



# ACADEMY OF **SELF** KNOWLEDGE

COURSE  
TWO  
THE PROPHETIC  
WAY OF LIFE

Author: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri  
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## **Book Description**

This volume of work corresponds to the entire Course TWO on the Prophetic revealed path that the Academy of Self Knowledge (ASK) has offered in the past.

We have renamed it to “*The Prophetic Way of Life*” and put together all 12 lessons (known as maps in this eBook) of the course into this single eBook for the convenience of the students who would go through the entire course, doing the exercises and quizzes at their own pace.

The course unveils the Prophetic path, enabling people who have studied the cosmic design to maintain inner reliability and reference points. This experiential journey offers keys to the awakening of the heart and its nourishment by means of its purification. Based on the cosmology/view that the heart is the connecting point between the soul (the eternal), and the self (the ephemeral), the course focuses on transformation through awareness and the practices of the Prophetic path. This way of transformation includes understanding accountability, and performing structural responsibilities while being continually aware of the soul and higher consciousness.

Having studied and gained an appreciation of the blueprint of life, students can now learn how religious practices are transformational tools to enlightened awakening. This course teaches the student how to navigate through the challenges of this world while constantly referring to the limitless zone of absolute perfection that produced and sustains this world. It illustrates to the seeker the fact that no one can stop striving for perfection, and yet no one can attain perfection for any durable time. This is because the One Source that contains all these perfections owns and possesses the entirety of creation, and not the other way around. God's perfect attributes permeate all of existence, which bind, unify and drive creation towards fulfillment. The objective of this course is to enable the seeker to love the One unconditionally, and deal with multiplicity rationally. The maps specifically deal with the following matters:

**Charting the Way – Map No. ONE: *One Creator – Countless Creations***



## Book Description

This map explores how we may achieve our highest potential as created beings by conscious worship of our original Source.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. TWO: *One Truth – Countless Realities***

In this map we learn about how our relationships with each other and our inner cosmology represent changing realities against the backdrop of a singular and unchanging truth.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. THREE: *Patterns in Existence – Allah’s Ways***

This map looks at how perfection underpins everything in existence, whether or not we perceive it as such, and how it is made possible for us to access guidance from Allah.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. FOUR: *The Prophetic Model of Muhammad***

Map Four teaches us that all prophets brought essentially the same divine message and that the Prophet Muhammad’s greatest miracle for all mankind, for all time, is the Qur’an.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. FIVE: *The Qur’anic Prescription for Life***

In this map the role of the Qur’an as the mirror for all creation is discussed; a mirror in which individuals and society as a whole are reflected and which guides both to live according to precepts laid down in it.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. SIX: *Acts of Worship***

In Map Six we are shown the vital link between acts of worship and a heightening in our awareness of the divine.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. SEVEN: *Relationships and Transactions***

The power of correct intention and the importance of our relationship with our original source are discussed in this map.

## Book Description

### **Charting the Way – Map No. EIGHT: *Towards Perfection and Enlightenment***

Map Eight teaches us about the power of the present moment as it is only the moment that contains within it divine perfection and the seeker who grasps this is set on the right course to enlightenment.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. NINE: *Principles and Foundations of Islamic Thought***

This map analyzes the tremendously cohesive influence of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad's exemplary life on disparate communities and nations.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. TEN: *Culture and Civilization of Muslims***

A further analysis of the cultural aspects of Islam and how the authentic prophetic teachings and cultural influences have mingled to positive and ill effect is done in this map.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. ELEVEN: *Individual and Society***

This map looks at how our outer reality reflects our inner and vice versa, and the inseparable connection between individuals and the societies they create. It reiterates the binding force that faith and its rituals provide, which serves to unify the individual and society.

### **Charting the Way – Map No. TWELVE: *Remedies and Prescriptions for the Wayfarer***

This map aims to provide an overview of the hierarchies of spiritual growth. An understanding of these hierarchies is important for anyone who wants to live in an enlightened way while adhering to the ideal code of conduct bequeathed to us by all prophets and especially the Prophet Muhammad.

The following is a complete overview of the course.

## **About Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri**

Acknowledged as a master of self-knowledge and a spiritual philosopher, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's role as a teacher grew naturally out of his own quest for self-fulfillment.

He travelled extensively on a spiritual quest which led to his eventual rediscovery of the pure and original Islamic heritage of his birth, and the discovery of the truth that reconciles the past with the present, the East with the West, the worldly with the spiritual – a link between the ancient wisdom teachings and our present time.

A descendant of five generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has taught students throughout the world for over 30 years. A prolific author of more than thirty books relating to the universal principles of Islam, the Qur'an, and its core purpose of enlightenment, he is a gifted exponent of how the self relates to the soul, humankind's link with the Divine, and how consciousness can be groomed to reflect our higher nature.

The unifying scope of his perspective emphasizes practical, actionable knowledge that leads to self-transformation, and provides a natural bridge between seemingly different Eastern and Western approaches to spirituality, as well as offering a common ground of higher knowledge for various religions, sects and secular outlooks.

## Overview

All of the Prophets indicated the same truth: that there is an Absolute Reality that germinates existence. It is timeless, beyond time and space, and from it has come multi-layers of lights. These lights have interacted with other layers of creational aspects, or other consciousness, resulting in multi-layered creations. These include many heavenly seen and unseen, and many earthly layers. We as human beings have many levels of consciousness. We have physical consciousness, of our hands, of our mind, of our sight, of our senses. Also, we have consciousness of our heart, whether it is clear or full of anger and rancor. The way of Islam gives a mapping whereby we can save ourselves from ourselves; ourselves from others; and others from ourselves. At all times we can use that mapping as a reference point of correct action.

Now the way (*deen*) has also many zones within it. Some aspects are very structured and ritualistic. There is a right time to face a certain direction and disappear into nothingness, which is our prostration (*sajda*). Then at certain times repeatedly throughout our life we abstain from food and drink, and so on. All of our rituals within the *deen* have deep meanings, which bring about spiritual growth and transformation. There are many layers of these meanings, which we become more and more sensitive to as we go along. The revealed books to so many Prophets, culminating in the Qur`an, contain many horizons of insights. There are some specific injunctions of do's and don'ts: be generous; do not hoard; do not fear for your provision. It is *Shaytanic*, from the lower aspects of the self. Do not harbor animosity for others; do not backbite; walk lightly on this earth. There are a lot of high quality prescriptions from the Qur'an.

