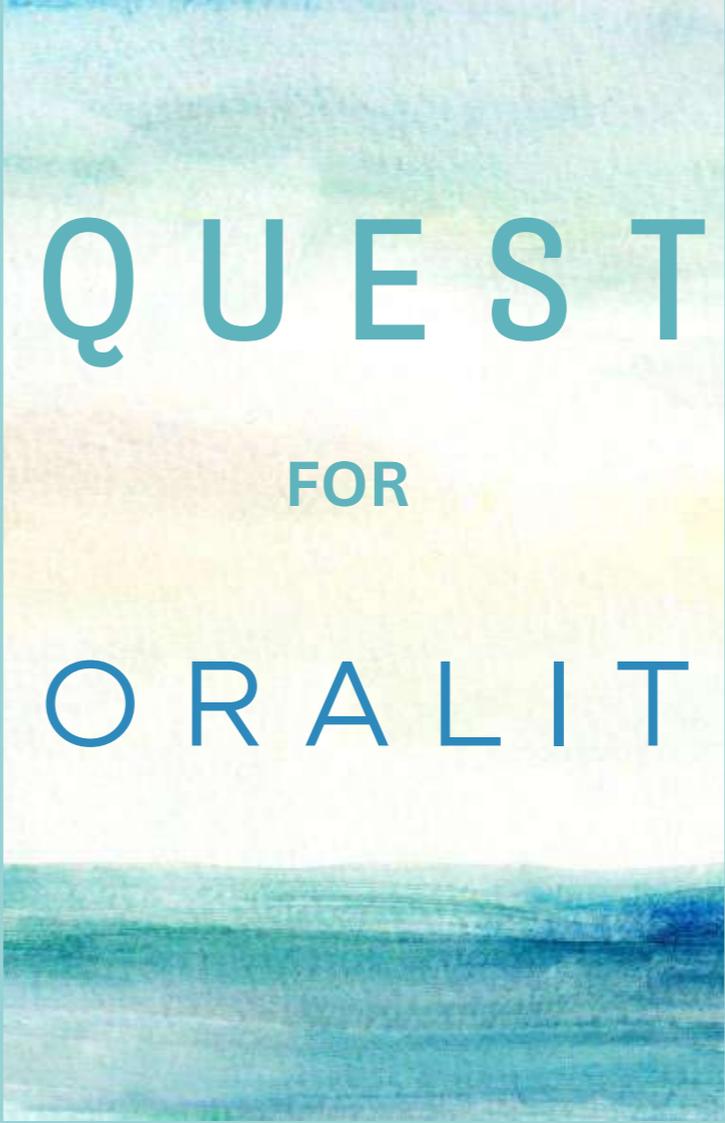


Quest for Morality is an in-depth exploration of Quranic moral conduct, offering readers an insightful understanding of the ethical principles found within the Quran. Drawing connections between timeless Divine guidance and the complexities of the modern world, the book presents practical ways to embody these values in daily life. It encourages individuals to pursue a path of inner refinement, sincerity, and compassion, grounded in Quranic teachings. The book serves as a meaningful guide for those seeking to grow in moral awareness and spiritual depth.

QUEST FOR MORALITY



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SAIHA MAAZ



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Saiha Maaz



Isha'at Department –Lajna Ima'illah UK 2025

Quest For Morality



Quest For Morality

Written by: Saiha Maaz

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used. Readers are urged to recite the full salutations:

sas: Ṣallallahu ‘Alaihi Wasallam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is written after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas).

as: ‘Alaihis-Salam (on whom be peace) is written after the name of the Promised Messiah (as) and all prophets other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas).

ra: Raḍi Allahu ‘anhu/‘anha/‘anhum (May Allah be pleased with him/with her/with them) is written after the names of the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) or of the Promised Messiah (as).

rh: Raḥimullahi ta'ala (may Allah shower His mercy upon him) is written after the names of the Khulafa of the Promised Messiah (as).

aba: Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala binaṣrihil-‘Aziz (May Allah, the Mighty help him) is written after the name of the current Khalifah of the Promised Messiah (as).

Note to Readers

The readers will note that we have not transliterated some Arabic words which have become part of the English language, e.g. Islam, Quran, hadith, jihad, Ramadan, and ummah. The Royal Asiatic Society's rules of transliteration for names of persons, places, and other terms, are not followed throughout the book as many of the names contain non-Arabic characters and carry a local transliteration and pronunciation style.

Please note that some words are given in parentheses () or *Italic*, these are the words we have transliterated from Arabic words.

The main reference used for interpretation of Qur'anic verses by the author is the 'The Holy Qur'an with Five Volume Commentary' which is the English translation of the Commentary on the Holy Qur'an by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih II (ra). Additional references wherever used have been cited at appropriate places.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

My Dear Sisters,

اَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Alhamdulillah, Allah the Almighty has enabled Lajna Ima'illah UK's Isha'at team to produce Quest for Morality as a guide to understanding morality and illuminating the path of virtue. With its foundation in the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Promised Messiah (as), it presents a comprehensive framework for navigating life's ethical dilemmas.

At the heart of this book is the assertion that true morality transcends mere natural inclinations. While virtues like kindness, humility, and courage exist inherently in all individuals, Quest for Morality emphasises the transformation of these innate qualities into conscious, reasoned moral actions underpinned by divine guidance.

The journey from natural states to moral excellence, as outlined in these pages, is not just a personal endeavour but

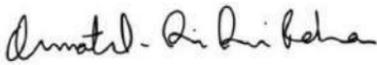
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a collective responsibility, essential for building a harmonious society.

Ultimately, Quest for Morality is a call to action; it invites readers to embark on a continuous journey of self-purification and moral development. May Allah enable us all to succeed in our quest in building a relationship with Allah the Almighty so that every action of our life becomes a means of worship.

Wasalam,

Your sister,



Qurratul-Ain Anni Rehman Serving
as Sadr Lajna Ima'illah UK

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, our thanks and praise are due to Almighty Allah without Whose boundless grace and blessings none of our work would be possible.

Lajna Ima'illah UK is privileged to receive the nurturing support and direct advice of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba). This inspires us daily and we earnestly pray that we continue to enjoy this grace of Allah. Ameen

I am grateful to Sadr Lajna Ima'illah UK, Dr Qurratul-Ain Anni Rehman Sahibah for her numerous prayers and steady guidance on this project.

May Almighty Allah bless the Isha'at team and enable it to continue to work successfully in the service of jamaat.

Mrs. Lubna Sohail

Serving as National Secretary Isha'at UK

Introduction

Religion exists in the inter subjective communication networks and collective conscience of masses. Merely possessing individual righteousness in isolation is insufficient; the overarching objective of Islam is the establishment of a society characterized by righteousness and morality.

Morals and vices are intricately linked, representing dual facets of human conduct. In instances where the Qur'an forbids a particular vice, it concurrently promotes the adoption of its complementary moral attribute to instil a specific ethical conduct for instance, it prohibits lying while simultaneously advocating for the embrace of truthful speech to foster the development of truthfulness and honest behaviour. Therefore, each vice is associated with a specific

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moral characteristic, thereby forming a corresponding pair. The Promised Messiah (as) says:

“Attraction forms the basis for everything that happens in the world, and the side which possesses greater conviction is able to attract others towards itself. There is every truth in the principle that a force can only be counteracted by another more powerful than itself.”¹

Qur’an usher believers towards embracing one while abstaining from the other, substituting good for evil.

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُدْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

Surely, good works drive away evil works.²

وَيُكَفِّرُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ

and repel evil with good.³

However, it is noteworthy that the number of vices to be avoided is comparatively fewer than the virtues prescribed for adoption as outlined in the Qur’an. Thus, as a believer

¹ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), How to be free from Sin, pg. 1, 2008, Islam International publications Ltd

² Surah Hud 11: 115

³ Surah Ar-Ra’d 13:23

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systematically and progressively eliminates impurity and darkness from their life while embracing purity and light, the culmination of their journey unfolds as an ascent towards perpetually escalating enlightenment.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

Allah is the friend of those who believe: He brings them out of every kind of darkness into light.⁴

يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

Thereby does Allah guide those who seek His pleasure on the paths of peace, and leads them out of every kind of darkness into light by His will, and guides them to the right path.⁵

Sets of these pairs of moral principles align into various categories within the context of societal morality.

1. Sexual conduct and standards of chastity:
 - a. Adultery (*Zina*)- Chastity

⁴ Surah Al Baqarah 2:258

⁵ Surah Al Maidah 5:17

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- b. Treachery of the eyes (*Badnazari*)-Modesty (*Haya*)
2. Establishing a fair and just society:
 - a. Cruelty- Justice
 - b. Lying- Truthfulness
 - c. Murder-Sanctity of Life
 - d. Dishonesty, stealing, theft-Honesty
 - e. Frugality, niggardliness, extravagance- Moderation
3. Removing social divisions, fracture and discontent:
 - a. Mischief (*Fasad*), secret plotting, rebellion- Loyalty, cooperation, unity
 - b. Hypocrisy, prejudice- Sincerity
 - c. Perfidy (treachery, duplicity)-Sincerity
 - d. Arrogance, conceit -Humility (*Ajz*)
 - e. Pride (*Taqabbur*), vanity (*Nakawat*)-Humility
 - f. Haste, cowardice-Perseverance, steadfastness, forbearance (*Bard*)
 - g. Hoarding -Selflessness
 - h. Suspicion, derision, defamation, slander, backbiting, envy-kindness, helpfulness, compassion
4. Social contract and trust:
 - a. Fulfilment of promises
 - b. Dishonesty (*Khayamat*)-Trustworthiness

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- c. Bribery-Honesty
 - d. Rebellion -submission, obedience
5. Positivity and peaceful society:
- a. Retaliation-clemency (mercy), forgiveness, peace-making
 - b. Ungratefulness (*Nashukri*)-Gratefulness, thankfulness
 - c. Obscene language, vain and idle talk-Pure Speech
 - d. Cowardice- Bravery, courage
 - e. Haughtiness- Cheerfulness (*Khubh Khulqi*)
 - f. Anger-Suppression of anger, meekness (*baleem*), forbearance (*bard*)
 - g. Trust in God (*Tawaqul*)
 - h. Intoxication
 - i. Gambling
6. An altruistic society:
- a. Ihsaan
 - b. Hospitality
 - c. Cruelty to animals- Sympathy to the creatures of this world (*Hamdardi - e Khalbq*)
 - d. Doing good- Service of mankind- Feeding the hungry
 - e. Philanthropy- Spirit of sacrifice

Contemporary society is experiencing a concerning trend towards increasing moral ambiguity and ethical laxity, with

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behaviours once deemed unacceptable now gaining acceptance and even advocacy. This phenomenon underscores a gradual erosion of moral values within societal frameworks. Despite a collective yearning for solutions and guidance amidst this moral malaise, there exists a reluctance to embrace the illuminating principles that could offer hope and serve as a beacon of salvation. The Promised Messiah (as) reveals:

“It is apparent from a close study of humanity that a hidden and formidable force is pulling it downwards, and man is swiftly being dragged into a pit which is termed *Asfalus Safilin* [the lowest of the low]. Such a complete change has come over the intellects of men, that they have come to admire and praise things which are abhorrent and detestable to the spiritual eye. Every soul feels itself being dragged downwards by a force, which, through its devastating influence, has already caused a whole world to fall into decline. Pure truths are laughed at and ridiculed, and complete submission to God is looked upon as an absurdity. Every soul is drawn towards the world as if constrained by some hidden force. As I have often stated before, attraction forms the basis for everything that happens in the world, and the side which possesses greater conviction is able to attract others towards itself. There is every truth in the principle that a force can only be counteracted by another more powerful

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than itself. It is impossible for this world, which is being pulled downwards by the force of base attractions, to rise up again, unless an opposing force appears from heaven to reinforce people's faith, and to show them that there is more substantial and lasting joy in submission to the commandments of God than in the fulfilment of carnal passions, and to convince them that transgression is worse than death. This heavenly light of conviction is granted to man through the 'Sun', i.e., the Imam of his age, and failure to recognise him amounts to dying a death of ignorance. The person who thinks he has no need of this true source of light is deluded, for he sets himself against the immutable laws of God.”⁶

For individuals striving to attain divine favour, the promised Messiah (as) asserts that faith in God and emulation of divine attributes constitutes the singular pathway through which humanity can achieve moral excellence. He says:

“The truth is that whatever good quality, whether intellectual or relating to conduct or morals, that can be manifested by man, cannot be manifested by human capabilities alone; rather, the real cause of its manifestation is Allah's grace. As these people receive Allah's grace more than anyone else, the

⁶ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), How to be free from Sin, pg. 1-2, 2008, Islam International publications Ltd

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Benevolent God bestows all good qualities upon them through His boundless beneficence. In other words, no one is truly good except God Almighty and all high moral qualities and all virtues are proven for Him alone. Then to the degree to which a person, discarding his self and his will, acquires nearness to the Being who is All Good, to that degree divine qualities are reflected in his soul. Thus, all of the good qualities and truly civilized behaviours that a person acquires proceed from his nearness to God alone.”⁷

⁷ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Part IV, sub footnote number 3, page 343, 2016, Islam International publications Ltd

Chapter 1 -Philosophies of Morality

Secular Moral Philosophies:

Morality, a fundamental aspect of human existence and a cornerstone of human society, has been dissected and reinterpreted by various philosophical minds throughout history, leading to the emergence of various ethical theories. Among these, three primary philosophical frameworks stand out: consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Each of these approaches offers unique perspectives on the nature of morality, the basis for ethical decision-making, and the evaluation of right and wrong actions.

Consequentialism, as a moral theory centres on the outcomes or *consequences* of actions as the primary determinant of their moral worth. Rooted in the idea that the

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ends justify the means, consequentialist theories, notably exemplified by utilitarianism, propose that actions should aim to produce the greatest good or happiness for the greatest number of individuals.⁸ Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, advocated for a calculus of pleasure and pain as a means of determining moral actions. Bentham's quantitative approach focused solely on calculating pleasure and pain as a means of determining the moral value of actions.⁹ Mill expanded on this, distinguishing between higher intellectual or moral pleasures and base physical ones.¹⁰ The strength of consequentialism lies in its emphasis on achieving positive outcomes. However, it raises concerns about the potential justification of morally questionable actions if they lead to favourable consequences.

To examine the implications of these philosophies in everyday life. Imagine you're standing near a railway track where a runaway trolley is hurtling down the line. Ahead, there are five unaware workers on the track, unable to move. You're standing next to a lever that can divert the trolley onto another track, saving the five workers, but

⁸ Duignan, Brian. [1999] 2000. "Utilitarianism". Encyclopedialike Britannica.

⁹ Bentham, Jeremy. 1780. "Of The Principle of Utility." Pp. 1–6 in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*.

¹⁰ Mill, John Stuart (1998). Crisp, Roger (ed.). *Utilitarianism*. Oxford University Press. p. 56.

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unfortunately, there's one worker on the alternative track who would be hit if you pull the lever.¹¹

A consequentialist approach, particularly utilitarianism, would evaluate this scenario based on the outcomes or consequences of your action. If you decide to pull the lever to divert the trolley, sacrificing one person to save five, a consequentialist would argue that this action is morally right because it maximizes the overall good. The greater good is achieved by saving a net total of four lives (five saved minus one lost). From a consequentialist perspective, the moral evaluation centres on the consequences: saving the greater number of lives, even if it involves making an active choice that results in harm to one person. The action is justified because it produces the best overall outcome in terms of minimizing harm and maximizing benefit. A person guided by Virtue ethics however will be faced with a paralysing moral quandary.

Additionally, accurately predicting and evaluating all possible consequences can prove challenging or impossible in complex moral scenarios. Human interactions and societal systems are complex, and the ripple effects of an action can extend far beyond what can be foreseen. Decision-makers

¹¹ Foot P. The Problem of abortion and the doctrine of the double effect. *Oxford Review*. 1967; 5:5–15.

