP

After many years of giving dawah, it was always the same questions that came up over and over again. Although there were very powerful explanations to the questions (and even in some instances, people accepted Islam), a shaykh pointed out that, the answers will not always satisfy the questioner because the foundations have not been established, and this would also just lead them to ask more and more questions.

The Sheikh said, if I could show them that Islam was the truth and that the Quran was from Allah, then logically they would have to accept and believe what God said. Ultimately, the answer to any questions about Islam is really "Because God tells us to".

The real challenge then is to get them to understand that there is a God and the Quran is His word and Muhammad ﷺ is His Messenger. This led to what was called the 'Systematic Approach to Dawah' - a simple system that could be an answer to most questions and cut straight to the root of the matter: go back and establish the foundations of calling to Allah first.

This method is a result of over 20 years of dawah experience and has been put together with the help of other dawaat, scholars and people of knowledge. The reason why this approach works so effectively is because it explains the foundational concepts of Islam in a reasoned and logical way. It avoids difficult issues and reduces the potential for arguments.



SUMMARY OF GORAP

- God’s Existence – this is a simple discussion about how we can know that there is a Creator of this universe.
- God’s Oneness – again we give some simple reasoned points that we can show how we can understand that there is only One Creator, One God, as opposed to for example many gods. And importantly we can understand that the Creator is unique and different from the Creation.
- Revelation And Prophethood – again we show and try to give good reasons and examples for believing that the Quran is from God – from Allah – and Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger.

If we can establish these things and get agreement on them, then the person we’re talking to is going to be moving very, very close to accepting Islam – inshaAllah!

IMPORTANT ADVICE

One of the important practical aspects of actually using the GO-RAP approach, it is that you use it as a map, rather than a rigid structure. Remember, this is the foundation for your dawah – so the GORAP is like your skeleton that you will develop with the flesh, muscles etc. later on, but you need to get your foundations correct first.

Understand how it all works, understand the concepts and steps rather than memorising the words merely like a script.

Make it your own and apply your own personality and knowledge to it. Don’t worry if you don’t get it all in one session; take your time! Learn it properly. Practice! Practice! Practice! Start by talking to yourself In the mirror, and then you know practice with your family and your friends.



TOPIC 10: BEFORE WE GO-RAP

Before we GO-RAP, there are two key aspects that we need to discuss that will help us have fruitful dawah conversations inshallah.

1. INITIATION

Initiation is what you do to move a normal conversation into a dawah conversation (i.e. a GO-RAP conversation). This is important because the key to an effective dawah conversation is to take control of it so that you can present Islam.

Any conversation has the potential to be a dawah conversation. A dawah conversation can come from either one of two paths: 1) either you initiate the conversation or 2) you redirect a conversation.

Examples:

- **Initiate a dawah conversation** by simply asking a non-Muslim a question: “excuse me David, a quick question – do you believe in God?” or “Sarah – what do you think is the purpose of life?”
- **Direct the conversation to a GORAP one:** David asks: “Why do you Muslims pray?” Instead of answering this question and every question that may follow it, bring the question back to its foundations.

Three Steps to Initiation

1. **Character:** Remember back to “The Caller” - our character and manners, being kind, considerate, smile, shake hands, thank them for the question, use their name and so on.
2. **Concept:** Bring them back to the foundations. To do this, we may have to say something like: *“In order for you to really understand the answer, I need to go over some of the basic principles of Islam.”*
3. **Agreement:** agree to have this conversation: *“Do you have a few moments where I could do that?”* This is important because if they say no or they are in a hurry or “I just want an answer to my question”, you’ll need to get them to appreciate the importance of understanding these foundational principles... Maybe you’ll only be able to give them a leaflet if they don’t have time because it’s going to require some of their time to hear what you have to say, so we need to get agreement from them to have this conversation.



DIFFERENT INITIATION SCENARIOS

You may find yourself in different scenarios and situations that require you to think a little bit more carefully about how you initiate the conversation. This may require you to know your surroundings, understand cultural sensitivities, and have some context about those you are talking to so you are not putting them off. You may need to use your interpersonal skills to defuse a potentially volatile situation!