Then there is another wave in it, which is to do with the history of mankind, individuals as well as societies. Where are they now? What did they do? What did they leave behind? What state are they in now? The Prophetic tradition is that you leave this world according to the state that you are in. You will be resurrected according to the state in which you have died. We all want bliss. We all want the eternal garden because the soul has been designed with the feeling of that state within it. So the question is how? We cannot do two things in this world at the same time. The how therefore becomes easy. Avoid those aspects, which are going to lower our consciousness, and our awareness, and get us imprisoned by the ego. Care more and more, and practice aspects

## Overview

of our life to heighten our awareness, reduce selfishness, and make us ready to leave this world as well as to stay in it. If we have a very clear map, we know where we are going to end up anyway, so we want to project and place ourselves in that position right now.

Our *deen* is a way life, a way of thinking, a way of eating, a way of worshipping, a way of transacting, and a way of relationships. Every aspect has the appropriate courtesy. To begin with, for a child it's a bit difficult because he does not immediately see the benefit that he shouldn't eat while he is walking; he shouldn't drink while he is running, and so on. But as he gets older he finds that these practices are beneficial because he does not get indigestion. All of these virtues, which are a result of practicing the *deen*, are of immediate direct benefit. We are living at a time when society cannot help the family and individual very much because of the smaller households, and all of the other demands of pleasures and frivolous distractions. Therefore, simply giving orders to young people to follow rituals will not work. But if they realize that they can excel in their studies and exams by perfecting their *sajda* (prostration), how to disappear and have no thought in it, they will certainly do their *salat* (prayers) more enjoyably, and more on time. They will not miss it. There are benefits of *salat* at every level. So we need to live our *deen*, and to absorb the benefits of every aspect of the Qur`an and Prophetic teaching. We must be the first beneficiaries, otherwise we will be preaching without partaking ourselves, and that is hypocrisy. That is what so many so-called religious communities suffer from. So the second course introduces us to the *deen*, the *shari`ah*, the way of life: the way of thinking, moving, transacting; what is correct, what is allowed and what is not; what is forbidden completely and what is despicable and to be avoided. It is all for our own sake. Allah does not need it. You and I need it in order to realize the light of Allah in our hearts. The course shows us how to transform vices into virtues, and how every aspect of the *shari`ah* is designed to bring about a shift and elevation in the level of our consciousness and awareness.

# **CHARTING THE WAY – MAP NO. 1:**

## **One Creator – Countless Creations**

This introductory map corresponds to Lesson ONE of ASK Course TWO and explores how we may achieve our highest potential as created beings by conscious worship of our original Source.

## **Charting the Way: Map No. 1 – Contents**

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- Overview
- Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations
  - \* Consciousness
  - \* Returning to Source
  - \* Polarity
  - \* Self-Knowledge
  - \* Inner Cosmology
  - \* The Realms of Essence, Attributes and Action
  - \* Divine Presence
  - \* A World of Opposites
- Foundations – Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations
  - \* Qur’anic Revealed Knowledge – Allah ‘The One Essence’
  - \* Relevant Prophetic Teachings – Allah ‘The One Essence’
- Exercises / Multiple Choice Quiz

## **Learning Objectives**

From this map, you will gain an understanding of:

1. Returning to the One Source (*Allah*) from which multiple realities emanate.
2. Ascending to the highest levels of consciousness and fulfilling our potential.
3. The nature of the Soul (*ruh*) and the spectrum of the Self (*nafs*).
4. What it means to be a conscientious seeker.
5. Complementary opposites and duality.



## **Overview**

Every aspect of manifest existence is based on movement and change and yet what human beings tend to seek is stability and security. Solving this apparent enigma involves discovering the singular truth, the light of which is reflected in the soul and heart of all human beings. The human heart contains the one constant screen upon which ever-changing patterns and images flash and generate countless forms and ideas that originate from the One Source.

## **Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations**

*Higher consciousness is only realizable by withdrawal from lower consciousness.*

### **Consciousness**

Our purpose as aware human beings is to make ourselves conscious of, or to ‘realize’, the One Essence. But we also know that this Essence is impossible to describe, perceive and therefore ‘know’ or comprehend in its totality. We may refer to it as pure consciousness, or God, or Allah, but these remain mere words and not a living and complete conscious realization. Over time, and by practicing deep meditation and reflection, we may begin to understand that there are ways to ‘perceive’ that are beyond the limits of our intellect and reasoning. This kind of perception is aligned with pure consciousness manifesting as infinite levels of conditioned human consciousness. It is beyond words and thoughts and feelings but still manifests in our more accessible consciousness and exerts a subtle but powerful influence over our lives and the lives of those around us.

Allah reveals that He is a hidden treasure and He loves to be known, thus He creates everything known or unknown to us. All admirable attributes emanate from the One Essence. Indeed, the fabric of life is inextricably woven from these attributes.

As a result, every human consciousness is driven to unify with this pure essence and to realize its own ultimate potential by it.

### **Returning to Source**

All movement and change in the world is to do with ascending towards the highest possible consciousness. What we call evolution is also a progression towards the subtlest and the highest. All the multiple varieties of creation have emanated from, are sustained by, and are yearning to be united with the One Essence that permeates all within and beyond time.

## Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations

While the soul dwells in the heart of the human being it remains pure potential energy. The struggle to achieve unity with the One Essence, which is a struggle worthy of the highest description and honor, begins when this potential energy is galvanized and unleashed through conscious, willing and proactive aspiration. It takes a focused and sustained conscientious effort to achieve the quantum leaps in consciousness that characterize the journey towards discovery of, and awakening to, the One. Being proactive in our aspiration is of far greater value than being an unaware, compelled, passive and inert creature.

The divine creator, the One Essence of all creation, is not subject to time or space or prone to the impact of any changes we experience in our earthly realm. He is the cause and the power behind all creation; He is the motivator and the witness of everything and therefore if we are conscious of Him to the extent that He permits us to be, then we embody the means by which He causes, motivates and witnesses in creation. He becomes the eye with which we see, the ears with which we hear and the hand with which we grasp (*Hadith Qudsi*, Sacred Tradition).