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often lack complete information about the potential consequences of their actions, leading to unintended and unforeseen outcomes even in the short term. Evaluating the long-term consequences of an action can be speculative and subject to even more uncertainties. Different people may assign different values to various outcomes, and what one person sees as a positive consequence may be viewed differently by another. Highlighting the fact that consequentialism also lacks an objective criterion for weighing and comparing different values for outcomes.

Utilitarianism, while striving to maximize general happiness and reduce suffering through calculations, overlooks the rich, profound aspects of human nature, according to Nietzsche. This divergence highlights the complexity of ethical thought, where utilitarianism seeks to quantify happiness, and Nietzsche's philosophy prompts a re-evaluation of values and the affirmation of individual potential.

Nietzsche's critique of traditional morality strikes at the core of established ethical norms. He vehemently rejected what he termed "slave morality,"¹² asserting that it stifled human potential by imposing values of humility, meekness, and self-

¹² Nietzsche, Friedrich; Lacey, Michael. "Nietzsche on master and slave morality"

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denial. He distinguished between two types of moralities: *master morality* and *slave morality*. He argued that *Master morality*, is associated with strength, power, and nobility. Those who embody it create their own values, defining good and evil based on their own characteristics and achievements. However, *slave morality* in contrast is a moral system that emerges in response to oppression, emphasising virtues of meekness and compassion. *Slave morality*, rooted in resentment, redefines values in opposition to the powerful, leading to the devaluation of traits associated with *master morality*.

Instead, Nietzsche proposed an alternative ethos that championed strength, individualism, and the pursuit of power. His concept of the "will to power"¹³ underscored the inherent drive within individuals to assert themselves and achieve self-mastery.

In Nietzsche's view, traditional morality, influenced by religious and societal norms, constrained human potential. His critique of traditional morality challenges the fundamental tenets of utilitarianism, dismissing it as a reductionist framework that oversimplified human nature by reducing moral decisions to hedonistic calculations.

¹³ Nietzsche, Friedrich (1886). *Beyond Good and Evil*. p. Section 228.

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Conversely, Rousseau advocated for the human mind to formulate a civic code or a set of life principles. For him, once people have achieved consciousness of themselves as social beings, morality also becomes possible, and this relies on the further faculty of conscience. In conflicts between egoism and altruism, he recommended turning to reason for resolution. His philosophy implies that, during the pursuit of pleasure, when faced with the choice between extreme selfishness and selfless sacrifice, reason should mediate.¹⁴ This hollow philosophy seems lacking in substance, particularly for those pursuing pleasure. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih Rabeḥ (rh) in his magnum opus, *Revelation Rationality Knowledge and Truth* comments:

“Those given to pleasure would hardly need advice from Bentham, Mill, Sidgwick etc. to stop short at the border of moderation and desist from leaping into the domain of utter selfishness. For them the choice between egoism and altruism would be out of the question. Who would stand in need of arbitration of reason in the area of his sensual desires? A person given to lustful and carnal pleasures needs no counsel. He pursues this course knowing full well the pros and cons of it.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Bertram, Christopher, "Jean Jacques Rousseau", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.)

¹⁵ Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), *Revelation Rationality Knowledge and Truth*- page 44-45, 1998, Islam International publications Ltd

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Following the Utilitarians, a notable generation of philosophers, including Empiricists Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, emerged. Their influence on subsequent philosophical generations was profound. Their philosophy emphasised belief solely in conclusions derived from demonstrable experimental observations. They asserted that ideas worthy of acceptance arise only from pure reason and signs, substantiated through consistent scientific experimentation. This empirical approach calls into question “moral sentimentalism”, asserting that moral distinctions arise from human sentiments and emotions, emphasising the role of passion and the influence of custom in shaping moral judgments.

Immanuel Kant, succeeding Hume, was deeply affected by Hume's realistic philosophy, contributing to the realism in Kant's own philosophy. However, despite being agnostic, Kant recognised the essential role of morality and proposed that morality should be deduced from reason alone, marking him as a pioneer in this perspective.

Deontology:

In contrast to utilitarianism, deontology focuses on moral duties, principles, and the intrinsic nature of actions themselves rather than their consequences. It proposes that

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certain actions are inherently right or wrong, regardless of their consequences and prioritizes the intent behind an action and adherence to moral rules. Immanuel Kant introduced the idea of the categorical imperative and argued that individuals should act based on universalizable moral rules derived from reason and that the morality of actions is contingent upon their adherence to these rules.¹⁶ He posits that one should always respect the humanity in others, and that one should only act in accordance with rules that could hold for everyone. Kant argued that the moral law is a truth of reason, and hence all rational creatures are bound by the same moral law. Thus, in answer to the question, “What should I do?” Kant replies that we should act rationally, in accordance with a universal moral law. Deontology's emphasis on moral rules and the intent behind actions provides a principled framework for ethical decision-making. However, critics argue that it can lead to inflexibility and might not offer clear guidance when moral rules conflict.

Virtue Ethics:

Virtue ethics diverges from both consequentialism and deontology by focusing on the cultivation of moral character

¹⁶ Johnson, Robert and Adam Cureton, "Kant's Moral Philosophy", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.)

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and virtues within individuals. Rooted in the works of Aristotle, virtue ethics posits that moral behaviour stems from the development of virtuous traits, such as courage, honesty, and compassion. This approach emphasises the importance of cultivating virtuous habits and character traits, viewing moral actions as an expression of one's character.¹⁷ While virtue ethics highlights the significance of character development, it could be perceived as subjective in determining which virtues are fundamental.

These contrasting viewpoints shed light on the multifaceted nature of morality. While utilitarianism quantifies morality through a calculus of pleasure and pain for the greater good, Nietzsche challenges the universality of moral values and calls for the celebration of individual strength and will. This dichotomy underscores the ongoing debate about the essence of morality and the diverse ways in which it is conceptualized and approached in philosophical discourse.

Now if we were to consider another scenario that you're a doctor working in a resource-limited hospital during a pandemic. There's a shortage of a life-saving drug, and you have only enough doses to treat half of the critically ill patients. You must decide who receives the treatment.

¹⁷ Hursthouse, Rosalind and Glen Pettigrove, "Virtue Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.)

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A utilitarian approach would focus on maximizing overall happiness or well-being. The doctor might weigh the potential outcomes of treating different patients: saving a higher number of lives, preventing the spread of the disease, or maximizing the years of life saved. In this case, they might distribute the limited doses to those patients whose treatment would result in the most lives saved or the most significant reduction in suffering, aiming to achieve the greatest overall benefit for society.

A doctor guided by virtue ethics, however, might consider the virtues relevant to their profession: compassion, beneficence, and justice. They would contemplate their role as a healer, aiming to make decisions that align with these virtues. The doctor might prioritize treating patients based on their immediate need, severity of illness, and potential for recovery. They would aim to act in a way that reflects the virtues they hold dear, possibly trying to ensure that the scarce treatment goes to those who could benefit the most.

Each of these ethical frameworks presents valuable insights into moral decision-making and reasoning. However, their inherent strengths and limitations imply that a singular approach cannot comprehensively address the complexities of moral dilemmas. Instead, a combination or integration of these approaches might offer a more comprehensive ethical

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perspective. Real-world moral deliberations often involve elements of consequentialist thinking, deontological principles, and considerations of virtuous character, reflecting the multidimensional nature of ethical reasoning.

The discourse on morality remains a complex and contentious subject within philosophical and theological circles, featuring a myriad of divergent theories and interpretations. Over centuries, scholars across disciplines have endeavoured to articulate a cohesive framework to comprehend morality, yet often their contributions have added layers of sub-theories to its already convoluted nature. Despite its universally acknowledged importance, a comprehensive grasp of morality remains elusive.

The root of the problem lies deep. Secular philosophies trip at the fundamental questions, “What is the nature and essence of morality?”, “Who has the authority to define moral conduct?” and “What are the tools and parameters that can formulate everyday decisions?” Defining morality frequently involves defining it as the pursuit of good. However, the ambiguity lies in discerning what constitutes 'good.' From global slavery to stolen generations of indigenous children, from persecution to genocide, appalling events unfold because certain individuals perceive their

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actions as righteous, either for personal gain or perceived societal benefit.

While the consensus leans toward the assertion that individuals should uphold moral standards, the practicality of being moral persists as an unresolved quandary. In contemporary society, the determination of moral codes often rests upon personal discretion, drawing from religious doctrines, philosophical doctrines, societal conventions, or subjective ethical compasses. When the determination of morality is subject to individual interpretation, the challenge arises: who possesses the authority to definitively determine what qualifies as moral conduct?

Hence, to navigate the concept of morality effectively, establishing core parameters becomes imperative to set a standardized benchmark.

Islam offers an extensive comprehension of morality, encompassing its theoretical underpinnings and practical manifestations. This Islamic framework not only aligns with achieving elevated spiritual ideals but also upholds principles of reason and logic. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih Rabeah (rh) states:

“On the one hand there is man's reason alone, unaided by Divine guidance, striving to resolve all human problems by

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itself. On the other, there is the Divinely revealed truth which emphasises the role of absolute moral measures to combat immorality in man.”¹⁸

This thorough examination of various philosophical schools of thought inevitably leads to the conclusion that reason alone is entirely insufficient for guiding humanity toward a peaceful moral society. Religious history illustrates that periods of peace were only attained when Divine messengers took a stand against human immorality.

“It was through a course of toil, sweat and blood, that islands of a near peaceful human society were ever created in the midst of the raging ocean of crime and sin. No doubt they were always reclaimed by the seas of temptation. But even so, the level of human morality was invariably raised a notch or two. Had it not been so and had there been no Divinely generated movements for the moral rearmament of man, society would be a hundred times worse than it is today.”¹⁹

Divinely inspired moral laws are not merely a series of commands and admonishments, they are a way for people to live better lives as individuals as well as members of a

¹⁸ Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), Revelation Rationality Knowledge and Truth- page 70, 1998, Islam International publications Ltd

¹⁹ Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), Revelation Rationality Knowledge and Truth- page 71, 1998, Islam International publications Ltd

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social order. These laws play a crucial role in human progression and raise the standard of humanity as a whole.

The Islamic school of thought:

The Islamic idea of morality is a unique perspective seated in natural human abilities and the correct utilisation of these faculties. It challenges the notion of morality existing independently of Divine guidance and a belief in God. It argues that while individuals may display glimpses of moral behaviour, true morality can only be realised through belief in God and emulation of Divine attributes. It posits that God has bestowed each and every human being with the faculties and potential to become a moral person, alongside an innate sense of right and wrong, a conscience. It is the appropriate use of these faculties guided by Divine revelation and reason that leads to true moral behaviour. The Islamic thought distinguishes between natural states and true morals, asserting that morals arise when reason and understanding govern actions, differentiating them from mere natural impulses exhibited without reflection.

The Promised Messiah (as) in his outstanding exegesis “The philosophy of teachings of Islam” elucidates that while individuals may embody traits like humility, courtesy, resilience, purity, empathy, courage, magnanimity,

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forgiveness, endurance, authenticity, and loyalty, it's essential to recognise that these virtues are inherent attributes. They are innate or have the potential to develop in every human. However, it's crucial to differentiate between displaying these virtues and the concept of morality. Animals and even infants can exhibit these positive traits, yet it would be incorrect to equate such displays with moral behaviour.

The moral framework presented in the Qur'an is not an isolated theological concept or a series of random virtuous actions. Instead, it constitutes a comprehensive ethical lifestyle that serves as an integral link in the chain of human spiritual progress. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

“The purpose of all Qur’anic insights and admonitions and directions is to raise man from his natural condition of barbarity to a moral state, and then to lift him from that state to the limitless ocean of spirituality.”²⁰

This journey of progression from natural instincts to higher moral and spiritual states, guided by reason, reflection, and a deep connection with the Divine, is the aim of Islamic morality.

²⁰ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The philosophy of teachings of Islam, page 24, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

Chapter 2- Qur'anic Morality

Islamic moral philosophy systematically engages with the entirety of moral comportment, delineating essential parameters and addressing fundamental queries across diverse domains of ethical inquiry. On one hand, it explicates the theoretical dimensions pertaining to the nature and essence of morality, concurrently offering tools and an intricate framework for ethical decision-making. A distinctive attribute of this philosophical approach lies in its provision of a methodical, step-by-step guide for realising ethical objectives, explicitly asserting morality as a foundational milestone on the path to spirituality.

The dilemma surrounding the attribution of authority for defining moral conduct is inherently resolved through the ascription of Divine authority to revelation.

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تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَبِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

These are the Signs of Allah; We recite them unto thee with truth. Surely, thou art *one* of the Messengers.²¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَآمِنُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

O mankind, the Messenger has indeed come to you with Truth from your Lord; believe therefore, *it will be* better for you. But if you disbelieve, verily, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and in the earth. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.²²

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may make it prevail over every *other* religion, even though the idolaters may dislike *it*.²³

A further authoritative framework is detailed in

²¹ Surah Al-Baqarah 2:253

²² Surah An-Nisa 4:171

²³ Surah At-Tauba 9:33

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

O ye who believe! obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you. And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most commendable in the end.²⁴

After establishing a structure of authority, Qur'an asserts that every individual is endowed by God with the inherent capacities and potential to evolve into a moral being, accompanied by an intrinsic awareness of morality, encapsulated in a conscience.

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

And *by* the soul and its perfection —

فَالْتَمَهَا فُجِّرَهَا وَنَقَّوَهَا

And He revealed to it what is wrong for it and what is right for it —

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ۝

²⁴ Surah An Nisa 4:60

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He indeed *truly* prospers who purifies it,

وَقَدْ حَابَ مَنْ دَسَّهَا

And he who corrupts it is ruined.²⁵

The quandary of what constitutes “good” and “evil” is discussed in detail in multiple places of the Qur’an in hundreds of verses. Two instances are reproduced here, speaking of man, Allah Taala says:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

And We have pointed out to him the two highways *of good and evil*.²⁶

And then the following verses detail moral acts that constitute “goodness”, for those progressing on the *highway of good* in this analogy.

فَكَرْبَةٍ

It is the freeing of a slave.

أَوْ اطْعَمَ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ

Or feeding in a day of hunger

²⁵ Surah Ash-Shams 91:8-11

²⁶ Surah Al-Balad 90:11

يَتِيئَانَا مَثَرَبَةً

An orphan near of kin,

أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَثَرَبَةٍ

Or a poor man *lying* in the dust.

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالرَّحْمَةِ

Again, he should have been of those who believe and exhort one another to perseverance and exhort one another to mercy.²⁷

In another verse Allah ta'ala says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

Dost thou not see how Allah sets forth the similitude of a good word? *It is* like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches *reach* into heaven.

تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

It brings forth its fruit at all times by the command of its Lord. And Allah sets forth similitudes for men that they may reflect.

²⁷ Surah Al-Balad 90:14-18

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وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ

And the case of an evil word is like *that of* an evil tree, which is uprooted from above the earth and has no stability.²⁸

An uncomplicated yet profoundly efficacious criteria of distinguishing good and bad is presented by the Holy Prophet (sas). *Wabisah bin Ma'bad* (ra) says, "I came to the Messenger of Allah (sas), and he said, "You have come to ask about righteousness." I said, "Yes." He (sas) said, "Consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels at ease and the heart feels tranquil. And wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and causes uneasiness in the breast, even though people have repeatedly given their legal opinion [in its favour]."²⁹

On another occasion he said: "Righteousness is in good character, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in your soul, and which you dislike people finding out about."³⁰

The Promised Messiah (as) delineates that humans are naturally imbued with a feeling of remorse or regret indicating that one has done something wrong or has lost an opportunity to do good – this contrition is the source that

²⁸ Surah Ibrahim 14:25-27

²⁹ Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal 4-227

³⁰ Muslim. 2553a, Book 45, Hadith 16Page 79. Tarikh Dimashq 62970

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inspires improvement in behaviour leading to moral conduct. He says:

“The time of true morals, whether good or bad, begins when a person’s reason becomes mature and he is able to distinguish between good and bad and the degree of evil and goodness, and begins to feel sorry when he misses an opportunity of doing good and is remorseful when he has done some wrong. This is the second stage of his life which is designated by the Holy Qur’an as the self that reproves.”³¹

In his profoundly articulated paper on the philosophy of the Islamic thought, the Promised Messiah (as) describes the transformation of natural states into moral and spiritual ones. He discusses the interplay between physical actions and their corresponding inner qualities, suggesting that true morality stems from exercising these qualities under the guidance of reason and at appropriate times.