Different Initiation Scenarios: YES OR NO!

You may face a scenario where someone demands a yes or no answer. For instance, *“Is Islam against homosexuality – yes or no!”*

DISCUSSION: *How would you deal with this scenario?*

In this case, we know the simple answer, but it does also depend on the culture and the person you are talking to. The way in which you respond may need to be tactful and considerate. In some countries, they may want you to give a direct answer, whereas in other countries, giving a direct answer may cause offence if it is not backed up with further explanation.

One way to help diffuse such difficult encounters is perhaps to ask them to provide more information about why they need to know this specifically; this will help you to understand more about them. Many times, in dawah conversations, you need to learn to be a good listener before you get to have a good dawah conversation.

Different Initiation Scenarios: CRAZY QUESTIONS

You may face a crazy question! For example, *“I heard you Muslims want to kill our babies!”*

DISCUSSION: *How would you deal with this scenario?*

In a situation like that it might just be better to say “no, that’s not true, Islam doesn’t teach that” and again you can find out what lead them to say such a thing and ask such a question.

The aim in the end is still the same – to bring the conversation back to having a fruitful conversation about Islam and the basic teachings about Islam. You just need to apply some basic people skills and common sense.



2. THE PREMISE OF A GO-RAP CONVERSATION

The premise of a GO-RAP conversation is very important as you can keep going back to it when there are some disagreements in the discussion. All we are trying to do here is get an agreement with the person we are talking with that the best way to make sense of the world around is by using common sense and reason.

If we don't use common sense and reason, what do we use in order to determine whether something is true or not? Is it based on our feelings? Do we rely on our dreams or our experiences? Do we look at what our ancestors said about it: "Oh this is true because my grandfather told me it was." or "I had this amazing spiritual feeling, so I know it's true". Do we expect to see a sign or a miracle?

The problem with all of these methods of making decisions is that these are very subjective. Everyone can all claim to have the same feeling. Some may say, "It's true because I accepted Jesus and my life changed". To this you could reply, "so you're saying that if something changes your life it must be true? Islam changed my life! So, it must be true!"

COMMON SENSE AGREEMENT

DISCUSSION: *Why use common sense?*

It is something that is universal and common! It's something we can all agree on, it's what people agree is the best thing to use to make decisions in their everyday lives and also by and large, it's objective, not subjective.

Simple analogy: what would you do if a man wearing nothing but a pair of red underpants came knocking on your door saying that he'd come to read the electricity meter? What you would do is not so important here as compared to what process you would use and what faculties you would employ to come to a decision about this man and his claim. Would you believe him without thinking and just let him into your house?

Would you just 'have faith?' Or 'a feeling'? Or would you think about the situation, ask some questions and apply reason? I'm pretty sure it would be the latter. Even if you told him to "Get lost you weirdo!", you'd use reason and common sense to make sense of the man in red underpants, just as we do for most things that happen in our lives.

This is our premise and that's what we call 'Common Sense Agreement' – to have an agreement with a non-Muslim, that in our discussion, we will apply common sense and our faculties of reason. We will be rational human beings



TOPIC 11: G – GOD’S EXISTENCE

The purpose is to show the non-Muslim that there is a God, a creator, using a simple and clear argument. How we get to this point is entirely up to you – whether it is subtle or direct. So, how DO you show this? What argument could we use? Well there are a number of simple arguments available.

DISCUSSION: *How would you articulate an argument that God exists?*

A SIMPLE DESIGN ARGUMENT

Let’s take a mobile phone as an example. A mobile phone is a good practical example to use because most of us have one and you can show this to the non-Muslim as you’re talking to them.