Creation follows a certain prescribed path or decree towards its final destiny, which is the One Essence, the origin towards which it was journeying all the time. This is the meaning of “from Allah by Allah to Allah”. Every material thing, animate or inanimate, is subject to natural laws and limitations within time and space. Although humans have emerged from and are returning to the zone beyond, they ideally need to be constantly aware of this final return and hence live responsibly in the here and now. The conscientious seeker lives and acts responsibly with patience and understanding but also experiences the delights of deeper perception and insight that come from beyond the rationality and reason born of conditioned consciousness.

### **Polarity**

Anything experienced in the realm of existence is balanced in a polarity of opposites: health / illness, love / hate, light / darkness. Anything that manifests in the world of consciousness must be perceived in terms of the spectrum of these opposites. Things may be totally dark or slightly or pure light. Human consciousness scans a horizon of experiences perceiving life as very desirable or very undesirable, joyful or miserable, with many variations in between.

## Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations

We are programmed by the One Essence to experience these layers of shifting and conditioned consciousness. But the constant yearning and call from the One Essence is also in our hearts urging us on to our highest potential consciousness. This is what is meant by ‘Allah calls us to Himself’. The inherent drive towards such a higher aspect leads some of us to turn away from the transient and ever-changing world. This turning away is not a renunciation of the world – because the prophetic path insists on a full engagement with life in all its aspects – but is a subtle spiritual avoidance of things that will stop us evolving towards higher consciousness.

Those who respond to the call remember at a profound level the passion for that eternal bliss and cannot settle only for the changing world of good and bad, desirable and undesirable. No one will ever be content in such a world because of its inherently uncertain nature. That is why we are enjoined to be “in this world but not of it”, even though we are in a constant and full engagement with the world. By our very turning ourselves towards that zone of bliss beyond this world we become more self-accountable, constantly watchful and incredibly humble so we do not fall short of our own high aspirations. We chastise ourselves if we do anything that may prevent access to that zone.

**Exercise One**

*“... from Allah, by Allah, to Allah”*

Meditate on this truth for a few minutes. How does it relate to your own life as a seeker?

**Exercise Two**

*“Higher consciousness is only realizable by withdrawal from lower consciousness”*

Reflect on the statement and ways in which you as a seeker can ‘withdraw from lower consciousness’, at the same time living ‘responsibly in the here and now’.

## Self-Knowledge

When we reflect on the highest divine attributes (aspects of which are contained within our soul and heart – referred to as *ruh*) we find sameness and a ‘gathered’ quality within all human beings. This sense of being gathered is the foundation of harmony. But when we analyze the ego-self (also often referred to as the *nafs* or lower self) we become aware of differences, the foundation of most conflicts within ourselves and between ourselves and others. The lack of unity and alignment between the soul and the self *within* the individual is one of the primary reasons for these conflicts.

The soul is always in harmony with itself and others. It is like a ray of light that emanates from a source of light – it is not the source but essentially the same as the source. Or we can say that the soul is like a spark that emanates from a flame – where the spark is not the flame but essentially the same as it. In a similar way, diverse shapes and individuations emerge once embers collect around the spark, just like the human identity or personality. These individual differences are superficial, incidental and accidental while the light within the spark remains vivid as ever and owes itself to its source.

The Prophet Muhammad taught that “*The souls are divine agents. Those who know each other are in harmony, those who do not know are in conflict*”. The meaning of this tradition is that before the *ruh* enters the body it has knowledge of all the other spirits (*arwah*)<sup>1</sup> because they all emanate from the same source<sup>2</sup>. But once it comes into the body it is covered by the *nafs*, implying that it is in fact the *nufus*<sup>3</sup> that are in conflict and not the *arwah*. This is as it should be: life began from a totally gathered state and manifests in dispersion and diversity.

Self-knowledge will enable us to see the unifying source that underlies diverse and apparent opposite manifestations. This is returning to the point made earlier about seeing with a ‘deeper perception’ beyond the limited intellect. To understand our individuality we need to uncover the unifying essence within ourselves, which will enable us to see it (Essence) reflected in all

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<sup>1</sup> Plural of *ruh*

<sup>2</sup> Surah *al-A`raf* 7:172

<sup>3</sup> or *anfus* – plural of *nafs*

creation. Man is a miniature image of the cosmos and his own complex cosmology, briefly outlined below, is designed to allow this unveiling process to take place in a conscious way.

By means of knowledge of the self we can identify the lower tendencies of the self and, through that understand the higher attributes of Allah. This kind of knowledge requires us to try and comprehend a thing by its opposite. By being aware of one's meanness, one can visualize Allah's generosity, for instance. Transcending the *nafs* before death brings about wisdom and illumination. Fear of death is a clear indication that transcendence has not yet been achieved.

### **Inner Cosmology**

Here are some key terms to which we will refer during this course:

**The self** (*nafs*) resembles a hologram that can reflect and reproduce ever-changing states and attributes. Its range covers the lowest qualities to the highest divine attributes. The *nafs* can act in the meanest as well as in the most generous of ways: fearful or courageous, impulsive or patient, silly or wise, agitated or peaceful, ignorant or illuminated.

**The mind** (*`aql*) is the faculty of rationality and reasoning. It is the foundation for civilized society, culture and tradition. The limitations of the mind are also the source of its power as a universal utility and how it makes human inter-relationships possible. Mind is vital to begin with until the illuminated heart supersedes it.

When the heart has been illumined, it penetrates all layers of the lower *nafs* and recognizes it and is vigilant over it. This is what is understood from the prophetic tradition that "*He who knows his Self knows his Lord*". Access to your Lord is through your soul, which dwells in your heart.

**The soul** (*ruh*) is the divine ray which energizes and gives life to the self and its physical body. It is the ultimate and constant reference point for the *nafs*. The actions and experiences of the *nafs* are only possible to understand because of the *ruh*. During sleep dreaming occurs when the *nafs* is distracted or less dominant. Death occurs when both the *nafs* and the *ruh* depart and the body is returned to its earthly origin.

## Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations

**The heart** (*qalb*) and its facets of monitoring, reflecting, witnessing and recording are the link between the *nafs* and the *ruh*. When the heart is clear of defects (hatred, suspicion, lust and so on), then it will reflect to the *nafs* the source of higher guidance – the *ruh* and divine light.

Good intentions and appropriate actions are needed to cleanse the heart, purify it and enable it to reflect the higher truth. Invocation (*dhikr*) and other acts of worship (*sawm*, *salat*, etc.) are also means of purifying the heart and increasing the remembrance of the Divine Being. Access to your Lord is through your soul, which dwells in your heart.



