

Islam's Teachings and How They Solve Past and Current Problems

توجيهات وتعاليم
إسلامية كانت سبباً
في الرقي والتقدم والتخضر

Written by

Muhammad Al-Sayed Muhammad

محمد السيد محمد

الألوكة
www.alukah.net

Islam's Teachings and How They Solve Past and Current Problems

{Verily, Allah enjoins justice and excellence, and giving (help) to kith and kin; and forbids all evil deeds, forbidden acts and oppression. He admonishes you, that you may take heed,} [Surat-An-Nahl: 90].

Islamic teachings were a cause for progress, advancement and civilization.

Written by: Muhammad Al-Sayed Muhammad

Translated by: Ummrahmah2000@yahoo.com

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Concept of Islam	4
Islam's Message	6
Islam and the Light of Belief	7
Islam and Disciplining and Purifying the Soul	26
Islam and Honoring and Preserving Human Life	27
Islam, Peace and the Call for Unity Among Nations and Peoples	28
Islam and Honoring Women	29
Islam's Emphasis on Childrearing and the Encouragement to Show Kindness and Compassion Towards Children	31
Islam's Concern for the Youth	32
Islam Calls for Kindness and Compassion Towards All of Creation (Animals, Birds, Trees, Plants).	33
Islam and Its Call to Knowledge	35
Islam and the Nation of "Read!"	38
Islam and Other Religions	39
Islam and Friendly Interactions with non-Muslims	40
Brotherhood in Islam	41
Islam and Its Magnanimity During Times of War	42
Islam and Good Treatment of War Captives	43
Islam, Guiding Rituals, Noble Character, Wise Interactions and Sound Laws ...	44
Islam and Its Perspective on the Trials, Tribulations and the Natural Disasters That Mankind Encounter, and How to Deal with Them	47
The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and Educating His Companions, may Allah be pleased with all of them, Upon the Teachings of Islam , Bright Illustrations of the Life of Prophet Muhammad and the Effects of Adherence to the Teachings of Islam	49
Islam's Teachings Are a Cause for Development, Advancement and Progress ...	57
Islam and Its Manner of Solving Major Problems (Past and Current)	70
What comes after progress, development and civilization? Or, to be more precise, what are the progressing nations lacking, and what are they in need of after all of this in order to crown their progress, thereby solving their current problems?	85
Why choose Islam as a religion?	87
The Results of Choosing Islam in the Hereafter	90
How to Enter Islam	93
Advice for the New Muslim or Muslimah	94

Introduction

All praise is for Allah, Lord of the worlds, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Former of darkness and light. I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, alone without partner; and I testify that Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, is His slave and messenger. O Allah, send prayers, peace and blessings upon Muhammad the prophet – the seal of the prophets and messengers. And O Allah, send prayers, peace and blessings upon his wives, his pure and distinguished household, his honorable companions, and whoever follows his guidance, sunnah and footsteps until the Day of Judgment.

Indeed, Allah, Blessed and Exalted, sent the seal of His prophets and messengers – Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him – with Islam as a religion that comprises: pure beliefs, guiding rituals, upright legislations, lofty teachings, rational directives; that invites to honorable manners and wise relations, commands every good and forbids every evil, and invites to knowledge, learning and human advancement in every aspect of life.

The early Muslims worked earnestly in executing Islam's teachings, seeking to please Allah, Glorified and Exalted, and it was a cause for their progress, advancement and civilization, as well as the spread of Islam's message (nearly 1400 years ago) to all the corners of the earth (Asia, Africa, Europe) and subsequent entering of Islam by people in drives, in the course of only a few years. And indeed the Muslim scholars at that time – and even up until our modern era – had lofty achievements and luminous inventions and discoveries in different scientific fields, all acknowledged by specialists in those sciences.

-What we wish to shed light upon in this concise treatise, which is revealed in its title "Islam's Teachings and How They Solve Past and Current Problems," is what these two questions clarify in the following manner:

- 1- How did the principles that are in agreement with Islam's lofty teachings and directives lead to the advancement – and certainly the progress and civilization – of the many nations that were working to achieve advancement? This will be answered by mentioning examples of those teachings and directives.
- 2- What comes after advancement and progression? Or, to be more precise: What is lacking in those nations that work to achieve advancement, and what are they in need of in order to be crowned with this advancement and by which they could resolve their current problems?

I ask Allah, Blessed and Exalted, to except our righteous deeds from us and multiply them for us; to open the hearts of His slaves to our cause and make it the reason for the guidance of His creation to Him. Certainly He, Glorified and Exalted, is the Helper towards that and Able to do it.

The Concept of Islam

Islam means: complete submission and surrender (of the mind, heart, soul and body) to Allah, Glorified and Exalted, and obedience to His commands. Let us ask: Should not a created slave, who was created from nothing and then fashioned in the best shape and form by Allah, Blessed and Exalted, recognize his Creator and admit his favors and blessings, and be submissive, surrendering and obedient Him?!!

The mental submission of a slave: He believes in the presence of a deity who created him, which is Allah, Blessed and Exalted; he also believes in His oneness, His magnificent abilities and in the oneness of His divinity; he does not ascribe partners to Him, nor does he believe anything about his Creator except that which befits His majesty – he believes about Him only that which is majestic and lofty, without the slightest disparagement, flaw or defect.

Mankind will find himself naturally inclined to endeavor – with his heart and mind – towards all that which is superior, exalted and lofty regarding his Creator, in terms of perfect, magnificent and lofty traits, without the slightest shortcoming or defect. He will imagine those perfect and magnificent traits with the highest conception possible for his heart and intellect to accept, especially when the signs that indicate His magnificent ability, marvelous creation, and beautiful workmanship (in the creation of mankind, the heavens and earth, the mountains, oceans, rivers, animals and plants) are more than can be enumerated. And this is what is accepted and agreeable with an uncorrupted nature, purified soul and sound intellect.

An example of that: Suppose there is a person of rank and authority, who is commended for his handsome form and beautiful traits...our intellect and imagination would lead us to conceive this person in the most esteemed status possible.

Likewise, suppose there is a structure characterized by its loftiness, beauty and beautiful foundation...our intellect and imagination would lead us to conceive this structure in the best regard possibly imagined.

Therefore, if what we alluded to regarding the best conception pertains to a slave that is created or object that is brought into existence, what then do we think of God the Creator, the Originator?!

The spiritual submission of a slave: By loving, exalting, revering and appreciating his Creator, Glorified and Exalted.

The physical submission of a slave: By obeying the commands of his Creator and avoiding His prohibitions.

This slave's submission is done out of love for his Creator, Lofty and Exalted, yearning for His pleasure and hoping to attain His Paradise and the magnificent, everlasting pleasures therein; he is also fearful of His wrath, and hopeful of salvation from His hell-fire and the painful and severe punishment therein. Hence, the worldly,

temporal life that consists of good times (that which brings happiness to a person) and bad times (that which brings loss to a person) is merely the testing ground for another ever-lasting life (for a life in Paradise and the eternal delights therein, or a life in hell-fire and the painful punishment therein).

Note: Allah, Blessed and Exalted, accepts every one of His slaves, is happy with them and forgives their sins and shortcomings if they turn to Him in repentance, believe in Him, acknowledge His oneness (the oneness of His divinity), obey Him and do not ascribe any partners to Him.

Also, Islam means: peace, security and tranquility. The word "Islam" (submission) is derived from the root word from which the word "Salam" (peace) is derived as well, which means security, safety and tranquility.

Islam is the religion of peace that extends to everyone, and under whose shade everyone takes comfort in peace, security and safety, void of injustice, oppression and tyranny.

In Islam, a person enjoys inner-peace – which is the true peace – in his beliefs about Allah, Glorified and Exalted, become purified, he is secure in his good thoughts about Him, and his soul becomes tranquil, his heart at rest, his limbs upright in the light of the divine directives and teachings that Islam brought. Allah, Exalted, says: {Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism), and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest,} [Surat-ur-Ra'd: 28].

Islam's Message

Islam brought a message that the untainted nature, purified souls, and sound intellects will accept and agree with. In essence, its message:

- Invites to pure set of beliefs void of even the slightest flaw or blemish that might confuse the mind and be impossible to comprehend and accept; a pure set of beliefs that an intelligent person accepts without compulsion or coercion to believe any concept that he is unable to accept.
- Invites to guiding rituals through which the human being is uplifted and exalted.
- Invites to upright laws, wise interactions and lofty teachings, by which human life becomes rectified.
- Invites to knowledge, learning and everything by which humanity progresses in all the spheres of life.
- Invites to peace and the ways to achieve it and adopt it, fulfilling covenants and agreements, and avoiding extremism and terrorism.
- Invites to every kind of goodness and any and all paths that lead to righteousness, and forbids every kind of evil and any and all paths that lead to it.
- Invites to fairness, excellence, and maintaining the ties of kinship, and forbids oppression, injustice, monstrosities and abominations.

Allah, Exalted, says: {Verily, Allah enjoins justice and excellence, and giving (help) to kith and kin; and forbids all evil deeds, forbidden acts and oppression. He admonishes you, that you may take heed,} [Surat-An-Nahl: 90].

Islam and the Light of Belief

Islam brought a pure creed that enlightens the mind and guides to a lucid knowledge of The Creator, a knowledge that is befitting to His Loftiness and Magnificence. Indeed, Islam calls for:

- Belief in Allah, Glorified and Exalted, the Creator and Originator; belief in His most beautiful attributes, the oneness of His divinity, without associating anything with Him as a partner. Every newborn is born upon the innate belief in its Creator who originated him, and the oneness of His divinity. The proof of that is if a newborn is brought and left until it becomes conscious and mature without any external effects on his beliefs, then we will find:
 - 1- That his innate nature that Allah, Exalted, created in him inclines him towards belief in his Creator who originated him. He will also be inclined to belief in the existence of just one God, a Strong and Magnificent God that is capable of creating him and creating the entire creation. We find him (this person who has become conscious and mature) in his times of emergency and need, he calls out saying: 'Oh my god! Oh my lord! Oh my creator! (which indicates one, not two or more) Guide me! Facilitate my affair for me! Take care of my needs! Do not forsake me!' We will not find him saying 'Oh my gods' or 'Oh my lords' or 'Oh my creators' (an indication of many), which proves that the Creator and the Originator is none other than one God, and that is Allah, Blessed and Exalted.
 - 2- That his heart will strive and his soul will yearn for submission and obedience to the commands of one Wise and Able god. Otherwise, where will the weak, created slave go to when the 'gods' become many and their commands and directions oppose and differ?! To whom is he submissive and obedient?! And if he submits and obeys one of the 'gods' and attains his pleasure, then indeed he will have disobeyed the other 'gods', thereby deserving their wrath and any punishment inflicted upon him. And this also confirms that the Creator and Originator is only one God, which is Allah, Blessed and Exalted.

An example for clarification: Is a slave who is owned by only one person – he obeys him and fulfills his specific commands and directions without the slightest resistance – in an equal and upright situation if he were to be sold to more than one person (two, three or more) and thereafter struggled to obey all of them and fulfill their commands?! The answer is of course no.

This is because in his first condition (the property of only one person), he finds himself clear-headed, his mind and soul relaxed at gaining the pleasure of his master, and basking in the comforts of His reward; however, in his second condition (the property of more than one person), he finds himself unstable, confused and worried, losing the pleasure of his masters and

tormented by their punishment, since due to their differing and opposing commands, he is compelled to obey and fulfill the commands of one of them, while disobeying the others and ignoring their commands at times; then obeying and fulfilling the commands of another while disobeying and ignoring the commands of the others at other times...all of this in an attempt to please all of them, but in the end, in the opinion of all his masters he is neglectful and disobedient, and deserves their anger and punishment.

- 3- That his mind contemplates logical answers to four important questions in the following manner: 1) Who created me and brought me into existence? 2) What are His attributes? 3) Why did He create me and bring me into existence? 4) What is the wisdom in that? In an instant he will find that after contemplation and reasoning, his innate nature, his heart's striving, his soul's yearning, and his mind's conclusion steer him to the answer to the first question: 'Who created me and brought me into existence? The answer: The One who created me and brought me into existence must be a Strong and Able God, because it is impossible for mankind to believe in the existence of a thing in the absence of a creator that brought it into existence. Everything that exists must have a creator that brought it into existence; every product must have a manufacturer; every created thing must have a creator. Moreover, he believes in the existence of his God and Creator, even though he does not see Him, since the signs and evidences that prove His existence are more than can be enumerated. Some examples of this are: The human being does not see his soul, yet he believes in the existence of a soul due to the existence of its impressions in life. Likewise, he does not see his brain, yet he believes in its existence due to the existence of its impressions such as the ability to think and ponder. Likewise, he does not see gravity, yet he believes in its existence due to the existence of its impressions such as gravitational pull...and so on and so forth.

Also, mankind will find that after contemplation and pondering, his innate nature, his heart's striving, his soul's yearning, and his mind's conclusion ...all lead him to the answer to a large and important part of the second question, which is: That God the Creator must be only one, not two or more, and this is for the following reasons:

- 1- When mankind asks: "Who is my Creator and Originator, and who is the Creator and Originator of all the creation?" the logical answer will be that the Creator and Originator of him and all of creation must be a Strong, Magnificent God, Able to create and originate. Thereafter he will continue to pose this question in a different way in the following manner: "Who is this God's Creator and Originator?" And supposing the answer was: "It must be another god who possesses strength and greatness," he would find himself compelled to repeat the same

question infinitely: "Who is the other god's Creator and Originator?" Consequently, the same answer will repeat itself never arriving at a correct root answer, since from the start the question is wrong and illogical.

Therefore, the ideal answer to this question is: God, the Creator and Originator – who created and originated mankind and all of creation – has neither creator nor originator. Therefore, there is but one God who possesses such magnificent strength and unrestricted abilities to create and originate something from nothing. This is the ideal and logical answer, besides which sensible and contemplating intellects will not accept.

- 2- Supposing the existence of more than one God, and consequently the existence of an independent will in each, if one wished to do something and another wished to do something else contradictory (like, one wishes to move a thing while the other wishes not to move it), what would happen in that case? The answer to this question lies in one of only three possibilities:
 - a- That each one's will would be executed, which is a futile claim due to its impossible nature, since a thing cannot be moved and remain still at the same time.
 - b- That each one will be incapable of executing his will, which is a futile claim as well, since it is impossible for God the Creator, Originator and fully-Able, to be incapable of doing anything.
 - c- That the will of only one will be executed and not the will of the other, and in that case this God is the true Creator (who is Able to do all things, and anything besides Him is absolutely not a god).

Continuously supposing in this manner makes it clear that there is but one true God, and He is God the Creator and Originator, who is Able to do what He wishes.

- 3- That if there was more than one god, there would be instances where some would exalt themselves over the rest, and other instances where some others would exalt themselves and gain the upper hand over the rest. In this way the heavens and earth would become corrupted, and the universe and all of creation therein would be destroyed, which includes everything that sustains human life.
And since this has not happened, then there must be only one God, who is the Strong, the Magnificent, the Able, and the One who is in control of all things: Allah, Glorified and Exalted.

An example of what we alluded to: When an opportunity for rule and authority of a nation arises, we find conflicts and wars (which include killing, ruin and destruction) as a result of each candidate's attempt to gain independent control and authority, and things do not begin to settle down until one of the candidates gains independent control and stabilizes his kingdom.

Also, what if there was more than one president of a nation? Will the affairs of this nation be settled? Of course not, and without a doubt there would be conflicts between them, in addition to consequences, such as the loss and ruin of the nation's resources and a impeded development. Hence, we find that all nations agree to appoint only one person to be its ruler or president, and it is the same as far as the creation within this universe is concerned: The Creator and Originator is only one God.

-Continuing to answer to the second of the aforementioned questions (What are the attributes of God the Creator and Originator?), the answer of which the brain works to ponder, we find that: Islam brought the logical answer which purifies a person's mind and stabilizes his thinking, in that Islam calls for the belief in the most beautiful and magnificent attributes of God the Creator and Originator; and that they are all attributes of excellence, perfection and loftiness, free of any shortcomings (and this is so only for God the Creator and Originator, Allah, Glorified and Exalted). Some of the attributes of Allah, Glorified and Exalted:

- The attribute of eternity: which means that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is the First, before whom there is none; and He is the Last, after whom there is none. He is never unaware, nor does He sleep. He is the Ever-Living who does not die. No vanishing of a place or ending of a period causes Him to cease, as He, Glorified and Exalted, is the Creator and Originator of both the place and the period.

- The attribute of ability: which means that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is the Able, and possesses absolute ability, and that He, Glorified and Exalted, is Able to do all things. When He wills something, He merely says to it, "Be," and it is. The signs of God the Creator's effortless ability are more than can be enumerated (such as the original creation of the universe and all that it contains, including the amazing creation of human beings, including the soul, the mind, the heart, the intricate inner systems, etc.).

-The attribute of knowledge: which means that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is the All-Knowing, and that His knowledge is vast and perfect, encompassing everything in every place and time (past, present, future), as He, Glorified and Exalted, is the Creator and Originator of everything from nothing.

-The attribute of wisdom: which means that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is the All-Wise, and that His wisdom is extensive and perfect.

-The attribute of will/volition: which means that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, does what He wills and wishes, which is within the folds of His beneficence and justice, and in accordance with the vastness of His knowledge and perfection of His wisdom.

-The attributes of forgiveness, mercy and generosity: which means that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, loves forgiveness, mercy and generosity; He forgives the sins and shortcomings of His slaves when they repent to Him, believe in Him and abide by

His commands; He engulfs them in His mercy, and honors them with His pleasure upon them and admitting them into His paradise and the magnificent, eternal delights therein.

-The attributes of truth and justice: which means that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, loves truth and justice, and that no one bears the wrongdoing of another, even a mother or father, rather each person is responsible for himself. Therefore, whoever performs even an atom's weight of good will find its reward on the Day of Resurrection (the day in which mankind will be resurrected after their death and held accountable for their deeds in the worldly life and given full recompense for their deeds), and whoever performs an atom's weight of evil will be brought to account for it.

-The attribute of peace: which means that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, loves peace, and commands His slaves to implement it on earth and execute the means to do so; He forbids them from oppression and tyranny, thus ensuring peace and security. If only we fully comprehended the wisdom behind the Islamic greeting of peace, meaning that a person greets another by saying, "Peace be upon you," while the other replies by saying, "Peace be upon you as well," which promotes the feelings of peace and tranquility.

Islam came to clarify that there is nothing that compares to Allah, Glorified and Exalted, in His perfection, beauty, loftiness, grandeur, strength; the effortlessness of His ability, vastness of His knowledge, the perfection of His wisdom, and all the beautiful attributes of Allah.

Islam also calls for the declaration that Allah, the Creator and Originator, is far above and removed from all deficient and blameworthy traits that do not befit Him; that He, Glorified and Exalted, is far above and removed from the actions of humans and all other creation (which they are in need of), such as eating and drinking (and their consequences, such as needing to relieve oneself), sleeping, relaxation, marriage and procreation. He, Glorified and Exalted, is the Creator and everything else is creation; He, Glorified and Exalted, is the Originator of these traits within them, such as the human's needs for food and drink, relieving oneself, sleep, relaxation, marriage, procreation, offspring, etc. However, He, Glorified and Exalted, stands in no need for any such things, for He is God, the Creator and Originator.

Islam also calls for the declaration that God, the Creator, is far above and removed from the attribute of racism, and that He, Glorified and Exalted, is not a God to individuals, groups, nations or tribes, to the exclusion of others; rather, He, Blessed and Exalted, is the God of all of creation, and responds to all of them (when they draw near to Him, believe in Him and obey Him), accepts their repentance, forgives them and opens the doors to His mercy. He admits them into His paradise and is pleased with them, for He, Lofty and Exalted, is the God of truth and justice, and therefore does not oppress any one of His slaves. All are equal in the sight of Allah, Exalted,

and no one is more virtuous than another except by his belief in and reverence for his Lord and Creator, along with his righteous deeds through which he seeks His nearness and His pleasure.

Islam also calls for the declaration that God, the Creator, is far above and removed from the attribute of needing offspring, and hence far above and removed, Glorified and Exalted, from taking a mate or wife (in order to procreate), for he is God, the Creator, who was not begotten from anyone as there is nothing before Him. And just as He, Glorified and Exalted, was not begotten from anyone, He, Glorified and Exalted, is not in need of begetting anyone, nor does such benefit Him. He is the Originator of everything from nothing.