Here is the argument: *“Your mobile phone - what is it made of? It’s composed of a few basic elements – plastic, glass, silicon for the chip, and some precious metals. Plastic comes from oil and glass and silicon come from sand. So basically, what you are holding in your hand is oil and sand. Now, what if I told you that I was walking along in the desert of Arabia (where there’s lots of oil and sand) and picked up a mobile phone which I just found lying there. What if I said this was a product of billions of years of random events? So, the wind blew, the sun shone, the rain fell, the lightning struck, the oil bubbled, and after millions and millions of years, the mobile phone formed itself...and naturally I pick it up, push the call button and call my mum! Is there a chance that this mobile phone could have randomly formed itself through these natural processes? Using our common sense, none of us would ever come to this conclusion!*

Once we’ve made this point, get them to think about the universe: *“If we would not accept this for a mobile phone, would we accept such an explanation for our universe and the life within it? After all, what are our options? That this vast universe all came about by a series of random events? Could it just have come from nothing? Perhaps the man in the red underpants spontaneously appeared!*

But ask yourself – do we ever see something coming from nothing? Could it have created itself? Surely that would need a starting point to begin with also. And if this is the case, then why not



apply these to everything else in life? Do you behave as if things just appeared out of nowhere and things happen just like that or do you believe that everything has a cause?

Common sense tells us that someone designed the phone using these components, so common sense would also tell us the same thing with the universe, with all its laws and systems – which are much more complex by the way than a mobile phone. It also points to an even greater intelligence to design and create the universe. The existence of design is a signpost to a designer. The complexity and the perfection of the design indicates something about the intelligence and capacity of the designer.”

ORDER IN THE UNIVERSE

In addition to this, we can also show how there is evidence of order in the universe, and that these laws that govern the universe are so finely tuned, that life could not exist without this degree of fine tuning. We probably wouldn't have life, let alone be able to thrive and develop as human beings!

- Our Earth rotates on its axis once every 24 hours. Imagine the earth was spinning really, really slowly, in a day was 30 or 40 years long. If this happened, one part would be exposed to sunlight and the other in darkness. So, the earth's surface would be both super-heated and super-cooled and it's very unlikely you would have life existing at all.
- Our planet is in the 'Habitable Zone' (or the Goldilocks Zone) - if we were fractionally (in cosmological terms) closer to the sun or further away, it would be too hot or too cold.
- If the composition of gases in our atmosphere was not exactly the right blend of oxygen, carbon dioxide and nitrogen, or if there was no ozone to filter out the harmful effects of the sun's radiation.
- When we look at the 'Big Bang Theory' that explains the origins of the universe, are our rational minds really willing to accept that it caused such order? Since when do explosions form intricate and balanced systems and complex life forms? Does chaos give rise to order? If I threw a grenade into a scrapyard, would I come out with a fully functional car?

All of these things have the right balance and give us the optimal conditions for life to exist. Without them, we'd probably not have life! Are we seriously saying all this fine tuning is by chance and coincidence? Again, the order in the universe indicates the intelligence of the creator!

AGREEMENT

Once we've given these arguments, like we did in the initiation stage, we want to get an agreement from the non-Muslim to see whether or not they agree with what we've said so far – is it true or not? Does it make sense or not? So, ask them something like this: “does that make sense to you?” “Do you agree with what I've said so far?” If they don't agree and have some contentions, then it's easier to deal with them at this stage, rather than get to the end of the GO-RAP and have to go back!



TOPIC 13: O – GOD’S ONENESS

The purpose here is to show why there can only be One God, One Designer, One Creator of the universe, and how it must be the case that this Creator is not like the Creation. We are beginning to deal with some important attributes concerning the nature of who God actually is.

Again, how you transition from God’s existence to God’s oneness is up to you, so long as you get to this point (i.e. *“So David, now we’ve agreed there is a creator for this universe, let’s discuss who or what this Creator is.”*)

DISCUSSION: *How would you articulate that God is One?*



THE NATURE OF THE CREATOR

Based on our conclusions, we can deduce that the nature of the Creator must be different from the universe. In other words: “the Creator and creation are not the same!” Why? Go back to our original argument: by looking at the ordering of the universe, we can simply conclude that it needs a creator. The reason is because the universe could not have come from nothing. That makes no sense at all. You can’t get something from nothing let alone something as complex as the universe.

THE UNIVERSE CREATED ITSELF?

The universe also clearly could not have created itself. There’s nothing to suggest that anything in the universe or the whole universe collectively could have that ability to organise and create itself. Back to the mobile phone example, no rational person would conclude that the mobile phone organised itself into a fully functioning mechanism.

WHO CREATED THE CREATOR?