**Exercise Three**

Consider (A) someone you get on really well with and (B) someone you do not get on well with in the light of the following:

Dispersion and separation, lower tendencies of the ego-self, the faculty of reasoning (*mufakkira* – see the eBook “*Sufi Map of the Self*”), a pure heart and the *ruh* as a reference point for the *nafs*.

## **The Realms of Essence, Attributes and Action**

As we noted above, life in our sensory world is based on movement, which means we live with and are influenced by constant change; hence we need to find a reliable and constant zone of reference that will assist us in dealing with and understanding the extent and quality of change. To illustrate this point, let us look at the concept of pain. I experience pain and a fever and that distresses me. I also know that I have experienced worse pain in the past. Within me, then, resides a reference to pain-free wellbeing as well as to a much higher degree of intolerable pain. Hence with adequate reflection on both I may find equilibrium in my current state.

The realm of attributes is subtler than that of the realm of action and manifestation. It is these attributes that provide the impetus for all action and physical existence. Even subtler is the essence of Allah which is hidden in His attributes. Witnessing and understanding the unity of actions and how it manifests comes first. Only then may we begin to comprehend the unity of attributes, all of which meet in the One Essence.

The universe is composed of infinite varieties of diverse and heterogeneous components: solids, liquids, gases, living, inanimate, seen and unseen energies, colors, galaxies, relative time and apparent infinite space. There is One unique power, however, that enables these existential realities to connect, relate and interact with each other: the Divine Essence; Allah, the Glorious, the ultimate unifier and source of all relative powers; the one unique, all pervading-Creator and Sustainer of time and space; the Light behind all lights and shadows.

What we all seek, consciously or otherwise, is the knowledge of this absolute truth. Allah's attributes – the Everlasting, the Merciful, the All Knowing, the All Powerful, the All Hearing, the All Seeing, and so on – are the doors which lead to the divine. These attributes are what govern the universe. Access to this knowledge comes only through self-knowledge, negating the ego-self (another definition of which is the shadow of the light of the soul) whilst upholding the spirit and reading the true meaning and message behind experiences and events.

## **Divine Presence**

## Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations

The true purpose of life is to adore, glorify and worship Allah. Yet how can you be consistent in your commitment, love and submission to Allah unless you experience the Divine presence at all times? How can you be illuminated, awakened and enlightened if you are dominated or influenced by the ego-self? The evolved seeker acts upon what the heart transmits and by doing so is transformed and able to transform. Constant, faithful submission, humility and high expectations of Allah will open up channels of insight and spiritual drive leading to a reliable and steady inner awareness, which becomes the source of true joy.

The seeker believes and hopes; the awakened knows and relies on the eternal truth. The seeker looks for the light of Allah to guide. He benefits and progresses according to the actions of submission, humility, patience, generosity, letting go and so on. The awakened only sees the merits of these attributes as emanating from Allah and as decreed for the awakened to act accordingly.

It is recorded in a prophetic tradition: *“I take refuge in Your forgiveness from Your punishment / purification [unity of actions], and take refuge in Your mercy from your anger [unity of attributes], and I take refuge in You from You [unity of essence]. Oh Lord, do not let me rely upon myself, not even for a blink of an eye”*. This means that we are acknowledging that there is only ‘You’ at the source of all that appears, and within all that there is. ‘You’ are the outer and the inner, the apparent and the hidden.

**Exercise Four**

Make a list of four things which help you on this path. For each one grade at what stage you are on a scale of 1 – 10 (10 being the highest).

E.g. 10 minutes meditation a day (5)

## **A World of Opposites**

It soon becomes clear to the sincere seeker that everything in creation is based on opposites. All physical creation or experience falls into, or is perhaps classified by, combinations of the following: ‘outer’ / ‘inner’, ‘sensory’ / ‘meaning’, ‘earthly’ / ‘heavenly’.

To illustrate this, let us imagine that I am standing before you presenting a discourse. It is an ‘outer’ event. You are looking at me and listening to me. It is also a ‘sensory’ experience for both of us. We are in the material / physical world and this event is therefore ‘earthly’. So we are undergoing an outer, sensory, earthly experience. Yet the purpose of my discourse is to share inner knowledge with you. So the purpose and sharing has an ‘inner meaning’ and this makes it a ‘heavenly’ experience.

The two opposites are balanced. The root of every situation or event lies in its opposite. Ordinary physical or material actions can be given a higher purpose and direction by awareness of the related inner event. For example, eating a meal is an outer, sensory, earthly event.

However, if we eat with the intention to nourish our bodies in order that it may be used effectively by the soul and thus carry us on the journey to greater perception and enlightenment, we will see that the act can be placed in the categories of inner, meaning, and heavenly.

All events and experiences can be categorized according to any of eight combinations of opposites. These may be classified as:

Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations

<b>Combinations of Opposites</b>	<b><i>Example</i></b>
1. Outer – Sensory – Earthly	<i>building one's house</i>
2. Outer – Sensory – Heavenly	<i>building a place of worship</i>
3. Outer – Meaning – Earthly	<i>seeing someone in pain</i>
4. Outer – Meaning – Heavenly	<i>looking at someone praying</i>
5. Inner – Sensory – Earthly	<i>remembering a loved one</i>
6. Inner – Sensory – Heavenly	<i>reflecting upon the stars</i>
7. Inner – Meaning – Earthly	<i>heart overflowing with love for all creation</i>
8. Inner – Meaning – Heavenly	<i>meditating upon God</i>

These and other concepts will be discussed in more detail as we proceed with this course.

**Exercise Five**

How & why would you classify the following in terms of the categories given above?

1. Reading an ASK map
2. Playing a game with children
3. Enjoying a day out with your partner
4. Visiting a holy shrine

## **Foundations – Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations**

- Qur’anic Revealed Knowledge – Allah ‘The One Essence’
- Relevant Prophetic Teachings – Allah ‘The One Essence’



## **Qur’anic Revealed Knowledge – Allah ‘The One Essence’**

Allah says:

*“Say: He is Allah, Absolute Oneness, All, the Everlasting Sustainer of all. He has not given birth and was not born, and no one is comparable to Him.”* (Surah al-Iklas 112:1-4)

Allah is the ultimate Divine Light, which is always present, representing the Absolute Essence from which all attributes, names and manifestations emanate. Allah’s dominion encompasses whatever is known or unknown, and cannot be comprehended/encompassed or limited by creation’s thoughts, concepts, indications or attempts. All creation strives towards Him and His qualities – the All-Merciful, All-Generous, All-Powerful, Ever-living, Beautiful One, the Perfect Light of Lights.