Therefore, it is not possible to accept the allegation that God took a son or anything similar, claiming that this son (a weak creature which is born from its mother, and thereafter becomes a suckling in need of breastfeeding, cuddling and care, etc.; after that it dies and is buried like all other humans) is part of the nature and representation of the God who created it as well as everything. It is not possible for the mature intellect to accept these types of fabrications, for if it was possible, it would lead to numerous questions that are impossible to answer, considering that these questions are built upon unfounded suppositions and presumptions, for example: What then prevents God, the Creator, from having other natures and representations with other offspring from among humans or even other types of creation (like the angels – who have a more honorable nature than humans – or the jinn, or other types of creation besides them of which we have no knowledge), claiming that these other offspring are part of the nature and representation of God, the Creator (who created them and created all things)?!

Is it possible for human nature to mix with animal nature? Is marriage between a human and a cow (or any of the different types of animals) acceptable, such that the result would be the birth of a half human/half cow (or any of the different types of animals), and thus the animal nature becomes a mixed with human nature?! Is it possible for an intelligent person to accept such?!

Of course not, as that would be make humans of an inferior nature and lesser rank, while God the Creator, Blessed and Exalted, honored them. Humans are therefore of a more honorable rank and higher status than animals, in spite of the fact that they all were created by God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted.

If this is the case concerning the humanistic nature and animalistic nature – in spite of the fact that both are part of the creation – then what would it be if it pertained to God the Creator, Glorified and Exalted, who created human beings and all other animals and creatures! Is it possible for an untainted soul to accept the alleged mix of godly nature (God the Creator) and human nature (the weak creature that Allah, Exalted, created from nothing – as it was in the first creation – and who performs the act of procreation; the creature that was born from the birth canal of its mother, became a

suckling in need of tenderness and care, and who will eventually die and be buried thereafter, like all other creatures) such that human nature is a one of the natures and representations of God, the Creator?!

Of course not, because that would be considered a flaw, shortcoming and lessening of the value of God the Creator, as He, Glorified and Exalted, is the Creator of humans and all other creatures. Therefore, Islam brought the concept that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is the One and Only God (who is not fragmented), who does not beget nor was He begotten, and there is nothing similar or comparable to Him at all.

Islam also calls for the exaltation of the attributes of God the Creator, Glorified and Exalted, and avoiding degrading Him by describing Him or representing Him in the shape of stones and statues. Does it make sense that after Allah, Glorified and Exalted, created mankind from nothing, that mankind then fabricates different statues, fashioning his God and Creator into different forms – in spite of the fact that mankind has never seen his Creator – then another person fabricates his God and Creator into different forms and shapes, and so on and so forth?!

God the Creator, is loftier and more magnificent than any representation that any of the creation may fashion Him into. Also, we find that the many different types, shapes and sizes of representations and statues are the cause for the human soul to incline towards exalting them (especially if large and intimidating), and after some time worshipping them (which is witnessed in many countries), directing their invocations to them and away from Allah, Exalted, while He is the True God who alone deserves adoration, exaltation and worship. Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is God the Creator and Originator; everything else is created and manufactured.

Hence, there is apparent wisdom in Islam's prohibition of drawing and fashioning God the Creator in the shapes of stones and statues. We must truly exalt and venerate Him.

Continuing to answer to the third of the aforementioned questions: "Why did Allah, Exalted, create and originate mankind?" a question which the mind struggles to answer. We find that Islam clarifies that Allah, Blessed and Exalted (God, the Creator), created mankind to worship and obey Him, guided by His directions and guidance. He obeys His commands, abstains from His prohibitions and enacts His legislation, as a test from Him, Glorified and Exalted, for mankind throughout his entire life, beginning from the age of maturity (the age in which mankind is able to marry and procreate) until his death.

This test is divided into two parts that can be concisely clarified in the following manner:

-The first part (the first test, which is the biggest part of the exam): Will the person believe in his God and Creator, acknowledge His existence and His favors upon him, and avoid associating anything with Him in His divinity? Or will he deny his God and

Creator, renounce His favors upon him, and associate others with Him in His divinity?

This first part of the test is considered the foundation upon which the second test is built. If a person succeeds at passing it (by believing in God the Creator and Originator, acknowledging His existence and favors upon him, and not associating anything with Him in His divinity), he becomes qualified to pass the second test. If he does not pass it, then passing the second test is of no use to him.

-The second part (the second test): Will the person worship his God and Creator (in whom he believes, whose sole divinity he affirms and whose favors he acknowledges), obey Him in the manner in which He wishes and exalt His commands? Or will he be lazy in his worship and obedience to Him, forget His favors upon him and detest what He commanded him with? Will he be thankful to his God and Creator for the favors which He bestowed upon him and provided him with, patient and not despair over the trials and tribulations that Allah, Exalted, decreed for him (according to His absolute wisdom, Lofty and Exalted), or will he neglect being thankful to his God and Creator, forgetful of His favors upon him, desperate and impatient over the trials and tribulations that Allah, Exalted, decreed for him (according to His absolute wisdom, Lofty and Exalted)?

If a person succeeds in passing this part of the test (the second test) by worshipping and obeying his God and Creator in the manner in which He wishes; is thankful to Him for His favors upon him; is patient and does not despair over the trials and tribulations that Allah, Exalted, decreed for him (in addition to succeeding at passing the first test); then he – by the grace of Allah, Blessed and Exalted – will deserve the forgiveness of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, as well as the greatest award which He, Glorified and Exalted, prepared for whomever struggles and succeeds in this test: Paradise, and all the magnificent and everlasting delights therein, including the luxury and pleasure of seeing God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted, who has no equal; in addition to His eternal pleasure upon them, whoever enters it (paradise, which Allah, Blessed and Exalted, created) will have enjoyment, never again feel misery, and will live forever and never die again.

If a person does not succeed in the tests (the first and second tests), then he – by the justice of Allah, Glorified and Exalted – deserves of the wrath of Allah, Lofty and Exalted, deprivation from His paradise, and entrance into His hell-fire (the fire which Allah, Lofty and Exalted, created) and all the painful and severe punishment therein.

-The length of the test: the entire period of a person's life, beginning from the age of maturity (the age at which a person becomes able to marry and procreate) until his death.

-The level of the test: Allah, Blessed and Exalted, does not burden a soul more than its scope and power. He does not burden His slaves with that which they are powerless

over, which is why the test placed by Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is on an equal level with all of His legally capable (mature and intelligent) creation.

-An example of the test (in order to clarify its nature): Allah, Exalted, may create a healthy and able-bodied person and provide him with wealth and make him rich; He, Glorified and Exalted, may also create another person who is unwell and handicapped (for example, missing a hand, foot or other body parts) and provide him insignificant wealth and make him poor. Thus, the first person's particular test (the healthy and wealthy one) – after belief in his God and Creator and the oneness of His divinity – is a matter of thankfulness, meaning: Will he be thankful to his God and Creator for those favors and fulfill His rights concerning them? Will he assist the sick and handicapped, be kind to the poor and needy, giving them from the wealth that Allah, Exalted, provided him with, anticipating the reward and recompense with his God and Creator, believing in the magnificence of His wisdom in that which He, Lofty and Exalted, decreed for him, and thereby fulfill those commands of his God and Creator that are within his capabilities? If that is the case, then he will have succeeded at passing the test, and will therefore be eligible to attain His God and Creator's Paradise – and all of the everlasting delights therein, as well as His pleasure upon him. Or, will the healthy and wealthy person be the exact opposite?

The second person's particular test (the unwell, handicapped and poor person) – after belief in his God and Creator and the oneness of His divinity – is a matter of patience, meaning: Will he have patience with the trials and tribulations that Allah, Exalted, decreed for him (such as illness, handicap and poverty, etc.), pleased and not desperate, anticipating the reward and recompense with his God and Creator, believing in the magnificence of His wisdom in that which He, Lofty and Exalted, decreed for him, acknowledging Allah's grace upon him in the form of other favors and blessings, fulfilling his God and Creator's commands as much as he has the power and ability to (as Allah, Blessed and Exalted, does not burden His creation, nor does he command them with what they are incapable of) in this short span of worldly life that he is living, thereby succeeding at passing the test, and deserving His God and Creator's Paradise and all of the eternal delights therein, as well as His pleasure upon him? Or, will he be the exact opposite of that?

Another example of the test (in order to clarify its nature): We find that Allah, Exalted, prohibited everything bad and harmful for humans, and permitted everything good and beneficial, for example: When Allah, Glorified and Exalted, prohibited mankind from eating swine because of the diseases it causes (which have been recently discovered), He, Blessed and Exalted, permitted all other good types of meat like camel, beef, mutton, goat and many types of fowl. Also, when Allah, Glorified and Exalted, prohibited mankind from drinking intoxicants and alcoholic beverages because of its destruction of the mind its consequences (such as misbehaving, crimes, evil actions and animalistic behaviors), He, Blessed and Exalted, permitted all the other good and beneficial beverages. In this manner, the test that Allah, Glorified and

Exalted, prepared for a person is within his power and within the realms of what benefits and suits him.

So, will mankind respond to his God and Creator, Glorified and Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and abstaining from His prohibitions? Or will he respond to the desires of his soul and oppose the commands of his God and Creator, Glorified and Exalted, treating them with carelessness and not exalting them?

It is important to mention that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, knows the end result of the test that He placed for a person before its results manifest, for He, Glorified and Exalted, is the Creator and Originator of the person from nothing. He, Glorified and Exalted, has more knowledge about a person than the person himself, and He is All-Knowing about what thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, deeds, obedience and disobedience a person will carry out. He is All-Aware of everything, as He is God, the Creator, and there is nothing like Him.

We will pause here with two important questions, which are:

-Since Allah, Glorified and Exalted, knows the results of the tests from the start, as well as what beliefs, behaviors, deeds, obedience and disobedience a person will carry out, why did He not send those who deserve His punishment to hell-fire straight away, and why did He not send those who earned His pleasure to Paradise straight away, without the test?

-What is the wisdom of Allah, Exalted, in placing this test upon mankind? The answers to these two questions are:

First (the answer to the first question): If He sent those deserving of punishment to hell-fire straight away, we would find them asking, "Why was I sent to hell-fire? What is my sin? And what is the proof that if I were to be tested by Allah, Exalted, I would belie and disobey Him?"

To clarify this, suppose there was a father who has a son in a particular level of his education. This son does not care about his education or studies, in spite of his father's advice to study and warnings of his punishment if he does not succeed in his exams. The son knows that he will be tested at the end of the year, and the father knows that his son does not care about his education and studies, hence he knows with near certainty that his son will not succeed in the exams because of the son's negligence regarding studying and his carelessness about the exams and the advice and warnings of his father. In spite of this, the father gives respite to his son, and continues to advise him; he does not punish him until the results reveal his failure in the exam, in order for it to be an argument against him. For if the father punishes the son before taking the exam and seeing his exam's result, the son may lie and say, "I have memorized all that I studied in school and I do not need to study," moreover, he may say, "Why are you punishing me?"

Allah's example, Glorified and Exalted, is the highest, for in spite of the fact that He, Lofty and Exalted, has complete knowledge of the condition of His creation, and what beliefs and deeds they will carry out (because His most beautiful attributes are perfect and absolute, Glorified and Exalted, and His knowledge, Lofty and Exalted, is vast and encompassing), He, however, from His perfect wisdom, gives them respite and incites them and warns them (through dispatching His prophets and messengers to them) in order to inform them that He loves and is pleased with them when they believe in Him and in the oneness of His divinity, worship Him and obey Him; He promises them Paradise (and all the magnificent, eternal delights therein) and incites them towards it; He also warns them of His wrath upon them and His punishment for them if they belie and deny Him and His existence, associate partners with Him in His divinity, or disobey Him. Hence, none of His creation will have an argument against Him on the Day of Resurrection (Day of Reckoning).

Indeed, Islam clarifies that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is the Truth and the Just, and He does not oppress His slaves. He, Glorified and Exalted, has the absolute argument against all of His creation, and no one has an argument against Him. Therefore, the wisdom of Allah, Exalted, requires that there be a day for reckoning and questioning about what people believed about God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted, as well as what actions and deeds they sent forth in the worldly life (which is considered the test for all humans), and that not only the actions and deeds of a person testify for or against him on the Day of Resurrection (the day of revival and reckoning), but also his skin, hands and feet will testify against him regarding the actions and deeds he sent forth. Therefore, no single one of them will have an argument against Allah, Exalted. We will also find that the ones who are admitted to Paradise (after tests and trials) will feel the extreme favor of Allah, Exalted, upon them, in His guiding them, belief in Him, aiding them in worshipping and obeying Him, and blessing them to pass this test and succeed in it (since without the guidance, assistance and blessing of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, a person is unable to do anything), thus their love and thankfulness to Allah will increase.

Secondly (the answer to the second question): Allah, Exalted, the Wise and All-Knowing, wished to place this test as a measure for mankind (either believing in Him and the oneness of His divinity, Glorified and Exalted, and worshipping and obeying Him; or, denying Him and associating partners with Him and His divinity, and disobeying Him), as well as to determine the levels of their efforts to worship and obey Him. Moreover, Allah, Blessed and Exalted, divided Paradise and the delights therein – which He prepared for His believing, worshipping, slaves – into high degrees and stations (in addition to all of its magnificent delights), so that the person who believed in his God and Creator and the oneness of His divinity may enter it and ascend, according to the degree of his efforts to exalt, love and worship his God and Creator, his hastening to obey Him, his fulfillment of His commands, and his abstaining from His prohibitions. Likewise, Allah, Exalted, divided hell-fire into descending steps and sections, so that the person who denied his God and Creator and

associated partners with Him would enter it and be tormented according to the degree of his denial and disobedience.

An example of what we are alluding to is the tests and exams in life that measure a person's level and skill (according to his efforts), which then determine the best universities, faculties and specialties that are best suited for him, as well as the profession he will enter into thereafter. And in spite of the high status and appraisal of all of them, there are still others that are better and considered first class (in terms of their high rankings) and all the others come after them.

Continuing to answer the fourth of the aforementioned questions: "What is the wisdom of God the Creator, in creating mankind and subjecting him to the aforementioned?" Such a question requires a bit of intelligence to answer it, therefore we clarify that:

Firstly: Islam makes it clear that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is All-Knowing, All-Wise and All-Aware; and all that He wills and does are in the realms of His bounty and justice, and in accordance with the vastness of His knowledge and perfection of His wisdom.

Secondly: Allah, Blessed and Exalted (the Wise and All-Knowing), willed that He would create the angels (as one form of His creation, Lofty and Exalted) before creating humans, and that He would create a natural disposition in them to worship and obey Him and never disobey Him. He did not create them with the freedom to choose whether or not to obey Him, and as such they are naturally disposed and compelled to execute His commands and avoid disobeying Him in anything. Therefore, it was from the wisdom of Allah, Exalted, that He create a new and different type of creation in a new manner, in that He would command them to worship and obey Him, giving them free will to choose between belief in Him and the oneness of His divinity, or associating partners with Him; He also gives them free will to choose between obeying or disobeying Him, as well as the freedom to strive and draw closer to Him, exalt Him, love Him, fulfill His commands and abstain from His prohibitions in order to attain His forgiveness and pleasure upon them (or the opposite). And this is the wisdom of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, in the creation of Paradise and its high degrees and stations, as well as His creation, Lofty and Exalted, of hell-fire and its degrading and depressing steps and sections.

After explaining Islam's magnificent message regarding God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted, we wish to pause for a question that may come to mind and consequently needs to be answered, which is: What is the fate in the hereafter of a person who dies without Islam having reached him? What about one who is insane, who does not know about Islam? What about a baby or small child?

The answer to this question: On the Day of Resurrection, God, the Creator, Lofty and Exalted, will test the one who never heard about Islam as well as the insane person who does not know about Islam with a test is suitable and consistent with each one's

capabilities (and He, Glorified and Exalted, is Most Knowledgeable about the results of this test). This is so that no one will have any argument against Him, and also to apply to them the same test that was applied to the rest of their species, since the rest of the creation and human slaves of Allah, Exalted, were tested in the worldly life. Thus, He does not oppress anyone of His slaves, and that is from His perfect wisdom, Lofty and Exalted, as Allah, Glorified and Exalted is the Truth and the Just.

On the other hand, the sane person who heard about Islam and its correct understanding will have the proof established against him and will have no excuse in front of Allah, Exalted.

Allah, Blessed and Exalted, will admit the baby and small child into His paradise and home of delights without any test, and this is from His bounty and kindness, Blessed and Exalted.

Let us pause here with an important and final question regarding this point, which is:

A person may say: If Allah, Mighty and Exalted, has asked me before creating me, I would have chosen to be created with an instinctive belief in Him, Glorified and Exalted, not associating anything with His divinity, and to be compelled to obey Him and not disobey Him; moreover, I would not have undergone this test for fear that I would not pass it successfully. So why did Allah, Exalted, ask me and leave me the freedom to choose?

The answer to this question: Let us firstly explain that Islam makes it clear that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is the Creator of everything; that He, Glorified and Exalted, created the universe and all of the creatures within it, and that the universe and all of the creatures within it (heavens, earth, mountains, seas, rivers and trees) worship their God and Creator (Allah, Glorified and Exalted), and glorify His praises in a manner unknown to human beings, such as: the rotation of electrons around the nucleus of an atom from which different types of substances are formed – this is one illustration of glorification and worship of God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted, which is similar to Muslims' worship of God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted, during their circumambulation of the Holy Ka'bah at the Sacred Mosque (the first mosque on the earth built for the worship of Allah, Exalted, alone), glorifying the praises of Allah, Exalted, alone, exalting Him, declaring Him far above any and everything, and thanking Him for His favors.

Islam also makes it clear that Allah, Exalted, is God the Creator and Originator, and the Able, and that while in the molecular stage, He asked each person – while they were still drops of fluid in the innermost parts of their father Adam (the first human being), peace be upon him – in a particular manner that He, Glorified and Exalted, knows (by the will of Allah, Exalted, in a later point we will allude to the scientific fact that was recently discovered, and its agreement with Islam's assertion that each person was a drop in the innermost parts of their father Adam), and gave him the choice to be like other types of creation that instinctively believe in Him, Glorified

and Exalted, do not associate anything with Him in His divinity, are compelled to obey Him, and never disobey Him (therefore never being tested, and neither entering paradise nor hell-fire); or, for him to be given the ability to choose – in the form of a test – between belief in Him, Glorified and Exalted, not associating anything with Him in His divinity, obedience to Him and fulfilling His commands (therefore entering paradise and delighting in all its everlasting pleasures, as a reward for successfully passing the test), and between denying His divinity, associating others as partners with Him, disobeying Him and not fulfilling His commands (therefore deserving punishment – as he did not successfully pass the test – as a penalty for his carelessness and neglect concerning the rights of his God and Creator by denying and disbelieving in His divinity and oneness, denying His favors and failing to exalt Him and His commands), thereby having complete free will and freedom to choose one or the other with no compulsion to do anything.

And because the human soul yearns and longs for pleasure, a person will no doubt strive for paradise (and the magnificent and everlasting delights therein) and hope to spend eternity therein. Thus, his selection is to be given the choice (in the manner we just mentioned) without taking into account the responsibility that would fall on him, as his choice would demand for him to not be deluded or fooled by the worldly life and its fleeting charms, nor be distracted by it from obedience to and fulfilling the commands of his God and Creator.

And a person may say that he does not remember that question, and this is natural, as mankind was named such (Insan) due to his forgetfulness. Indeed, as time passes, mankind forgets and his ability to remember decreases. So what of an event that occurred ages ago? And particularly because the wisdom and will of Allah, Exalted, necessitates that mankind's memory of this event be erased, yet the fact is that it did take place. However, since Allah, Exalted, informed about it on the tongue of the seal of His prophets and messengers, Muhammad – may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him (who brought Islam as a way of life, and was aided by His Lord with miracles and supernatural phenomena that were a testament to his being a prophet and messenger and confirmed that which he conveyed) – we must believe in and affirm it.

To get a clearer picture, let each person ask himself this question once more: If he was given the choice all over again, would he prefer to be predisposed and compelled to glorify and worship his God and Creator in a certain manner, not be tested, and not enter paradise or hell-fire? Or would he prefer to be tested by Allah, Exalted, on the basis that he will be granted paradise and the magnificent, everlasting delights therein if he successfully passed the test, or deserving of His punishment if he was neglectful and did not pass it?

However, in order for a person to be honest with himself, he must ask this question at a time other than the hard and uneasy times of worry and strife in the worldly life that he is living: a time of mental clarity, in order to be firm in his answer.

A person will realize that he accommodates his soul by choosing his current situation of tests and trials, hoping to attain paradise and its delights, striving to spend eternity therein, particularly since the test is not one that he is incapable of passing successfully; rather, the test is on a general level, as Allah, Blessed and Exalted, does not burden a soul with more than it has the capacity and capability to bear.

Thus, we say that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, spoke the truth in His Noble Book (the Qur'an) upon the tongue of the seal of His prophets and messengers, Muhammad – may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him.