If the Creator of the Universe was like the universe, then its nature would also be the same; that would mean it would also have a need for a designer, an organiser and a systemiser. This on its own is fine from the point of view of logic the problem comes when we keep asking the question. “So, what then created this complex being that created the complex universe? It must be something even more powerful and complex.” But then we can ask the same question about that, and then the next and the next. You could then ask this question again and again. You’d keep needing a creator to create a creator to create a creator – ad infinitum forever. There’s a problem with this, as it would never allow us to explain how we have the universe here and now.

REFLECTION: *Imagine that I want to lift a table, but it’s too heavy for me to lift alone! So, I ask my friend to help me, he says: “yes sure, but I’m only going to help you if someone else helps me” and then that person also makes the same condition. “Then I’m only going to help you if someone else helps me. So, imagine if this went on and on and everyone is saying: “I will only help if somebody else helps”. Will the table ever be lifted?*

This example shows the problem about when it comes to the creator of the universe being created, and that also being created and that creator having a creator and so on and so forth – we cannot have creators creating creators forever because, just as the table will never be lifted, the creation will never be created. But it’s here, the universe exists – where does that leave us?



AN UNCREATED CREATOR

A rationale conclusion would be - again, using our reasoning - that the Creator of the Universe was NOT created. Meaning, this Creator, what we would more commonly call God or Allah, is the uncaused Creator, who is different in nature from the creation.

If this is the case, we can also highlight how this would apply in all aspects – so for example, if the creation is needy, then the Creator should be self-sufficient. If the creation is temporary, the Creator should be eternal, and if the creation is confined by space and time, the Creator should be free of space and time. It's also not really conceivable that there could be more than one such being, because if there was more than one, each would limit the other and we would return to our same problem.

AGREEMENT

Again, after giving this argument, we can again get an agreement to see whether or not they agree what we've said makes sense and is true to them. If they agree – then we can move on to the rest of the GORAP.



TOPIC 15: THE LINK BETWEEN GO & RAP

At this point, we are shifting into another area. We've covered God – His Existence and Oneness – and now we are linking this belief and agreement to the **need** for Revelation and Prophethood.

The argument goes something like this:

We can observe that the Creator of this universe has provided the means for every need that we have to be fulfilled. The needs could be physical, like the need for food and drink and air, or they can be emotional, like the need for love, companionship and security. Would it also not be reasonable to assume that, since God – this Creator – has provided a means to satisfy our every need, that He would also provide means to satisfy our existential and spiritual needs as well.

What do we mean by existential needs? Well these are the “big” questions like:

- What is the purpose of our existence as human beings?*
- Why is there suffering in the world?*
- If there is a Creator, why does this Creator let bad things happen?*
- Why are we here and what's it all for?*
- Where are we going?*
- Is there life after death?*

These spiritual questions are connected to God. Since one has understood that there must be a Creator, then we naturally want to know more about this being.

- Will He help us?*
- If so how?*
- Is there some way to express gratitude and thanks for the great gifts and blessings that have been bestowed upon us?*
- How can we express that in an appropriate way?*

This is what we call “worship” and it is a powerful and strong impulse in all humans.

ONLY IF GOD TELLS US

Using and introducing the example of *why there is suffering* (often called The Problem of Evil), can be very powerful. This is because it's a very common question that people have, especially in the West. A few points to mention:

1. Suffering is not something that negates the existence of a creator. This is because we have already come to the rational conclusion that God exists.
2. The question is actually more emotional than rational. In fact, all they can really ask is “*why does God allow suffering and evil to exist?*”
3. The only way we can really know the answer to this question is if God tells us. It's the same with our purpose in life. The only way to be sure is if the Creator of life tells us!
4. From the spiritual perspective, what we know about God through reason is very limited. Our intellect can only take us so far – what we need from here is for God to direct us and fill the gaps.



MAKING THE LINK

The link we're making at this point is the **NEED** for us to have God explain certain things to us. There is a **NEED** for some form of communication from God to:

- tell us what He wants from us
- what our purpose in life is
- to tell us about life after death
- what is going to happen to us when we die

Now only that, but also:

- to announce His presence to mankind
- to explain His nature
- how to have a relationship with Him
- what would that relationship look like?
- what is worship?