Allah’s essence and original Light radiate and overflow into all realms of creation. Anything that exists, appears, or lives, has within it an aspect of this light, and thus it is in Allah’s kingdom. We as descendants of Adam’s tribe have within our innate nature (*fitrah*) a yearning and love for all the primal streams and shafts of lights, which have the beautiful and desirable qualities of Allah. These Attributes are referred to in the Qur’an and in the Prophetic teachings as the Most Beautiful or Glorious Names. Most of these Attributes are universally acknowledged by all faiths, communities and cultures as virtues or high qualities<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, sages, saints and great leaders often show a hint of some of these traits and qualities.

Allah says:

*“He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward; and He is the Knower of all things. It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days; then He established Himself upon the Throne. He knows all that enters the earth and all that emerges from it, and all that descends from the sky and all that ascends up into it. He is with you wherever you may be, and Allah sees all.”* (Surah al-Hadid 57:3-4)

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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to Map 8, *“The Sufi Map of the Self”*, under section: *“Divine Qualities & Attributes that the self yearns for”*

## Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations

*“Allah’s are the most beautiful names, so invoke Him by them. Leave those who desecrate His names. They will be repaid for what they do.” (Surah al-A`raf 7:180)*

The task for mankind is to relate and connect to the appropriate quality or Name and be engulfed and absorbed by its glorious quality to realize its immediate present reality. Each and every quality meets all of the other attributes in the all-encompassing One. This great mystery can never be resolved. It will dissolve and yield its truth when we ourselves submit and die into its truth. It is the death of the individual identity – the shedding of the accretions that a human being collects through life – that will reveal His supreme presence.

Allah’s eternal presence and His glorious attributes have been there from before creation and will continue after the end of all creation. Our responsibility is to yield and submit to His signs through our needs, shortcomings and other dependencies. He has created us such that we submit, read the signs and follow with faith and confidence in His grace. All of His names, signs, attributes and qualities are signposts along His path. We are led by Him unto Him.

**Relevant Prophetic Teachings – Allah ‘The One Essence’**

1. Truly Allah resembles no ‘thing’ and no ‘thing’ resembles Him; everything which enters one’s imagination concerning Him is a misinterpretation.
2. “Praise belongs to Allah, Who cannot be perceived by touch or any investigation by means of the physical faculties. He cannot be understood by the five senses, and imagination cannot grasp Him. Anything sensed, felt or touched by the hand is created (and therefore not the Creator). Allah is Sublime, the Powerful; whatever is desired by Him comes into existence.”

## **Charting the Way – Map No. 1: Exercises to Deepen Learning**

*(One Creator – Countless Creations)*

**Title:**

*What is the purpose of human existence? How might the seeker move towards fulfilling this purpose?*

**Word Length:**

*Between 500 and 1000 words.*

**Criteria:**

*You may find the following criteria useful in addressing the question:*

1. A description of moving from lower to higher consciousness.
2. The nature of the soul and the self.
3. Dealing with duality.
4. Some references to your own experience.

## **Charting the Way – Map No. 1: Multiple Choice Quiz**

*(One Creator – Countless Creations)*

*The purpose of this quiz is to test your own understanding of this map. Choose the **BEST** answer A, B, C, or D:*

### **Questions:**

**Q 1: Human beings will not reach their highest potential consciousness, unless they**

- A. Evolve towards a higher form
- B. Reject undesirable experiences
- C. Turn away from the transient ever-changing world
- D. Retire completely from the outside world

**Q 2: The main purpose of self-knowledge is**

- A. To repent of the lowest qualities of the self
- B. To understand the true source of all attributes
- C. To avoid committing sins
- D. To appreciate one's own individuality

**Q 3: The seeker becomes awakened when he/she**

- A. Sees only Allah's hand in everything
- B. Follows the correct path of the believer
- C. Is always humble
- D. Forgets about the *nafs*

**Q 4: Awareness of opposites is important because**

- A. We can live a balanced life

Charting the Way – Map No. 1: One Creator – Countless Creations

- B. We can combine different types of opposites
- C. We can nourish our minds and bodies
- D. We can develop insights into inner meanings of events and experiences

**Answers:**

- 1: C.
- 2: B.
- 3: A.
- 4: D.

## **CHARTING THE WAY – MAP NO. 2: One Truth – Countless Realities**

This map corresponds to Lesson TWO of ASK Course TWO. In this map we learn about how our relationships with each other and our inner cosmology represent changing realities against the backdrop of a singular and unchanging truth.

## **Charting the Way: Map No. 2 – Contents**

- Learning Objectives
- Overview
- Charting the Way – Map No. 2: One Truth – Countless Realities
  - \* Seekers of Unity
  - \* The Right Code
  - \* Simple Living
  - \* Material World
  - \* Full Circle
- Reflection 1
- Reflection 2
- Reflection 3
- Foundations – Charting the Way – Map No. 2: One Creator – Countless Realities
  - \* Qur’anic Revealed Knowledge – Creation
  - \* Relevant Prophetic Teachings – Creation
- Exercises / Multiple Choice Quiz



## **Learning Objectives**

From this map, you will gain an understanding of:

1. Divine Truth is absolute and is not subject to any changes or confined by time and space, nor can it be discussed, defined, or contained.
2. All that human beings perceive as ‘reality’ is relative and interactive and subject to change.
3. Conscientious seekers always refer to the Truth whilst acknowledging and engaging with changing realities.
4. Relationships between human beings need to be underpinned by a sound connection with the ever-present Creator, otherwise most human associations remain unfulfilled.
5. The perfect or universal man is he who does the right thing in the right way at the right time.

## **Overview**

Absolute Truth is a quality of God and whatever is in the universe reflects to varying degrees the divine decrees, qualities, and timelessness that is divine but it does so in a relative way. We can conclude from this that Truth is eternal and every other reality reflects only an aspect of it.

Whatever occurs within the realms of time and space appears to be real for a period. There is no end to these ‘realities’. The more durable an occurrence, the more it appears to be ‘true’. Therefore, even the relative ‘truth’ we encounter here relates to sustainability and timelessness and always reminds us of the Absolute Truth...