Also, if a person asks himself: Does he prefer to be created in a form other than his human form, like other types creation (for example: an inanimate object like a rock, mountain, or otherwise) that are predisposed and compelled to glorify and worship their God and Creator in a particular manner, until the time that Allah, Exalted, decrees for him to cease existing (as no one has the superiority over Allah, Exalted, to initiate any of His creation, nor to cease the existence of any of His creation), and thereafter will not be tested nor will he enter paradise or hell-fire; or, does he prefer to be created in his human form (as a person, enjoying those things with which Allah, Exalted, honored him, like a mind, a heart, a soul and senses) and be tested by Allah, Exalted, on the basis that if he successfully passes the test, he will be granted paradise and its magnificent, everlasting delights, or if he neglects it and fails it, he will be deserving of His punishment?

Surely, because of what we just touched upon, he would answer that he chooses his current condition of being created as a human to be tested by Allah, Exalted.

The few simple facts that we alluded to spell out the authenticity of Islam's call to belief in God the Creator (Allah, Glorified and Exalted), as well as in His oneness (i.e., that He, Glorified and Exalted is One, and is not divided into different natures or forms, and that He neither begets nor was He begotten), and the Oneness of His divinity; they also clarify Islam's agreement with what is accepted by the unadulterated nature and sound contemplating minds, and what is longed for and yearned after by purified souls.

- Islam calls for belief in the noble angels as one of the magnificent creations of Allah, Exalted. Allah, Exalted, created the angels with a nature and predisposition to worship and obey Him and fulfill His commands. They do not disobey Him in anything, as Allah did not create them with the freedom to choose between obeying and disobeying Him. Among the angels is one who is entrusted with the task of revelation, meaning there is one who is commissioned with receiving the duties, commands, prohibitions and directions from God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted, and conveying them to those whom Allah, Blessed and Exalted, chose to be His prophets and messengers, conveying what is revealed to them (from duties and directions that they receive from the angels) to mankind so that they may act upon it.

- Islam calls for belief in the divine scriptures. These are the scriptures that contain the duties, commands, prohibitions and directions that were revealed to the angel entrusted with revelation (Jibreel, peace be upon him). The last of these divine scriptures is the Noble Qur'an (that Allah, Blessed and Exalted, protected), which contains that which testifies to its truthfulness and sanctity, as it is comprised of an undiluted creed concerning God, the Creator, Glorified and Exalted (a little of which we alluded to briefly), pure teachings, guiding rituals (which produce a soul that is elevated and purified from despicable traits), upright laws, lofty directives and sensible guidelines through which human life is rectified upon the methodology of the Lord (God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted), and through which all of its problems are solved. This is in addition to its beautiful style and composition, magnificent eloquence, detailed expressions, comprehensiveness and splendor in a manner that renders humans incapable of producing even one chapter similar to any of its chapters. Not to mention the amazing scientific facts (in every field of science) that its noble verses spoke of and alluded to more than 1400 years ago, at a time when no one had even the slightest knowledge of such facts, which were discovered only recently. All of this is a testament that this book which comprises all of this (the Noble Qur'an) is the Book of God the Creator, Blessed and Exalted. Thus, the protection of Allah, Exalted, for it in its original form until today – and until the Hour is established – while other previous scriptures have been lost or distorted, is proof that it is the book of Allah, Exalted, by which all the divine previous divine scriptures were completed.
- Islam calls for belief in and veneration of the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted. They are those humans whom Allah, Blessed and Exalted, chose from His creation to convey His message and teach mankind about their God and Creator; to invite them to belief in Him and the oneness of His divinity; to instruct them to worship Him in the manner which He wants (according to the perfection of His wisdom and will) through fulfilling His instructions and commands. Moreover, it requires all people to believe in the seal of the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted, the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, as well as belief in his message, due to what the testaments of his prophethood indicate, for example:
 - The purified creed and message that the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, brought, which the intact nature, pure souls and rational intellect accept (which we alluded to previously).
 - His praiseworthy character and honorable traits, such as his graceful logic, fine speech, pleasant attitude, perfect and handsome physical features, and his noble lineage (he was from the noblest of Arab tribes), may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, are all proof of Allah, Exalted, chose him for prophethood.

- His asceticism, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his aversion to the charms and attractions of the worldly life, and his hastening to worship the Creator alone, and to the paths of goodness, virtue, honorable character and maintaining the ties of kinship that He called to, as well as busying his heart with continuous remembrance of Allah, Exalted.
- His mercy and compassion towards human beings and all the creation of Allah, Exalted, as well as the blessing that he, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, brought to the lives of anyone who was connected to him for any reason.
- The support he received from Allah, Glorified and Exalted, through answering his supplications, is a proof of the truth of his message, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him.
- The support he received from Allah, Glorified and Exalted, through the performance of miracles and supernatural acts (that no one is able to perform except the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted) is a proof of the truth and authenticity of his message, the greatest of which is the divine scripture which is the seal of all the scriptures that preceded it: the Noble Qur'an (which Allah, Blessed and Exalted, vowed to preserve until our day and age and even until the Day of Judgment), preserved in its original, divine form and radiant brilliance; its eloquence, magnificent meanings, precise harmony of its expressions and structures, and the loftiness of its objectives and goals, are a challenge to Arabs and non-Arabs, in all places and all times, to bring forth one chapter (or even one line) similar to it, yet they are unable to and have failed to do so. The amazing scientific facts contained in the Noble Qur'an (conveyed over 1400 years ago, at a time when no one had even the slightest knowledge of such facts, and which modern science has only recently affirmed to be true and accurate) are proof that the Noble Qur'an is but revelation from Allah, Exalted, and that Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, is the seal of His prophets and messengers.
- The protection of Allah, Exalted, for him, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, until he conveyed and spread His message, in spite of the attempts on his life by the enemies of Islam. He received his first revelation, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, at the age of forty, and he died at the age of sixty-three, i.e., his prophet hood lasted for only twenty-three years. This is a period that is equal to the rule of many kings and leaders, yet he was able during it to extract the roots of polytheism, idol-worship and reverence of deities besides Allah, Exalted, and implant monotheistic faith in the hearts, and firmly establishing the pure, unadulterated worship of Allah alone, Lofty and Exalted, absent of any type of polytheism, in addition to ridding the Arabian peninsula of all of its corrupt habits and norms. This is a proof of the support that Allah, Exalted, gave him for his message.

Let us pause briefly to address a question that may arise, which is: Is it not possible to worship Allah, Exalted, by exhibiting good character and enjoining

what is thought to be good amongst the people, and forbidding what is thought to be evil amongst the people, without any need for prophets and messengers? The answer is: Life and everything in it is for Allah, Exalted, and is a gift and blessing to mankind from Him, Blessed and Exalted. Therefore, it must be according to what He, Glorified and Exalted, wants, and this is what the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted, clarify to mankind. Also, human beings have different desires and natures, so if they cannot agree on their Creator and the oneness of His divinity (some believe and some do not) then can we expect them to agree on what is deemed good and what is deemed evil?! That is why the message of the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted, is a comprehensive message (conveyed through the teachings, instructions, commands and prohibitions that Allah, Exalted, revealed to them) which calls for belief in Allah, Exalted, and His oneness; reminders of His favors and blessings, Blessed and Exalted; and the command to worship Him, Lofty and Exalted, in the manner that He wants, thus mankind unite in the belief in One God (Allah, the Creator, the only One deserving of worship), worshipping Him in the one manner that He wants, Glorified and Exalted, and according to His wisdom and will.

- Islam calls for belief in the Last Day. It is the day in which all of mankind will be resurrected after their deaths. Therein Allah, Exalted, will question them about their beliefs and the deeds they sent forth, and then hold them accountable for them. Thus, whoever does an atom's weight of good will find its reward; and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will be held accountable for it. It is from the wisdom of Allah, Exalted, to make such a day wherein mankind will be brought to account, for if there were no afterlife of recompense, there would be no logical reason for mankind to exhibit morals and praiseworthy characteristics (like truthfulness and trustworthiness), unless his adherence to such did not go against his own worldly benefit. Meaning: a person exhibits and adheres to morals and praiseworthy characteristics (in spite of the fact that during certain times and situations his adherence to them goes against his own worldly benefit) seeking after the reward of Allah, Exalted, fearful of His punishment, and hoping for His compensation in the afterlife. Also, suppose there is a person who causes the death of thousands of people...how will he be brought to account for these crimes, and how will these people receive their retribution from him if there were no day of resurrection and reckoning? It is not possible to settle his account in this worldly life, since the worst punishment that he may receive – death – is retribution for only one of the deaths that he caused, so what about the rest of the human souls who did not exact revenge or retribution against him?!

Another example: When a person risks his own life in order to save the life of another (while defending him), this behavior is considered noble and praiseworthy. So, one wonders: Is a person's concern merely to behave and be described with this noble and praiseworthy characteristic enough to make him put his own life at risk in order to save the life of another? Meaning: Is it

logical for a person to lose his own life in order to merely behave and be described with a praiseworthy characteristic, without there being any reward for this lofty deed and noble character that he exhibited? Or, does a person exert himself and his life seeking and anticipating the reward of Allah, Exalted, for the lofty deeds and honorable, praiseworthy character that he exhibited, since Allah, Exalted, encourages mankind to exhibit these and other honorable and noble characteristics, and promises them His reward on the Day of Resurrection (the day wherein mankind will be resurrected and brought to account) in the form of Paradise (if he performed those deeds for His sake, Glorified and Exalted, and in reverence of His instructions, Lofty and Exalted)?

Without a doubt, the logical answer is that a person exerts himself and his life doing what Allah, Exalted, encourages him to do, seeking and anticipating the His reward, Glorified and Exalted, and all that He promised him on the Day of Resurrection.

What we have explained clarifies the need for a day in which every human soul may seek retribution from the one (murderer or criminal) who caused its death or suffering, repaying him with the punishment that he deserves; a day in which the one who saved a human life – as Allah, Exalted, encourages – anticipating His reward, Glorified and Exalted, may be rewarded, and other such examples.

Thus the wisdom of Allah, Exalted, in making this day (the Last Day) for resurrection, reckoning and recompense becomes clear, moreover the truth and accuracy of Islam's message that calls for belief in the Last Day.

- Islam calls for belief in divine decree, the good and bad of it. Meaning: Everything that occurs in the universe, and every good and evil thing that a person is exposed to (like good times and hard times, wealth and poverty, health and illness) is simply pre-ordained by Allah, Exalted (according to His perfect wisdom and His will, Glorified and Exalted) and with His complete knowledge, Glorified and Exalted, as He is the All-Knowing and All-Aware. Therefore, a person should not despair as a result of anything bad or evil that he is subjected to; he should be content with what Allah, Might and Lofty, allotted and decreed for him.

What we have concisely touched upon clarifies the purity of the creed that Islam calls to, which conforms to the unadulterated nature, purified souls and sound intellects, and by which a person's path to his God and Creator, Glorified and Exalted, is illuminated, thereby achieving happiness in his worldly life and life in the hereafter.

Islam and Disciplining and Purifying the Soul

Allah, Exalted, says: {But whoever comes to Him as a believer, and has done righteous good deeds, for such are the high ranks. Gardens of Eden under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever: such is the reward of those who purify themselves}, [Surat Taha: 75-76].

Allah, Exalted, says: {Indeed he succeeds who purifies his ownself}, [Surat-ush-Shams: 9].

Indeed, Islam encourages purification of the soul, and calls for disciplining it and cleansing it from imperfections, harms and vices, and elevating it to the degree of excellence. Islam clarifies that this is the way to achieve success and the highest levels of the Paradise of delights. Purification of the soul is achieved when a person replaces the characteristics of disbelief, denial of the Creator (as well as His prophets, messengers, scriptures and the Last day), polytheism and disobedience for the characteristics of belief in the Creator (as well as the oneness of His divinity, and belief in His prophets, messengers, scriptures, and the Last Day), obedience and worship; by exchanging lowly traits, bad manners and ill conduct with good traits, praiseworthy manners and honorable conduct.

Islam and Honoring and Preserving Human Life

Islam, through its upright laws, strives to honor and preserve human life, as Allah, Exalted, says: {And indeed We have honored the Children of Adam}, [Surat-ul-Israa': 70], wherein is a command to preserve the enormous favors that Allah, Exalted, has blessed mankind with (such as health), as well as the blessing of discernment. He therefore forbade anything that could diminish or take away that discernment; He allowed good and pure things that are considered useful and beneficial, and strictly prohibited all impure things that could cause harm.

Islam forbids taking a life (generally speaking) without due cause, and issues a severe warning against this heinous crime. Allah, Exalted, says: {...That if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, and/or to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind}, [Surat-ul-Ma'idah: 32], and clarified the severe punishment for such a crime in this world as well as the hereafter.

Islam also forbids suicide, or for a person to expose himself to mortal danger. Allah, Exalted, says: {And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you}, [Surat-un-Nisaa: 29]; and {And do not throw yourselves into destruction}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 195].

Islam, Peace, and The Call for Unity Among Nations and Peoples

The word "Islam" is a derivative of the same Arabic root from which the word "Salam" derives (which means: safety and security). Islam calls for peace and its fundamentals, as well as exercising the means to achieve it. It is against extremism and terrorism, and demands the fulfillment of vows and oaths. Allah, Exalted, says: {And if anyone of the pagans seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah, and then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men who know not}, [Surat-ut-Tawbah: 6]; He, Exalted, also says: {Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity}, [Surat-ul-Mumtahanah: 8].

Islam also calls for unity among nations and peoples, as Allah, Exalted, says: {O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who is the most pious. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware}, [Surat-ul-Hujurat: 13]. He clarified that there is no difference between one group of people or nation and another, as all are equal in the sight of Allah, Exalted, because He, Glorified and Exalted, is the One Who created them, and there is no virtue in one individual over another in the sight of Allah, Exalted, except in terms of belief, god-consciousness and righteous deeds which include developing the earth and avoiding spreading corruption therein.

Islam therefore set a methodology for the establishment of humanity and achieving peace, and that is through calling for belief in one God, which will in turn unify mankind (in spite of their different languages and colors) under one kind of worship and one set of commands and instructions comprising of everything good and useful for all of humankind. Indeed, Islam commands to all goodness and whatever leads to good; it forbids all evil and whatever leads to evil. It clarifies that this is part of mankind's test from Allah, Exalted, as it includes the prohibition of murder without due cause, and clarifies that after death a person will be brought to account (on the Day of Resurrection) for the corruption he spread in the earth, and for the murder he committed without due cause; he will also be brought to account for his negligence towards preventing and forbidding murder (and other such crimes and vices) if he was able to do so. Likewise, if he exerted himself to prevent and forbid murder and corruption, and strove to develop the earth, spread goodness, truth and virtue in every corner of society, he will gain the reward from Allah, Blessed and Exalted, and He will be pleased with him, earning Paradise and all of its magnificent delights,. This is the way to establish humanity and achieve peace.

Islam also clarified that whoever saves a life, it is as if he saved all of mankind. Allah, Exalted, says: {If anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind}, [Surat-ul-Ma'idah: 32].

Islam and Honoring Women

Islam raised the status of women by celebrating her enormous role in the society and demanding for her to be honored and lived with in kindness and good conduct, throughout all the stages of her life, beginning from her birth and childhood (as a newborn, then a little girl, then when she grows and becomes a bride), and continuing on to marriage (as a wife) and motherhood (as a mother and grandmother). This is affirmed through Qur'anic verses and Prophetic Hadiths over and over again.

Beginning from her birth and childhood (as a newborn and little girl): Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever has a daughter and does not bury her alive nor scorn her nor give preference to his male child over her, Allah will admit him to Paradise," (Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad). He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said: "Whoever has three daughters or three sisters, or two daughters or two sisters, and lives along with them in a good manner, has patience with them, and fears Allah with regard to them will enter Paradise," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said: "Whoever has three daughters for whom he provides shelter, treats with compassion and fully supports, Paradise becomes absolutely binding for him." It was said, 'What if they are two (daughters)?' The Prophet said, "Even if they are two." Some people believed that if they had inquired about just one, he would have said it was so for one as well. (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Regarding when a woman becomes a wife, Allah, Exalted, says: {And live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good}, [Surat-un-Nisaa': 19]. The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also gave an admonition regarding women, saying: "So be good to the women," (Sahih Al-Bukhari). In his final illness from which he passed away, the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also advised: "The prayer! The prayer! And fear Allah regarding those whom your right hands possess!" meaning: your wives from amongst the women. (Reported by Abu Dawud, and Al-Albani authenticated it).

The keenness of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, regarding good treatment of the wife, and the emphasis on giving her all of her rights and honoring her, is clearly evident, in that he, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, gave an admonishment regarding her during his extreme illness just before his death. And there are many more Hadiths that clarify this.

At the stage of motherhood: Allah, Exalted, says: {And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small'}, [Surat-ul-Israa': 23-24]; He,

Exalted, also says: {And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years. Give thanks to Me and to your parents; unto Me is the final destination}, [Surat Luqman: 14].

- A man came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, who is more deserving of my company?" He said: "Your mother." The man then said: "Then who?" He said: "Your mother." The man then asked again: "Then who?" He said: "Your father," (Sahih Al-Bukhari).
- A man came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, I came because I wish to fight in a battle with you (i.e., I wish to be by your side when you face your enemies who wage war against you), and I came while my parents were weeping." He, may Allah's peace and blessings upon him, said: "Return to them (i.e., stay by their side) and make them laugh as you have made them weep," (Narrated by Ahmad).

It is from the compassion of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, that he commanded a man to stay at his parents' side and look after them due to their need for him, rather than be at his side, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, when he faced his enemies from amongst the polytheists that waged war against him. By this he clarified the tremendous superiority of the parents, especially the mother, as was clarified in the previously mentioned Hadith.

- Also, a man came to the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, saying: "O Messenger of Allah, I wish to participate in a battle, and I came to seek your counsel." He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, asked him: "Is your mother present (i.e., is your mother still alive)?" The man responded: "Yes." He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, then said: "Stay with her, for indeed Paradise is at her feet (i.e., in your kind treatment, service and obedience to her)," (Narrated by Ahmad).
- When the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, went to visit the grave of his mother (as she died while he was only six years old; likewise his father died when he was still in his mother's womb, therefore it was his grandfather, Abdulmuttalib, who raised him after the death of his parents) he sobbed so profusely (due to missing her) that his companions began to sob due to his sobbing, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. This was due to his kindness and compassion, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and his acknowledgment of her rights over him.

And there are many other Noble Qur'anic verses and Prophet Hadiths that clarify the tremendous superiority of the woman and her high status in Islam, all of which call for honoring her in all the different stages of her life.

Islam's Emphasis on Childrearing and the Encouragement to Show Kindness and Compassion Towards Children

Islam emphasizes the importance of raising children and giving them a pure and righteous upbringing that is founded upon behaving with noble character traits and praiseworthy manners, as children are the seeds and fruits of the future. One such example: Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: One day I was riding behind the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and he said: "My boy! I will teach you a few things: Preserve Allah and He will preserve you. Preserve Allah and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask from Allah, and when you seek help, seek help from Allah. Know that if the entire nation gathered together to benefit you, they will not be able to benefit you except with that which Allah has written for you; and if they gathered together to harm you, they will not be able to harm you except with that which Allah has written for you. The pens have lifted and the pages have dried," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

- Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever says to a child, 'Come, take this,' and then does not give him something has told a lie," (Narrated by Ahmad). Meaning, it is not allowed to lie even to small children or even in a joking manner, as this will ensure that the child has a good upbringing that is founded upon exhibiting noble character traits and praiseworthy manners, such as honesty and trustworthiness, in both speech and deed; and not adopt vile character traits such as dishonesty and the likes.
- Also, Islam encourages kindness and compassion towards children, as the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was keen to joke with children and show concern for them. An example of this is in the actions and words of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, as Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: I had a brother that was called Abu 'Umayr, and whenever the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, would come to visit us, he would say to him: "Abu 'Umayr! What has the little bird done?" as a way of joking with him and showing him attention.
- Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said: 'Uyaynah bin Hisn came to visit the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and saw him kissing his grandsons, Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn. He said to him: Do you kiss them, O Messenger of Allah? I have ten children and I have never kissed any of them. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, replied: "Who ever does not show compassion will not be shown compassion," (Narrated by Abu Ya'laa).
- The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever does not show compassion for children is not one of us," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). And there are so many more Hadiths which clarify this point.

Islam's Concern for the Youth

Islam shows great concern for the youth, since the condition of society, as well as the advancement of nations and peoples, is directly related to their good condition. The youth are the men of tomorrow, fathers of the future and the very nerve of the ummah, and Islam strives to give them the best upbringing that will enable them to carry responsibility through good examples of pious, righteous youth that the Noble Qur'an sheds light upon (as in the story of the inhabitants of the cave) and that the Prophetic Hadiths speak about (such as the story of the three youth who entered a cave to take shelter, and thereafter a boulder fell and blocked the cave's entrance). These stories offer lessons and admonitions, and serve as excellent examples to follow and take comfort in.