Additionally, he outlines three methods of reform: basic moral training for savages, instructing individuals in higher moral qualities, and teaching the essence of true love and communion with the Divine.

³¹ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 27, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

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He delves into these states by referencing the Holy Qur'an, describing how each state emerges from a different source within a human being.

1. Natural State (*Nafs-e-Ammarah*): This is the instinctual state where natural inclinations dominate, leading to actions that might not align with moral conduct. The Qur'an describes this as the self that incites to evil.
2. Moral State (*Nafs-e-Lawwamah*): This stage marks the progression from the natural state. It involves self-reproach, striving for higher moral qualities, and a recognition of actions against virtue. The Qur'an refers to this as the self-reproaching self.

The Promised Messiah (as) explains:

“It is so called as it reproves man on vice and is not reconciled to man's submitting to his natural desires and leading an unbridled existence like the animals. It desires that man should be in a good state and should practise good morals, and no kind of intemperance should be manifested in any aspect of human life, and natural emotions and desires should be regulated by reason. As it reproves every vicious movement, it is called the reproving self. Though it reproves itself in respect of vices, yet it is not fully effective in practising virtue and occasionally it is dominated by natural

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emotions, when it stumbles and falls. It is like a weak child who does not wish to stumble and fall but does so out of weakness and is then remorseful over his infirmity.”³²

3. Spiritual State (*Nafs-e-Mutma'innah*): This is the elevated stage where the soul finds peace in Divine connection. It signifies a deep spiritual strength, a close relationship with God, and an inability to live without that connection.

The natural qualities which a person possesses, though they may resemble morality at times, cannot be considered moral. Until one uses reason and understanding, based on the intrinsic conscience and divinely revealed guidance, to apply natural qualities at the appropriate time and place in order to make them moral qualities. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

“The Holy Word of God has classified man’s natural faculties and desires and urges, as natural conditions. These, when they are consciously regulated and controlled and are brought into action on their proper occasions and places, become moral qualities.”³³

³² Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 5-6, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

³³ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 17, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

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Hence, a person can be modest, polite, steadfast, chaste, sympathetic, brave, generous, forgiving, patient, sincere, loyal etc. but it must be remembered that these good qualities are simply natural states. These qualities, or the potential to develop and establish such good qualities have been bestowed upon every human being. Yet it cannot be said that the mere manifestation of good qualities should be considered to be morality. Good qualities can also be exhibited by animals, or even infants, yet no one would ever consider an animal or an infant to be moral.

The Promised Messiah (as) explains:

‘Natural conditions are not something distinct from moral conditions. When they are regulated and are used on their proper occasions, under the direction of reason, they acquire a moral character. Before they are controlled by reason and understanding they have not the character of moral qualities, but are natural impulses, however much they might resemble moral qualities. For instance, if a dog or lamb displays affection or docility towards its master it would not be described as moral or good-mannered. In the same way a wolf or a tiger would not be described as ill-mannered on account of its wildness... A child or a mad man sometimes behaves in a manner that has the appearance of moral action, but no sensible person calls such conduct moral, as such conduct does not proceed from good sense and

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appropriateness but is a natural reaction to the circumstances.³⁴

Hence, these natural qualities cannot be considered moral qualities until they are utilized in an appropriate fashion. True morality cannot come about, until these good qualities are used at the appropriate time and place. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

‘We have repeatedly pointed out the distinction between a true moral quality and a natural condition, which is that a moral quality is conditioned by conformity to place and occasion, and a natural impulse often comes into play out of place.’³⁵

The Promised Messiah (as) also highlights that exhibiting good qualities alone doesn't guarantee spiritual growth. Instead, genuine spirituality involves a deep connection with God and the exercise of virtues in accordance with Divine will.

As previously noted, three fundamental springs underlie human states, thus Qur'an identifies three methods of

³⁴ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p. 24-25, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

³⁵ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p. 61-62, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

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reform. The initial one focusing on teaching senseless savages, basic social values, lifting them from a primitive state and establishing social etiquette.

Reformation of the Natural State:

According to the Holy Qur'an, there exists a profound connection between the natural state of man and his moral and spiritual well-being. Even seemingly mundane actions impact one's moral and spiritual states. When a person's natural state aligns with the principles of divine law, it transforms into a moral state, influencing spirituality. The Qur'an emphasises fundamental hygiene and humble deportment, underscoring the intricate link between outward actions and inner purity. The Promised Messiah (as) elucidates:

“According to the Holy Qur'an the natural state of man has a very strong relationship with his moral and spiritual states, so much so that even a person's manner of eating and drinking affects his moral and spiritual states. If the natural state of a person is subjected to the control of the directions of divine law it becomes his moral state and deeply affects his spirituality, as is said that whatever falls into a salt mine is converted into salt. That is why the Holy Qur'an has laid stress on physical cleanliness and postures, and their regulation in relation to all worship and inner purity and

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spiritual humility. Upon reflection, this very philosophy is borne out as exceedingly accurate; namely, that physical conditions deeply affect the soul.”³⁶

The Qur’an suggests that the movements of the body significantly influence the soul, and thus, it addresses every aspect of human conduct. This attention to detail reflects the Qur’an’s aim to reform the natural state of man comprehensively. The Promised Messiah (as) illuminates:

“The movements of the soul follow the movements of the body. If the body is drawn in a particular direction the soul automatically follows it. It is, therefore, a function of the Book of God to direct itself to the natural state of man: that is why the Holy Qur’an pays so much attention to the reform of the natural state of man and gives directions with regard to every one of his actions, his laughing, crying, eating, drinking, dressing, sleeping, speaking, keeping silent, marrying, remaining celibate, walking, standing still, outward cleanliness, bathing, submitting to a discipline in health and in illness etc. It affirms that man’s physical condition affects his spiritual condition deeply.”³⁷

³⁶ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 8-9, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

³⁷ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 14, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

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The Divine Scheme, as outlined in the Holy Qur'an, begins by imparting rules for social behaviour, elevating individuals from a state of barbarism. The aim is to instil elementary moral values, creating a foundation of social conduct. Subsequently, the Qur'an seeks to refine these basic moral habits, transforming them into higher moral qualities.

Attaining True Morality:

The Promised Messiah (as) explains:

“At the stage of the self that reproves, a person is bestowed so much of reason and understanding and good conscience, that he reproves himself over a wrong done by him and is anxious to do good. That is the stage when a person acquires high moral qualities.”³⁸

Whoever as man is weak by nature, he falls and endeavours and then falls again. Qur'an guides such a one by declaring:

إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

As to those who do wrong and then substitute good for evil; *to them*, I am indeed Most Forgiving, Merciful.³⁹

³⁸ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p. 27, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

³⁹ Surah An Naml 27:12

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And

وَأَنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحَاتٍمَّ اهْتَدَىٰ

But surely I am forgiving to those who repent and believe and do good deeds, and then stick to guidance.⁴⁰

This constant strife of substituting good for evil is the essence of moral struggle. True morality is attained through the gradual elimination of evil, but it's essential to recognise that there's no void left behind. This space must be occupied by goodness. Consequently, morals exist in pairs: refrain from lying and promote truthfulness. The Promised Messiah (as) describes two main categories of moral qualities: those that help in avoiding evil actions and those that facilitate performing good deeds. He says:

“Moral qualities fall under two heads. First, those moral qualities that enable a person to discard evil; and, secondly, those moral qualities that enable him to do good. Discarding evil comprehends those qualities through which a person tries that he should do no harm to the property, honour or life of a fellow being by his tongue or his hand or his eyes or by any other organ, nor should he design to do him such harm. The doing of good comprehends all those moral

⁴⁰ Surah Taha 20:83

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qualities whereby a person tries to benefit a fellow being in respect of his property or honour by his tongue or his hand or his knowledge, or by any other means, or determines to make manifest his glory or honour, or overlooks a wrong that had been done to himself and thus benefits the perpetrator of the wrong by sparing him physical pain or financial imposition, or inflicts such chastisement upon him in respect of the wrong which is in reality a mercy for the wrongdoer.”⁴¹

He breaks down the moral qualities related to avoidance of evil into four Qur’anic virtues, *Ihsan*, *Amanat* and *Diyanat*, *Hudnah* and *Haun*, *Rifq* and *Qaul-i-Hasan* categorically.

1. Chastity (*Ihsan*): Refers to sexual purity or abstinence from illicit sexual activities. He emphasises the importance of controlling desires and avoiding immoral behaviour, highlighting that this virtue is a moral quality when practiced consciously.
2. Honesty and Integrity (*Amanat* and *Diyanat*): Stresses the natural disposition humans have towards disliking what belongs to others. This innate aversion to possess others' belongings forms the root of honesty and integrity. He highlights the need

⁴¹ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 40-41, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

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to fulfil all aspects of honesty and integrity to truly possess these moral qualities.

3. Peacefulness (*Hudnah and Haun*): Refers to refraining from inflicting physical harm on others unjustly and living peacefully. He underscores the need for peaceful behaviour, pointing out that this quality is rooted in the impulse of attachment found in humans, but to be considered moral, it must be exercised by choice and reason.
4. Gentleness and Politeness (*Rifq and Qaul-i-Hasan*): Highlights the importance of being cheerful and polite. He discusses how cheerfulness is the natural faculty that gives birth to courtesy and politeness and cites teachings that encourage positive speech and behaviour towards others.

The Qur'anic perspective on moral qualities related to doing good encompasses various dimensions. The Promised Messiah (as) presents four fundamental morals related to doing good.

1. One crucial aspect is the concept of '*afw*,' which involves forgiving individuals for their transgressions. The Qur'an emphasises that forgiveness should be extended judiciously, considering whether the situation calls for mercy or appropriate consequences. The Qur'an instructs

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believers to control anger and pardon sins when necessary. The Qur'anic guidance advocates a balanced approach to morality, discouraging blind forgiveness and promoting a thoughtful consideration of whether forgiveness or punishment aligns with the greater good for both the offender and the community. The Qur'an acknowledges the diversity of human nature and advises against a one-size-fits-all approach to forgiveness.

2. Furthermore, the Qur'an introduces the concept of '*adl*' (equity) as another moral quality for doing good. *Adl* refers to the quality of being just, fair, and impartial. It involves treating individuals equitably and ensuring that each person receives their due rights. The Qur'an emphasises the importance of justice in various aspects of life. It encourages believers to be fair in their dealings, whether it's in matters of law, commerce, or personal interactions. The concept of *adl* is deeply rooted in the idea of maintaining balance and ensuring that no one is wronged. It underscores the importance of responding with kindness and benevolence, encouraging actions that are proportionate to the circumstances.
3. The Qur'an also promotes '*ihsan*' (benevolence). *Ihsan* goes beyond mere justice; it involves acts of

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kindness, goodness, and excellence. It is the quality of doing good to others beyond what is strictly required, often described as going the extra mile. Qur'an frequently mentions *ihسان* as a desirable quality for believers. It encourages acts of benevolence and emphasises that believers should not only fulfil their obligations but also strive for excellence in their conduct. *Ihsan* involves showing kindness, compassion, and generosity to others without expecting immediate reciprocation.

4. '*ita'i dbil qurba'* (graciousness towards all as between kindred), this concept entails treating others with the same kindness and consideration that one would show to close family members. It emphasises a broad sense of kinship and community. The Qur'an encourages believers to extend familial care and compassion to a larger circle, treating others as if they were close relatives. This includes being considerate, supportive, and compassionate towards fellow human beings. The idea is to create a sense of community and mutual support, fostering an environment where individuals care for one another as if they were part of an extended family. However, the emphasise remains on the idea that these qualities should be exercised appropriately based on the demands of time and occasion.

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The Qur'anic perspective critiques the notion of consistently and mindlessly employing a singular moral attribute without careful consideration or insight. True morality encompasses the ability to discern when to deploy a specific moral attribute and when to refrain from doing so. It revolves around the judicious application of the appropriate moral quality in accordance with the demands of the given situation.

The Promised Messiah (as) analyses the concept of constant forgiveness in this context, highlighting that forgiveness without considering the circumstances may disrupt societal order and hinder the reform of wrongdoers. He emphasises that a comprehensive understanding of human nature involves recognizing and appropriately utilizing various faculties, such as anger, mercy, and forgiveness, guided by reason. Urging believers to exercise justice, benevolence, and graciousness based on the specific demands of each situation. The Qur'anic philosophy asserts that true virtue lies in the judicious use of natural faculties under the guidance of reason, fostering a balance between different aspects of human nature for the betterment of individuals and society.

Why be moral?

The Qur'an addresses the perennial ethical query pertaining to the motivation for moral behaviour by elucidating a multifaceted framework. At its core, Qur'anic text asserts that ethical conduct is integral to realising the expansive purpose inherent in human creation. It posits the pursuit of virtuous actions as an essential catalyst for unlocking the full spectrum of spiritual potential, fostering an evolutionary progression towards a heightened state of spiritual being and a pursuit of divine connection. The imperative to adhere to virtuous principles is underscored as a means to not only cultivate personal growth but also to fortify familial ties and contribute to the establishment of a more cohesive and improved societal framework. Foremost among the incentives for ethical conduct, according to the Qur'anic perspective, is the unlocking of spirituality—a transcendental dimension that transcends mundane considerations and serves as a paramount impetus for virtuous living.

Within the Islamic paradigm, morality is not considered an ultimate objective but rather serves as a conduit—a medium or pathway—toward a more elevated quest. The arduous journey of self-reformation and purification, characterized by a continual struggle or uphill battle, is positioned as a

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means to attain a loftier and transcendent end. In this conceptual framework, the emphasis lies not solely on the ethical conduct itself but rather on its instrumental role in facilitating a higher spiritual and existential purpose.

This multi-dimensional approach seeks to elucidate the interplay between ethical conduct and the broader tapestry of human existence as articulated in the Qur'anic discourse.

Is there room for morality in the modern world?

The inquiry raised by modern secular society revolves around the notion that if an individual already exhibits commendable moral conduct, and if secular education can guide one towards virtuous behaviours, what rationale exists for embracing a particular religious belief? Critics argue that religions purport to instil moral values, yet individuals may possess ethical virtues independently of religious affiliations. That ethical conduct and material advancement are inherent human needs. Furthermore, it is contended that a considerable number of secular individuals demonstrate superior moral standards compared to adherents of religious doctrines.

In order to navigate this discourse effectively, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the intricate interplay between moral transformation, material advancement, and religious

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adherence. A nuanced comprehension of these relationships should guide the formulation of our lifestyles.

Moral virtues can be exhibited by any individual irrespective of belief set as they are intrinsic qualities however, they remain imperfect and an undeveloped potential as the Islamic philosophical paradigm posits morality as an essential precursor to spiritual advancement. The Promised Messiah (as) expands:

“A person who denies the existence of God can yet exhibit good moral qualities, such as to be humble of heart, to seek peace, to discard evil and not to resist the evil-monger. These are all natural conditions which may be possessed even by an unworthy one who is utterly unacquainted with the fountainhead of salvation and enjoys no part of it.”⁴²

For a Muslim, Qur’an is the bedrock of morality, and one cannot disentangle morality from religious convictions. Islam declares indispensability of religion, positing it as a guiding force towards material progress, morality, spiritual elevation and communion with the divine. The Promised Messiah (as) explains:

⁴² Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 18, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

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‘It is necessary that he should become conscious of the existence of God to a degree at which he should not consider his creation as without purpose, so that an understanding of the Divine should stimulate his true moral qualities.’⁴³

Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad (ra) elucidates:

‘...as man did not come about by himself, he need not work out his own moral standard and try to determine what is good for him. Having been created by a Higher Being, it stands to reason that he has no model worth following other than that Higher Being and no moral objective other than reflecting the attributes of his Creator and Master. the Holy Prophet (sas) himself, states:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

That is, O people! Model your morals on the attributes of Allah.