## **Charting the Way – Map No. 2: One Truth – Countless Realities**

The Absolute Truth is One, never changing, ever-present, beyond time and space and yet it is the cause of everything that is in time and space. There are numerous ‘realities’ within time and space. These realities change all the time within their varying life spans, but each reflects or encompasses within it an element of Truth. For example, it is real that one feels pain, yet it is also real that one loves peace. The pain in the foot is a ‘reality’ only for an hour, but love for peace is a reality forever. Both are real and complement each other and both reflect an aspect of the Absolute Truth.

### **Seekers of Unity**

The unity underlying existence has been revealed through many different messengers. Many seekers of unity have assigned different names to their discoveries over time but found the same Truth underpinning their discovery. Sometimes it appears as a religion or a culture. Conscientious seekers always refer to the Truth whilst acknowledging and engaging with changing realities. One exercises reason and rationality whilst being aware of the original Light and essence (or soul), which is beyond, as well as within, rationality. However, something more practicable is needed for us to navigate our way through the world and our life-transactions.

### **The Right Code**

On an earthly level of existence, the entire rationale of ethics and morality has always been to discern the nature of cause and effect and that of the relative world. Equipped with this understanding and guidance we are able to see more clearly the subtle and veiled Cause at its nucleus. If respect for this world and worldly morality does not lead to respect and courtesy towards the Creator then we are left with a barren and unfulfilling code with which to live by.

From the very earliest of times, awakened and enlightened people, including the first prophets, had a clear priority with regards to ethics, morality and conduct, and in their time they placed greater emphasis on understanding Absolute Truth in its abstract form rather than on learning about existential realities; about how the world works.

The later, or Abrahamic prophets, culminating in the Prophet Muhammad, presented to their people a comprehensive view and understanding of the ever-present, constant Truth and urged them ceaselessly to interact with this reality in the correct way. Their aim in this was to raise the people under their guidance to their highest potential—the perfect representatives of divine Mercy and Truth for the perfect or universal man is he who does the right thing in the right way at the right time. For there is no constant act of perfection in the changing world of time and space, there is only the appropriate action at a specific time and place.

### **Simple Living**

Those who inherited and correctly applied these teachings from the early messengers and prophets understood the connection between energy and form, or the abstract and concrete, and the right way to interact with each. This was because life was very simple and uncomplicated then. There was a clear understanding of the right conduct towards one's fellow man and there was the correct way to respond to natural phenomena in order to live in harmony with nature. In that simple way of living, daily life was intimately influenced by natural phenomena such as the seasons and weather cycles. Thus, it was easy for people to relate to both the physical and the unseen: these aspects or subtleties were substantially interwoven into the daily fabric of their lives.

### **Material World**

As human beings became more urban and civilized and lived within far more rigidly organized structures, most of their attention began to focus on cause and effect in the realm of physical duality, which resulted in a less sensitive awareness of the subtle cause of creation.

This dislocation from unity and oneness is particularly well-illustrated in the way modern medicine is structured. In contemporary society, for example, a sick person to whom a complex combination of medication has been prescribed may suffer unpleasant side effects and the illness may become more severe. The subtle cause of the illness, however, may have been an emotional need or crisis all along, like a lack of love and acknowledgement, or the need for a more fulfilling life. With our current over-emphasis on the senses and physicality, we tend to become

de-sensitized to the subtler cause. We are now once again at a point in time when there is a move towards a holistic and subtle approach to healing once more. As a result, a new application of the moral codes discussed earlier needs to be put in place.

### **Full Circle**

Every human being at all times is on the path of discovering the Absolute Truth. We all yearn for the perfections that are the divine attributes. These attributes are the manifestations of the Absolute Truth in our world. We love wealth; in truth it is Allah who has boundless wealth. We love power; in truth it is Allah who is the all-powerful. We love knowledge; in truth it is Allah who knows all. We love life to continue; in truth Allah has no beginning and no end. And the soul, which contains all of the divine perfections and glorious attributes, lives on forever.

Indeed each human being is a soul that knows the Truth all the time but must filter it through the individual self and experience the world through the lens of this self, however dark or shattered it may be. Whatever you observe or experience is a reality and the longer it lasts, the closer it is to Truth. To illustrate the point, eternal peace can never be attained in this world. Yet, the longer I feel peace inwardly the closer I am to Truth.

As stated earlier, the Absolute Truth manifests through all of the divine attributes, which we adore. Appropriate action is that action which brings about balance, equilibrium, and stability. Any action that moves even slightly towards that state is appropriate in the context.

**Exercise One – Conscientious Seekers**

*“Conscientious seekers always refer to the Truth whilst acknowledging and dealing with the changing realities.”*

Reflect on an experience where you were able to ‘refer to the Truth’ and another one where you failed to do so. How did this alter your perception and the way you dealt with the situation?

**Exercise Two – Absolute Truth and Temporary Reality**

As you live a day in your life, consider how your experiences of temporary reality relate to absolute Truth”

e.g. Someone’s behavior annoyed you – temporary reality which could reflect the soul’s search for Absolute justice and courtesy.

## Reflection 1



*Higher consciousness is only realizable by withdrawal from lower consciousness.*

***"The Truth is One, never changing, ever present, beyond time and space, and yet it is the cause of everything that is in time and space. There are numerous realities, all within time and space. These realities change constantly, within their varying life spans, but each reflects an aspect of truth."***

Truth is absolute and is not subject to any changes, or the vagaries of time and space, nor is it discussable, definable, or containable. The Prophet taught that we should not discuss Allah, for we will go astray. But we should ponder and reflect on His attributes, qualities and the perfections of Allah.

All realities are glimpses of this Truth and the more durable they are, the closer they are to Truth. It is real that I am hungry, but that reality will change after eating. It is real that I seek happiness, that reality is everlasting. That reality is more subtle and the quest for happiness lasts longer and its ultimate fulfillment is everlasting, therefore it is closer to truth. But actually the quest for happiness and hunger are reflections of the same truth only on different levels of density/subtlety.



## Charting the Way – Map No. 2: One Truth – Countless Realities

All realities are relative and interactive, and relate to or repel each other. The paradox or enigma of human beings is that we contain within us the Eternal Truth, which is the soul, and at the same time experience ever- changing realities. What is referred to as God, or Allah, is the source and originator of all the souls that are at varying levels of realizing the original divine Creator.