Islam Calls for Kindness and Compassion Towards All of Creation (Animals, Birds, Trees, Plants)

Islam calls for kindness and compassion towards all of the creation of Allah, Exalted, from animals, birds and plants. It warns against annoying and mistreating them, and some examples of that regarding animals are:

- 1- The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "A man once saw a dog eating mud due to thirst, so he took his shoe and filled it with water and gave it to the dog to drink. Allah thanked him for that and admitted him to Paradise," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).
- 2- The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was asked: O Messenger of Allah, is their reward in our kind treatment of beasts?! He replied: "There is reward in every breathing animal," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).
- 3- The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, forbade riding on riding animals without need so as not to harm them. He said: "Ride them in good health and leave them in good health; and do not use them as chairs during your conversations on the roads and in the market places, for it could be that the riding animal remembers Allah, Blessed and Exalted, more than its passenger," (Narrated by Al-Imam Ahmad).
- 4- The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Fear Allah regarding these unspeaking animals; ride them while it is befitting and eat from them when it is befitting," (Narrated by Abu Dawud). Meaning: give them their rights of continuously watering and feeding them, and do not burden them, and thus they will remain in good condition, capable of bearing their load without difficulty, and they will be plump when it comes time to eat from them.
- 5- The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, cautioned against harming animals, and clarified that harming them brings about the anger and punishment of Allah, Exalted, as he said: "A woman entered hell-fire because of a cat that she tied up; she neither fed it or allowed it to eat from the grass of the earth," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).
- 1- Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, passed by a donkey whose face had been branded (i.e., in order to be identified) and he said: "May Allah's curse be upon the one who branded it," (Narrated by Ibn Hibban).
- 2- (Regarding birds): The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, cautioned against harming birds and killing them without a need (such as for food), and he made it clear that this warning includes all birds as well as small birds. He said: "Whoever kills a small bird for amusement, it will cry out to Allah, Mighty and Exalted, on the Day of Resurrection, saying: 'So and so killed me for amusement, and he did not kill me for any use,'" (Narrated by An-Nasaa'i).

- 3- (Regarding trees and plants): Allah, Exalted, says: {And do not do mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order, and invoke Him with fear and hope; Surely, Allah's Mercy is (ever) near unto the good-doers}, [Suratul-A'raf: 56]. And the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, admonished, saying: "...And do not cut down palm trees or fruit-bearing trees, and do not destroy buildings..." (The Sealed Nectar). An exception to this is in times of necessity when one is compelled to do so, or when there is a general benefit to be derived from doing so that is commensurate with it.

Islam and Its Call to Knowledge

Islam calls for knowledge and learning, and for the advancement of the human race in every aspect of life. The first command that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, received from his Lord, was the statement of Allah, Exalted: {Read in the name of your Lord who created}, [Suratul-'Alaq: 1]. It was a command to be implemented and lived by, by him as well as his followers after him. And, as is well-known, reading is the means to gain knowledge in every field.

Not only that, but Islam encourages increasing one's knowledge as well, as Allah, Exalted, says: {And say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge!'}, [Surat Taha: 114].

The Noble Qur'an and Prophet Hadiths conveyed amazing scientific facts (about the heavens, earth, mountains, seas, humans, animals, birds and plants) over 1400 years ago, at a time when no one had even the slightest knowledge of such facts; facts the truth and accuracy of which modern science and advanced technology have only recently discovered and confirmed. Some examples of these scientific facts are:

- 1- Allah, Exalted, says: {And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves...}, [Suratul-A'raf: 172]. And Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah took the oath from Adam's back (peace be upon him), and took every one of his offspring from his loins..." (Narrated by An-Nasaa'i). The Noble Qur'anic verse as well as the Prophet Hadiths clarify that all the offspring of Adam (the father of all humans, as he was the first human that Allah, Exalted, created) were present in his loins at the time of his creation, and modern science has discovered something called "chromosomes," in addition to the embryological discovery of the hereditary role of the chromosome. Moreover, it has been confirmed for embryologists that human creation is predetermined (clearly defined) beforehand in the fertile fluids of both the father and mother, and that this predetermination stretches across ancient times connecting the genetic codes from the father to his ancestors until it reaches Adam, peace be upon him (the father of the human race). These genetic codes are programmed in minute, extraordinary and introverted detail inside the living reproductive cell's nucleus, which means: Each one of Adam's offspring existed in the genetic code of the father of humans, Adam, at the time of his creation. This clarifies the conformity of what the Noble Qur'anic verse and Prophetic Hadiths allude to (both of which dealt with the discussion of the previous point), in addition to the discoveries that modern science has made.
- 2- Allah, Exalted, says: {Does man think that he will be left neglected? Was he not a drop of fluid from emitted semen?}, [Surat-ul-Qiyamah: 36-37]. The meaning of the first verse is: Does a person suppose that he will be left carelessly, without being burdened to fulfill the commands of Allah, Exalted; or carelessly left without reckoning or recompense – of either reward or

punishment – for his obedience or disobedience of the commands of Allah, Glorified and Exalted? The answer is: A person will not be carelessly left without being burdened or commanded to fulfill the commands of Allah, Exalted; nor will he be carelessly left without reckoning or recompense – either reward or punishment – for his obedience or disobedience of the commands of Allah, Glorified and Exalted. Rather, he will be questioned, brought to account, and recompensed for the deeds he sent forth. Therefore, whoever does an atom's weight of good will receive its reward, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will be brought to account for it.

The meaning of "drop of fluid" is male and female fertile fluids, and the meaning of "emitted semen" is the fluid from which an embryo is conceived. Meaning: a person's creation begins with one single (miniscule) drop of fertile, conception-inducing fluid, which consists of a great many sperms. The noble Qur'anic verse is in agreement with what modern science has affirmed, as it points out that conception of the embryo occurs from one drop of fertile fluid (the semen), and that the use of "drop" by Allah, Exalted, indicates singularity and not plurality. Therefore, conception does not occur from all of the sperms contained in the semen (as semen consists of millions of sperms), as the term is not expressed in the plural form in the Noble Qur'an, rather it is expressed in the singular form. Therefore, one single sperm fertilizes one female ovum that is selected for fertilization from the thousands of ova present in the ovaries. This clarifies the conformity between what the noble Qur'anic verses point out and what modern science has discovered, which in turn illustrates preciseness and eloquence of the noble Qur'an's expressions, as well as its agreement with what modern science has affirmed.

- 3- Allah, Exalted, says: {Then He made his offspring from Sulalah (sperm) of worthless water}, [Surat-us-Sajdah: 8]. The meaning of "Sulalah" means a tiny extract of the fertile fluids, and this is the "drop" that the previous verse explained (which we just touched upon in number 2). The meaning of the noble verse is that a person's conception as an embryo begins with a tiny extract of fertile fluids. Indeed, modern science has affirmed that the description of the male sperm that conceives the embryo (and from which humans are conceived) conforms completely to what the Noble Qur'an conveyed and pointed out through the use of one word in the statement of Allah, Exalted, "Sulalah," for the following reasons:

- a. The word "Sulalah" is a derivative of the Arabic verb that means "to gently slip through" hence, calling the sperm "Sulalah" carries several meanings:

- It is the small part (sperm) of the fertile fluids (semen);
- That this small part of the fertile fluids resembles a long fish;
- That this small part of the fertile fluids slips through gently;

Modern science has discovered:

- That the drop from which an embryo is conceived is an extremely tiny part of the fertile fluids (semen); that its appearance resembles a long

fish; and that this tiny part (sperm) gently slips through in the midst of the crowdedness of many sperms in the tightness of the uterus' neck by swimming in fertile fluids (semen) in order to fertilize the egg. All of this conforms to what the Noble Qur'an conveyed and pointed out over 1400 years ago, as that it alluded to these amazing scientific facts at a time when no one had even the slightest knowledge about such things. Thus, these noble verses are a sparkling beam of light that bear testimony to the truth of the Noble Qur'an and that it is revelation from Allah, Blessed and Exalted, and consequently, the truth and accuracy of the message of Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him.

-For more information about the amazing scientific facts that the Noble Qur'an and Prophet Hadiths conveyed to over 1400 years ago, at a time when no one had even the slightest knowledge of such facts, please refer to the following book (in English): "Islam and the Discoveries of Modern Science as One of the Testimonies and Proofs of the Prophethood and Message of Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him."

Resources in the Arabic Language:

- Verses of Scientific Miracles (heavens earth, animals, plants) in the Noble Qur'an, by Dr. Zaghloul An-Najjar.
- Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of Scientific Miracles in the Prophetic Tradition, by Dr. Zaghloul An-Najjar.
- Encyclopedia of Islam and Modern Science, and Scientific Miracles in the Noble Qur'an by Dr. Zaghloul An-Najjar.
- Embryology in Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah, by the Association of Scientific Miracles of the Qur'an and Sunnah in Makkah.
- The Miracle of the Qur'an Regarding What the Womb Conceals, by Professor Karim Naguib Al-Aghr.
- Islam and the Discoveries of Modern Science as One of the Testimonies and Proofs of the Prophethood and Message of Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, by Professor Muhammad Elsayed Muhammad.

Islam and the Nation of "Read!"

Islam came with a command to read and learn, in order to bring mankind out of the wandering darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge in order to traverse its path, thus advancing humankind in every aspects of life.

And, as we pointed out in a previous point, the first noble Qur'anic verse that Allah, Blessed and Exalted, revealed to Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was His statement, Blessed and Exalted: {Read!}, [Surat-ul-'Alaq: 1]. By it, Islam advanced a nation from being characterized by ignorance, backwardness and illiteracy, to become the nation of "Read!" thus becoming a reading, learned nation, from which rays of light and knowledge emanate to the entire world.

The pioneer Muslims strove to meticulously read and study the noble verses of the Qur'an, in essence implementing the first matter revealed in the Noble Qur'an, which was the statement of Allah, Blessed and Exalted: {Read!}. They took great care to investigate and discover the scientific facts conveyed therein as well as in the Prophetic Hadiths, and remained devoted to their study, which consequently became a cause for their advancement in all the scientific fields, especially astronomy.

Islam and Other Religions

Islam has always been keen to invite people of other religions to the true path that conforms to the nature that mankind was created upon by Allah, Exalted and Lofty, which is: belief in God the Creator, Glorified and Exalted, and belief in the oneness of His divinity and not ascribing anything to Him as a partner. This is the true path that Islam calls to and strives to spread and propagate with wisdom and gentle exhortation, and through intelligent, logical and sensible dialogue.

Allah, Exalted, says: {Say (O Muhammad): "O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him}, [Surat Aal 'Imran: 64]; Allah, Exalted, also says: {Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better}, [Surat-un-Nahl: 125].

Islam also makes it clear that there is no compulsion on anyone to enter Islam, as Allah, Exalted, says: {There is no compulsion in the religion}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 256]; Allah, Exalted, also says: {To you be your religion, and to me my religion}, [Surat-ul-Kafiroon: 6].

Islam and Friendly Interactions with non-Muslims

Islam is a religion of magnanimity, thus it strongly encourages kind and friendly interaction with non-Muslims (who do not fight against the Muslims), as the foundation of interaction in Islam is kindness and fairness with all people, Muslim or non-Muslim.

Allah, Exalted, says: {Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity}, [Surat-ul-Mumtahanah: 8].

Brotherhood in Islam

Islam calls for unity, solidarity, camaraderie, affection and compassion. Allah, Exalted, says: {And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah and be not divided among yourselves; and remember Allah's Favor on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren}, [Surat Aal 'Imran: 103]; and the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The Muslim is the brother of a Muslim," (Sahih Al-Bukhari); he also said: "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever (i.e., all the body parts share in the pain)," (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

Before the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was sent as a messenger, the Arabs were murderous, fighting tribes, with conflicts and wars always arising amongst them for the smallest and most insignificant reasons. However, after the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, came with his message of Islamic monotheism (belief in God the Creator and the oneness of His divinity, and obeying and worshipping Him), and people began entering Islam in large numbers, they became loving, compassion and affectionate brothers, to the point that a Muslim would prefer for his Muslim brother to have before himself. Through Islam, Muslims from every corner of the earth became brothers with one another, in spite of their different colors, nationalities, languages and classes. And, by the will of Allah, Exalted, we will shed light upon two worship rituals (prayer and pilgrimage) as well as other worship rituals in Islam, clarifying their effects as well as their superior nature in removing the differences and breaking barriers between all races of humans in spite of their different colors, languages and classes.

Islam and Its Magnanimity During Times of War

The Muslims' wars against their enemies were either to stop their enemies' aggression, defend their religion of Islam and ensure the free spread of Islam's message, or against those who defamed the image of Islam, distorted its truth and stood in the way of calling to it and conveying its message and teaching it to people.

Still, Islam forbade Muslims from engaging in treachery and betrayal during wars, as well as killing children, women and the elderly (non-combatants); it also forbade killing those who surrender or are weaponless (non-combatants); it furthermore forbade demolishing homes, cutting down shrubberies, destroying cities, and any other forms of corruption and destruction in the earth.

Islam is founded upon compassion and magnanimity, thus we witness fair and humane treatment in times of war.

An example of this is when the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, pardoned the inhabitants of Makkah who had previously turned him and the Muslims out of their homes and livelihoods, fought with them for more than 20 years, made several attempts on his life, and hated the message of Islam. This was after the Opening of Makkah when he entered the city, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, victorious but still humble before Allah, Glorified and Exalted, neither ruthless or vengeful; rather, he replaced all of that with pardoning and beautiful reconciliation, saying: "What do you suppose I will do with you?" They said: "Goodness, as you are a generous brother and the son of a generous brother!" He said: "I say as my brother Yusuf once said: 'No reproach on you this day, may Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!' [Surat Yusuf: 92]; go on, for you are all free," (Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi).

And on the day of the Opening of Makkah (after the Muslims entered victorious without fighting), when the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, heard that someone was saying: "Today is a day of massacre (i.e., a slaughter wherein the Muslims will take vengeance against their enemies who fought against them for more than twenty years, and turned them out from the homes and livelihoods)," he denied this saying and declared the one who uttered it to be in error. He replied by saying: "Today is a day of compassion," meaning: this is the day wherein we will pardon and forgive those who fought against us. [Uyun-ul-Athar fi Fanun-il-Maghaziy wa-Ash-Shama'il wa-As-Sayr].

Allah, Exalted, spoke the truth when He said concerning the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him: {And We sent you not except as a mercy to creation}, [Surat-ul-Anbiya': 107]. And, as we indicated in the previous point, Islam does not compel non-Muslims to accept Islam. Rather, it merely invites them to accept it and implement its teachings, leaving the choice to them in this world, as ultimately their account is with Allah, Exalted, on the Day of Resurrection.

Islam and Good Treatment of War Captives

Islam is a religion of mercy and fairness, hence, it forbids harming and torturing war captives, and encourages their good treatment. It also sought to make some use of the detaining captives, in that the leader of the Muslims may at that time exchange their captives for Muslim captives; or he may set them free for nothing in return (in the case that there are no Muslim captives at the time, out of kindness and grace); or some other action that will bring about greater benefit.

An example of this is found in the collection of Sahih Muslim, where the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, had pardoned Thumamah bin Athal after setting him free, saying to him: "What do you think, O Thumamah?" i.e., what would you like to say? Thumamah replied: "O Muhammad, I have a good opinion of you. If you kill me then you will have killed one who has spilled blood (i.e., you have a right to do so as I deserve to be killed), and if you are gracious with me then I will be grateful (i.e., if you pardon me I will never forget this favor of yours towards me), and if you desire money then ask and you will be given whatever you wish." The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, left him for two days, then came to him and asked: "What do you think, O Thumamah?" He replied: "As I have already told you: if you are gracious with me then I will be grateful, and if you kill me then you will have killed one who has spilled blood, and if you desire money then ask you will be given whatever you wish." Thereupon the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "Set Thumamah free (i.e., let him go for nothing in exchange)," whereupon Thumamah set off until he came to a palm tree near the masjid. He took a bath and then entered the masjid and said: "I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." This example is an example of the kindness of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, towards one of his war captives, which clarifies that Islam is a religion of mercy and compassion.

Islam, Guiding Rituals, Noble Character, Wise Interactions and Sound Laws

Islam brought with it guiding rituals by which the human soul becomes cleansed and purified from all of the negative and lowly characteristics that corrupt it (such as classism, pride, racism, etc.). Such guiding rituals lead the soul to lofty characteristics (such as humility, empathy for others, cooperation, etc.). An example of this is in the following worship rituals:

-The ritual of prayer: In prayer we witness equality between all Muslims. The leader stands beside the constituent, the rich beside the poor, the strong beside the weak (shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot) in organized, aligned lines. The prayer leader is the one who has memorized the largest portion of the Qur'an and – out of respect for knowledge – is also the most knowledgeable amongst them. They all perform the prayer in one manner – standing, bowing and prostration to Allah, Exalted. A huge scientific benefit has been discovered concerning the act of prostration in the Muslim prayer ritual (placing the forehead and nose on the ground in exaltation of Allah, Exalted), in that worshipping Allah, Exalted, in this manner rids a person's body of extra electrons by transferring them to the ground, thus protecting the body from the harms they could cause. Thus, the wisdom of God the Creator, Lofty and Exalted, becomes clear in the beauty and magnificence of His legislations.

-The ritual of the poor-due: In this ritual we witness an example of social welfare in the Islamic society, where the rich (those whom Allah, Exalted, has blessed with abundant wealth) extract a percentage of their wealth (2.5%) every year to give to the poor, needy and weak, thus the spirit of affection and love reigns throughout the Islamic society, encompassing whomever dwells therein, Muslim or not. To be more clear: the poor-due is calculated on frozen and idle capital (neither savings nor investments) over which one complete Hijri year has passed, with the intent to stimulate and invest it, such that the poor-due is paid from the surplus and profits instead of paying it from the capital, thus producing fast returns on the capital which indirectly encourages wealthy individuals to invest their money in different projects that generate work opportunities thus lowering unemployment rates, producing fast returns on capital, and stimulating the economy.

-The ritual of fasting: In this ritual, Muslims withhold from eating, drinking and intercourse from dawn until sunset, for one particular month of the year (Ramadan). Muslims in every corner of the earth participate in this ritual all at the same time (in the month of Ramadan, and from dawn until sunset) and all in the same manner. It is recommended that a person breaks his fast with a few dates and some water, as this is from the guidance and habits of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. In this guiding ritual a person is able to imagine the plight of his brothers in humanity who are starving and sympathize with them, causing him to help them and show kindness to them. He also realizes the huge blessing of Allah, Exalted, upon him and increases in gratitude for it. This is in addition to the scientific

health benefits of fasting that have been discovered, which state that fasting allows the digestive system to rest, helps to rid the body of toxins through the liver, decreases the storage of fat by ridding the body of it, strengthens the immune system, overcomes addictions, and so many other benefits, especially if the fast is broken with a few dates and some water after a long period of going without food. This is because the body benefits greatly by the vitamins and minerals found in dates and absorbs them easily. Likewise, water works to wash the kidneys inside the human body.

-The ritual of hajj (pilgrimage): This ritual is obligatory for the person who is capable (both physically and financially) at least once in their lifetime (and if a person wishes to perform hajj more than once voluntarily then that is recommended), during particular days of a particular month of the Hijri year (Dhul-Hijjah), and at a particular place, which is Makkah. This is where all the different races of Muslims from all corners of the earth gather, regardless of their different colors, nationalities, languages, ages and classes, to perform the rites and rituals of hajj in the one manner that Allah, Exalted, wants, thereby strengthening the bond between the different races of people from every corner of the earth, and thus unifying nations and peoples.

Something that has been discovered and noticed recently is that the Muslim ritual of circumambulation of the Sacred House (the Ka'bah) in Makkah that is performed seven times in a counter-clockwise direction is the only ritual that is congruent and harmonious with the universal order that Allah, Exalted, created. For example, the rotation of electrons around the nucleus (which consists of atoms which in turn make up substances) is made up of seven levels of energy (K, L, M, N, O, P, Q) and is counter-clockwise. Likewise, the earth's rotation on its axis is counter-clockwise, as is the earth's revolution around the sun. And this is the same counter-clockwise direction of the ritual of circumambulation that Muslims perform around the Ka'bah.