Islam teaches that Allah, the Exalted, created man in the image of His own attributes, and the seeds of all His attributes (except those that are specific to God) have been sown in human nature, albeit in smaller and limited form. To nurture these natural seeds, He reveals a code of conduct—the Shariah—to His pious people from time to time. Shariah

⁴³ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p. 27, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

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is the moral code that creates real reformation and progress in the world. Searching for an alternative is a wasted effort."⁴⁴

In establishing true morality, adherence to the pattern delineated by the attributes of Allah, as expounded in the Holy Qur'an, is paramount. This divine guidance serves as an inexhaustible source for moral advancement, with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) emerging as the epitome of moral excellence, as attested by the Qur'an itself:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَّ خُلِقْتَ عَظِيمٌ

"And thou dost surely possess high moral excellences"⁴⁵

His moral conduct, affirmed by his wife Hazrat A'isha (ra), directly mirrored the ethical code outlined in the Holy Qur'an, as she testified, "كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ" His morals were according to the Qur'an."⁴⁶

This testament not only furnishes us with a template for achieving genuine morality but also provides an exemplary illustration in the form of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas). The transformative impact of this exemplary model is evident in the revolutionary change it

⁴⁴ Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A (ra), Our God, pp. 172-173, 2016, Islam International publications Ltd

⁴⁵ Surah Al Qalam 68:5

⁴⁶ Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, Vol. 8 p. 144.

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instigated among the Companions (ra) of the Holy Prophet (sas).

Thus, Qur'an views morality as a tool to achieve the purpose of man's creation. It sets forth the pivotal role of morality in spiritual development and the acceptance of prayer. The pursuit of morality in the absence of religious guidance is an incomplete and aimless endeavour, futile at its outset thus marked by a dearth of substantive accomplishments. The continual oscillation within the realms of stifled personal growth, incalculable repercussions, stringent regulations, and solitary rationality lacks compatibility with human nature. Islam on the other hand guides that a harmonious and fulfilling life is achievable through a balanced and holistic approach that aligns with religious principles.

Chapter 3- Social Conduct and Etiquette

Islam, as a perfect and complete religion, furnishes solutions to a myriad of challenges, with the Holy Qur'an serving as a comprehensive and flawless guide. The teachings of the Holy Prophet (sas) extend beyond spiritual and moral dimensions to encompass practical guidance for material and worldly affairs as well. He gave detailed guidance on practical matters including urban planning considerations, emphasising cleanliness, spacious living, and well-ventilated spaces. His guidance is comprehensive, covering aspects ranging from state affairs to trade, commerce, and industry.

As noted in the previous chapters the preliminary step towards morality is civilised societal conduct. The Holy Qur'an initiates a comprehensive program for reforming the inherent state of humanity, focusing primarily on cultivating

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good manners and regulating fundamental aspects of human conduct, such as dietary habits, marriage practices, and social interactions. These teachings aim to elevate individuals from a primitive state to a civilized existence by establishing just social values.

The Qur'anic injunctions include prohibitions on specific familial relationships, inheritance practices, and marriage arrangements, emphasising the need for modesty and rescuing individuals from behaviours resembling an animalistic existence. Directives against self-harm, infanticide, and engagement in immoral activities, such as gambling, underscore the Qur'an's commitment to promoting a wholesome and virtuous lifestyle.

Maintaining cleanliness, both personally and in communal spaces, is emphasised, alongside advocating moderation in speech, consumption, and daily activities. The Qur'an also provides ethical guidelines for various situations, encouraging respectful behaviour, generosity towards others, and prompt responses to social cues like making room or rising when required. The reformative teachings extend beyond basic societal norms to encompass higher moral standards, discouraging slander, unnecessary talk, and immoderate behaviour.

Etiquette:

As previously elucidated, the directives pertaining to social comportment encompass a spectrum ranging from fundamental decorum within domestic settings to the decorum observed in collective social gatherings, further extending to the protocols observed in worship, proprieties associated with the handling and recitation of sacred Qur'anic texts and the discourse concerning prophets. Given the expansive nature of this subject, this discussion will selectively explore a limited subset of these themes, serving as illustrative instances of the broader instructional content.

Domestic decorum:

In Qur'anic thought, the foundational pillars of human civilization are rooted in the guidance given to mankind concerning clothing, eating, and drinking. It is through these behaviours, first exemplified by the sons of Adam, that the distinction between man and beast becomes apparent. These acts represent the earliest markers of human dignity and culture, setting humanity apart from the instinct-driven existence of animals. The following verses encapsulate the fundamental Qur'anic principles underlying the discourse on attire, food and hygiene:

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يٰۤاِبْنِيۤ اٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْنِكَ لِبَاسًا يُّوَارِيۤ سَوْآتِكَمۡ وَرِيۤشًا ط وَلِبَاسًا التَّقْوٰى ط ذٰلِكَ حَيۡرٌ ط ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ
اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَذَّكَّرُوۡنَ

O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you raiment to cover your shame, and to be an elegant dress; but the raiment of righteousness — that is the best. That is *one* of the Signs of Allah, that they may remember.⁴⁷

وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمۡ مِّمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلۡلًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمۡ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ اَكۡنَانًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمۡ سَرَ اِيۡتِلَ تَقِيۡنَكُمۡ الْحَرَّ
وَسَرَ اِيۡتِلَ تَقِيۡنَكُمۡ بِاَسۡكُمۡ ط كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ نِعۡمَتَهُ عَلَیۡكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُسَلِّمُوۡنَ

And He has made for you garments which protect you from heat, and coats of mail which protect you in your wars. Thus does He complete His favour on you, that you may submit *to Him*.⁴⁸

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِيۡنَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُنۡتَهِيۡنَ

Allah loves those who turn to Him and loves those who keep themselves clean.⁴⁹

وَيٰۤاِبٰٓءَآبَآءَ فَطَهَّرُوۡا

⁴⁷ Al Araf 7:27

⁴⁸ An Nahl 16:82

⁴⁹ Al Baqarah 2:223

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And thyself do thou purify.

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ⁵⁰

And uncleanness do thou shun.⁵⁰

In harmony with the Islamic principle that the state of the body influences the mind, physical purity becomes indispensable for nurturing spiritual well-being. Allah the Almighty says:

مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَا لِيُزِيلَ بِيُزِيدَ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُنَبِّئَكُمْ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Allah desires not that He should place you in a difficulty, but He desires to purify you and to complete His favour upon you, so that you may be grateful.⁵¹

The focus here is on the purification of the mind and soul, and Islam teaches that external purity is a path to internal purity, just as outward impurity can lead to inner corruption. The Holy Prophet (sas) emphasised the profound significance of cleanliness, saying: "Cleanliness is half of faith."⁵² And "Purification is the key to prayer."⁵³ He further

⁵⁰ Al Muddathir 74:5-6

⁵¹ Surah Al Maidah 5:7

⁵² Muslim 223, Book 2, Hadith 1

⁵³ Sunan Abu-Daud, Book 1, Kitab Al-Taharah, Number 0061

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said, "When you visit your brethren, ensure that your clothes and mounts are neat, for Allah dislikes dirt and untidiness."⁵⁴

By maintaining outward cleanliness, one is preparing the soul for inner purification. A pure mind housed in a pure body is the ideal that every Muslim strives to attain. Islam prescribes two primary means of bodily purification: ablution (wudhu) and bathing (ghusl). Regularly performing wudhu not only fulfils a religious obligation but instils a routine of personal hygiene and self-discipline.

Bathing, which involves cleansing the entire body, is also a fundamental aspect of daily hygiene in Islam. As cleanliness is continuously encouraged, bathing becomes an integral part of a Muslim's life. After certain activities, a ritual bath is required to attain the state of purity necessary for salaah. It is also a sunnah of the Holy Prophet (sas) to bathe before religious gatherings, such as Friday (Jumu'ah) and Eid prayers.

Another essential hygienic practice in Islam is the washing of private parts after using the toilet. Water is used for cleansing, and only the left hand should be employed for this task. This practice not only removes impurities but also helps

⁵⁴ Pathway to Paradise, A Guidebook to Islam, Chapter 4: The Daily Life of a Muslim Woman, 1996, Lajna Ima'illah USA

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prevent infections by eliminating bacteria. Washing the hands thoroughly afterward completes the process.

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (sas) recommended additional personal hygiene habits for Muslims. These include oiling and combing the hair after washing, trimming and cleaning the fingernails and toenails, and removing excess body hair from the armpits and pubic regions. He also encouraged the use of perfume after bathing. The Holy Prophet (sas) placed great emphasis on the practice of regular oral hygiene, considering it an essential aspect of daily life. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: Did I not apprehend that it would be burdensome on my people I would prescribe the brushing of teeth before every prayer.⁵⁵

Hazrat Huzafa (ra) relates that when the Holy Prophet (sas) woke up from sleep. He brushed his teeth.⁵⁶ Hazrat Ayesha (ra) relates: We used to prepare for the Holy prophet (sas), his toothbrush and water for his ablutions so that whenever Allah awakened him during the night, he could brush his teeth and make his ablution and offer prayer.⁵⁷ When Muslims follow the principles of Islamic hygiene properly, the benefits are twofold: outward cleanliness paves the way

⁵⁵ Sahih al-Bukhari 887, Book 11, Hadith 12

⁵⁶ Sunan an-Nasa'i 2, Book 1, Hadith 2

⁵⁷ Riyad as-Salihin 1198, Book 8, Hadith 208

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for inward purity, and society as a whole reaps the rewards by avoiding many health risks and illnesses.

The decorum of the mosque calls for a conduct marked by grace, poise, and a deep sense of dignity. It demands not only reverence in one's demeanour but also mindfulness of others, fostering an atmosphere of respect and care within the social setting. At the very least, a bath should be taken every Friday, ablution must precede prayer, and the use of perfume before attending the mosque or large gatherings is encouraged. The wisdom behind these practices, is to foster an atmosphere of harmony and mutual respect.

وَأَطِّهِرْ بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

and keep My House clean for those who perform the circuits, and those who stand up and those who bow down *and fall prostrate in Prayers*,⁵⁸

Hazrat Salman Farsi (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said if a person takes a bath on Friday, cleans himself thoroughly, oils his hair, uses such perfume as is available, sets forth for the Mosque, does not intrude between two persons, offers the prescribed portion of the prayer and

⁵⁸ Surah Al Hajj 22:27

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listens in silence to the Imam his sins committed since the previous Friday are forgiven.⁵⁹

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that he heard the Holy Prophet (sas) say when the prayer service is about to commence do not come running to it. Come to it walking calmly. Then join in the service at the stage of your arrival and make up afterwards what you might have missed.⁶⁰

In his Friday sermon delivered on 23rd April 2004, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) expounded on the importance of cleanliness and purity, he urged the community to reflect on whether we are truly meeting the high standards of cleanliness prescribed in Islam, offering the following points as a guide:

1. Clean and orderly environment: It is essential to keep our surroundings neat and tidy, with proper arrangements made for disposing of household waste.
2. Maintaining cleanliness in buildings and mosques: Both places of worship and homes should be kept clean and well-maintained.

⁵⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari 883, Book 11, Hadith 8

⁶⁰ Riyad as-Salihin 703, Book 1, Hadith 24

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3. Encouraging plantation and greenery: The community should take pride in encouraging greenery and ensuring that cleanliness and natural beauty become defining features of our neighbourhoods.

4. Regular upkeep of homes and gardens: We must break free from the stereotype of untidiness by ensuring our homes and gardens are regularly maintained.

5. Personal appearance and hygiene: We should always be mindful of our personal hygiene—wearing clean clothes, using perfume, washing hands before meals, and brushing teeth—all of which are Sunnah practices.

6. Caring for public pathways: Removing obstacles like stones or twigs from public paths is a noble act rooted in the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Huzur (aba) reminded us that adhering to these principles not only enhances personal purity but also creates a cleaner, more harmonious community, reflecting the high moral and spiritual standards of Islam.

Preferring the right hand:

In numerous verses of the Qur'an, there is a clear preference for the right over the left, a theme further emphasised in the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (sas). These traditions provide believers with detailed guidance on how to conduct their daily social and religious practices, revealing a distinct inclination towards favouring the right side. The Prophet's established habit was to initiate virtuous actions with his right hand or by starting from the right side. He always used his right hand for eating, drinking, and dressing, reserving his left for other tasks. In Islamic tradition, the right side has long symbolized goodness, while the left is often associated with wrongdoing. In this spirit, The Holy Prophet (sas) instructed his followers to use the right hand when eating, for it reflects a higher moral order. He said: When someone eats, eat it with your right hand. If he drinks, drink it with his right hand. Indeed, the devil eats with the left hand and drinks with the left hand.⁶¹

Believers are instructed to begin ablution by washing the right hand first. When putting on shoes, the right foot should lead. Hazrat Ayesha (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) liked to use his right hand for everything, for his ablutions,

⁶¹ Muslim 2020

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for combing his hair and for putting on his shoes.⁶² Hazrat Hafsa (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) used his right hand for eating, drinking and putting on his clothes and his left hand for purposes beside these.⁶³

In seating arrangements, the guest of honour is placed to the right of the host. Even at the birth of a child, the Muslim call to prayer (Azan) is to be whispered into the right ear before reciting *Al-Takbir* in the left. These instructions are not incidental, but deliberate, down to the smallest detail. According to the Prophet's teachings and his consistent personal example, Muslims are advised to use their right hand for clean and pure things, while tasks considered less clean are reserved for the left. Thus, when a Muslim extends their hand in greeting, it is done with the assurance that they are offering a clean hand.

This concept of sidedness, both in religious rituals and social conduct, was intentionally woven into the fabric of Islamic teachings. This intriguing phenomenon of sidedness, or chirality, reveals itself in nature's intricate design. While all molecules spin, they do not all spin in the same direction—some dance from right to left, while others twirl from left to right. Yet, chirality is not merely a quirk of the molecular

⁶² Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 170

⁶³ Abu Daud, Riyad as-Salihin 724, Book 1, Hadith 45

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world; it extends even to the tiniest of subatomic particles, which also exhibit this inherent bias. As we ascend through the various stages of evolution, we encounter countless other remarkable instances where life demonstrates a marked preference for the right. This partiality to sidedness manifests not only at the molecular level but also in the behaviour of animals and even in the subtle movements of plants, as if life itself leans towards one side of the cosmic dance.