Once we've made this link, and shown the strength of this need, then we can move to establish that Revelation – the Quran – is from God and also Prophethood – Prophet Muhammad ﷺ – is the Prophet of God.

Remember: our focus is, **giving people compelling reasons as to why Islam is the truth**. First, we need to articulate this link, and then we can move on to Revelation and Prophethood.



TOPIC 17: R – REVELATION

TRANSITIONING TO REVELATION

The objective of the R section is to give reasons as to why a particular revelation – the Quran – is from God. To transition to this topic, we can use a very simple analogy: *Every time we buy an electrical gadget or a device – like a mobile phone for example - what do we usually get with it in the box? An instruction manual. This manual is there to show us how to use the device properly, the do's and don'ts, all the warnings and recommendations, etc. God has sent revelation as our instruction manual – how we should behave, the do's and don'ts, warnings and recommendations of life and how to live it. We believe the Quran is that manual for life.*

Now we're in a position to argue its case. There are a number of arguments for why the Quran is from God, many of them are found in the Quran itself

DISCUSSION: *How would you argue that the Quran is Revelation from God?*



ARGUMENT 1: PRESERVATION

Allah says: **“It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder [the Quran], and it is certainly We Who will preserve it.” [15:9]** You could pick up a copy of the Quran anywhere in the world, and compare them with manuscripts dating to within thirty years after the death of the Prophet Mohammed ﷺ and you would find the text to be the same (apart from the style of writing and certain marks placed to aid pronunciation).

Not only is it preserved in written form, but more importantly it is also preserved orally, with millions of people memorising the text worldwide. Even the fact that so many people speaking so many languages have been able to memorise it in its entirety is also an indication of its divine origin.

ARGUMENT 2: INIMITABILITY OF THE QURAN

Allah says: **“And if you all are in doubt about what I have revealed to My servant, bring a single chapter like it, and call your witnesses besides God if you are truthful. [2:23]** The Quran challenged the Arabs, who were masters of poetry and linguistic skill, to produce even one chapter like it. The shortest chapter of the Quran is a mere three verses (Surah al-Kawthar). Many embraced Islam just from hearing the Quran being recited, and they were dumbfounded and unable to meet this challenge despite their linguistic skills.

ARGUMENT 3: CLEAR MESSAGE OF WHO GOD IS

What the Quran teaches about the Creator matches what can be understood rationally by everybody everywhere - that is to say, that there is One Creator that is unlike the creation. There are lots of verses in the Quran that talk about this, such as:

- The uniqueness of God [112:1]
- He created all things [39:62]
- Everything depends on Him [35:15]
- He alone is worthy of worship [20:14]

If you don't have these to hand, then Surah Ikhlas is a simple one to go by, **“Say: He is God, the One and Alone, God the one whom everything needs and who Himself needs nothing, He is not born, nor does He beget, and there is nothing that can be compared to Him.” [112]** You can show this to non-Muslims that after our rational discussion on who or what this Creator should be, then the Quran matches this concept exactly!

ARGUMENT 4: UNIVERSAL MESSAGE OF THE QURAN

Not only is the belief in God one that matches our rational mind, but we can also talk about the message of the Quran being a universal one. It is not limited to some particular tribe or group of people - It is for everybody, regardless of their race or status.

The laws and guidance given in the Quran are universal and something we can all apply, as well as being in line with what we'd expect in order to have a good life, such as:

- The need for justice [16:90]
- Honouring your parents [17:23]
- Being good to your neighbours [4:36]
- Saving lives [5:32]
- Don't be prideful [17:37]
- Don't cheat people [17:35]
- Don't steal
- Don't bribe [17:35]
- Don't commit adultery [17:32]

ARGUMENT 5: FALSIFICATION TEST

The Quran itself gives a sort of falsification test; a good test to apply to any book that claims to be from the Creator. Allah says: **“Do they not then consider the Quran carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein contradictions in abundance”** (4:82)

ARGUMENT 6: ACCURACIES IN THE QURAN

What links well with the falsification test is that, not only that it does not contain any contradictions, but in fact, it seems to be making statements about history, theology, philosophy, law and the natural world that challenges a normal human explanation.