Islam calls for beautiful, honorable and lofty morals, as well as good and wise ways of interacting, such as honesty, trustworthiness, compassion, fairness, generosity, open-handedness, forgiveness, pardoning, tolerance, and so much more. An example of that is in the following:

-The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings upon him, said: "The best of you are those of you with the best character," (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

-The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings upon him, said: "The most beloved to me and closest to me on the Day of Resurrection are those of you with the best character," (Sahih At-Tirmidhi).

Indeed Islam brought upright laws through which the individual's and society's behaviors are corrected, thus leading to progress and advancement for the human race in every aspect of life. An example of this:

- a- Islam makes everything that is good and beneficial for mankind lawful for him, from food, drink, clothing, residence, marriage and much more. It forbids

any foods that cause mankind harm (such as swine and dead meat – the dangers of both have been discovered recently to cause diseases in the human body), as well as drinks that cause harm (such as wine, spirits and alcohol, which cause a person to lose his mind and behave in an irrational and animalistic manner, which may lead to abuses and aggressions, in addition to the many dangerous diseases drinking causes in the human body).

- b- Islam makes all impure, lewd and sinful acts unlawful (such as murder, adultery, stealing, tyranny, etc.), as well as anything that leads to the corruption of the individual and society.

And there are so many more examples other than what we have shed light upon that clarify the wisdom and soundness of the legislations that Islam brought.

Islam and Its Perspective on the Trials, Tribulations and the Natural Disasters That Mankind Encounter, and How to Deal with Them

Islam makes it clear that the different trials and tribulations a person encounters in life are one of the following:

- 1- They are to be considered a reminder and an exhortation for him, in order to realize his actual weakness (no matter what level he has reached in the different areas of his life) and utter need for his God and Creator to protect him and remove these trials from him (such as illnesses, diseases, straitened circumstances, accidents, etc.).
- 2- Also, so that a person knows the reality of the fleeting worldly life, and that whatever enjoyment he experiences is only a passing enjoyment that is about to slip away and is not eternal for anyone. Indeed it ends with a person's death, or a change in his circumstances or condition (such as from health to illness and incapacity, or from strength to weakness, or from richness to poverty, etc.). Therefore a sound and intelligent person will not be deceived by this fleeting worldly life and its enjoyments, and will always be connected to his God and Creator, believing in and worshipping Him and fulfilling His commands, thus working for the hereafter, which is the ever-lasting life wherein a person will find the reward for his deeds in this worldly life.
- 3- The different trials and tribulations are simply a part of the test that a person is going through in life, meaning: Will a person return to his God and Creator, believe in Him and be satisfied with His pre-ordainment, patient with the trials and tribulations that He decreed, Glorified and Exalted, anticipating the reward for his satisfaction and patience with His Lord, Lofty and Exalted? Or will he be the opposite of that, and deny his Lord, associate partners with Him, show discontent with His pre-ordainment and impatience with the trials and tribulations that He, Lofty and Exalted, decreed?
Allah, Exalted, says: {And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient ones}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 155].

A person must know that no matter how healthy, strong, rich or powerful he is, he will not live forever in this world, and there will come a day wherein he will die. He will begin a new stage of life in the hereafter wherein a person will be resurrected in order to see the results of his beliefs and actions. A person must also know that the worldly life will come to an end one day in order to make way for the other ever-lasting life that has no end. Therein Allah, Exalted, will bring a person to account, and his recompense will be either the eternal delights of Paradise, or the painful torment of hell-fire. Therefore, the worldly life is nothing but a stage through which a person is moving on to the hereafter.

How a person must deal with the trials and tribulations that befall him:

Firstly, a person must believe in his God and Creator, Glorified and Exalted, and in the oneness of His divinity. He must be fully convinced that He, Glorified and Exalted, is Able to do all things, and able remove all the different types of trials and tribulations that he as a human is incapable of removing. Furthermore, he must seek refuge in Him, Glorified and Exalted, humble himself before Him and invoke Him to remove the trials and tribulations that have befallen him and rescue him from them.

Secondly, a person must exert all the means available to him to ward off the trial and safeguard himself from it.

We conclude this point with the glad tidings of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, for the believer who patiently perseveres through the trials and tribulations that befall him, anticipating the reward of his patience with Allah, Glorified and Exalted, as he explained that Allah, Glorified and Exalted will reward him well on the Day of Resurrection with the eternal delights of Paradise. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings upon him, said: "Strange is the affair of the believer! Indeed, all of his affairs are good, and this is not for anyone except the believer. If he experiences happiness he is grateful, and this is good for him; and if he experiences hardship he is patient, and that is good for him," (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and Educating His Companions, may Allah be pleased with all of them, Upon the Teachings of Islam

Bright Illustrations of the Life of Prophet Muhammad and the Effects of Adherence to the Teachings of Islam

The message of Islam was founded upon noble characteristics and sought to firmly root them in the souls. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "I was sent but to perfect noble characteristics," (Al-Muwatta' of Al-Imam Malik, and Al-Albani authenticated it). What is meant is the best of characteristics and the loftiest of praiseworthy traits. Therefore, the more noble a Muslim's character (in addition to his abiding by and adherence to all other Islamic teachings), the closer he will be to Allah, Exalted, and the higher his rank in Paradise.

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, patiently persevered in the face of a great deal of difficulties while conveying the message of Islam, until he helped his people to progress and advance past divisions, conflicts, fanaticism, haughtiness, and constant fighting, to a nation brought together upon the teachings of Islam. He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, established the Islamic nation in a short period (only twenty-three years), during which he was able to build a society founded upon the principles of goodness, truth and virtue. He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was wise in his propagation, forbearing in his direction and guidance using intelligent and logical dialogue in convincing and deterring disobedience and lowly, evil characteristics. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, gave his companions the best education and training upon the teachings of Islam, which called for goodness, virtue and charming and noble characteristics. Here are some concise illustrations of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and the effects of his education and training on his noble companions, may Allah be pleased with all of them:

- 1- Anas bin Malik reported: "I served the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, for ten years, and he never said to me 'Uff!' nor did he ask me 'Why did you do such and such?' or 'Why did you leave such and such?' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was the best of people in character," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).
- 2- There was a time when the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, used to wear a Najrani cloak (i.e., a garment he used to wrap himself in from Najran, a place between Al-Hijaz and Yemen), and the hem of this cloak was very thick. Once a Bedouin man came up to the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and pulled his cloak so hard that the shoulder of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, became bare. The Bedouin then said – harshly and impolitely – "O Muhammad! Give

some of Allah's wealth that you have!" The noble Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, smiled at him with forbearance, forgiveness and compassion, then ordered that he be given some money. (A concise explanation of a hadith narrated by Al-Imam Ahmad). So instead of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, attacking this Bedouin, or ordering his companions to punish him, he pardoned him and gave him the best treatment. The ignorance of the ignorant only caused him, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, to increase in forbearance, forgiveness and kind treatment.

- 3- A Bedouin once came to the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, requesting some charity from him. He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, gave it to him, then asked him: "Have I treated you well?" The Bedouin replied: "No, not at all!" His statement angered the Muslims, so they stood up to beat him up for acting impolitely with the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, motioned for them to not harm him, then he took the Bedouin to his home and gave him more and then said: "Have I treated you well?" He replied: "Yes, and may Allah reward you and your family with good!" The Prophet may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, then said: "When you said what you said before, it caused anger in my companions; so if you like, say to them what you have just said to me in order to calm their anger." The Bedouin agreed, and the next day he came and the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "This Bedouin said what he said, then we gave him more and he seems to be satisfied, is that so?" The Bedouin answered: "Yes, and may Allah reward you and your family with good!" Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The parable of me and these types of individuals is like that of the man whose camel was running away from him. The people were running after it and it only made the camel run faster. The owner called out to the people, 'Leave me to deal with my camel, for I am more familiar with it.' He then came towards it from in front of it and offered it a fistful of grass. He pulled it back until it kneeled down. Then he saddled it and climbed upon it," (Narrated by Al-Bazzar).

This example is a clear example of the extreme gentleness, forbearance, forgiveness and kind-heartedness of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, as well as his wisdom in teaching the Bedouin and his noble companions how to deal with these types of situations.

- 4- Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was the best of people, the most generous of people and the bravest of people." He said: "One night the inhabitants of Madinah became startled when they heard a noise." He continued: "They found the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon

him, on the unsaddled horse of Abu Talhah, with his sword wrapped around his neck, saying: 'Do not be frightened, do not be frightened!'" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). Meaning: one night, the Muslims in Madinah heard a sound that frightened and startled them, and they were aroused from their sleep, alarmed and terrified, thinking that the enemy was lying in wait preparing to attack them in the darkness of the night. When the Muslims went out walking in the direction of the sound to investigate the matter, they found the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, coming towards them on a horse from the direction of the sound after he had investigated the matter himself, assuring them and telling them to go back to their homes. This incident illustrates the extreme bravery, fearlessness and courage of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, as such that he did not wait until the Muslims informed him of the matter, rather he fearlessly went himself to investigate the matter and assure the Muslims.

- 5- 'Abdullah bin 'Aamir, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: "My mother called out to me saying: 'Come here, I will give you something.' Whereupon the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said to her: 'What do you wish to give to him?' She replied: 'I will give him a date.' He said to her: 'If you had not given him something it would have been recorded on your record as a lie,'" (Narrated by Ahmad). Meaning: The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was teaching this mother and all of his followers that all lying, including lying to children, is not permissible. This is so that children do not learn the act of lying and get used to it, and more importantly to raise children up with the characteristic of honesty.
- 6- Sahl bin Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was brought something to drink and he drank from it. On his right was a young boy and on his left were old men. He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, asked the boy: "Will you permit me to give to them first?" The boy replied: "No, by Allah! I will not give up my portion of (blessings from) you to anyone!" Sa'd said: So the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, handed it to him. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). Meaning: It was the habit of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, that he would pass to his right and then to his left. However, in this instance he found that there was only one boy on his right and old men on his left, so he wished to allow the old men to drink before the lad out of respect for them (their age and their number). At the same time, he, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, did not want to deprive the boy of his rightful turn to drink (since he was on the right of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), so he wished to resolve the situation by seeking the boy's permission (in order to respect his right and acknowledge him). The boy, however, wished to experience the joy of drinking from the same spot of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and he was not giving anyone his portion of

that blessing. Thus, the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, granted the boy's request, acknowledging the truth and fairness that he taught his companions as well as all of his followers, and also to give the boy a sense of value and get him accustomed to bravery and giving his opinion politely. Indeed, he, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was a wise teacher.

- 7- The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, went out on one of his expeditions (wars against his polytheist enemies who fought against Islam) in the middle of the day. While he was returning with his army, he, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, passed by a tree-filled valley, so the Muslims spread out to take shade under the trees. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, went under a tree and hung his sword on one of its branches, then fell asleep. While he was sleeping, a Bedouin came to him, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, grabbed his sword, took it out of its sheath and leveled it. When the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, woke up the Bedouin said to him: "Are you afraid of me?" The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "No." The Bedouin then said: "Who can protect you from me?" The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said three times: "Allah." Then the Bedouin's hand began to tremble and he became confused and dropped the sword. Thereafter the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, picked it up and said to him: "Who can protect you from me?" The Bedouin said: "Be better than me," meaning: If you were me you would have mistreated me, so be better than me and do not treat me as I treated you. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said to him: "Will you testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah?" The Bedouin replied: "No, however I promise you that I will not fight against you, nor will I support anyone who fights against you." So the Prophet pardoned him and let him go without punishing him. The Bedouin returned to his people saying: "I came to you from the best people," and from that day on he never supported or aided anyone against the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. (A summarized explanation of a hadith reported by Jabir and narrated by Al-Imam Ahmad and others). This incident clearly illustrates the extreme conviction of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, as well as his trust and confidence in Allah, Glorified and Exalted, and the beautiful forbearance, forgiveness and pardoning he showed for the Bedouin who had come to kill him.
- 8- While the Muslims were digging a trench (in order to safeguard them against the attacks of the polytheists when all the enemies of the Muslims had gathered together against them), a huge and extremely solid boulder fell in front of them, and not even their pickaxes could break it up. They complained about it to the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, so he took the pickax and said: "In the name of Allah," then struck the boulder with one blow, breaking a third of it into pieces. He, may Allah's

peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah is the Greatest," and then gave the Muslims the glad tidings of a victory from Allah, Exalted, for them in the future, which was the conquest of the Levant. Then the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, struck the boulder a second time, breaking another third of it into pieces. He said, "Allah is the Greatest," then gave the Muslims the glad tidings of a second victory from Allah for them in the future, which was the conquest of Persia. Then the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, struck the boulder a third time, breaking the last third into pieces, whereupon he said: "Allah is the Greatest," and gave the Muslims the glad tidings of a third victory from Allah for them in the future, which was the conquest of Yemen. (A summarized explanation of a hadith narrated by An-Nasa'i). And all of these prophecies of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, came true, as after only a short time Islam entered those countries that he spoke of, and their people entered Islam in large numbers.

This incident illustrates the complete trust and confidence of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, for Allah, Exalted, as he did not depend on his strength but instead sought refuge in his God and Creator by beginning with the statement, "In the name of Allah," and concluding with the statement, "Allah is the Greatest." He did not attribute his success in breaking the boulder to himself, rather he attributed it to Allah, Exalted, by saying, "Allah is the Greatest," as Allah, Exalted, is greater than everything, and it is by His grace and blessing that we succeed in anything. Thus, this was an excellent lesson for his noble companions and all his followers in how to trust in Allah and seek refuge in Him.

This incident also clarifies how the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, spread the spirit of hope and victory in the hearts of his companions at their time of weakness and worry, and fear of attack from their enemies. It also shows the veracity of what he, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, informed them of and the authenticity of his message from Allah, Glorified and Exalted.

- 9- Anas bin Malik reported: While we were in the masjid with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, a Bedouin came and urinated in the masjid. The companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, began to scold him, so the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Do not interrupt him; instead leave him." They left him alone until he finished urinating, then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, called him over and said to him: "Any kind of urine or filth is not suitable for these masjids. Rather they are only [appropriate] for the remembrance of Allah, prayer, and recitation of the Qur'an." He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, then ordered someone to bring a bucket of

water and pour it over it (in order to clean the place where the Bedouin had urinated). (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). This incident illustrates the wisdom of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, in resolving these types of situations. He forbid his companions from using force and violence with the one who has erred, and instead displayed gentleness with the Bedouin while teaching him a very subtle lesson without scaring or frightening him.

- 10- A man came to the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and said: "My wife gave birth to a black boy (i.e., he was hinting that he was denying his paternity)." The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, asked him: "Do you own any camels?" The man replied that he did. The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, asked him: "Are any of them brown or grey?" The man replied: "Yes, there is." He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, asked the man: "How is that?" The man replied: "Perhaps it is hereditary." The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, then said: "And perhaps this (the boy's color) is hereditary (i.e., perhaps the boy inherited one of the characteristics of his ancestors)!" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). Here, the Prophet did not allow the man to deny paternity of the boy for a mere imagined speculation about something that possibly occurred. This incident illustrates how the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, treated this dangerous situation (that could have resulted in the loss of an innocent child's heritage, and the complete destruction and break up of a Muslim home) through intelligent and logical dialogue that was both satisfactory for the questioner and consistent with modern genealogical findings concerning this natural occurrence. Not to mention that not even the slightest proof existed of his wife's betrayal. This incident also illustrates the Prophet's role and wisdom in preserving the family and its stability, which consequently leads to the stability of the society.

And there are so many other bright examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, that illustrate the magnificence and loftiness of Islam's teaching and their objectives.

The bright example of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, had an extremely positive effect on his noble companions, as well as an active role in educating and bringing up a rare generation that was established upon the foundations of goodness and virtue. Some examples:

- 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf was one of the companions of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, who, after entering Islam, had migrated from Makkah to Madinah in order to escape the harm and torture inflicted upon them by the polytheists (the people of Makkah who fought against Islam), leaving behind everything that was precious and valuable to them (wealth, homes), and sacrificing all of it for the sake of steadfastness and adherence to the religion of Allah, Exalted, Islam.

Therefore, after his migration to Madinah, the companion 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf was poor just as the other Muslims who migrated were, as he no longer owned a home or had any wealth or even a wife. Sa'd bin Ar-Rabie' (one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, who lived in Madinah, and who welcomed, aided and supported the Prophet and his companions who had migrated with him) felt that the least he could do was to tell 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf: "Take half of my wealth for you." Sa'd also had two wives at this time, so he said to 'Abdur-Rahman: "Choose one of my two wives – the most beautiful one; look at her and if you are pleased I will divorce her and you may marry her when her waiting period is over." Meaning, Sa'd bin Ar-Rabie' wished to give preference to his Muslim brother 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf by giving him half of his wealth and marrying him to the most beautiful of his two wives, and this was his way of implementing the teachings of Islam that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, had taught them and educated them upon. Allah, Exalted, says: {And they give them (emigrants) preference over themselves, even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful}, [Surat-ul-Hashr: 9]. He longed for the reward and recompense from Allah, Blessed and Exalted, for the assistance he offered his Muslim brother.

However, the response of 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf (who had been taught and educated the teachings of Islam by the Prophet Muhammad himself, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, such as the encouragement to work hard and earnestly, to have self-esteem and dignity and to not be needy towards others) was simply to invoke Allah to grant goodness to his brother (in Islam) Sa'd, saying to him: "May Allah bless your family and your wealth," and decided to work as a trader. (The story in its entirety was narrated by Al-Imam Al-Bukhari).

Allah bestowed His blessings upon the companion 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf (who refused to eat and live by other than the work and earnings of his own hands) and opened the doors of His graces and provisions for him until he became one of the wealthiest Muslims who would spend abundantly on the poor and needy. His was a true implementation of the teachings of Islam and emulation of the chosen Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him.

We conclude this point with a brief description of the personality and physical features of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, in the following manner:

-A brief description of his personality, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him: He was always pensive and silent for long periods of time, never speaking unless there was a need; gentle-natured, never becoming angry for the sake of himself (his anger was only for the sake of Allah, Exalted, when His sacredness was violated), his laugh was a smile; he joked and played with his companions and never said except the truth.

-A brief description of the physical features of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him: he had a pinkish color, light-skinned with a reddish tint; a round face like a full moon; due to their natural beauty, his eyes appeared as if they were adorned with liner although they were not, and they were wide-set with a long gap between them; his eyelashes were long, which added to the beauty of his eyes; his eyebrows were subtly long and disconnected; he had a wide forehead, a thin nose and the most handsome mouth; he had a gap in his front teeth, and when he spoke it looked as if light emanated from between them; when he was happy his face lit up like a piece of the moon; his hair was black and neither curly nor straight; his neck was as pure as silver; his beard was completely black except for a few grey hairs (from aging); he was firm-bodied, neither plump nor thin; he was neither tall nor short, although he was closer to tall; his chest and belly were even; he was open-minded (he never became angry for his own sake, rather he became angry only for the sake of Allah, Glorified and Exalted); he was simply illuminating: if any part of his body became exposed (such as his shoulders during hajj or 'umrah) it looked like light due to its beauty and purity. And these are just some of the physical characteristics of Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him.

Islam's Teachings Are a Cause for Development, Advancement and Progress

In previous points, we touched upon some of the lofty teachings and high principles of Islam in different examples and areas, and now we wish to shed light upon some of the lofty teachings of Islam that are a cause for development, advancement and progress. By the will of Allah, Exalted, we will limit our discussion to the fields of education, manners, knowledge and work, since growth, development, advancement and progress all occur through these fields.

Firstly: some examples of Islam's lofty teachings in the field of education and manners-

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. A man is the guardian of his family and he is responsible for his flock. A woman is the guardian of her husband's home and she is responsible for her flock. The servant of a man is a guardian of the property of his master and he is responsible for his flock. No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock," (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

- 1- Teaching praiseworthy traits and noble characteristics, for example: Honesty, trustworthiness, not cheating, honoring guests, kindness toward parents and neighbors, sympathy for the poor and needy, etc.; and a caution against vile characteristics and traits like lying, treachery, quarreling, etc. Following are some of the noble Qur'anic verses and Prophetic Hadiths that explain this:

-Allah, Exalted, says: {Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful}, [Surat-un-Nisaa: 36].

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "A true believer does not taunt, curse, abuse or talk indecently," (Narrated by Ahmad); meaning: the believer is not given to cursing, abusing and taunting people, nor is he given to bad behavior and actions.