Clean, Appropriate and Modest Attire:

In line with Islamic teachings, dressing modestly and covering oneself is seen as a means of enhancing, rather than diminishing, a person's dignity and worth. This sentiment was eloquently expressed by Tawakkol Karman, the hijab-wearing Muslim Nobel Prize laureate of 2011. When asked why she chose to cover up, she responded:

Man in his early times was almost naked, and as his intellect evolved, he started wearing clothes... What I am today and what I am wearing represents the highest level of thought and civilization that man has achieved.⁶⁴

⁶⁴<https://www.eduislam.in/2018/12/tawakkol-karmans-perfect-argument-about-Hijab.html>

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Further explanation on the usage of clothing and the attendant etiquettes is discernible within the sayings attributed to the Holy Prophet (sas). He says:

*Put on your garments and do not issue forth uncovered, and Wear loose trousers for they cover the limbs effectively and urge the women to do the same when they go out.*⁶⁸

Hazrat Umar(ra) used to recite a prayer on wearing new clothes and narrated a tradition of the Holy Prophet (sas) that whosoever gets new clothes and gives his old clothes in charity and recites this prayer, attains God's protection and guardianship both in life and death. He is sheltered by God's covering up of sins and his sins are forgiven:

All praise belongs to Allah, who clothed me with such a dress which conceals my nakedness, and I attain adornment and beauty in my life. God has granted this dress to me without any effort or labour on my part.⁶⁹

Hazrat Abu Said khudri (ra) relates that when the Holy Prophet (sas) wore a new article, he mentioned it by name for example a shirt, shawl or headgear, and recited this prayer: O Allah, all praise belongs to You. You gave me these

⁶⁸ Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (ra), Wisdom of the Holy Prophet, The London Mosque, 1981, p38, 1995, Islam International Publications Ltd

⁶⁹ Treasure house of prayers, pg. 85-86

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clothes to wear. I seek Your blessings in this dress and blessings for the purpose for which it was made. And O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the evils of this dress and evils, which can emanate from it.⁷⁰

The Sunnah of the Prophet (sas) also reflects a preference for certain colours of clothing, revealing his thoughtful choice in attire. Hazrat Ibn Abbas (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: Wear white clothes for they are best and use them as shrouds for your dead.⁷¹ Hazrat Abi Ramtha Rifaa Tamimi (ra) relates; I saw the Holy prophet (sas) wearing two green garments.⁷² Hazrat Jabir (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) entered Mecca on the day it fell wearing a black turban.⁷³

As with all aspects of life, intention holds great significance. The reason behind wearing clothes carries weight—whether it stems from humility or is driven by vanity and a desire to show off. Hazrat Ibn Omar (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: On the day of judgement Allah will not look upon one who lets down his loin cloth, shirt or turban out of pride.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Sunan Abi Daud 4020, Book 34, Hadith 1

⁷¹ Tirmidhi. Riyad as-Salihin 778, Book 3, Hadith 1

⁷² Abu Daud and Tirmidhi, Riyad as-Salihin 782, Book 3, Hadith 5

⁷³ Muslim 1358

⁷⁴ Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 72, Number 674

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Muslims are instructed to seek balance and to walk the path of moderation, for blessed are those who follow the middle way. The Holy Prophet (sas) says: 'The middle is the best.'⁷⁵

Hazrat Muaz ibn Anas (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: One who having the capacity to wear rich garments abstain from wearing them out of a sense of humility before Allah will be called by Allah on the day of judgement in priority to all others and will be given the choice to put on whichever of the mantles of faith he prefers.⁷⁶

While humility in dress is encouraged, an excessive inclination toward austerity is also discouraged. Those whom Allah has blessed with abundance are encouraged to dress well, though modestly, as an expression of gratitude for the blessings they have been granted. Hazrat Amr ibn Shuaib (ra) relates on the authority of his father and grandfather that the Holy prophet (sas) said: Allah likes to see the mark of his bounty and his servant.⁷⁷ Islam emphasises this moderation in all avenues of life, including dress and food intake. Qur'an says that all food should be consumed in moderation, with no indulgence taken to excess.

⁷⁵ Tafsir Qurtabi, vol. 2, p.154 and Hadith 35, 40 Hadith Shah Waliullah

⁷⁶ Tirmidhi 2481

⁷⁷ Mujam Alkabir, 5167 (Riyad as-Salihin 802 (Book 3, Hadith 25) #37291)

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Food Etiquette:

As in all aspects of a Muslim's life, Islam offers clear guidance for living a life of purity and good health. Holy Qur'an says:

كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ

Eat of the good things We have provided for you. ⁷⁸

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

O ye who believe! eat of the good things We have provided for you, and render thanks to Allah, if it is He Whom you worship.

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَكُلَّ الْخَنِزِيرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ بِهِ لغيرِ اللَّهِ ^ع فَمِنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

He has made unlawful to you only that which dies of itself, and blood and the flesh of swine, and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked. But he who is driven by necessity, being neither disobedient nor

⁷⁸ Al Baqarah 2:58

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exceeding the limit, it shall be no sin for him. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.⁷⁹

The first three categories of prohibitions are set in place due to their harmful effects on the body, and what harms the body inevitably harms the spirit as well. The final prohibition, however, concerns something that poses a direct threat to one's moral and spiritual well-being, as it involves associating others with God—a grave transgression. Yet, in His mercy, Allah allows exceptions in cases of dire necessity: when one's very survival depends on it, even prohibited food may be consumed. Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۗ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

O ye men! eat of what is lawful *and* good in the earth; and follow not the footsteps of Satan; surely, he is to you an open enemy.⁸⁰

The term "*halal*" signifies that which is permissible for a Muslim, and thus halal meat refers to animals slaughtered in the name of Allah, with their blood fully drained. In contrast,

⁷⁹ Al Baqarah 2:173-174

⁸⁰ Al Baqarah 2:169

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"*haram*" denotes what is forbidden—this includes blood, pork, and alcohol. Beyond this, Allah commands that you partake only in what is "*tayyab*," meaning food that is pure, wholesome, and beneficial. While something may be *halal*, it may not always meet the standard of *tayyab* and therefore should be avoided. Islam teaches that the state of the body directly influences the state of the soul, emphasising the need to preserve one's health and vitality with the utmost care.

In a Hadith narrated by Hazrat Abu Huraira (ra), the Prophet Muhammad (sas) said, "Allah is pure and He accepts only that which is pure. Allah has commanded the believers to do that which He commanded the Messengers, and the Messengers to do that which they were commanded. He said: 'O you Messengers! Eat of the good things and do righteous deeds.' (Qur'an 23:52) And He said: 'O you who believe! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you.' (Qur'an 2:173)"⁸¹

Qur'an further elucidates:

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ

Eat, then, of that over which the name of Allah has been pronounced, if you are believers in His Signs.

⁸¹ Sahih Muslim, Book 1, The Book of Faith (Kitab al-Iman), Hadith 10

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وَمَا لَكُمْ إِلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَاكُمْ مِمَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ^ط

And what reason have you that you should not eat of that over which the name of Allah has been pronounced, when He has already explained to you that which He has forbidden unto you — save that which you are forced to?⁸²

The Holy Prophet (sas) taught basic table manners to Hazrat Umar bin Abi Salamah (ra), a child at the time: O child, say the name of Allah (i.e., say Bismillah before starting eating), eat with your right hand, and eat from what is near you.⁸³ The Holy Prophet (sas) taught, if one forgets to recite the prayer and then remembers it during the meal, then he should say:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَوْلَهُ وَأَخْرَجَهُ

In the name of Allah at the beginning and the end.⁸⁴

The Holy Prophet (sas) never ate to his full satisfaction, teaching moderation in all things. He advised: "There is no vessel worse for a person to fill than the stomach. A few bites are enough to sustain a person, but if one must eat

⁸² Al Anam 6:119-120

⁸³ Bukhari 5376 and Muslim 2022

⁸⁴ Riyad as-Salihin 728, Book 2, Hadith 2

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more, let a third of the stomach be filled with food, a third with drink, and leave a third for breathing."⁸⁵

The Promised Messiah (as) explains in this context:

“Experience also shows that different types of food affect the intellect and the mind in different ways. For instance, careful observation would disclose that people who refrain altogether from eating meat gradually suffer a decline of the faculty of bravery; they lose courage and thus suffer the loss of a divinely bestowed praiseworthy faculty. This is reinforced by the evidence of the divine law of nature that the herbivorous animals do not possess the same degree of courage as do carnivorous ones. The same applies to birds. Thus, there is no doubt that morals are affected by food. Conversely those who are given to a diet consisting mainly of meat and eat very little of greens suffer a decline of meekness and humility. Those who adopt the middle course develop both types of moral qualities. That is why God Almighty has said in the Holy Qur’an:

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

and eat and drink but exceed not the bounds; surely, He does not love those who exceed the bounds.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Sunan Ibn Majah 3349, Book 29, Hadith 99

⁸⁶ Al Araf 7:32

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That is to say, eat meat and other foods but do not eat anything to excess, lest your moral state be adversely affected and your health might suffer.”⁸⁷

When sharing a meal from a communal tray, one should take from the portion closest to them. This practice aligns with the teachings of the Prophet, reflecting both humility and respect for others at the table. The Holy Prophet (sas) would always sit down to eat, and he would encourage others to do the same. Sitting down to eat not only helps us to eat mindfully but also prevents us from overeating. Hazrat Wahl ibn Abdullah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: I do not eat while reclining against a pillow.⁸⁸ In another hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, the messenger of Allah (sas) said, "None of you should eat while reclining on his back like a camel. Rather, sit down and eat."⁸⁹ This hadith also emphasises the importance of taking time to eat, rather than rushing or eating on the go.

Another cherished Sunnah that Muslims are encouraged to uphold is the practice of washing our hands both before and after meals. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) consistently washed his hands prior to eating and urged those around him

⁸⁷ Philosophy of teachings of Islam, pg. 9-10

⁸⁸ Bokhari, volume 7, Book 65, Number 311

⁸⁹ Bukhari 5398,5399. Book 70, Hadith 26,27, Tirmidhi Book 25, Hadith 1830

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to do likewise. In a hadith narrated by Muslim, the Prophet (sas) said, "When one of you eats, let him wash his hands, and if he cannot find water, let him at least strike the earth with his hands (and then wipe them), for Satan runs away from the one who strikes the earth with his hands."⁹⁰

This ritual serves to cleanse any impurities and dirt before partaking in food, while washing hands afterward removes lingering food particles, thus safeguarding against the spread of germs. Beyond its physical benefits, it also carries a profound spiritual advantage, for it is believed to repel Satan and his malevolent influence. Such an act of purification not only prepares the body for sustenance but also cultivates a sacred atmosphere conducive to gratitude and mindfulness.

The Prophet Muhammad (sas) emphasised the significance of demonstrating respect and gratitude for our food. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy prophet (sas) never found fault with food. If he desired it, he ate it, and if he disliked it he left it.⁹¹ He instructed us against blowing on hot dishes to cool them, as this act is seen as a sign of disrespect and may inadvertently spread germs. In a Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira (ra), the Prophet Muhammad (sas)

⁹⁰ Tirmidhi book 25, Hadith 1800

⁹¹ Sahih Bukhari, volume 7, Book 65, Number 320

said, "Do not blow into your food, for the blessing is in the middle of it."⁹²

Rather than blowing on hot food, the Prophet Muhammad (sas) advised allowing it to cool naturally or incorporating a cool liquid, such as water or milk, to temper its heat. This approach not only reflects patience and respect for the meal but also ensures a more enjoyable dining experience. Hazrat Ibn Abbas (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: Blessing descends upon food in its middle, so eat from the sides of the vessel and do not eat from its middle.⁹³ This guidance encourages a mindful appreciation for the sustenance we receive, highlighting the sacredness of each meal.

Sleeping and Waking up:

When it comes to the optimal time for sleep, night is the most suitable period for rest. This is not merely a matter of custom—nature itself appears to have designed daylight hours for labour and the night for slumber and rejuvenation. Straying from this natural rhythm often leads to increased strain and compromised health. The health of those who work nocturnally, serves as evidence of this truth, their

⁹² Masnad Ahmad Number 3194

⁹³ Tirmidhi 1805, Book 25, Hadith 19

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irregular schedules result in detrimental effects on their well-being. Qur'an states:

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا

And We have made your sleep for rest,⁹⁴

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ رِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا

And He it is Who has made the night a covering for you, and *Who has made* sleep for rest, and has made the day for rising up.⁹⁵

While some may advocate for late nights and late mornings, this practice is both unnatural and unwise. Observing nature, we find that all animals and birds awaken at dawn. A Muslim is encouraged to rise early for prayers, a practice that aligns with both nature and health. Sleep plays a critical role in metabolism and the body's ability to assimilate nutrients. However, prolonged periods of sleep can be harmful, as they allow for the accumulation of foul vapours, leading to a state of lethargy rather than refreshment. This underscores the wisdom of alternating short intervals of rest with periods of activity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) exemplified this ideal, typically retiring early and rising shortly after

⁹⁴ Surah An Naba 78:10

⁹⁵ Surah Al Furqan 25:48

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midnight for *Tabajjud* prayers, often taking a brief nap in the forenoon. Qur'an enjoins believers:

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا

And during the night prostrate thyself before Him, and extol His glory for a long *part of the night*.⁹⁶

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لَدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

Observe Prayer at the declining and paling of the sun on to the darkness of the night, and the recitation of *the Qur'an in Prayer* at dawn. Verily, the recitation of *the Qur'an* at dawn is *especially* acceptable to God.

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ ۗ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

And wake up for it (the Qur'an) in *the latter part of the night* as a supererogatory service for thee. It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to an exalted station.⁹⁷

According to a hadith reported by Hazrat Abu Huraira (ra), Allah's Messenger (sas) said:

⁹⁶ Surah Ad Dahr 76:27

⁹⁷ Surah Bani Israil 17:79-80

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“Satan puts three knots at the back of the head of any of you if he is asleep. On every knot he reads and exhales the following words, ‘The night is long, so stay asleep.’ When one wakes up and remembers Allah, one knot is undone, and when one performs ablution, the second knot is undone, and when one prays, the third knot is undone and one gets up energetic with a good heart in the morning; otherwise, one gets up lazy and with a mischievous heart.”⁹⁸

In another narration from Hazrat Abu Umamah (ra), he relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: “Make a practice of getting up at night, for it was the custom of the pious before you, is a means of bringing you near to your lord, an atonement for evil deeds and a preventative of sin.”⁹⁹

This cherished tradition of our beloved Prophet (sas) resonates deeply with the importance of awakening in the stillness of the night, when the world is enveloped in slumber. In those sacred hours, one finds the opportunity to draw near to Allah, seeking forgiveness for both past transgressions and future shortcomings.

The term *Nafilah* in the verse denotes a special grace, highlighting that prayers are not a burden to weary the flesh

⁹⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab at-tahajjud Hadith 1142

⁹⁹ Mishkat al-Masabih, Kitab as-salat, Hadith 1227

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but rather a privilege and a divine favour from God. The *Tabajjud* Prayer is ideally suited for the believer's spiritual elevation; in the stillness of the night, alone with the Creator, one experiences profound divine communion.

Hazrat Ayesha (ra) relates that the Holy prophet used to offer 11 rak'as of voluntary prayer in the latter part of the night. When the dawn broke, he offered two brief rak'as, and then rested on his right side till the *Muezzin* came to tell him that the congregation had assembled.¹⁰⁰

After the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (sas) first profound spiritual experience—when the angel of God visited him with Divine revelation in the Cave of Hira—he hurried home, filled with trepidation. Such fear was natural, given the novelty of the encounter. Seeking solace, he requested to be wrapped in a mantle. This act of wrapping not only signifies protection but also conveys a deeper meaning of unity and cohesion, suggesting, “O you who have been tasked with uniting the nations of the world under one banner!” In the Hadith, the Holy Prophet (sas) is referred to as *Al-Hashir*, the one who joins and unites the peoples of the earth (Bukhari). Qur'an refers to that endearingly saying:

¹⁰⁰ Muslim, Kitab al Salat, Book 4, chapter 110, Number 1602

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يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَرْمَلُ

O thou who art bearing *a heavy responsibility*,

قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

Stand up *in Prayer* at night except a small portion thereof—

نُضْفَةً أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا³

Half of it, or make it a little less than that

أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا

Or make it a little more than that — and recite the Qur'an slowly and thoughtfully.

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

Verily, We are charging thee with a weighty Word.

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا

Verily, getting up at night is the most potent means of subduing *the self* and most effective in respect of words *of prayer*.

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا^ط

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Thou hast indeed, during the day, *a long chain of engagements.*¹⁰¹

In these verses, the Holy Prophet (sas) is instructed that nightly prayers to God will fortify him for the substantial task ahead. According to a well-known Hadith, when revelations descended upon him, the Prophet (sas) would enter a trance like state, experiencing a unique sensation that caused large drops of sweat to fall from his forehead, even on the coldest of days, and he would feel an overwhelming weight upon his body.¹⁰² The Qur'anic revelation being described as “a weighty Word” reflects the intensity of this experience.