Historical Accuracies

- The accurate title used for the ruler of Egypt during the time of Yusuf and Musa: during the time of Yusuf عليه السلام, the ruler of Egypt is referred to as a King, but at the time of Musa عليه السلام, he is referred to as Pharaoh (to learn more about this, download or order our publication 'The Eternal Challenge'. Go to iera.org/shop.)
- Other accuracies include the name of Haman that has been discovered in historical records, and the preservation of Pharaoh's body.

Multi-Layered Nature

When the Quran talks about the natural world, it speaks of it in a way that would appeal and make sense to readers during that time, but it also makes sense to us today.

- The description of the origins of the universe: **“Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were ‘once’ one mass then We split them apart? (21:30)**. For the 21st century man, this verse allows for our current understanding of how the universe came into being – what we refer to as the big bang (i.e. the universe started out as a singularity that expanded.)
- The Quran calls our attention to how we humans were created from humble origins, **“Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot (alaqah).” (23:14)**. The Quran uses the word



alaqah, which can mean a clinging substance, a leech or a worm, and a blood clot, or blood in a general sense. Yes, the ancient Greek physicians and ancient Hebrews predating the Quran also described the embryo as a clinging substance and a blood clot, but interestingly the word *alaqah* also refers to a worm or a leech. And this is what the embryo actually looks like at around days 22-25 of its development.

UNDERSTANDING “SCIENTIFIC MIRACLES” IN THE QURAN

It is impossible to claim scientific miracles, due to the fact that science does not lead to absolutes and that the verses of the Quran (in many cases) have multiple interpretations. The Quran is not meant to be a book of science, but it is a book of signs. Whilst we live in times where science is popular, it is in no way a benchmark to test the Quran. Science is constantly changing its view on things based on new data. The Quran does not talk about the natural world from a scientific perspective per say, but it’s a reflective perspective. It asks us to think deeply and contemplate that these are all signs that point to the power and wisdom of the Creator – this is the reason that we could use such arguments.

Think about how you could use any of these arguments for the Quran and how you would articulate them in your own words during the GO-RAP conversation. To learn more arguments for Revelation, download or order our publication ‘The Eternal Challenge’. Go to iera.org/shop.

AGREEMENT

Again, do not forget to get an agreement from the non-Muslim, to see whether or not they have understood or agreed with what you have said so far is true.



TOPIC 19: P – PROPHETHOOD

The last stage for GO-RAP is Prophethood. The objective here is to show the non-Muslim how the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is truly a messenger of Allah and that he was a man chosen and sent by God. The easy way to do this is, if you have proven the Quran is true, the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is also true, because the Quran says: “Say, [O Muhammad], “O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all.” [7:158]. This works in the opposite way too, meaning that we could GO-RAP or GO-PAR because, once you establish one, you automatically establish the other.

DISCUSSION: *How would you argue that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is a Prophet of God?*



LIAR, DELUDED OR TRUTHFUL?

One way to examine the claim to Prophethood is by using a process of elimination. This is a method that can be applied to anyone making a claim about anything and it essentially can be reduced to three fundamental choices:

- That the person making the claim is a liar.
- Or they are telling the truth.
- Or they think they are telling the truth but they are deluded or mad.

LIAR

To claim that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ lied has no merit. You can show that he was known for having an amazing character, even before claiming prophethood. You can refer to the time period that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was alive in, where corruption was widespread, yet he would not engage with the evils of that society. Instead, he would look after the orphans and elderly and would help improve the community. As a result, the people honoured him ﷺ with the title: “The Truthful and the Trustworthy”. Not only that, but even after his prophethood, he was well known for his truthfulness, even by his enemies!