Every soul totally reflects and is loyal to its Lord. The Absolute Truth contains all the perfections that we yearn for in this world, such as boundless generosity, power, knowledge and wisdom, and the ability to create or destroy. Allah's qualities embrace all these attributes which are known to the soul.

The self admires these and moves in small degrees towards them, or occasionally against them. When it moves towards them it is called 'obedience', when it moves against them it is called 'disobedience'. The human self has been given this limited license to look up to the soul and its qualities, or turn towards its shadow.

The Creator's generosity is absolute, His power absolute, His knowledge absolute, and the soul of Adam contains all of these patterns. Since the individuality or the personality of Adam has arisen, the only way to know absolute generosity has been to experience relative generosity or meanness. Thus, to know any of these attributes, which are boundless and perfect and absolute, we need to taste an aspect of these or their opposites. We live in the zone of the relative which is governed by the Absolute, and the stamp of the Absolute is evident in every instant, everywhere.

Each human being is a soul, modified by the self, and which reflects the Absolute, in order to experience the relative. All relationships are relative and changing, for the word 'relationship' has its roots in the word 'ratio'.

## Reflection 2



*Higher consciousness is only realizable by withdrawal from lower consciousness.*

***"Awakened and enlightened people from earlier times, including the earlier prophets, had a clear priority with regard to ethics, morality and conduct, and the emphasis was much more on truth than on existential realities. The Prophet taught that the purpose of all ethics and morality has always been to help the self to evolve in consciousness towards its original essence - so we are prepared to see more clearly the subtle and veiled cause behind all existence."***

Enlightenment or awakening means access to the truth within. As we are occupied and involved with ever changing worldly experiences, we need to refer to the zone of stability and constancy within our soul to make the right decision and choose the best direction. The more the seeker manages to transcend specific consciousness and awareness and refers back to pure consciousness and divine awareness, the more they are inwardly calm, stable and content. This is the ultimate objective in this life, which has been lived fully by all the prophets, messengers, sages and other enlightened teachers.

All matters of ethics, morality, obedience, and correct actions are to do with prolonging the experience of perfection as the manifestations of divine qualities. We desire to be well, which is to a great extent

dependent on our relationship with food and care for body/mind. Allah is the source of all wellness. Adhering to moral values or religious boundaries are attempts to increase the channels between the self and the soul, which flow through the heart, and thereby increase the possibility of attaining wellness in a holistic sense. The soul resides in the 'heart' and the heart is the seat of the higher intellect - *mutafakkira* - which is linked to insights and inspiration and a genuine reflection of the Truth. If you want to have constant access to the One Absolute and enjoy wellness and perfection, then you yourself must be constant and steady in the performance of correct and appropriate actions.

You therefore cannot cover yourself with lies or hypocrisy. The human desires to prolong the experience of perfection and this dynamic can only be performed adequately if whatever we do is appropriate at that instant.

The definition of appropriateness is to do the right thing in the right way at the right time. But what is right?

Perfection in that instant is right. If you are to be put in that same situation again, you will do the same thing. You will act generously, for example, towards someone you feel is less fortunate than you, irrespective of other people's views or opinions. It is the reference to Truth or to Absolute perfection.

Often the most appropriate action is not necessarily always the rational or logical but may seem irrational. For example, if someone has suffered a financial loss, worldly 'logic' dictates that the person stop giving to others or stop being charitable. But in the context of transactions based on the desire for durable and holistic wellbeing, the opposite would apply: to be more generous and

charitable. In this way the person is accurately reflecting and acting upon divine Absolute Generosity.

A generous act is very specific and is appropriate to a particular moment. The same act may be mean or inappropriate at another moment. Presenting your mother with a box of chocolates that you know she will distribute or enjoy, is a kind act, but to give that box knowingly to an individual who has diabetes would be inappropriate and insensitive. To cut a finger is criminal, normally, but to amputate a finger destroyed by gangrene is divine mercy. It is appropriate.

No intelligent human can ever stop working towards perfection at all times. Nor will you ever be able to attain it for any length of time. Like everything else, here is relative 'perfection' and there is Absolute Perfection. Whatever relative perfection we attain will always be subject to an end, decay and entropy. As soon as you get it, the context changes for the realm of absolute perfection contains and controls all, and this divine messenger, the soul, beams its lights from your heart, perpetually. We tend to miss the light and its message. Success means to be controlled by Him, consciously.

**Exercise Three – Doing the Right Thing at the Right Time (appropriateness)**

Reflect on two decisions/actions you have taken.

1. What factors influenced you?
2. What was the outcome?
3. Do you believe you took the right/wrong action/decision and why?
4. Are there times when there does not seem to be any correct action?

### Reflection 3



*Higher consciousness is only realizable by withdrawal from lower consciousness.*

*The perfect or universal man is he who does the right thing in the right way at the right time. For there is no constant act of perfection in the changing world of time and space, there is only the appropriate action at a specific time and place. Every human being at all times is on the path of discovering the truth.*

The origin of man is the command of Allah - 'Be!' The soul is a subtle force, the origin of which is in another realm and cannot be directly experienced or intellectually understood. The presence of such a force is indicated by what is the experienced reality.

A divine breeze causes the coagulation of the first cells, which then derive nourishment from the earth of the womb and move through the various stages of growth into a discernible form. Man was formed in such a way to enable him to reflect upon his true origin.

In Arabic the root word of *ruh* (soul) is the same as that of *rih* (wind, breeze) and *rasah* (comfort, ease). The search for comfort and ease is ingrained in man's nature. The subtle force that results in the creation of man is divine, sublime and indiscernible by our

limited intellect. The power of the intellect is derived from the *ruh* so how can it directly comprehend the nature of its originator?

The nature of man as described in the divinely revealed book is to be a collector, a gatherer, who wants increase and goodness, wants to avoid badness and filter out anything that might cause disharmony. That disharmony might simply be in the mind or in desires, without having a physical reality to them. While desires can remain just desires they can, like the desire to steal, result in a physical reality. Nevertheless, every human being wants equilibrium, peace and wellness.

The purpose of man's existence is very clear as it is recorded in the Qur'an: "*And I have not created the jinn and man except that they should worship Me*" (Surah *al-Dhariyat* 51:56). The real purpose of creation is to know the true meaning of worship; and the word in Arabic implies complete harmony, the absence of resistance or friction. The verbal root of this word in one form is *abbada*, to make smooth. Through worship, life becomes smooth and, therefore, will be completely connected, unified and gathered. The journey becomes only an experience rather than an end in itself; it becomes a means to an end, when it leads to the timeless zone.