Qur'an declares that awakening at night for prayer serves as a powerful means of subduing one's self and mastering one's inclinations towards evil. The holy men of God universally affirm that nothing contributes more to spiritual growth than night prayer. In the tranquil stillness of the night, when nature is at rest, one finds a unique peace that allows for an intimate communion with the Creator. This solitude illuminates the soul with a celestial light that can subsequently be shared with others. Such moments are particularly conducive to developing strength of character

¹⁰¹ Surah Al Muzzammil 73:2-8

¹⁰² Bukhari, chapter 1, Revelation. Hadith no 2 & Sahih Muslim 2334

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and enhancing the clarity and substance of one's speech. Effective communication and a boundless capacity for hard work are essential attributes for a reformer aiming to succeed in his mission. Night prayer fosters the cultivation of these vital qualities, enabling one to gain control over one's thoughts and words, ultimately extending this mastery to others. In a hadith, narrated by Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra), he reported Allah's Messenger (sas) as saying: "The most excellent fast after Ramadan is God's month al-Muharram, and the most excellent prayer after what is prescribed is prayer during the night."¹⁰³

Waking up in the depths of the night to stand up for prayer is a task that requires much effort. On this, the Holy Qur'an commends the believer by saying:

تَتَجَانَفُ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

Their sides keep away from their beds; [and] they call on their Lord in fear and hope, and spend out of what We have bestowed on them.¹⁰⁴

In the *Five-Volume Commentary*, it is mentioned that it is important for anyone who wishes to acquire self-discipline

¹⁰³ Sahih Muslim, *Kitab as-siyam*, Hadith 1163a

¹⁰⁴ Surah as-Sajdah 32:17

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and develop an effective character to stick to the habit of waking up for *Tabajjud*.¹⁰⁵ In a hadith, narrated by Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra), we learn that the Messenger (sas) of Allah said: “May Allah have mercy upon a man who wakes up at night and prays, and awakens his wife. If she refuses, he sprinkles water on her face. May Allah have mercy upon a woman who wakes up at night and prays and awakens her husband. If he refuses, she sprinkles water on his face.”¹⁰⁶

In this hadith, the Holy Prophet (sas) emphasised the importance of the night prayer. He deemed it essential for the husband to wake up the wife for the prayer, knowing how hard it might be to get up for the prayer. The Promised Messiah (as) has said:

“If our entire lives are spent in worldly engagements, what will we have accumulated for the hereafter? Make a special effort to wake up for *Tabajjud* and offer it with fervour and joy.”¹⁰⁷

Incorporating *Tabajjud* into one’s routine requires discipline and determination. It’s not merely about waking up physically but hearkening the soul towards the spiritual success it craves.

¹⁰⁵ Five Volume Commentary, Vol .5 p. 2706

¹⁰⁶ Sunan An-Nasa’i, *Kitab qiyami l-layli wa tatanwu’i n-nabaar*, Hadith 1610

¹⁰⁷ Malfuzat, Vol. 1, p. 5

How The Holy Prophet (sas) Slept:

The Messenger of Allah (sas) would put his right hand under his blessed right cheek. He would lie on his right side facing the Qibla and rest on a pillow that was made from leaves of a date tree. Hazrat Hudhaifa (ra) narrated, When the Prophet (sas) went to bed at night, he would put his hand under his cheek and then say, O Allah, in Your name I die and I live and when he got up, he would say, Praise be to Allah who has brought us back to life after causing us to die, and to Him is the resurrection. ¹⁰⁸

Hazrat Al-Bara bin `Azib (ra) narrated that the Prophet (sas) said to me, “Whenever you go to bed perform ablution like that for the prayer, lie on your right side and say,

اللَّهُمَّ اسَلِّمْتُ وَجْهِي إِلَيْكَ، وَفَوَضْتُ أَمْرِي إِلَيْكَ، وَالْجَانُّ ظَهَرِي إِلَيْكَ، رَغْبَةً وَرَهْبَةً إِلَيْكَ، لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ، اللَّهُمَّ آمَنْتُ بِكِتَابِكَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْتَ، وَبِنَبِيِّكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلْتَ

‘O Allah! I surrender to You and entrust all my affairs to You and depend upon You for Your Blessings both with hope and fear of You. There is no fleeing from You, and there is no place of protection and safety except with You O Allah! I believe in Your Book (the Qur’an) which You have

¹⁰⁸ Sahih Al-Bukhari 6314

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revealed and, in Your Prophet, (Muhammad) whom You have sent.’ Then if you die on that very night, you will die with faith (i.e. or the religion of Islam).¹⁰⁹

Based on the above lying on one’s side is the recommended position of sleeping. Studies have shown that around 16 percent of people usually sleep on their stomachs with their arms around their pillows, 14 percent of people sleep on their backs, and the rest sleep on their sides. Sleeping on your side is by far the most popular way of sleeping and perhaps the best. It reduces acid reflux and snoring. The Messenger (sas) of Allah never laid on his stomach and if he saw anyone doing so, he would wake them up by his feet and be very upset. It was narrated that Hazrat Abu Dharr (ra) said: “The Prophet (sas) passed by me, and I was lying on my stomach. He nudged me with his foot and said: ‘O Junaidib! This is how the people of Hell lie.’”¹¹⁰

From a health perspective, sleeping on one’s back can lead to spinal congestion and even nocturnal disturbances. The airways can obstruct more easily, worsening sleep apnoea, and there’s a troubling link between back sleeping and sleep paralysis, where the body is frozen between dreams and waking. Similarly, sleeping face down is detrimental, while

¹⁰⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari 247

¹¹⁰ Sahih (Darussalam) Sunan Ibn Majah 3724

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primarily resting on the left side can hinder heart function and disrupt blood flow to the brain, potentially leading to distressing dreams and sleepwalking. Sleeping on your side offers quiet relief, reducing snoring and easing the symptoms of obstructive sleep apnoea. In this posture, the airways remain open, allowing for easier breathing. The way we sleep shapes our nights, with side sleeping offering peace, while back sleeping invites potential disruption. The scientifically recommended position for sleep is on the right side, a principle supported by modern medical research.¹¹¹ This aligns with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (sas), who advised his followers to sleep on their right sides. It is also beneficial for the head to point north, as magnetic currents flow from north to south and are mysteriously connected to our nerves, which the body should not oppose.¹¹²

An important consideration when it comes to sleep is the mental state before falling asleep. Any thoughts or emotions present in the mind linger in the subconscious throughout the night, shaping our thoughts and actions. For example, a child who falls asleep while crying often wakes in a similar

¹¹¹ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/sleep-paralysis-causes-symptoms-and-treatments>

¹¹² <https://www.alislam.org/articles/hygiene-of-sleep/>

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state. Therefore, it is prudent to focus on moral and spiritual ideas before drifting off. Holy Qur'an says:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا ۗ سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and *lying* on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: “Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; *nay*, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.”¹¹³

The Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (sas) before sleeping was to recite *Subhan Allah*, *Alhamdulillah*, and *Allahu Akbar* thirty times. Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib (ra) narrated that Hazrat Fatima (ra) went to the Holy Prophet (sas) asking for a servant. He said,

“May I inform you of something better than that? When you go to bed, recite “*Subhan Allah*’ thirty-three times, ‘*Alhamdulillah*’ thirty-three times, and ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ thirty- four times. Ali added, ‘I have never failed to recite it ever since.’” Somebody asked, “Even on the night of the battle of

¹¹³ Surah Aal e Imran 3:192

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Siffin?” He said, “Even on the night of the battle of Siffin.”¹¹⁴

Hazrat Ayesha (ra) narrated:

When the Prophet (sas) went to bed every night, he used to cup his hands together and blow over it after reciting Surat Al-Ikhlās, Surat Al-Falaq and Surat An-Nās, and then rub his hands over whatever parts of his body he was able to rub, starting with his head, face and front of his body. He used to do that three times.¹¹⁵

These verses are not mere incantations; they delve into the most exalted attributes of God, leaving a profound impression on the mind. Contemplating these Divine qualities purifies and elevates the soul, providing protection from negative thoughts and harmful influences. When practiced thoughtfully, this ritual becomes a source of immense moral strength.

It is also inadvisable to sleep immediately after the evening meal. Islam specifically encourages Muslims to perform the Isha (late evening) prayer in congregation at a mosque, which is beneficial for both soul and body. Hazrat Abu Hurairah

¹¹⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari 5362 and Sahih Muslim 2727 a

¹¹⁵ Sahih Al-Bukhari 5017

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(ra) relates the Holy Prophet (sas) instructed him that when retiring to bed at night, he should dust the bed and recite this prayer: O Lord, in Your name, I lie in bed and in Your name, I will raise my body from it. If You decide to take possession of my soul, bestow mercy upon it and if You decide to return it, protect it, as You protect Your pious servants.¹¹⁶

These Islamic teachings are firmly rooted in natural and sound hygienic principles. Exploring these doctrines in the context of modern science reveals their profound wisdom and relevance to contemporary life.

Etiquette in public setting:

The moment we step beyond the threshold of our homes, the Qur'an reminds us that the world we encounter is not ours alone. Every person, every living being, and even the very earth beneath our feet holds its own rights. We are called to walk through life with a sense of reverence, carrying ourselves with a conduct rooted in respect, kindness, and the comfort of those around us. It is a divine expectation, a reminder that our interactions must honour the dignity of others, reflecting a deeper harmony that transcends the self. Hazrat Abu Huraira (ra) reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "While a man was

¹¹⁶ Sahih Al-Bukhari 6320 and Sahih Muslim 2714 a

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walking in the road, he found a thorny branch in the road, so he moved it aside. Allah appreciated his deed and forgave him.”¹¹⁷

The Qur’an encourages travel across the earth, inviting us to glean wisdom and knowledge from our experiences along the way. Yet, this journey is accompanied by its own code of conduct, guiding our behaviour as we navigate the world. Qur’an says:

قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ ۖ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ

Surely, there have been *many* dispensations before you; so travel through the earth and see how *evil* was the end of those who treated *the Prophets* as liars.¹¹⁸

The Qur’an offers prayers for setting out on a journey that resonate with a profound sense of humility and gratitude. These prayers remind us that it is Allah who has bestowed upon humanity the means to traverse the earth, whether by land, sea, or sky. As we embark, we are invited to reflect on His mercy and generosity, acknowledging that our movement, our progress, and our safety are gifts from Him.

¹¹⁷ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2472, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1914

¹¹⁸ Surah Aal e Imran 3:138

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In this act of prayer, we express our thankfulness, carrying with us an awareness that every step we take is by His grace.

يَتَسَمَّوْا عَلَى ظُهُورِهِمْ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ

That you may sit firmly upon their backs, *and* then, when you are firmly seated thereon, you may remember the favour of your Lord, and say, ‘Holy is He Who has subjected this to us, and we had not the strength to subdue it *ourselves*.¹¹⁹

وَقَالَ اذْكَبُوا فِيهَا بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ مَجْرَاهَا وَمُرْسَاهَا اِنَّ رَبِّي لَعَفُوٌّ رَّحِيْمٌ

And he said, ‘Embark therein. In the name of Allah be its course and its mooring. My Lord is assuredly Most Forgiving, Merciful.’¹²⁰

The Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (sas) offers rich, practical guidance for every aspect of travel, providing wisdom on when to set out, which days are most favourable, where to pause for rest, and how to conduct oneself along the way. In its attention to detail, it serves as a roadmap for both the body and soul. Though this guidance is extensive, we offer

¹¹⁹ Surah Az-Zukhruf 43:14

¹²⁰ Surah Hud 11:42

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just two examples, reflecting the depth of this prophetic wisdom that touches every journey with purpose and grace.

Hazrat Sakhar ibn Wadaa (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) supplicated: Allah bless the mornings of my people. Whenever he dispatched a scouting party or an army, he dispatched it in the first part of the day.¹²¹

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: When you travel through fertile land give the camels their share from the land and when you travel through barren land hasten your pace and thus conserve their strength and when you make camp for the night leave the track alone for it is also the track of the beasts and of insects during the night.¹²²

Societal etiquette:

In the realm of human interaction, a person's first offering is often his speech. The Qur'an instructs us to speak with truth, kindness, and simplicity, guiding us toward words that are clear and sincere.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

¹²¹ Tirmidhi 1212

¹²² Muslim, Book 20, KITAB AL-IMARA, Number 4723

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O ye who believe! fear Allah, and say the straightforward word.¹²³

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

and speak to men kindly¹²⁴

وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا

and speak to them words of kindness.¹²⁵

وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا

And say to My servants that they should speak that which is best. Surely, Satan stirs up discord among them. Surely, Satan is an open enemy to man.¹²⁶

Hazrat Ayesha(ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) spoke simply so that all those who listened to him understood him.¹²⁷

Yet, with this guidance comes a solemn reminder: every word we utter carries weight, and we are held accountable for each one. It is a gentle but powerful warning, urging us

¹²³ Surah Al Ahzab 33:71

¹²⁴ Surah Al Baqarah 2:84

¹²⁵ Surah An Nisa 4:9

¹²⁶ Surah Bani Israil 17:54

¹²⁷ Abu Daud, Book 36, Kitab Al-Adab, Number 4821

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to be mindful of our speech, to choose our words with care, knowing that they are not fleeting—they endure in the sight of Allah.

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

He utters not a word but there is by him a guardian *angel* ready to record it.¹²⁸

The Holy Prophet's (sas) beautiful teaching reveals that a good and kind word is itself an act of charity. Through this simple yet profound wisdom, we are reminded that generosity is not limited to material gifts; even a gentle word, spoken with sincerity and kindness, carries the weight of a noble deed. In every kind utterance, we have the power to uplift others and earn divine reward, for in the eyes of the Prophet (sas), speech infused with goodness is a form of giving.

Hazrat Adiy ibn Hatim (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: Shield yourself against the fire even if it be only with half a date given in alms, and one who cannot afford even that much should at least utter a good word.¹²⁹ Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy prophet said: A good word is charity.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Surah Qaaf 50:19

¹²⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari 1417, Book 24, Hadith 21

¹³⁰ Bukhari and Muslim, Riyad as-Salihin 693, Book 1, Hadith 14

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Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) related that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: Charity is incumbent upon every human limb every day on which the sun rises. To bring about just reconciliation between two contestants is charity. Helping a person mount his animal, or to load his baggage on it is charity. A good word is charity. Every step taken towards the Mosque for salat is charity. To remove anything from the street that causes inconvenience is charity.¹³¹

Islam teaches us to offer a greeting of peace whenever we meet others. This simple gesture, rooted in the tradition of saying "As-salaam u alaykum," extends more than just words; it conveys warmth, goodwill, and the hope for harmony. In offering peace, we not only fulfil a religious duty but also foster a sense of unity and mutual respect, transforming every encounter into an opportunity for connection and compassion. Qur'an commands Muslims to exchange greetings in the most gracious and dignified manner when they meet, emphasising this as both a social and moral obligation. Failing to do so is not merely a lapse in etiquette, but a neglect of duty for which one will be held accountable before God, as the concluding words of the following verse make clear:

¹³¹ Sahih al-Bukhari 2989, Book 56, Hadith 198

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وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

And when you are greeted with a prayer, greet ye with a better prayer or *at least* return it. Surely, Allah takes account of all things.¹³²

The customary greeting in Islam is the phrase *السلام عليكم*, meaning "peace be upon you," often followed by the additional words *ورحمة الله وبركاته*, "and God's mercy and His blessings." Pious individuals frequently enhance this greeting with further prayers, in line with the divine instruction: "greet with a better prayer or at least return it in kind." However, the verse carries a broader meaning, extending its guidance to all forms of salutations, good wishes, and blessings.