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, once asked three times: "Shall I not inform of the worst of the major sins?" They said: "Of course!" He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Associating others in worship with Allah, mistreatment of parents, and killing oneself..." He sat up from reclining position and said: "And giving a false oath..." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever says to a child, 'Come here, I will give you something,' then does not give him something has lied," (Narrated by Ahmad).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Fulfill the trust to him who entrusted it to you, and do not betray him who betrayed you," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever possesses these four traits is a hypocrite; whoever possesses one of them has an attribute of hypocrisy until he abandons it: he lies whenever he speaks, he does not fulfill whenever he promises, whenever he makes an agreement he proves treacherous, and whenever he argues he becomes vulgar," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was walking through the market place when he passed by a pile of food. He put his fingers in it and felt wetness. He said: "O owner of the food! What is this?" He replied: "It was rained upon, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "Why not put it on top of the food so the people can see it?" Then he said: "Whoever cheats is not one of us," (Narrated by Muslim and Ahmad).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "I will be like this in Paradise with the person who takes care of an orphan," and he raised his forefinger and middle finger by way of illustration. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day must not annoy his neighbor," (Narrated by Muslim).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day must not annoy his neighbor; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last day should honor his guest; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak goodness or remain silent," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

2- Teaching the importance of cleanliness, a handsome appearance, and keeping the roads clean and nice.

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Indeed Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty," (Narrated by Muslim). Meaning, He loves that a person keeps his body, clothes and overall appearance clean. Likewise, He loves that a person keeps his home and the locality in which he lives clean, including streets and roads, etc.

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Indeed Allah is pure and He loves purity; He is clean and loves cleanliness; He is generous and loves generosity; He is hospitable and loves hospitality, so clean your courtyards," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

-Islam requires ablution in order to perform the five daily prayers. It is done by washing the hands, rinsing the mouth, sniffing water into the nose then blowing it out, washing the face, washing the hands again (this time until the elbows), wiping the head and ears, and washing the feet until the ankles.

-Keeping in mind: Islam encourages the economical use of water for purification, ablution and cleaning, and discourages abusing and wasting it. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, once passed by Sa'd while he was performing ablution and said: "What is this excessiveness, O Sa'd?" Sa'd replied: "Is there excessiveness in ablution?" He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, replied: "Yes, even if you were at a flowing river," (Narrated by Ahmad). Meaning: It is not permissible to take more water than what is needed for purification, ablution and washing, so as not to abuse and waste the water without benefiting from it.

-Islam encourages being in a state of purity and ablution before going to sleep as well as upon waking (in preparation for the obligatory dawn prayer).

-Islam also encourages bathing, which is when a person washes and purifies his entire body with pure, clean water. This illustrates the importance Islam places on complete purity and cleanliness of the body.

-Islam encourages perfuming and using pleasant scented colognes that bring delight and happiness to the soul. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, used to love perfume and used it often. Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: "I have never smelled a scent or musk or amber more pleasant than the scent of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him," (Narrated by Ahmad).

-Islam encourages purity and cleanliness, which includes: cleaning the teeth and freshening the breath by using a siwak (natural toothbrush from the Arak tree), something that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, encouraged at the time of every ablution, before praying, before sleeping and after waking (including waking early for the obligatory dawn prayer). Indeed, the siwak works to freshen the mouth, gives it a pleasant scent, purifies it from bad odors, and protects it from harmful impurities.

-The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The siwak is purifying for the mouth and pleasing to the Lord," (Narrated by An-Nasa'i). Meaning, purification – including purifying the mouth – is a cause for gaining the pleasure of Allah, Glorified and Exalted. So it is clear that Islam puts great emphasis on cleanliness, and that it is indeed the religion of purification.

-Modern science has discovered many medical benefits resulting from the use of the siwak (natural toothbrush from the Arak tree), as it contains a substance that is rich in purifying, cleansing and anti-bacterial properties. This substance has actually recently

been used in powder form for cleaning and purifying the mouth. Additionally, swallowing one's saliva after using siwak is not harmful, as opposed to doing so after using modern, commercial toothpastes, as we know that these ingredients can cause harm if swallowed, especially in small children.

-Islam encourages the removal of harmful objects from the streets and roads.

-The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "...And removing harmful objects from the road is charity," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

-The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "While a man was walking on a road he came upon a sharp branch in the middle of the road and removed it (i.e., he moved it out of the way to prevent it from harming someone), so Allah thanked him and forgave him," (Narrated by Muslim).

3- Teaching humility and shunning arrogance

-Allah, Exalted, says: {And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not each arrogant boaster. And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice (braying) of the ass}, [Surat Luqman: 18-19).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him said: "Allah has revealed to me that you should humble yourselves to one another. One should neither transgress against another nor hold himself above another," (Narrated by Muslim).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The person with even an atom's weight of pride will not enter Paradise," (Narrated by Muslim).

4- Teaching organization and orderliness

Islam strives to instill the principle of organization and orderliness in people. It disciplines them in it in order for them to implement it. This is clear from its teachings, directives and laws, and an example of this is: the ritual of prayer (which Muslims perform in congregation in the masjid), wherein Muslims stand side by side in straight, orderly rows, performing the prayer in a single manner. Their movements and positions are unified and organized (including standing, bowing and prostration to Allah, Exalted), all the while following one leader (the person who has the most knowledge and has memorized the most from the Qur'an, out of respect for knowledge). And there are many more examples of Islamic rituals, teachings, directives and laws that seek to instill and implement the principle of organization and orderliness.

5-Teaching about choosing the best and most beneficial foods, and avoiding anything that is bad and harmful

-Allah, Exalted, says: {O you who believe! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah, if it is indeed He Whom you worship}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 172].

-Allah, Exalted, also says: {...He allows them all good things, and prohibits them from all evil things."} [Surat-ul-A'raf: 157].

6- Teaching the beautiful manners of food and eating

- a- Washing the hands before eating.
- b- Sitting down while eating, and avoiding eating while standing or walking.
- c- The sitting should be on the knees with the feet showing (and this manner of sitting is in agreement the customary way of dining in Japan); or, to sit on the left leg with the right leg outstretched. Both manners of sitting help to prevent over-eating thus preventing harm to the stomach.
- d- Mentioning the name of Allah, Exalted, by saying "In the name of Allah," before beginning, and invoking the blessings of Allah, Exalted, upon the food by saying "Oh Allah, bless us in the provisions You have given us..."; then praising and thanking Allah, Exalted, after finishing eating for His tremendous graces by saying, "All praise is due to Allah."

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Indeed Allah is pleased with the slave who eats some food then praises Allah for it; or drinks some beverage then praises Allah for it," (Narrated by Muslim).

- e- Eating with the right hand, and beginning with the food that is in front of you, and then what is beside it.

-Umar bin Abi Salamah, may Allah be pleased with them both, reported: The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said to me: "Young boy, mention the name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

- f- Eating the amount of food that is beneficial for the body, and avoiding filling the stomach with food so as not to bring harm upon oneself.

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "No man fills a container worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him. If he has to, then he should keep one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for his breathing," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and An-Nasa'i).

- g- Avoiding extravagance and going beyond the natural and allowed limits of eating and drinking, since eating and drinking many different types of foods and drinks in one meal (overly satisfying one's appetite) could cause harms and expose one to diseases.

-Allah, Exalted, says: {...And eat and drink but waste not by extravagance}, [Surat-ul-A'raf: 31].

h- Avoiding leaving food leftovers on plates that have been eaten from, and being careful to take only the amount that a person needs, thereby avoiding wasting food.

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "There is blessing in the last bits of food," (Narrated by Ahmad).

7- Teaching about honoring your neighbors with some of your food, according to your ability

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "When you make broth, add more water, then look to your neighbors and pour a generous amount for them," (Narrated by Muslim).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him said: "He who eats to his fill while his neighbor beside him is hungry is not a true believer," (Narrated by Al-Hakim).

8- Teaching about care and concern for others, thinking of them and being selfless

-Allah, Exalted, says: {O you who believe! Bow down, and prostrate yourselves, and worship your Lord and do goodness that you may be successful}, [Surat-ul-Hajj: 77].

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him him, said: "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever fulfills the need of his brother, Allah will fulfill his need," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever among you is able to benefit his brother should do so," (Narrated by Muslim).

The meaning of 'brother' in these Hadiths is your brother Muslim, as Allah, Exalted, says: {The believers are but brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy}, [Surat-ul-Hujurat: 10].

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Seek me among your weak ones..." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). Meaning: seek my love and pleasure through working to assist the weak, poor and those with special needs by investigating their circumstances, fulfilling their needs and protecting their rights. Thus, you will achieve the pleasure of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, as Allah, Glorified and Exalted, loves and is pleased with whomever implements the teachings of His

Messenger since it is He, Lofty and Exalted, who sent His Messenger with these lofty, magnanimous teachings to be implemented by people.

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The most beloved people to Allah, Mighty and Majestic, are those who are most beneficial to the people," (Narrated by At-Tabari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever does not show compassion for children and respect for elders, is not one of us," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

10- Teaching the importance of assimilating into the society and spreading the spirit of love and cooperation amongst friends and acquaintances, by spreading the greeting of peace to everyone.

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The best companion in the sight of Allah is the one who is best towards his companion," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The best people in the sight of Allah are the ones who initiate the greeting of peace," (Narrated by Abu Dawud). Meaning: The closest people to Allah and the ones most deserving of His forgiveness and mercy are those who initiate greetings to others by saying "May peace be upon you," i.e., I wish you safety and security. The response to this greeting is the same: "And may peace be upon you."

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "O people! Spread (the greeting of) peace, feed others, uphold the ties of kinship, and pray during the night when people are sleeping, and you will enter Paradise in peace," (Narrated by Ahmad).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I inform you of something which, if you do, you will love one another? Spread (the greeting of) peace amongst yourselves," (Narrated by Muslim).

-A man asked Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him: Which is the best Islam? He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, replied: "Feed the hungry and extend the greeting of peace to those whom you know and do not know," (Narrated by Muslim).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Do not belittle any small deed, even if it is greeting your brother with a cheerful countenance," (Narrated by Muslim).

11- Teaching the importance of loving others and advising them

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The religion is sincere advising and well-wishing," (Narrated by Muslim). Meaning: Giving sincere advice to others is from the teachings of Islam, because it means that you wish well for others and are offering sincere advice and direction to them that will bring out benefit for them and prevent them from evil.

12- Teaching the importance of treating others well

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Behave with others with the best of character," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

13- Teaching the importance of honoring guests

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "...And whoever believes in Allah and the Last day should honor his guests," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

14- Teaching the importance of treating neighbors well, loving them, visiting them and fulfilling their rights

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should treat his neighbors well," (Narrated by Muslim).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "And the best neighbor in the sight of Allah is the one who is best towards his neighbor," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

15- Teaching the importance of appreciating time, and honoring appointments, commitments and agreements

-Allah, Exalted, says: {By Time}, [Surat-ul-'Asr: 1]. Meaning, Allah, Glorified and Exalted, swears by time, due to its importance and value in Islam. Indeed, Islam encourages making good use of time in anything that is beneficial and useful, and discourages abusing and wasting it in non-beneficial and useless things.

-Allah, Exalted, says: {O you who believe! Fulfill your obligations!}, [Surat-ul-Ma'idah: 1].

-Allah, Exalted, says: {And fulfill (every) covenant. Verily, the covenant will be questioned about}, [Surat-ul-Isra': 34].

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks he tells a lie; whenever he promises he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted he proves dishonest," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). Meaning: The true believer is not characterized by lying, breaking promises, or treachery.

16- Teaching patience, perseverance and optimism, and shunning pessimism

-Allah, Exalted, says: {O you who believe! Endure and be more patient (than your enemy), and guard your territory by stationing army units permanently at the places from where the enemy can attack you, and fear Allah, so that you may be successful}, [Surat Aal 'Imran: 200].

-Allah, Exalted, says: {Verily, he who fears Allah with obedience to Him, and is patient, then surely, Allah makes not the reward of the good-doers to be lost}, [Surat Yusuf: 90].

-Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "There is no such thing as omens, and the best omen is optimism." They asked, "What is optimism?" He said, "A good word that one of you hears (and takes as a good omen)," (Narrated by Ahmad). Meaning, There is no pessimism in Islam, and there is only optimism and glad tidings through good and righteous words.

17- Teaching the importance of earnestness and precision in work

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Indeed, Allah loves that when someone undertakes some work that he does it with precision," (Narrated by Abu Ya'la and At-Tabari).

18- Teaching the importance of team work

-Allah, Exalted, says: {Help you one another in virtue, righteousness and piety; but do not help one another in sin and transgression}, [Surat-ul-Ma'idah: 2].

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The believer is to the believer like parts of a building, each one of them supporting the other," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah's hand is with the congregation," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). Meaning: Allah, Exalted, blesses and brings success to the congregation.

19- Teaching and instilling the love reading, and encouraging and promoting it

-Allah, Exalted, says: {Read, in the name of your Lord who created!}, [Surat-ul-'Alaq: 1].

-Allah, Exalted, says: {Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous!}, [Surat-ul-'Alaq: 3].

a- Some examples of Islam's lofty teachings, propagation and emphasis regarding the field of knowledge and education, as well as appreciation for scholars:

-Allah, Exalted, says: {And say: 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge'}, [Surat Taha: 114].

-Allah, Exalted, says: {It is only Allah's knowledgeable slaves who fear Him}, [Surat Fatir: 28].

-Allah, Exalted, says: {Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge}, [Surat-ul-Mujadalah: 11].

b- Some examples of Islam's lofty teachings which encourage respect and reverence of the scholars:

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "...And the superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like the superiority of the moon above all other heavenly bodies," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Treat people according to their status," (Narrated by Abu Dawud). Meaning: Determine their rank and honor their status.

c- Some examples of Islam's lofty teachings regarding buying and selling:

-Allah, Exalted, says: {And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight. That is good (advantageous) and better in the end}, [Surat-ul-Isra': 35].

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "May Allah's mercy be on him who is lenient (easy-going) in his buying, selling, and in demanding back his money," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The honest, trustworthy trader will be with the prophets, veracious and martyrs," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). Meaning: He will be in the highest levels of Paradise.

d- Some examples of Islam's lofty teachings regarding work

-The incitement to work: Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "No person eats any food better than that which was brought by the work of his own hands," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "It is better for anyone of you to take a rope (and cut) and bring a bundle of wood (from the forest) over his back and sell it and Allah will save his face (from the Hell-Fire) because of that, rather than to ask the people who may give him or not," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

-The encouragement to go to work early, thus taking advantage of the time and preserving it and not wasting it: Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "O Allah, bless my nation in their early mornings," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). Meaning: In the early morning and beginning of the day.

20- Teaching the importance of continuous improvement and changing for the better

-Allah, Exalted, says: {...And do good. Truly, Allah loves the good-doers}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 195].

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah has prescribed excellence for all things," (Narrated by Muslim). One type of excellence is excellence in work. The one who excels in his work strives to do well and perfect it, and this is through precision and putting emphasis on developing the skills used in his work.

21- Teaching the importance of sacrifice, and giving until the last moment of one's life

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "If the Final Hour comes while you have a palm-cutting in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it," (Narrated by Ahmad). Meaning: When the a person's life comes to an end, or it is the end of the world and all creatures will cease to exist (due to the coming of the Day of Resurrection – the day in which mankind will be brought to account by Allah, Glorified and Exalted), and at that moment he is holding a small plant, it is better for him to plant it as long as he is capable of doing so, in spite of the fact that at that moment it will be of no avail to him. Thus, it is befitting for a person to strive and work until the last moment of his life, seeking the reward and pleasure of Allah, Glorified and Exalted, as Allah, Blessed and Exalted, says: {Verily! As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, certainly! We shall not suffer to be lost the reward of anyone who does his (righteous) deeds in the most perfect manner}, [Surat-ul-Kahf: 30].

We conclude this point by reiterating the following examples of Islam's lofty teachings that elevate social relations and strive to improve them:

- 1- Initiating the greeting of peace: The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The best of people in the sight of Allah are those who initiate the greeting of peace," (Narrated by Abu Dawud).
'Abdullah bin 'Amr said: A man asked the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him: Which Islam is the best? He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, replied: "Feed the hungry and extend the greeting of peace (i.e., saying "Peace be upon you") to those whom you know and do not know," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).
- 2- Emphasis on visiting and greeting neighbors: Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should treat his neighbor well," (Narrated by Muslim).
- 3- Exchanging gifts in order to spread love and affection among the Muslims: Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "If you exchange gifts you will love one another," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

- 4- Laughing gently and taking care to not make your voice loud: Allah, Exalted, says: {Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much}, [Surat-ul-Ahzab: 21]. His laugh, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was a smile; and when he was extremely happy about something he would laugh quietly and in a dignified manner, without making loud sounds.
- 5- The encouragement to meet others with a smile and cheerful countenance, in order to bring delight and happiness to their hearts: Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, was always happy, easy-going, gentle natured and kind-hearted.

'Abdullah bin Al-Harith said: "I have never seen anyone who smiled more than the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). In spite of his being occupied with matters of propagation and inviting others to the religion of Allah, Exalted, (Islam) as well as all the oppression and fighting he sustained and endured from the enemies of Islam, it never prevented him, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, from striving to bring delight and happiness to the hearts of his companions, such that he was in the habit of happiness and smiling in their faces whenever he met them.

The companion Jarir bin 'Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, informed us the condition of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, every time he saw him, saying: "He never showed me anything but a smile in my face," (Narrated by Muslim).

And the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Your smile in your brother's face is charity," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi), therefore Islam renders each one of its followers brothers to one another.

Hopefulness and working for a better future are achieved through cheerfulness and smiling.

22- Islam's teachings regarding the manner of purification before ritual acts of worship (such as prayer)

-Purification according to Islamic teachings:

- 1- Washing the hands;
- 2- Rinsing the mouth (by taking water into the mouth, moving it around, then spitting it out;
- 3- Sniffing water into the nose then blowing it out;
- 4- Washing both hands up to the elbows;
- 5- Wiping the hair on the head;
- 6- Wiping the ears from (inside and behind);
- 7- Washing the feet up to the ankles.

All of the above-mentioned points clarify the magnificence of Islam's lofty teachings and high principles in the areas of education, morals, knowledge and work. Advancement and progress for nations and peoples occur by propagating praiseworthy character traits, honorable treatment, cleaning and purifying the soul, knowledge and learning, and hard work and precision.

Islam and Its Manner of Solving Major Problems (Past and Current)

Islam invites to the divine and upright methodology by which all of human life will be reformed, and strives to offer model solutions to all types of major problems, both past and current. The following are some examples:

1- The problem of bondage and slavery:

At the dawn of Islam, slave trading was a prevailing business in many societies (if not most or all), and was quite widespread in the old Arabian society. Islam sought to solve this problem with extreme wisdom, thus it did not outlaw the practice right away, as slave trading at the time was considered a main source of income for many people, and slaves were also considered capital (the more slaves you had the more your net worth increased, and you could subsequently trade them for money). Islam's aim was not to hinder people from their wealth and deprive them of it, so this spreading phenomenon and deep-rooted custom was treated with extremely remarkable care and wisdom through the following methods:

-Islam made freeing a believing slave as expiation for many different types of sins. Meaning: a person's repentance for committing certain types of sins was conditional upon their freeing a slave if they were able to. If a person owned slaves, he would have to free one; and if he did not own slaves but was wealthy, then he would have to buy a slave and free him, and this served as penance from the sins he had committed, according to what Islam commanded.

-Islam incited Muslims to free slaves, explaining the reward and compensation from Allah, Blessed and Exalted, for the one who hastened to free a slave from bondage, as the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever frees a believing slave, Allah will save all of his limbs from the hell-fire just as he freed the limbs of the slave," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). Meaning: On the Day of Resurrection, Allah, Blessed and Exalted, will reward him with salvation from hell-fire and entrance into the eternal and magnificent delights and pleasures of Paradise. As such, there were some of the companions of Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him (who were brought up on Islam's lofty teaching of freeing the slaves in your possession, seeking the reward and compensation of Allah, Blessed and Exalted), that would spend large amounts of money to buy slaves in order to free them, seeking the pleasure of Allah, Blessed and Exalted. Thus, Islam indeed strove to treat and solve this problem with extreme wisdom.

2- The problem of suicide:

Islam strove to cure this problem by treating the causes that lead to it, and some of the causes for suicide are:

-Feelings of inadequacy and failure: Islam rooted out this cause that leads to many cases of suicide by opening the eternal door of hope and closing the

door to despair forever. Islam made it clear that despair is not a characteristic of a true believer (those who believe in God the Creator and in the oneness of His divinity). Allah, Exalted, says: {Say: 'O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'}, [Surat-uz-Zumar: 53].

Allah, Exalted, also says: {...And never give up hope of Allah's Mercy. Certainly no one despairs of Allah's Mercy, except the people who disbelieve}, [Surat Yusuf: 87]. These verses explain that a believer must not despair of the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, Exalted, towards him for his shortcomings if he turns to Him in repentance; also, a believer must not despair of Allah's blessing and support for him when he seeks His refuge and assistance. Rather, he must always have hope in the mercy, blessing and support of Allah, Exalted, and strive and try earnestly time after time to achieve his objectives and reach success, seeking through it for Allah, Blessed and Exalted, to be pleased with him.

