

Fast 2: Principal functions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad

- The following prayer was said some 2500 years before the Holy Prophet appeared:

“And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House: Our Lord, accept from us; surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord, and make us both submissive to You, and (raise) from our offspring, a nation submissive to You, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully); surely You are the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful. Our Lord, **and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall** ^[1]**recite to them Your messages** ^[2]**and teach them the Book** ^[3]**and the Wisdom, and** ^[4]**purify them.** Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise.” — 2:127–129

وَأَذِيفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
 رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾
 رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً
 مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ
 أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٨﴾ رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا
 مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَ
 الْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾

- When that Messenger appeared, God said to the people:
 - “Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom and teaches you what you did not know.” — 2: 151
 - “Certainly Allah conferred a favour on the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His messages and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error.” — 3: 164
- The Holy Prophet Muhammad fulfilled these four *principal functions*:

(Note: In 2:129, “purify them” is mentioned as the last of the four functions, while in the above two verses it is the second in order of mention. We follow here the order as in 2:129.)

- He conveyed or **recited** to his people the literal words and text of the Quran, such that it was permanently preserved.
- He **taught** them its meanings, both by explanation and by his practice and example. “Teaching the book” is different from reciting its text to people.
- He **taught them** “**wisdom**” (*hikmah*), so that they could present their religion, and act upon it, in the light of knowledge, in a sensible way, in a manner which appeals to human reason and the best sentiments of the human mind.

Having *wisdom* is different from just having *knowledge* (in this case, knowledge of the Quran). Wisdom enables us to make correct, sensible judgments. The Quran says:

“He grants wisdom to whom He pleases. And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good. And none are mindful but those who have understanding.” — 2:269

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ
أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

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The Quran calls itself: “A Book, whose verses are characterized by wisdom, then they are made plain, from One Wise, Aware.” — 11:1

كُتِبَ الْحِكْمَةُ آيَاتِهِ ثُمَّ فَصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ
خَبِيرٍ

“This is from the wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you (O Prophet)” — 17:39

ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ

Various prophets are also described as having been given wisdom by God: Abraham (26:83), Lot (21:74), Joseph (12:22), Moses (28:14), David and Solomon (21:79), John the Baptist (19:12), and Jesus (43:63). It is also said of all prophets that God gave them “Book and wisdom” (3:81).

[4] The Holy Prophet Muhammad **purified them** of all kinds of sin, by transforming their behaviour and outlook. The Quran says to followers of the Holy Prophet:

“Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it attractive in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you disbelief and transgression and disobedience” (49:7).

- **He would forever perform these functions:**

- “He it is Who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom — although they were before certainly in manifest error — and others from among them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise.” — 62:2-3

We are told here that the Holy Prophet would not only perform the above-listed four functions for his contemporary followers but also for “others from among them who have not yet joined them”, meaning people in the future. He would perform these functions through those of his followers who would obtain light from him and spread it further among people.