The Holy Prophet (sas) held the greeting of *salaam* in the highest regard, placing great importance on its practice. He would not only insist on offering this greeting of peace but also provided detailed guidance on its proper use. For him, *salaam* was more than a custom—it was a profound expression of respect and goodwill, a means of fostering harmony within the community. His attentiveness to this simple yet powerful gesture reflected his deep commitment

¹³² Surah An Nisa 4:87

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to spreading peace and kindness in every encounter. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy prophet (sas) said: When one of you meets a brother he should salute him. Then if they are separated by a tree or a wall or a rock, he should salute him again when they meet.¹³³

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: A rider should greet a pedestrian. A pedestrian should greet one who is sitting, and a small party should greet a large party.¹³⁴ Bokhari's version adds, a younger one should greet an older one.

Ethics and Etiquette of Holding an Assembly or Gathering:

The Qur'an offers profound guidance on the etiquette of social gatherings, detailing how we should conduct ourselves in the company of others. It teaches us where and how to sit, when it is appropriate to leave, and how to respect the space and presence of those around us. These instructions are not mere formalities, but principles meant to foster respect, humility, and consideration within any gathering. Through these teachings, we are reminded that our behaviour in such moments reflects our character and our

¹³³ Abu Daud 5200

¹³⁴ Muslim, Book: 26, KITAB AS-SALAM, Number 5374

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faith, elevating the act of coming together into a reflection of mutual dignity and harmony. Allah the Almighty says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَرَجَّتْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

O ye who believe! when it is said to you, ‘Make room!’ in *your* assemblies, then do make room; Allah will make ample room for you. And when it is said, ‘Rise up!’ then rise up; Allah will raise those who believe from among you, and those to whom knowledge is given, to degrees *of rank*. And Allah is Well-Aware of what you do.¹³⁵

Hazrat Ibn Umar (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: ‘Let no one ask another to give up his seat to him but make room and sit at ease.’ If a person gave up his seat for Ibn Umar, he would not take it.¹³⁶ Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy prophet (sas) said: When someone gets up from among company and returns to it, he is the best entitled to occupy the seat he had left.¹³⁷

Hazrat Abu Daud (ra) says that the Holy prophet (sas) said: No one should sit between two persons without their

¹³⁵ Surah Al Mujadalah 58:12

¹³⁶ Bukhari: 1379, Muslim: Book 26, KITAB AS-SALAM, chapter 11, 5411

¹³⁷ Muslim: Book 26, KITAB AS-SALAM, chapter 11, 5414

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permission.¹³⁸ Hazrat Ibn Umar (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: Where three are present two should not hold secret converse excluding the third.¹³⁹

Islam illuminates the nature of social gatherings as well, guiding believers toward those that uplift the spirit and nourish the soul while cautioning against those that do not. A gathering that forgets the remembrance of God holds little value for a true believer, serving instead as a reminder of the importance of surrounding oneself with companions who inspire faith and reflection. In choosing our company wisely, we honour our commitment to a life of purpose, ensuring that our social interactions contribute to our spiritual growth and reinforce the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood in faith. Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O ye who believe! fear Allah and be with the truthful.¹⁴⁰

In the quest for morality, it is vital to seek the company of the righteous. Surrounding ourselves with those who embody honesty and virtue is essential, as their presence

¹³⁸ Abu Daud, Book 36, Kitab Al-Adab, 4826

¹³⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari 6290, Book 79, Hadith 62

¹⁴⁰ At Taubah 9:119

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helps to cleanse the moral and spiritual tarnish that can settle upon our hearts. Such companionship not only uplifts us but also invites the remembrance of God, guiding our thoughts and actions toward the divine. It leads the believer to a fountain of purity and goodness, creating a nurturing environment rich in moral integrity and spiritual growth, and reminding us of our sacred purpose in life. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) related that the Holy Prophet (sas) said, when a person sits down in company in which there is no remembrance of Allah, he incurs loss and displeasure from Allah; and when a person lies down and does not remember Allah, he incurs loss and displeasure from Allah.¹⁴¹

Visiting others and Dinner invitation:

An important facet of social behaviour lies in visiting the homes of others and sharing meals together. In these intimate gatherings, the Qur'an offers detailed guidance on the conduct expected of a believer. It emphasises the importance of propriety, urging us to seek permission before entering someone's home, thereby respecting their space and privacy. This act of asking for permission is a reflection of our consideration for others and sets a tone of mutual respect. Approaching such occasions with warmth and

¹⁴¹ Abu Daud, Book 36, Kitab Al-Adab, Number 4838

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gratitude, the Qur'an encourages values of generosity and hospitality. By honouring these bonds of fellowship and connection, we not only enrich our relationships but also create an atmosphere of kindness and gratitude, embodying the spirit of community that the Qur'an so beautifully inspires. Firstly, Qur'an guides:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذُنُوبَكُمْ حَيْثُمُ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

O ye who believe! enter not houses other than your own until you have asked leave and saluted the inmates thereof. That is better for you, that you may be heedful.

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

And if you find no one therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. And if it be said to you, 'Go back' then go back; that is purer for you. And Allah knows well what you do.¹⁴²

The first injunction emphasises that one should not enter a home other than his own without first announcing his arrival

¹⁴² Surah An Noor 24:28-29

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by greeting its occupants and seeking their permission, as well as inquiring whether they are willing to receive him. While this guideline may appear straightforward and basic, its application as a general rule of conduct has the potential to prevent much unnecessary trouble and suspicion. It not only curtails the possibility of scandal but also protects individuals from being seen in circumstances that might invite misinterpretation, thereby preserving the privacy of their homes. Hazrat Anas (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said son, when you enter your home greet your people with the salutation of peace. it would be a source of blessing for you and for the members of your family. ¹⁴³

Furthermore, this verse suggests that unauthorized entry into an office can disrupt operations and lead to wasted time; hence, permission should be sought from the relevant authority before entering. Visitors should also announce their presence with a greeting, which allows the occupants to recognise them. Sending a name-slip or introduction card to the person with whom one wishes to meet—whether in an office or at home—aligns with this Qur’anic directive, serving as an appropriate means to ascertain whether the individual is willing to receive the visitor. The verse also makes it clear that entering even uninhabited houses without

¹⁴³ Tirmidhi 2698

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obtaining the necessary permission from the concerned parties is strictly prohibited.

Then Qur'an graciously guides believers on whose homes they may visit freely, allowing them to partake in a meal without the need for a formal invitation. It emphasises that the homes of friends and family, are places where warmth and familiarity welcome such visits. This divine instruction fosters a spirit of openness and community, encouraging believers to share in the joys of companionship and hospitality, weaving a tapestry of connection and trust among one another.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ
بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ آبَائِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ
بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ خَلَتِكُمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتُمْ مَفَاتِحَهُ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ
جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا جَمِيعًا أَوْ أَشْتَاتًا فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
مُبْرَكَةً طَيِّبَةً كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

There is no harm for the blind and there is no harm for the lame, and there is no harm for the sick and none for yourselves, that you eat from your own houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses

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of your fathers' brothers or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or *from* that of which the keys are in your possession, or *from the house of* a friend of yours. There is no harm for you whether you eat together or separately. But when you enter houses, salute your people — a greeting from your Lord, full of blessing and purity. Thus does Allah make plain to you the commandments, that you may understand.¹⁴⁴

Islam advocates for complete social equality, standing firmly against the rigid divisions that separate people into isolated compartments. The verse highlights the significance of free social interaction and collective dining across all classes, encouraging shared meals as a way to foster familiarity and break down the barriers that keep people of different social standings apart. While it does not forbid eating separately, it clearly promotes the value of dining together. In this way, the Qur'an nurtures a sense of belonging, reminding us that true fellowship flourishes in the embrace of shared moments and unguarded hospitality. The term *بيوتكم* ("your own houses") is understood to include the homes of one's sons and daughters, despite their omission from the subsequent list of households where one may eat freely.

¹⁴⁴ Surah An Nur 24:62

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The teachings on social ethics, domestic manners, and proper conduct emphasise that one should never enter a home uninvited, and when invited, it is essential to be punctual. Arriving too early is as discourteous as arriving late. After sharing a meal, it is advised to depart promptly, avoiding unnecessary delay or indulging in idle post-meal chatter, thereby respecting both one's own time and that of others. Qur'an guides:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ نَبْظِينَ إِنَّهُ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعَبْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَعِجِبُ مِنْكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَعِجِبُ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ۗ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنْكِرُوا آرْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ آبَا ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا

O ye who believe! enter not the houses of the Prophet unless leave is granted to you for a meal without waiting for its *appointed* time. But enter when you are invited, and when you have finished eating, disperse, without seeking to engage in talk. That causes inconvenience to the Prophet, and he feels shy of *asking* you to leave. But Allah is not shy of *saying* what is true. And when you ask them (the wives of the Prophet) for anything, ask them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts. And it behoves you not to

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cause inconvenience to the Messenger of Allah, nor that you should ever marry his wives after him. Indeed that would be an enormity in the sight of Allah.¹⁴⁵

Prophet Muhammad (sas) consistently shared meals with his family, friends, and companions and gave guidance on the etiquette of such invitations. Dining together and sharing food not only fosters a deeper connection among individuals but also amplifies the blessings bestowed by Allah. In a hadith narrated by Abu Daud (ra), the Prophet (sas) said, "Eat together and not separately, for the blessing is in being together."

Hazrat Abu Masud Badri (ra) relates, a man prepared some food for the Holy prophet (sas) and invited him along with four others. But a fifth also went along with them. Arrived at the door, The Holy Prophet (sas) said to the host: this one has followed us. You may permit him, if you will and if you wish he will retire. He said messenger of Allah indeed I invite him.¹⁴⁶

Sharing a meal together fortifies social ties, nurtures harmony, and cultivates a profound sense of community. This communal experience not only brings individuals closer

¹⁴⁵ Surah Al Ahzab 33:54

¹⁴⁶ Bukhari Hadith No.5434 Book 70, hadith 62

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but also enhances the spirit of togetherness and belonging. The Holy Prophet (sas) placed great emphasis on the importance of accepting invitations, the act of graciously accepting an invitation strengthens bonds and fosters goodwill among friends and family. To refuse such gestures of hospitality may inadvertently cast a shadow over relationships, leaving feelings of disappointment or unacknowledged warmth. Thus, the teachings remind us that embracing these moments of connection is not merely a matter of courtesy but a vital thread in the fabric of community and fellowship, nurturing the ties that bind us together. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: When any of you is invited to a meal, he should accept the invitation. Then if he is fasting, he should pray for the host, and if he's not fasting, he should eat.¹⁴⁷

Visiting the sick

Sickness and disease are inevitable facets of life, often intertwined with our own choices and excesses that may affect our health. Yet, the Qur'an teaches us to cultivate a total trust in God, the one with absolute power to heal and restore. In the face of illness, we are reminded that our reliance should be placed not solely on remedies or

¹⁴⁷ Muslim 1431

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treatments, but on the divine wisdom and mercy of Allah. This profound trust becomes a source of strength, guiding us through our trials and illuminating the path to recovery, reinforcing our belief that true healing ultimately lies in His hands.

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ

‘And when I am ill, it is He Who restores me to health;’¹⁴⁸

Visiting the sick is a sacred sphere of social interaction that binds all Muslims together in a shared commitment to care for one another. It is an act steeped in compassion, reflecting the deep responsibility we hold for the well-being of others. At the heart of this social conduct lies a genuine concern for the vulnerable, as we reach out to uplift those in need and serve our communities. In these moments, we embody the spirit of empathy and kindness, recognizing that true connection flourishes when we extend our hearts and hands to those who are unwell, nurturing a culture of support and solidarity among us.

The Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (sas) illuminates the way in this sphere as well. Hazrat Ayesha (ra) relates that when the Holy prophet (sas) visited any member of his family who was

¹⁴⁸ Surah Ash-Shu`ara' 26:81

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sick, he would touch the invalid with his right hand and would supplicate: Oh Allah! Lord of mankind! remove the affliction and bestow healing though art the healer. 'There is no healing save thy healing, a healing that leaves no ill behind.'¹⁴⁹

The following hadith succinctly encapsulates a believer's responsibilities toward others within the social sphere. It serves as a timeless reminder of our duty to uphold compassion, kindness, and respect in our interactions, urging us to foster a community grounded in empathy and mutual support. Through these words, we are guided to recognise the importance of our actions and attitudes in shaping a harmonious society, highlighting that each gesture of goodwill contributes to the greater tapestry of our shared humanity.

Hazrat Baraa ibn Azib (ra) relates the Holy prophet (sas) enjoined the following seven upon us: visiting the sick, following a funeral, calling down the mercy of Allah upon one who sneezes, supporting the weak, helping the oppressed, multiplying the greeting of peace, and fulfilling vows.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Bukhari Hadith No.5674, Book 75, hadith 35

¹⁵⁰ Bokhari 5635

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In summary, the Qur'anic reforms commence with foundational principles governing social conduct, progressively addressing higher moral qualities, and serving as a transformative guide for individuals transitioning from a state of barbarity to one of civility and social responsibility.

Chapter 4 -Sexual Conduct and Standards of Chastity

The absence of a divine authority leads to a lack of objective morality, rendering moral values contingent upon societal consensus and subjective interpretations. Without a transcendent basis for morality, societal norms become fluid and susceptible to the whims of the majority, potentially resulting in a moral relativism characterized by ever-changing standards.

Historical shifts in societal attitudes towards issues such as female attire and premarital sex underscore the fluid nature of moral values, highlighting the absence of an objective standard against which to evaluate ethical frameworks. Contemporary societal norms, while celebrated as progress

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by some, lack a definitive basis for asserting superiority over past standards.

The reliance on subjective notions of happiness as a moral compass further complicates ethical discourse, as happiness lacks an objective definition and can be subject to manipulation or exploitation. Moreover, the absence of objective morality fails to provide clear boundaries or limits to behaviour, potentially leading to the normalization of harmful practices. Without an objective moral anchor, ethical boundaries become increasingly ambiguous, leaving moral decision-making vulnerable to manipulation and shifting cultural preferences.

Contemporary debates surrounding contentious issues such as the acceptance of alternative sexual orientations and unconventional familial relationships underscore the moral relativism inherent in the absence of divine moral guidance. Without a transcendent moral authority, ethical discourse risks devolving into a mere exercise of competing opinions, lacking firm ethical principles to guide behaviour and resolve moral dilemmas.

A profound warning of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) comes to mind:

إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَجِبْ فَأَضَعْ مَا شِئْتَ

“If you feel no shame, do whatever you like.”¹⁵¹

The Qur’an, through its divinely revealed laws and comprehensive guidance, offers an encompassing ethical framework aimed at cultivating a chaste and moral society. In addition to providing detailed regulations concerning marital relationships and describing prohibited unions, the Qur’an furnishes a code of conduct pertaining to sexual matters, thereby establishing boundaries for moral behaviour. In Islamic teaching, preserving sexual purity is deemed a paramount obligation for believers. Islam prohibits engagement in activities conducive to moral decadence, thereby emphasising stringent measures to safeguard against the arousal of carnal desires. Exercising restraint over carnal impulses demands a level of mental fortitude which is higher and more valued than performing other moral acts such as charitable expenditure in Qur’anic thought.

Furthermore, the Qur’an goes beyond mere prescription of limits; it delves into the underlying causes that precipitate immoral conduct, seeking to address the foundational

¹⁵¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Adab, Hadith 147

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origins of such phenomena. It asserts that every virtue or vice originates from a specific source. Concerning virtuous qualities, the Qur'an advocates mastery and complete control over their underlying roots. Conversely, for detrimental qualities, it advocates their total elimination and eradication, thereby closing off all avenues leading to them.

Given that actions and speech are inherently rooted in cognition, the Qur'an endeavors to address the fundamental reconfiguration of cognitive processes, perceptions, and attitudes. In doing so, it safeguards against the infiltration of sinful tendencies into the individual's psyche. Recognizing that the eyes and ears serve as primary conduits to the mind, the Qur'an prioritizes their regulation as a means to cultivate virtuous thought patterns and uphold mental purity.