Islam also made it clear that all of a person's efforts, striving and hard work in his life to move forward in the path of goodness and success (even if he ends up unsuccessful) are all to his advantage and will be on his scale of good deeds on the Day of Resurrection, if he indeed he does it with a good and righteous intention, and through it all seeks for Allah, Blessed and Exalted, to be pleased with him.

Meaning: If a person's inner intention towards Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is righteous and sincere, but he is not successful in his efforts, striving and hard work to move forward in the path of success, then by the mercy, blessing and excellence of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, towards His slaves, He will count all of his striving and efforts (however unsuccessful) on his scale of good deeds on the Day of Resurrection. He will also reward him for it as a result of his righteous intention. Thus, this is an incentive to spread the spirit of hope, striving and struggling in our efforts, time after time (even if you end up failing) towards achieving success.

-Feeling a lack of purpose in life: Islam roots out this cause that leads to suicide by clarifying the objective and purpose of this life that we are living, giving insight into its role as a means to success in another, pleasurable and eternal life after death. With belief, righteous deeds, praiseworthy manners, good treatment of others and beautiful development of the earth in this short worldly life, we will achieve the success of the highest levels of the delightful, eternal Paradise in the hereafter.

-Psychiatric problems resulting from a lack of interaction and love between people, and a preference for the imaginary and virtual world over the real world, leading to belief that the virtual world is better and more comfortable

than the real world: Islam treats these psychiatric problems and the desire to live in the ideal, model world where a person can find all he wishes for (a good, comfortable and affluent life) with the promise of another eternal life that has been promised to the righteous believers (those who believe in God the Creator and in the oneness of His divinity) after this short worldly life. It is a life wherein the believers will enjoy eternal delight and pleasure in gardens of eternity as a reward from Allah, Blessed and Exalted, because of their believing in and worshipping and obeying Him (by fulfilling His commands and avoiding His prohibitions), as Allah, Exalted, says: {Verily! Those who believe and do righteous deeds, shall have the Gardens of Paradise for their entertainment. Wherein they shall dwell (forever), no desire will they have to be removed therefrom}, [Surat-ul-Kahf: 107-108].

In obedience to Allah, Exalted, a person must not commit suicide for any reason whatsoever, as Allah, Exalted, says: {And do not kill yourselves. Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you} [Surat-un-Nisaa': 29]; and {...And do not throw yourselves into destruction...}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 195].

Thus, a person obliges himself to patiently persevere while enduring suffering in this short, fleeting worldly life, looking forward to what Allah, Blessed and Exalted, promises him in another long, eternal life, wherein he will find the good, comfortable, affluent life he always wished and hoped for.

3- The problem of alcohol and drugs, and their negative, and perilous consequences and problems:

Islam strives to treat and solve these problems through lofty teachings that emphasize safeguarding the mind, and forbid anything that could cause the loss or absence of it, such as alcohol and drugs. In this way, their negative and perilous consequences and problems are avoided, as humans are distinguished from the rest of creation by the blessing of sense/intelligence, and without it humans behave like cattle and animals, having no control or direction in their behavior and actions. Rather, a person could commit the most dangerous types of crimes and vices (like murder, stealing, adultery, rape, aggression, etc.) while he is totally unaware of it.

-The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Do not drink alcohol, for it is the key to all evil," (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah has cursed wine, its drinker, its server, its seller, its buyer, its presser, the one for whom it is pressed, the one who conveys it, and the one to whom it is conveyed," (Narrated by Abu Dawud).

-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Every intoxicating drink is unlawful," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Islam is severe in its prohibition of alcohol and drugs, due to their negative effects and perilous consequences. Islam even prohibits drinking or consuming even a small quantity of anything which will cause the loss or absence of the

mind in large quantities. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "A small amount of whatever causes intoxication in large amounts is unlawful," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

The wisdom in that is that drinking and consuming a small amount leads to drinking and consuming a large amount, which in turn causes addiction and difficulty doing without it.

In addition to what we have touched upon, alcohol is a cause for many fatal diseases in humans. Islam closes the door absolutely on anything that causes harm to the soul, corrupts the mind and spreads vice in the society. As Allah, Exalted, says: {...He allows all good and lawful things, and prohibits them from all evil and unlawful things...}, [Surat-ul-A'raf: 157].

- 4- The problem of unemployment: Islam strives to treat and solve this problem through encouraging person to strive and exert his efforts to make good use of all the available means to work no matter how simple or small). This is after placing one's trust in Allah, Exalted (the Able, the Provider), having confidence and certainty in Him, depending on Him, seeking refuge in Him and invoking Him to bless and make easy for you whatever ease He has given you regarding means. Allah, Exalted, says: {...And in Allah (Alone) let those who trust, put their trust}, [Surat Ibrahim: 12].

Islam also encourages a person to depend on himself (after placing his trust in Allah, Exalted, the Able and the Provider), and not rely on others, and an example of that is:

The authors of the Sunan collections narrated in the hadith of Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, that he reported: A man of the Ansar came to the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and begged from him. He (the Prophet) asked: "Have you nothing in your house?" The man replied: "Yes, a piece of cloth, a part of which we wear and a part of which we spread (on the ground), and a wooden bowl from which we drink water." The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Bring them to me." He then brought these articles to him and he (the Prophet) took them in his hands and asked: "Who will buy these?" A man said: "I shall buy them for one dirham." He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said twice or thrice: "Who will offer more than one dirham?" A man said: "I shall buy them for two dirhams." He gave these to him and took the two dirhams and, giving them to the Ansari man, he said: "Buy food with one of them and hand it to your family, and buy an axe and bring it to me." He then brought it to him. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, fixed a handle on it with his own hands and said: "Go, gather firewood and sell it, and do not let me see you for a fortnight." The man went away and gathered firewood and sold it. When he had earned ten dirhams, he came to him and bought a garment with some of them and food with the others. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, then said: "This is

better for you..." (Narrated by Abu Dawud). This noble Prophetic Hadith, clarifies how the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, dealt with helping this man in an exemplary, ideal way. He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, essentially changed the man from a beggar (who perhaps would have continued begging from people due to his needs and his lack of a profession from which he could secure provisions for himself) into an effective worker who buys and sells and is in no need of help from others thereafter. This was after the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, chose a project for him that was suitable for his financial circumstances and physical and mental ability, thus the man would no longer be a burden upon the society, but instead turned out to be a productive and useful resource for people to emulate.

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "It is better for anyone of you to take a rope (and cut) and bring a bundle of wood (from the forest) over his back and sell it and Allah will save his face (from hell-fire) because of that, rather than to ask the people who may give him or not," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

By trusting in Allah, Exalted, as well as continually working even simple jobs that are available to a person with precise and earnest execution of the means, Allah, Blessed and Exalted, will bless that simple job, expand it and give him a good and vast provision from it. Not only that, but Allah, Blessed and Exalted, will also reward this person (after death, on the Day of Resurrection) with loving him, being pleased with him, and admitting him into Paradise, the home of delights. The following illustrates this point: It was narrated that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, shook a man's hand and found it rough from the effects of his handiwork. He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said to the man: "This is a hand that Allah and His Messenger love."

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The honest, trustworthy trader will be with the prophets, veracious and martyrs (i.e., he will be in the highest levels of Paradise)," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Hence, Islam, through its principles that it encourages and promotes (such as trust in Allah, Blessed and Exalted, and striving earnestly to execute the available means of work), offers a person both moral and emotional support to boldly venture into the work world and avoid being redundant.

This is in addition to the fact that Islam encourages cooperation, solidarity and support in every area and among the different social classes to work together moving forward towards progress and prosperity.

5- The problem of poverty:

Islam strives to solve this problem through the following means-

- a- Islam vehemently calls for and encourages social welfare and giving charity to the poor, widows, orphans and needy. It makes it clear that Allah, Blessed and Exalted, rewards this deed tremendously, as Allah, Exalted, says: {Charities are only for the poor, those employed to collect, to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam), to free the captives, for those in debt; for Allah's Cause, and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise}, [Surat-ut-Tawbah: 60].

Allah, Exalted, also says: {Those who spend their wealth in the Cause of Allah, and do not follow up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury, their reward is with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 262].

Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "I and the one who cares for an orphan will be as these two (and he put his index and middle fingers together) in Paradise (i.e., in the highest levels of Paradise)," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "(A compulsory) charity is enjoined upon every Muslim." They (the people) said: "If one has nothing?" He said: "He should work with his hands so that he may benefit himself and give in charity." They said: "If he cannot work or does not work?" He said: "Then he should help the oppressed unhappy person (by word or action or both)." They said: "If he cannot do it?" He said: "Then he should enjoin what is good (or said what is reasonable)." They said: "If he cannot do that?" He said: "Then he should refrain from doing evil, for that will be considered for Him as charity," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

- b- Islam made it compulsory for the rich to give the poor-due from their wealth to the poor and needy, and offered motivation by explaining its tremendous reward with Allah, Exalted, on the Day of Resurrection. One of Islam's fundamental beliefs is recognizing that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, is the owner of wealth and possessions. He is the one who provides it to His slaves, and that is why He, Glorified and Exalted, is the only one who possesses the right to regulate the matter of ownership of wealth and possessions, and the manner in which it is distributed amongst the poor, needy and others entitled to receive poor due, in accordance with His perfect wisdom and will, Glorified and Exalted.

Thus, Islam commands the rich whose wealth has reached a specific value (in the form of gold, silver, cash, livestock, seeds, fruits and minerals) and over which a specific time has passed (in the case of gold, silver and cash) without having been invested in any useful activity for the individual or

society, to extract a specific percentage from it in order to spend on the poor and needy. This (giving) can be achieved through organizations that specialized in this work, as they will distribute the wealth among the recipients in different and suitable percentages according to the necessity and the ability to settle the needs of the poor and needy, and invest the money in projects whose profits will go directly to the poor and needy.

If this system that Islam put in place to solve this problem is implemented with care, precision and effectiveness through competent authorities, we are sure to witness the positive effects of it, as this problem will clearly and noticeably lessen and decreased until it is completely eradicated. This actually happened long ago during the caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abdul-'Aziz, when after the passing of time and an effective system, wealth was abundant and one could not find poor and needy people to whom to distribute the idle wealth. So he ordered that it be distributed to anyone who wished to and was making efforts to get married (as a protection for the young men and women as well as the entire society from the spread of lewdness and vices).

- 6- The problem of adultery (unlawful relationship between a man and woman):
Adultery and the problems caused by it are an enormous corruption for the individual and the society, which is why Islam did the following-
 - a- Vehemently encouraged marriage made lawful by Allah, Blessed and Exalted, and to facilitate its costs, avoiding excessiveness in the dowry, and many other ways to ease the impediments of marriage. It encourages the formation of a good family through the relationship made lawful by Allah, Exalted, between a man and a woman. With this relationship guided in the right direction, the product will be bringing up a righteous generation that strives for the progress and stability of the society.
Some of the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, that encourage lawful marriage and lawful relationships between a man and his wife:
-Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "...And intercourse with one's wife is charity," meaning, a man having sexual intercourse with his wife is rewarded by Allah, Exalted. They (the companions) said: "O Messenger of Allah! There is reward for one of us fulfilling his desire?" He said: "Tell me, if he fulfilled his desire where he had no right, would he be committing a sin?" (Of course). He continued: "Likewise, if he fulfilled his desire lawfully there is reward for him," (Narrated by Muslim). Here we find the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, using intelligent, logical dialogue in answering the questioner, thus clarifying the meaning and instilling it.
 - b- Islam outlawed adultery and forbid even coming near it or any paths that lead to it. Allah, Exalted, says: {And come not near to the unlawful sexual

intercourse (adultery). Verily, it is a great sin and an evil way}, [Surat-ul-Israa': 32].

- c- Islam established a severe punishment for anyone who falls into this sinful crime as well as anyone who spreads this vice in the society.
- d- Also, Islam strives to treat and solve this problem with extreme wisdom through intelligent, logical dialogue, and this is clear from a situation which occurred with the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and the young man who came to him asking him to make adultery lawful for him, as we was unable to abandon it and do without it. Abu Umamah reported: A young man came to the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and said: "O Messenger of Allah! Permit me to commit adultery!" The people immediately advanced towards him berating him, saying: "Shut up! Shut up!" The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, instructed the young man to come sit close to him and then said: "Do you like it for your mother?" The young man replied: "By Allah, no! May Allah make me your ransom!" The Prophet said: "Neither do the people like it for their mothers." He continued: "Do you like it for your daughter?" The young man replied: "By Allah, no, O Messenger of Allah! May Allah make me your ransom!" The Prophet said: "Neither do the people like it for their daughters." He continued: "Do you like it for your sister?" He replied: "By Allah, no! May Allah make me your ransom!" The Prophet said: "Neither do the people like it for their sisters." The Prophet continued: "Do you like it for you paternal aunts?" He replied: "By Allah, no! May Allah make me your ransom!" The Prophet said: "Neither do the people like it for their paternal aunts." He continued: "Do you like it for your maternal aunts?" He replied: "By Allah, no! May Allah make me your ransom!" The Prophet said: "Neither do the people like it for their maternal aunts." Then the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, placed his hand on the young man and said: "O Allah, forgive his sins, cleanse his heart, and protect his chastity," and after that he was no longer given to committing adultery. (Narrated by Al-Imam Ahmad).

This Hadith illustrates the manner in which the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, treated and solved this problem: with subtlety, gentleness, forbearance and extreme wisdom, and through intelligent, logical dialogue, cogent argument and good propagation, in order to instill the praiseworthy morals and honorable treatment that Islam brought to protect the individual and stability of the society, elevating it to the status of a virtuous society built upon the foundations of goodness, truth and virtue.

- 7- The problem of decreased births as a result of the youth's aversion to marriage, thus the decrease in active and productive human strength in many countries: Islam strives to root out these problems through the following means-

- a- Islam strives to direct the human desire in the proper direction. Mankind's succession developing the earth occurs through marriage and reproduction that Allah, Blessed and Exalted, made lawful, as the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry..." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). And the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said: "Marry, reproduce and increase..." (Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi).
 - b- Islam encourages making marriage easy for young men and young women, as well as facilitating its costs for all the different social classes. It encourages the establishment of a Muslim home whose foundation is implementation of the lofty teachings, directives and principles of Islam, thus ensuring the righteousness of the individual and the stability and success of the society. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The most blessed women are those with the easiest cost," (Narrated by Ahmad).
 - c- Islam opened a new door to encourage the youth to marriage, and this can be explained in the following manner: It could be that many youth do not have the financial means to secure an affluent and easy life, for reasons outside of their control (such as limited job availability and opportunities, lowered wages, inflation, etc.), thus Islam offers one simple solution to this problem, which is: It encourages marriage to the youth who are religious, of praiseworthy character and who implements the teachings of their religion (Islam). Indeed Islam encourages overlooking many of the impediments to marriage that are outside of a person's control, on the condition that the individual, his condition and his manners and suitable, and that he is a religious person of high morals (implements the lofty teachings of Islam, and this is within the means and abilities of all the youth). The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, advised the guardians of young women regarding marriage, saying: "If there comes to you a person whose religion and character please you, then accept his proposal; if not, there will be trials and tremendous corruption in the earth," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). It is the same with young women, as the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The worldly life is enjoyment, and the best enjoyment is a righteous woman," (Narrated by Muslim).
- Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said: "A woman is married for four things: her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So be successful with the religious one..." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). And as it is known, women differ regarding these three matters (wealth, family status and beauty) since they are outside of their control and they essentially have no hand in these three matters. Thus, Islam opened a new door through which it encourages marriage to the woman who may not have been blessed with the three

above-mentioned matters (beauty, wealth, family status), as the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "So be successful with the religious one," i.e., he preferred the righteous, religious woman who implements the teachings of her religion (Islam) and has praiseworthy character, all of which is within the means and abilities of all young women, as it is possible for a woman to strive to rectify her character and exhibit praiseworthy and honorable morals.

Thus, Islam offers model solutions to treat and solve these problems by encouraging rectification of the youth, exhibiting praiseworthy and honorable character and spreading good and virtue amongst the ranks of the Muslims.

8- The problem of broken families:

Islam strives to treat and solve this problem through more than one means, such as-

- a- Islam strives to cement the relationship between a man and his wife, and limit the opportunities for arguments, conflicts and divorce, thus preserving the family unit which in turn protects children and their upbringing.
- b- Islam clarifies the great responsibility that falls on the shoulders of fathers and mothers towards their children in terms of giving them the best care, equal treatment, a good upbringing and planning for the future that is promised to them. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock; the leader is a shepherd, the man is a shepherd over his household, the woman is a shepherd over her husband's home and children. Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). He also said: "Fear Allah and be fair between your children," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). He also said: "Honor your children and give them good manners," (Narrated by Ibn Majah). He also said: "The child's right upon his father is that he teaches him to write," (Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi). So the husband or father is the shepherd of his home; likewise the wife or mother is the shepherd of her home.
- a- Islam commands children to give their fathers and mothers the best treatment because of their tremendous virtue (fathers and mothers) over them. Allah, Exalted, says: {And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect nor shout at them, but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small'}, [Surat-ul-Israa': 23-24].
- b- Islam encourages the best treatment of children (brothers and sisters) for one another, showing kindness and good-will to one another, removing

jealousy and malice from between them. An example of this is illustrated in the Qur'an in the long story of the Prophet of Allah, Yusuf, peace be upon him, with his brothers (from which many beneficial and valuable lessons can be taken about how the true nature of the relationship between siblings), and no doubt that this will come about as a result of the parents' handling the responsibility that Islam places upon them regarding their children's good upbringing and education. Through the good relationship that Islam seeks to establish between a man and his wife, and the family bonds that are established between parents and their children and amongst the children themselves, the family unit will be strong and unable to be broken up.

9- The problem of divorce:

Islam strives to solve this problem through:

- a- Islam encourages and commands a man to live peacefully with his wife and to fulfill her rights. Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The best of you are those who are the best towards their families; and I am the best of you towards my family," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).
- b- Likewise, Islam encourages and commands a woman to live peacefully with her husband and fulfill his rights. Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "If a woman prays her five prayers, fasts her month of Ramadan, preserves her chastity and obeys her husband, it will be said to her: 'Enter Paradise from whatever gate of Paradise that you wish,'" (Narrated by Ibn Hibban and Al-Albani authenticated it).
- c- Islam prohibits a man from oppressing his wife in the case that he dislikes her. Islam also encourages the man to keep his wife even if he dislikes her, and likewise, the woman should remain with her husband even if she dislikes him. This is done in a creative way, as Allah Exalted, says: {And live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good}, [Surat-un-Nisaa': 19]. Meaning: because a person does not know the unseen future, there may very well be goodness in the very thing he dislikes.
- d- Islam promotes mending relationships, and clarified that mending relationships – especially between a husband a wife – is one of the best deeds by which to draw closer to Allah, Exalted, in order to earn His pleasure and reward that He promised on the Day of Resurrection (the eternal delights and pleasures of Paradise). Allah, Exalted, says: {If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Allah is Ever All-Knower, Well-Acquainted with all things}, [Surat-un-Nisaa': 35]. Allah, Exalted, also says: {And if a woman fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no sin on them both if they make terms of peace between themselves; and making peace is better. And human inner-selves

are swayed by greed. But if you do goodness and keep away from evil, verily, Allah is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do}, [Surat-un-Nisaa': 128]. Allah, Exalted, also says: {So fear Allah and adjust all matters of difference among you (mend your relationships), and obey Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad), if you are believers}, [Surat-ul-Anfal: 1]. Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Shall I tell you a degree better than prayer, fasting and charity?" They replied: "Of course!" He said: "Mending relationships," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

By establishing general rules for kind treatment between a husband and wife as a preventive measure to avoid problems, Islam strives to minimize the opportunities for disputes, conflicts and divorce between a husband and wife.

10- The problem of racism:

Islam strives to treat and solve this problem through-

- a- Islam establishes and instills the principle of equality between all people from all different nationalities and social classes; and that there is no virtue in one over another except by his faith in and reverence of Allah, Exalted, his character, and his righteous deeds. Allah, Exalted, says: {O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who is pious. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware}, [Surat-ul-Hujurat: 13]. And Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "O people, your Lord is one and your father Adam is one. There is no virtue of an Arab over a foreigner, nor a foreigner over an Arab, and neither white skin over black skin, nor black skin over white skin, except by righteousness. The most honorable of you with Allah are the most pious. Have I not delivered the message?" They replied: "Of course, O Messenger of Allah!" He said: "The let those who are present inform those who are absent," (Narrated by Ahmad). Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said: "Allah does not look at your bodies or your faces, but He looks at your hearts," (Narrated by Muslim).
- b- Islam legislated guiding rituals of worship through which we witness the most beautiful implementation of equality between the different groups in the society and the different nationalities of the world. An example of this:
 - The ritual of prayer: Everyone stands as equals in one line, completing one row after another in balanced, equal rows. The leader stands beside the constituents, the rich beside the poor...all following and being led by one leader (the imam), performing the prayer in one manner, from its beginning until its end.
 - The ritual of Hajj (pilgrimage to the Sacred House): Muslims from all different nationalities, social classes and parts of the world (according to

their physical and financial abilities) meet to perform one set of rites, thus establishing the principle of unity, and throwing away division and racism.