## **Foundations – Charting the Way – Map No. 2: One Creator – Countless Realities**

- Qur’anic Revealed Knowledge – Allah ‘The One Essence’ – Creation
- Relevant Prophetic Teachings – Allah ‘The One Essence’ – Creation



## **Qur’anic Revealed Knowledge – Allah ‘The One Essence’ – Creation**

Creation is rooted in the mysterious. It includes the worlds of the spirits, the angels, the jinn, and myriad aspects of the spiritual and material realms. Allah describes those of us who accept this as true as *“the ones who believe in the unseen”* (Surah *al-Baqarah* 2:3). While children live in their own little carefree world, they need to be told to groom themselves, to wash their hands and tidy their room in order to assume the responsibilities of adulthood. In much the same way, we too have to be constantly reminded of the vast, unfathomable, unseen worlds that are far greater than our seen world, in order to mature into perfection the Creator has given us the potential for.

From the unseen world of *haqiqa*, or Reality, Allah reminds us: *“I was a Hidden Treasure and I love to be known, so I created.”* The basis of creation is love. Its purpose is to know the foundation and essence of life, which is why we all love to know with absolute certitude. The mind will drive us on until we come to be sure. We are programmed to know.

Everything hinges on *tawhid*, ‘divine unity’. What we see as creation is a unified field that rests upon an unstructured, invisible foundation not subject to time and space as we know it. The soul of the human being emerges in the timeless zone, lives through the physical world (the inter-space), and moves back into the timeless zone towards the Absolute. We realize that we are in the inter-space between what seems tangible and what is beyond. All systems of knowledge, all the true prophets and teachers, and all true religions acknowledge this; one aspect of us relates to existential realities on earth, which are to do with cause and effect, while another keeps us attuned to our origin before time.

Allah says:

*“Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day, and the ships which run upon the sea and that which is of use to men, and the water which Allah sends down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and scattering about in it creatures of every kind, and the changing of the winds, and the clouds subservient between heaven and earth, in all of these are signs (of Allah’s sovereignty) for people who understand.”*  
(Surah *al-Baqarah* 2:164)

*“And among His signs is that He created mates from yourselves, that you may find tranquility in them. And He has placed between you love and compassion. Surely in that are signs for people who reflect. And of His signs are the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors. Surely, there are signs in that for those who have knowledge.” (Surah al-Rum 30:21-22)*

*“The seven heavens and the earth and those in them praise Him, and there is nothing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification. Truly, He is Forbearing, Forgiving.” (Surah Bani Isra’il 17:44)*

*“Your creation and your raising (from the dead) are only as (the creation and the raising of) a single soul. Indeed, Allah is Hearer and Seer.” (Surah Luqman 31:28)*

*“The All – Merciful (Who) taught the Qur’an He created man, and He taught him (clear) expression. The sun and the moon move with precision. The herbs and the trees bow down in prostration. And the sky He uplifted and He established the balanced universal laws, so that you would not exceed this balance. So establish the balance with equity and do not fall short in the measure.*

*The earth He has laid out for all creatures, therein are fruit and palms having sheathed clusters, husked grain and fragrant herbs. Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny? He created man of clay like earthenware, and He created Jinn from a flame of smokeless fire.*

*Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny? Lord of the two Easts, and of the two Wests, then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny? He has made the two seas flow; their sides meet but between them is a barrier which they cannot exceed.” (Surah al-Rahman 55:1-20)*

**Relevant Prophetic Teachings – Allah ‘The One Essence’ – Creation**

1. “Reflect upon the bounties of Allah, not upon the essence of Allah, for you will never be able to measure the extent of His power.”
  
2. “Allah does not allow anything to exist without a reason: thus He made a reason for everything and He made an explanation for every reason; He gave knowledge for every explanation and He made a door for every knowledge. Those who know this know it; those who are ignorant of it are ignorant of it...”
  
3. “Thus in creation is Truth itself, if you possess sight, and in the truth is creation itself, if you possess intellect. If you possess both sight and intellect, then you see nothing therein but one thing, albeit in different forms.”

## **Charting the Way – Map No. 2: Exercises to Deepen Learning**

*(One Truth – Countless Realities)*

**Title:**

*Discuss the relationship between Absolute Truth and multiple realities in creation.*

**Word Length:**

*Between 500 and 1000 words.*

**Criteria:**

*You may find the following criteria useful in addressing the question:*

1. Definitions of ‘Absolute Truth’ and ‘multiple realities’.
2. The role of Divine Attributes, appropriate action and human relationships. Give an example for each.
3. An explanation of how an enlightened being might deal with changing realities.

## **Charting the Way – Map No. 2: Multiple Choice Quiz**

*(One Truth – Countless Realities)*

*The purpose of this quiz is to test your own understanding of this map.*

*Choose the **BEST** answer A, B, C, or D:*

### **Questions:**

**Q 1: Seeking happiness is described as ‘closer to the truth’ than being hungry because**

- A. Hunger can be satisfied but we can never be happy
- B. Seeking happiness reflects our desire for the everlasting perfection of Allah
- C. You can be happy even when you are hungry
- D. A true believer is always happy

**Q 2: We need to experience the relative**

- A. To submit to Allah’s will
- B. Because we have to be tried and tested
- C. In order to know the absolute
- D. Because we are physical beings

**Q 3: Acting appropriately means**

- A. Adhering to *Shari`ah*
- B. Striving to act in line with the Divine qualities at all times
- C. Avoiding excess
- D. Living a moral life

**Q 4: Human beings are called a ‘paradox’ or ‘enigma’ because**

- A. Their creation is a mystery

- B. They are both animal and human
- C. They are capable of good and evil
- D. They encompass both earthly and heavenly aspects

**Answers:**

- 1: B.
- 2: C.
- 3: B.
- 4: D.

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*Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri*

Ageless and universal wisdom set against the backdrop of a changing world: application of this knowledge to one's own life is most appropriate.

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**Keys to the Qur'an: Volume 4: Commentary on Surahs Al-`Ankabut, Al-Rahman, Al-Waqi`ah and Al-Mulk**

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*Edited By: Munawar A. Anees*

*Foreword By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri*

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