An example of this is the incident of Abu Sufyan, who was a non-Muslim at the time and a staunch enemy of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and his meeting with Heraclius, the Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire. Heraclius started asking him different questions about the Prophet ﷺ: **“What is his family status amongst you?” “Are his followers increasing or decreasing?” And then he asks him “Have you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (to be a Prophet)?” Abu Sufyan said “No” and Abu Sufyan said when he was narrating this incident, “By Allah! Had I not been afraid of my companions labelling me a liar, I would not have spoken the truth about the Prophet.” Heraclius says near the end of the narration, “I asked, whether he was ever accused of telling lies before he said what he said, and your reply was in the negative. So, I wondered how a person who does not tell a lie about others could ever tell a lie about Allah.” (Bukhari)**

We could also rationally argue that, if we think about people who lie, they do so to either avoid some pain or for some sort of benefit and gain. But the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ didn't avoid pain - he was persecuted, boycotted and exiled, starved of food and stoned by children. Nor did he gain any sort of benefit - he didn't live a lavish lifestyle, ate simple meals, used to patch his own clothes and mend his own shoes. At one point, the pagan Arabs offered him riches, women and power, if he'd just stopped spreading his message, but he rejected this outright. When he died, all he had in his possession was his white riding mule, his shield, and a piece of land which he left to charity.



DELUDED?

Deluded is a nice way of saying someone is mad or they have mental problems. By analysing the teachings of Islam that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ brought, how is it possible that a man could come with a whole system for life, including dietary laws, marriage laws, and economical system, family life, criminal law, hygiene, ritual etiquettes – a complete system covering every aspect of life? Where did he get it from? To this day, Islam continues to massively improve and positively affect people's lives – both on a practical and spiritual level.

Prophecies are another powerful way to show how a man that foretold the future could not do so unless God - who knows all things - told him! For instance, a famous prophecy, is **“that you will see the barefooted, unclothed bedouins competing in the construction of tall buildings”** We are seeing this prophecy right in front of our eyes as the Arabs across the Middle East (i.e. the Burj Khalifa in Dubai and the Kingdom Tower currently being built in Saudi Arabia). If he was deluded, how is it possible for a deluded man to make such accurate statements about the future?

Finally, if we look at the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, he had many experiences that, if he were deluded or a liar, he could or would have used them as a proof to support his lies or delusion. One example of this is when his son, Ibrahim, passed away on the same day, there was a solar eclipse. Many of the locals thought that God made the eclipse happen because of the death of the Prophet's ﷺ son. Now, if the Prophet ﷺ was deluded or a liar he would have used such an opportunity to reinforce his claim. However, he didn't; he said: “The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of the death of someone from the people but they are (two) signs amongst the signs of God. When you see them, stand up and pray.”

TRUTHFUL

If he wasn't a liar and he wasn't deluded, what's the only possible conclusion? That is he was speaking the truth! He was a messenger of God. This is how we might conclude the Prophethood section. Do not forget to get an agreement!



TOPIC 21: SUMMARY AND CONTENTIONS

Alhamdulillah, we've finished the GO-RAP.

Let's summarise: A systematic approach to giving dawah. A GO-RAP conversation where, if a person asks you any question about Islam, we are able to take it back to the foundations and give them compelling reasons why Islam is the truth.

The different stages:

- Initiation stage – redirected the conversation by telling them we need to go over some basic concepts.
- The Premise (Common Sense Agreement) – agree that our conversation will be based upon on common sense, so that we maintain a level of objectivity.
- God's Existence – give compelling reasons why God exists.
- God's Oneness – give compelling reasons why God is One and not like the creation.
- Link to Revelation and Prophethood – show them that our limited minds can only take us so far as to what God wants from us, our purpose, and the “big” questions in life. We need revelation.
- Revelation – give compelling reasons why the Quran is from God
- Prophethood – give compelling reasons why the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is a man chosen and sent by God. That's it.



DISCUSSION: *How would you deal with the following contentions on God's Existence and Oneness?*

- There is no physical evidence
- Who created God?
- Evolution
- The Problem of Evil
- Jesus is God
- Jesus is the son of God



DISCUSSION: *How would you deal with the following contentions on Revelation and Prophethood?*

- What about Revelation And Prophethood? They may say something like:
- Muhammad ﷺ copied the Quran from different sources including the bible.
- Why doesn't God show Himself or send an angel?
- I don't follow organised religion
- It was inspired by the devil
- science is a matter of interpretation and you're connecting the Quranic verses to natural phenomena is not tenable.