11- The problem of violence and terrorism:

Islam strives to solve this problem through-

- a- Its lofty teachings that it brought which call for excellent manners and the best treatment of others, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Allah, Exalted, says: {The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better. Then verily he with whom you had mutual enmity will become as though he was a close friend}, [Surat Fussilat: 34]. Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah is Gentle and loves gentleness, and He grants reward for gentleness what He does not grant for harshness or anything else," (Narrated by Muslim). He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said: "Whoever points a piece of iron at his brother, the angels curse him, even if it was his full brother," (Narrated by Muslim). He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said: "If gentleness is found in anything, it beautifies it and when it is taken out from anything it damages it," (Narrated by Muslim).
- b- Islam forbids the killing of a person without right, and is severe regarding the sanctity of blood (a person's life). Allah, Exalted, says: {...If anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, and/or to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind}, [Surat-ul-Maa'idah: 32]. (We touched upon this in a previous point).
- c- Islam clarifies that propagation to the way of Allah should be through wisdom and fair preaching, void of harshness or anything that leads to violence and terrorism, as Allah, Exalted, says: {Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided}, [Surat-un-Nahl: 125].
- d- Islam clarifies that there is to be no compulsion on anyone to enter a specific religion or hold the same beliefs as anyone else, as Allah, Exalted, says: {There is no compulsion in religion}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 256]. Allah, Exalted, also says: {And say: 'The truth is from your Lord.' Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve}, [Surat-ul-Kahf: 29]. Meaning, Islam clarifies that Allah, Exalted, alone is the only One who can hold a person accountable for his incorrect beliefs, thus it becomes clear that Islam strives to solve this problem through its lofty teachings and moral directives that it brought.

12- The problem with increased inflation:

Inflation is an economic problem which means an increase of prices for a service or product, as a result of one of two causes:

- a- Increased demand for a service or product that many people are in need of, coinciding with its limited availability or a decreased supply to meet the

demand, such that the supply amount does not suffice to meet the demand for it, thus its price begins to increase beyond its actual cost; thereafter, as it disappears from the market and the demand for it rises, its price increases higher and higher and no one is able to obtain it or benefit from it except a small portion of the population who are wealthy enough to afford it. This is largely due to monopolizing forces in the market establishments and the actions that control availability of services or products and the diminution with the objective of increased profits. Islam forbids this type of monopolizing and made it unlawful, as the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever hoards (in order to monopolize) is wrong," (Narrated by Muslim). The meaning of "he is wrong" is that he is disobedient and sinful. In the Islamic system the price of a product reflects its actual cost in addition to a fair and reasonable amount of profit.

- b- Rising cost of the service or product due to the interest from a monetary loan that was borrowed from banks or other financial institution, which must be paid back with an increased interest rate that is over the principle (original amount borrowed). This monetary interest – no matter how much or how little – that causes the cost of services or products rise – which the consumer will ultimately pay the price for – is a burden on the individual as well as the society. The profit that is gained from the interest on this type of loan is called loan usury, which Islam forbids, as Allah, Exalted, says: {...Whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden usury}, [Surat-ul-Baqarah: 275]. And the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, clarified that Allah, Exalted, curses those who deal in usury and those who cooperate with them, as he, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah curses the one who accepts usury, the one who pays it, the one who records it, and the witness to it; they are all the same," (Narrated by Muslim). Meaning, Allah, Exalted, declared usury unlawful and is vehement in His prohibition of it.

Thus, Islam treats this problem by outlawing any type of benefit resulting from loans in a general sense, no matter how great or how little, making the benefit zero. Islam allows goodly loans, which is the one in which there is no sought after benefit except seeking the pleasure of Allah, Glorified and Exalted, and encouraged and incited towards it. In this was Islam strives to spread the spirit of cooperation and mutual support between individuals in the society.

In addition to Islam's way of curing the problem of inflation through outlawing the means that lead to it (such as hoarding for the purpose of monopolizing and usury benefits), it has also placed another solution to this problem, and this solution is by fulfilling the obligation of the poor-due that we touched upon previously, which strives to encourage the wealthy in an

indirect way to invest their wealth in different projects that will lead to fast returns on capital and will stimulate economic life.

What we have touched upon is a model of the problems that Islam deals with using extreme wisdom, presenting exemplar solutions for them.

It also shows the divine and proper methodology that Islam brought to make human life upright in all corners of the earth at all times.

What comes after progress, development and civilization?

Or, to be more precise, what are the progressing nations lacking, and what are they in need of after all of this in order to crown their progress, thereby solving their current problems?

In this point we would like to discuss the nations and peoples that strive to develop and progress, and furthermore each individual within the society, since each is a fundamental, main element of his or her nation, without whom there would be no foundations or even a nation. That is why the actual question is: What does the individual who is striving to develop, advance and progress need to crown his efforts and success in order to preserve and secure his reward?

What is there to look forward to after a person exerts efforts and exhausts his life to advance and develop his country? Does he not deserve appreciation and recognition? The answer: Of course. However, the question remains: How then, after he spent his years and exhausted his life? One may say: There is appreciation and recognition for each person in a society who lives an honorable life. However, this can be refuted by saying that recognition in this manner is neither sufficient nor does it truly honor a person (in a general sense) who has been serious and hardworking throughout his entire life, and who was fully intent on remaining that way for as long as he lives, because recognition of this type ends with death and the end of the person's life. Plus the fact that recognition of this type overlooks many people, especially the pioneers who struggled and sacrificed to re-establish their country after hardships during periods of stagnation or destruction during times of war; they neither profited nor reaped the fruits of their efforts and hard work by living the prosperous and respectable life they worked for if their nation could not establish itself as an advanced and wealthy country. Or, recognition of this type may overlook certain people due to the insignificance of their salary in the face of the demands of life, or those who live in remote areas far away from the progress and comfortable level of living that many cities have achieved, or those who have been affected by natural disasters such as floods, volcanoes and earthquakes, etc. That is why the true recognition (in addition to recognizing a person during their life) must come after death, in the form of a long, continuous life that never ends. Just as a person worked earnestly in life and was fully intent on continuing in this way for as long as he lived, he must be recognized for his efforts and hard work, as well as his intention to continue in this way. This recognition will also be based on his heart's good and righteous intentions, thus he will be recognized for his good work along with his heart's righteous intention, and his earnestness and hard work will serve as a proof of his intention, and this is from the bounty and wisdom of Allah, Exalted.

This is what Islam offers a person who works for the advancement and progress of his country (whatever his nationality), on the condition that he acknowledges and believes in God the Creator, Glorified and Exalted, and in the oneness of His divinity,

thus not associating anything with Him as a partner, following His teachings and worshipping Him in this short, worldly life that a person lives; who was fully ready to exert his efforts and work earnestly to follow the teachings of his God and Creator, Glorified and Exalted, worship Him, and obey Him during his worldly life no matter how long it lasts. Thus recognition after death is from Allah, Blessed and Exalted, in the form of a comfortable, long, continuous and ever-lasting life that will never end, in His Paradise and His home of honor. This is a promise of Allah, Exalted, in Islam for His believing, righteous, and rectifying slaves.

In the previous points, we touched upon the meaning of Islam and its invitation to a pure, unadulterated belief system that agrees with the innate nature that Allah, Exalted, created mankind upon, and through which the human soul becomes purified and uplifted; the system that offers model answers to all the questions that occur to the mind regarding the issue of mankind's creation and his relationship with his God and Creator. Furthermore, we discussed the lofty teachings and high principles that are the cause for progress, advancement and civilization when they are applied and adhered to, in addition to what Islam comprises and offers in terms of essential and model solutions to different key problems, both old and current.

Thus, the true honoring is through Islam, following its beautiful teachings and implementing what it brought and invites to.

That is why we say: A person who – in his short, passing, worldly life – strives for the advancement and progress of his country (no matter his nationality) is in need of Islam in order to crown his striving, efforts and success. Meaning: To be a believer in Allah, Exalted, and the oneness of His divinity, submit to Him, follow His teachings and commands, thus saving the reward for his efforts, earnestness and struggles that he exerts in his worldly life to be kept for him after his death in the form of a comfortable, long, ever-lasting, continuous life that never ends, which is the life in Allah's Paradise, Blessed and Exalted, and the home of His honor.

This is the true and eternal crowning and recognition that never ends.

Why choose Islam as a religion?

In order to answer this question, allow us to clarify:

- The religion with Allah, Exalted, is Islam, and it means: Complete submission and humility (by mind, heart, soul and body) to Allah, Glorified and Exalted, fulfilling His commands and abstaining from His prohibitions, Glorified and Exalted. Islam is the religion of innate nature upon which Allah, Exalted, created His creation. It is the religion of pure monotheism that brought a call for belief in the God the Creator, Glorified and Exalted, and the oneness of His divinity; that offered logical, model answers to everything the human mind contemplates, wonders about and needs an answer to. Thus, it is the religion that sound, rational minds accept (and we clarified that in the section "Islam and the light of belief").
- Islam is the only religion that calls for belief in all the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted, revering and respecting them and not demeaning or degrading any of them. Surely, at a time when we find other modern religions founded upon belief in some of the prophets and denial of others, following their desires and fanaticism (as some people do not believe in a prophet or messenger because he is not of their nationality or tribe, etc., and this is a reason for rejecting the message), we find that Islam does not differ between any of the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted, such that it requires belief in and respect and reverence for all of them, as well as belief in their messages, and that the last of these messages is the message of the seal of the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted: Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, who brought Islam as a religion.
- The divine scripture that Islam brought (The Noble Qur'an) is the only book that Allah, Blessed and Exalted, vowed to protect from being lost or altered. This is because there is no other prophet or messenger after Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, thus there is no other divine scripture after the Qur'an, the scripture by which all the other divine scriptures were sealed and which has remained in its original and brilliant form comprising all that mankind needs to rectify his life in the worldly life and hereafter. The Noble Qur'an comprises of:
 - a- The pure, unadulterated set of beliefs which contains no defects or flaws.
 - b- Upright laws that rectify all of human life.
 - c- Guiding rituals by which the human soul is purified and cleansed from vices and filth, rising and elevating it to the highest levels of excellence.
 - d- Praiseworthy morals and honorable interactions.
 - e- Lofty teachings through which progress, development and advancement is attained.
 - f- Several different allusions to universal sciences in all fields of science, and these allusions are amazing gleams of light to move forward in the path of science.

- g- Lofty directives, that are a cause for solving the different types of problems that mankind faces, old and current. That is why it is required to believe in this final divine scripture (the Noble Qur'an) that Islam brought, thus choosing Islam as a religion.
- Islam's moderation: This is clarified by the balanced and moderate beliefs that Islam brought in the pure, unadulterated creed that calls for belief in God the Creator, Glorified and Exalted, and the oneness of His divinity, as well as exalting, praising, and magnifying Him, Glorified and Exalted, from any blameworthy, demeaning or defective traits. It also calls for belief in all the prophets and messengers of Allah, Exalted, and respecting and revering them (because they are those whom Allah, Exalted, chose to convey His message). Islam's moderation is also clarified in the balanced and moderate laws and worship rituals that it brought. A person is not taken to task except for what he has the power to bear, and he is not burdened with what he is unable to do; also, the balance and moderation in foods, drinks, spending and avoiding extravagance; the balance and moderation in giving the body and soul their rights and necessary requirements, which is illustrated in the Prophet Muhammad's, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, affirmation of the statement of the companion Salman, (who learned directly from Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) to Abu Ad-Darda': "Your Lord has a right upon you, your self has a right upon you, and your family has a right upon you. Therefore give each one its due rights." The response of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, to this statement was: "Salman has spoken the truth," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari from a long hadith).

Islam is the religion which implements balance between the worldly life and the hereafter, giving each one its right. Thus, it is a must to choose Islam as a religion, because of the interweaving of the proofs and indications that testify that it is the true religion from Allah, Blessed and Exalted.

Allow us to clarify: It is upon every person in general to search for the truth and follow it wherever he finds it, as long as the indications and proofs are authenticated. It is not right that simply because an idea or belief prevails for a long period of time in a society, that a person will eventually submit to it from any member of the society and reluctantly accept the belief and develop a bias about it due to his unwillingness to go against what his ancestors grew up on, especially when there is not even the slightest evidence or proof of its correctness, and, actually, when the fallacy of said belief is explained, they realize that the truth is actually some other idea or belief.

Accepting any belief or idea merely on the basis of suspicions, suppositions and guesses without even the slightest proof of its correctness, and especially when it contradicts logic and everything it requires, is considered an insult the human mind that Allah, Exalted, honored mankind with.

That is why we invite all to think about and contemplate Islam in a logical and neutral way, for if so, the authenticity of its indications and proofs will

become clear, as well as the fact that it is the true religion from Allah, Blessed and Exalted, and thereafter it will be required to choose Islam as a religion.

The Result of Choosing Islam in the Hereafter

Allah, Exalted, says: {But whoever comes to Him as a believer, and has done righteous good deeds, for such are the high ranks. The Gardens of Eden under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever: such is the reward of those who purify themselves}, [Surat Taha: 75-76]. Allah, Blessed and Exalted, informs us in this noble Qur'anic verse of the beauty and magnificence of His reward for the one who believes in Him, Glorified and Exalted, the oneness of His divinity, and works righteous deeds, intending them sincerely for Him, Glorified and Exalted; the one who submits to Him and is humble towards Him and fulfills His commands, Lofty and Exalted. This reward is: The highest ranks in the eternal, never-ending pleasures and delights of the Garden of eternity.

The description of Paradise in Islam:

- 1- Its pleasures are ever-lasting, never decreasing or ending.
- 2- Its inhabitants are luminous and beautified, there is no heat or cold, and whoever enters it will be eternally happy, never feeling misery again.
- 3- Its soil is extremely white, its dust is pure musk with a strong, lovely scent; its pebbles are pearl and ruby.
- 4- Its palaces are made of gold and silver.
- 5- Its rivers are the most beautiful and amazing sight to see and they are many and different types; in Paradise there are rivers of pure water, rivers of milk whose taste has not changed, rivers of pure honey, etc.
- 6- It is filled with lush gardens and blooming and fruit-filled trees.

Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "In Paradise there is a tree the shade of which a rider passes under for one hundred years," (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). He also said: "There is no tree in Paradise except its trunk is made of gold," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

- 7- Its fruits are pleasant, and are many and different types; it is never cut off at any time.
- 8- There are all different types of pleasant and enjoyable foods (like different types of meat) and drinks.
- 9- There is everything that the soul desires and that pleases the eye; pleasures that no eye has seen, no ear has heard and have never crossed the imagination of any person.

The description of the inhabitants of Paradise in Islam:

- 1- Their faces are handsome and beautiful, radiant like the night of the full moon.
- 2- Their height is sixty cubits.
- 3- Their age is thirty three years and they will neither age nor will their hair turn grey ever; they will be eternally young, their youth will never end and

their clothes will never become old or worn; they will be in eternal pleasure and will never die.

- 4- They will be healthy and will never be ill or sick again.
- 5- They will enjoy the pleasure of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, on them and He will never be angry with them; they will never be worried, annoyed, sad, or desperate ever again; they will be happy and never feel misery ever again.
- 6- They will enjoy seeing Allah, Blessed and Exalted (without encompassing Him, Lofty and Exalted, as there is nothing like Him).
- 7- There will be no hatred or envy between them; their hearts will be like one heart with no differences between them.
- 8- They will eat and drink every enjoyable and delightful thing.
- 9- They will not spit nor blow their noses; they will not urinate or defecate; the remnants of their food will come out in the form of secretions from their skin whose smell is lovelier than musk.
- 10- One inhabitant of Paradise will be given the strength of one hundred men.
- 11- They will marry the "Hur-ul-'Ayn" (women of Paradise); if one of the women of Paradise came to the earth, the heavens and earth would fill with light and a pleasant scent due to her intense beauty; Allah will re-create the righteous Muslim woman and she will therefore be more beautiful than the women of Paradise, in addition to the fact that she will be with her husband in Paradise.
- 12- Their beauty is continuously renewed, such that they will increase in beauty forever.
- 13- They will be inspired to glorify and praise Allah, Glorified and Exalted, instinctively and without any hardship or weariness.

Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah will say to the inhabitants of Paradise: 'O inhabitants of Paradise!' They will say: 'O our Lord, we present ourselves and are at Your pleasure, and goodness rests in Your hands.' Then He will say: 'Are you contented?' And they will say: 'And how should we not be contented, O Lord, when You have given to us that which You have given to no one else of Your creation?' Then He will say: 'Would you not like Me to give you something better than that?' And they will say: 'O Lord and what thing is better than that?' And He will say: 'I shall cause My favor to descend upon you and thereafter shall never be displeased with you,'" (Narrated by Muslim).

Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said: "When the inhabitants of Paradise enter Paradise, Allah, Blessed and Exalted, will say to them: 'Do you wish Me to give you anything more?' They will reply: 'Have You not made our faces bright? Have You not brought us into Paradise and delivered us from hell-fire?' And Allah will remove the Veil. The inhabitants of Paradise will feel that they have not been awarded anything dearer to them than looking at their Lord, and

that is 'even more'," then he recited this verse: {For those who have done good is the best and even more. Neither darkness nor dust nor any humiliating disgrace shall cover their faces. They are the dwellers of Paradise, they will abide therein forever}," (Narrated by Muslim).

How to Enter Islam

Actually, what we can say is: How to return to Islam, as opposed to how to enter it, since Islam is the religion of the innate nature that mankind was created upon and which agrees with it. In any case, entering Islam happens first with belief in one's heart in God the Creator and in the oneness of His divinity (Allah, Glorified and Exalted) and belief in the truth of the message of the final prophet and messenger of Allah, Exalted, Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, then pronouncing it with the tongue by saying: "I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah; and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and messenger."

Thus, a person becomes a Muslim (without the need for any official rituals) and becomes a new brother (or new sister) in Islam to all Muslims from every corner of the earth.

Advice for the New Muslim or Muslimah

After Allah, Blessed and Exalted, blesses a new Muslim brother or sister with Islam, we would like to advise and enjoin upon them (as well as ourselves and all Muslims in every corner of the earth) the following:

- 1- The necessity of adhering to the lofty teachings and directives of Islam in every small and large matter or our daily lives, until we meet Allah, Exalted, thus ensuring happiness in this worldly life and the hereafter.
- 2- The necessity of emulating the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, in our character and treatment of others, so that we can present an honorable picture of Islam in every part of the earth, propagating Islam practically. When A'ishah (the wife of the Prophet), may Allah be pleased with her, was asked about the description of the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, she said: "The character of Allah's Prophet was the Qur'an," (Narrated by Muslim). Meaning, he was the embodiment of the Qur'anic methodology, implementing all of Islam's lofty teachings from praiseworthy character and honorable treatment to everything else.
- 3- Strive to spread this marvelous religion (Islam) and countering anyone who attempts to slander the good picture of Islam, through spreading its lofty teachings and directives via modern technological means, such as:
 - a- Creating internet websites specifically for propagation in different languages.
 - b- Creating satellite channels and shows specifically for propagation of Islam, countering western and Zionist media, refuting the fallacies and distortions about Islam that they incite.
 - c- Countering the types of internet websites that are produced by the enemies of Islam and that pretend to be Islamic (indirectly) and making the Muslims and others aware of them.
 - d- Printing books specifically for propagation of Islam in different languages, and distributing them to Orientalist centers and public and university libraries around the world, etc.
 - e- And many other ways of propagation to strive to spread and introduce Islam.

Allah, Blessed and Exalted, says: {And who is better in speech than he who invites to Allah, and does righteous deeds, and says: 'I am one of the Muslims'} , [Surat Fussilat: 33].

In conclusion, we praise Allah, Blessed and Exalted, for the blessing of Islam that He blessed us with, making us monotheistic Muslims living by the best religion that the seal of the prophets and messengers, Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, brought. We ask Him, Blessed and Exalted, to use us as callers to Him through spread this magnificent religion (Islam) to all of mankind.

O Allah, send peace and blessings upon Your Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad; and upon his pure household and outstanding companions; and upon all those who follow his guidance and live by his sunnah until the Day of Recompense. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of Creation.