Identifying the eyes as a primary gateway for the influx of malevolent thoughts into the mind, the following verse commands believing men and women to avert their gaze when encountering one another. The Promised Messiah (as) writes:

“It is the Word of God alone that, by its very clear and open statements, lays down specific and well-defined limits and parameters for all our words and deeds, action and inaction, and teaches us the norms of humanity and the way of purity;

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it alone emphatically stresses upon the safeguarding of one's organs—like the eyes, ears, tongue, etc.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا أْفْرُوجَهُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَرَادَ لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is well aware of what they do.¹⁵²

This means that the believers should guard their eyes and ears, and private parts from those who are not *mahram* and should refrain from seeing, hearing, and doing all that is forbidden. Thus, would they be able to foster inner purity. That is to say, their hearts will be safeguarded from diverse types of passions, for these are the organs which primarily incite the carnal passions and provoke beastly traits. Observe, therefore, how the Holy Qur'an stresses safeguarding oneself from those who are not *mahram* and how explicitly it urges believers to restrain their eyes, ears, and private parts to avoid any occasion that might lead to impurity.¹⁵³

Lowering one's gaze serves as a means to uphold the purity of the mind and soul. Both men and women are enjoined to

¹⁵² Surah An Nur 24:31

¹⁵³ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Barahin e Ahmadiyya, Part III, page 112, 2014, Islam International publications Ltd

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exercise restraint and modesty by averting their gazes, thereby establishing a standard of virtue that mitigates the potential for moral transgressions. Adherence to such standards is integral to fostering a society characterized by purity. This directive extends beyond mere physical interactions to encompass vigilance against the consumption of immoral and licentious content across various digital platforms. To attain divine approval, Ahmadi's are earnestly reminded to undertake the process of self-improvement while also imparting these values to future generations.

Elaborating on this verse, the Promised Messiah (as) states:

“That is, to instruct the believers that they should restrict their glance at the sight of a woman whom they may lawfully marry to the extent that they are unable to clearly see her face, or at the chance of seeing something promiscuous; their view of a woman's countenance should not be prolonged and unrestricted. In other words, they should never gaze with their eyes wide open, whether their glances are lustful or not. Such behaviour would cause one to err. One cannot preserve their purity and chastity with their vision unrestricted. This would lead to many trials. One's heart cannot become pure, nor is it possible to attain a state of utter purity befitting of a true seeker until he purifies his vision. Furthermore, in this verse, we are also taught to guard

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all such bodily mediums through which we can commit sin. These bodily mediums referred to in this verse include the genitalia, ears, nose, mouth and all such body parts. Notice how lofty this teaching is, in which no aspect has been overly or inadequately emphasised, rather, it has been imparted with wisdom and balance. An individual who reads this verse will immediately realise that the commandment to refrain from the practice of unrestricted vision is in place so that one does not fall into hardship and so that both men and women are protected from making a mistake.”¹⁵⁴

The term "فروج" (furuġ), translated as "private parts," extends beyond its literal meaning to encompass all aspects of the body that are considered indecent to expose. Moreover, it metaphorically denotes the channels through which corrupt thoughts may infiltrate the human psyche. This concept encompasses various bodily organs, including the eyes, ears, tongue, hands, and feet. Consequently, believers are encouraged to vigilantly protect all avenues through which sinful influences may permeate their minds.

The Promised Messiah (as) further elucidates:

¹⁵⁴ Address by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V. Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022. The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence.
<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/#ftoc-heading-5>

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“It should be kept in mind that as the natural condition of man, which is the source of his passions, is such that he cannot depart from it without a complete change in himself, his passions are bound to be roused, or in other words put in peril, when they are confronted with the occasion and opportunity for indulging in this vice. Therefore, God Almighty has not instructed us that we might freely gaze at women outside the prohibited degrees and might contemplate their beauty and observe all their movements in dancing etc. but that we should do so with pure looks. Nor have we been instructed to listen to the singing of these women and to lend ear to tales of their beauty, but that we should do so with a pure intent. Rather, we have been positively commanded not to look at their beauty, whether with pure intent or otherwise, nor to listen to their musical voices or to descriptions of their good looks, whether with pure intent or otherwise. We have been directed to eschew all this as we eschew carrion, so that we should not stumble. It is almost certain that our free glances would cause us to stumble sometime or the other. As God Almighty desires that our eyes and our hearts and all our limbs and organs should continue in a state of purity, He has furnished us with this excellent teaching. There can be no doubt that unrestrained looks become a source of danger. If we place soft bread before a hungry dog, it would be vain to hope that the dog should pay no attention to it. Thus God Almighty

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desired that human faculties should not be provided with any occasion for secret functioning and should not be confronted with anything that might incite dangerous tendencies... It should be remembered that to restrain one's looks and to direct them only towards observing that which is permissible is described in Arabic by the expression *ghadd-e-basar*, which is the expression employed in the Holy Qur'an in this context. It does not behove a pious person who desires to keep his heart pure that he should lift his eyes freely in every direction like an animal. It is necessary that such a one should cultivate the habit of *ghadd-e-basar* [lowering of the eyes] in his social life. This is a blessed habit through which his natural impulses would be converted into a high moral quality without interfering with his social needs. This is the quality which is called chastity in Islam."¹⁵⁵

Whilst instructing us to safeguard from immorality, the Promised Messiah (as) states:

“One who openly looks at a *non-Mabram* [i.e. a person to whom marriage is permitted] from any aspect (which is prevalent nowadays) will continue to openly look at *non-Mabram* women, until one day he shall look at them with ill intentions, for carnal desires are part of every person's

¹⁵⁵ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, pg. 45-49, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

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nature. Experience proclaims aloud; rather, it screams to us that there is never a good outcome for one who openly looks at other women. What is the reason for Europe being replete with infidelity? It is because they developed the habit of casually looking at *non-Mahram* women.”¹⁵⁶

The Qur’an warns that when unmonitored, these various pathways have the potential to culminate in immorality. Initially, the prevalence of immoral behaviour through visual consumption became widespread, subsequently normalizing physical intimacy, and ultimately escalating to egregious levels. Contemporary society bears witness to this progression, necessitating heightened awareness and concerted efforts to address the issue. Furthermore, this phenomenon has transcended geographical boundaries due to the pervasive influence of media and the concept of freedom, rendering immorality a pervasive norm across nations.

Qur’an warns believers to remain ever vigilant as they are accountable for the appropriate use of their faculties. The Promised Messiah (as) expounds in this context, “It is said:

إِنَّ السَّبْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّهُ أَوْلِيكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

¹⁵⁶ Address by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V. Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022. The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence. <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/#ftoc-heading-5>

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Verily, the ear and the eye and the heart — all these shall be called to account. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:37)

That is, the ears, the eyes, the heart, and all other organs and faculties possessed by man shall be called to account whether they were used improperly; he will be questioned for every shortfall or excess or for taking an extreme course. Just look at how expressly and emphatically the Word of God has directed that all human organs and faculties be employed on the path of goodness and virtue, and the complete and elaborate exposition it gives for the right and balanced functioning of all faculties, so that no ambiguity or confusion is left.”¹⁵⁷

Adultery (*Zina*):

Similar to its approach towards other moral transgressions, Islam advocates for prevention rather than cure when it comes to adultery. Accordingly, Islam emphasises the importance of avoiding circumstances that may potentially lead to sin, thereby prioritizing proactive measures to mitigate the likelihood of moral lapses. The Holy Qur'an warns,

¹⁵⁷ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Barahin e Ahmadiyya, part III, page 113, 2014, Islam International publications Ltd

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وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزَّوْجَ الَّذِي أَنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

And come not near unto adultery; surely, it is a foul thing and an evil way.¹⁵⁸

The verse not only prohibits the act of adultery but also emphasises the importance of abstaining from anything that may lead to it, advocating for avoidance of all potential pathways that could culminate in such transgression. In the context of social interaction, Islam employs preventive measures, particularly concerning the mingling of individuals of the opposite sexes. A narration from the life of the Holy Prophet (sas) exemplifies his cautious approach towards interactions between men and women who are permitted to marry each other, underscoring the importance Islam places on maintaining appropriate boundaries in such situations.

Hazrat Umm Salamah (ra) narrates: “Once, whilst I was in the presence of the Holy Prophet (sas), who was also accompanied by Hazrat Maimunah (ra), Hazrat Ibn Umm Maktum (ra) came to visit. This incident took place after the commandment of the veil had been revealed. Upon his visit, the Holy Prophet (sas) said, ‘Both of you should veil yourselves from him.’ We responded, ‘O Prophet (sas) of Allah, isn’t he blind? He is unable to see us, nor recognise

¹⁵⁸ Surah Bani Israil 17:33

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us.’ The Holy Prophet (sas) said, ‘Are you both blind as well? Are you not able to see him?’”¹⁵⁹

The notion of men and women engaging in platonic relationships, devoid of romantic or sexual intentions, is a relatively modern construct that has garnered attention in psychological research. Recent studies have cast doubt on the viability of such relationships, particularly when viewed through an Islamic lens. For instance, findings published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* indicate that 62 percent of participants acknowledged the presence of sexual tension within their cross-sex friendships.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, a survey conducted among members of the dating site Match.com revealed that 62 percent of respondents acknowledged instances where their presumably platonic friendships transitioned into romantic or sexual involvements.¹⁶¹ Dr. Jeremy Nicholson, in an article for *Psychology Today*, further underscores these challenges:

“Can men and women be just friends? In many cases, the answer is no. Sometimes that is a good thing, when both people see friendship as a step to mutually-satisfying love, sex, and/or commitment. At other times, men and women

¹⁵⁹ Sunan Abi Dawud Kitab al-Libas Hadith 4112

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/articles/200109/can-men-and-women-be-friends>, Retrieved 16 April 2019

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*

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cannot be just friends because only one friend desires something more. Those mismatched desires between men and women lead to unequal friend-zone situations, where one person's needs are completely satisfied at the other's expense. Those unfortunate instances and the frustrations around them are the friendship problems we hear so much about.¹⁶²

The fact of the matter is that research clearly indicates that such friendships are extremely dangerous and can easily turn to adultery.

While it is acknowledged that some individuals may indeed sustain platonic friendships without engaging in adultery or fornication, Islam's regulations are not tailored to accommodate the exceptions but rather to serve the welfare of the majority. This principle applies to platonic relationships as well. Due to the multitude of inherent risks, Islam prohibits such relationships and unequivocally advises women to safeguard their beauty from men outside the prohibited degrees. Such men are called *ghair mahram*, and those to whom women can show their beauty are called *mahram*. They have been identified in 24:32 of the Holy Qur'an. The ultimate goal of this teaching is to promote

¹⁶² <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-attraction-doctor/201304/can-men-and-women-be-just-friends>, Retrieved 16 April 2019

hayaa or modesty, and to safeguard the society from the spread of lewdness and immorality.

Discussing this issue, the Promised Messiah(as) writes, “A fair-minded person will appreciate that the free mixing of men and women and their going about together would expose them to the risk of succumbing to the flare of their emotions...To avoid such untoward situations from arising, the Law-Giver of Islam has forbidden all such acts as might prove to be a temptation for anyone.”¹⁶³

Relationships between men and women outside the bounds of marriage have a greater potential of Satanic influence which then leads to romance and sex. In the context of the hollow notion of freedom in the western world, the Promised Messiah(as) notes, “It is necessary therefore, that before granting such freedom as is being advocated, the moral condition of men should be improved and rectified. After men have developed enough self-temperance to restrain their passions, you may consider whether the veil is necessary or not. To insist upon unrestricted freedom in the present circumstances would be like putting sheep at the mercy of lions”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Essence of Islam, vol. 3, p. 327

¹⁶⁴ Essence of Islam, vol. 3, p. 329-330

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) clarifies in this context:

“As far as the [ruling regarding] friendship between girls and boys is concerned, the primary logic behind it is to safeguard the chastity of women [and men]. Free mixing is likely to result in a variety of evils. Therefore, Islam distinguishes between mahram and non-mahram relationships in this regard and defines the limits of male-female relations. Allah and His Messenger (sas) imparted very clear teaching to their believers and followers in this regard. Hence, the Holy Prophet (sas) said that a person should not meet a non-mahram woman in seclusion for Satan was always the third companion in such a rendezvous. ‘Whenever a man is alone with a woman, Satan makes a third,’¹⁶⁵

He was, of course, referring to the inevitable thoughts and feelings that will arise in such a situation. He further instructed, ‘No person [man] should be alone with a woman except when there is a mahram with her.’^{166,167}

The Promised Messiah (as) explained the wisdom behind this instruction of the Holy Prophet (sas) in the following words:

“It has often been heard and observed that such societies see no ill in a *non-mahram* man and woman remaining alone

¹⁶⁵ Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Fitan, Mishkat al-Masabih, Kitab al-nikah, Hadith 3118

¹⁶⁶ Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-hajj, Hadith 1341c

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.alhakam.org/can-boys-and-girls-be-just-friends/>

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behind closed doors; they call this civilisation. It is to counter these very adverse effects that the Founder of Islam has forbidden an individual altogether from approaching anything that may lead them to stumble. In this relation, the Holy Prophet (sas) has stated that where a *non-mabram* man and woman sit in seclusion, the third with them is Satan. Just reflect on the harrowing outcomes that Europe is having to bear as a result of this non-restrictive and unbridled teaching. In certain places, an utterly shameless life of promiscuity is led. This is due to teachings of the sort just mentioned. If you wish to protect a thing from misuse, it must be safeguarded. However, if one does not watch over a possession – and considers the world to be innocent – then keep in mind that it will surely be ruined. The Islamic veil is a truly holy teaching indeed, which, through segregation, saves man and woman from stumbling. It has delivered mankind from an illicit, grievous and bitter life.”¹⁶⁸

In the second condition of the pledge of allegiance the Promised Messiah (as) has drawn our attention toward nine vices including safeguarding against adultery.

“He/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication/adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; (In other words the one who pledges allegiance) and that he/she

¹⁶⁸ Report Jalsa Salana 1897, p. 48

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will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they might be.”

Within the framework of today's world and the increasing urgency to uphold individual purity and nurture a chaste society, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) stated:

“Where we must protect ourselves and our children from the ills of society which are spreading rapidly, we must also strive to explain to others in order to keep our surroundings pure. In fact, the development and spreading of these evils is taking place in order to spread atheism, and a fundamental aspect of it; rather, it is the agenda of those spreading atheism. It is a feature thereof which is designed to take mankind away from God Almighty and religion. Hence, we must make great efforts in this jihad [struggle].

It is mentioned in a Hadith that Hazrat Anas (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said, “One of the signs of the hour is that knowledge will be taken away, ignorance will prevail, alcohol consumption will be common, and adultery will spread.”¹⁶⁹

Thus, the matters mentioned in this prophecy at that time are being witnessed in this very era, but even then, people

¹⁶⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari Kitab al-'Ilm Hadith 80

are failing to fear of God. Where Ahmadis must safeguard themselves from these indecencies, they must also strive to save others. May Allah the Almighty grant wisdom to the world and enable the people to listen to and understand our message.¹⁷⁰

Maintaining Chaste behaviour:

A great moral and spiritual revolution of universal proportions which the Qur'an aims to instigate is to transform *Ibad us shaitan* عباد الشيطان (the sons of darkness) into *Ibad ur Rehman* عباد الرحمن (the servants of the Gracious and Beneficent God). Within its verses, the Qur'an elucidates the multifaceted qualities and characteristics attributed to these devout servants of the Gracious God and invites all believers to adopt these virtues. Qur'an says *Ibad ur Rehman* are the ones,

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْعَالِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

And who guard their chastity —¹⁷¹

In the contemporary digital age, the challenges for *Ibad ur Rehman* are complex. In the quest of guarding chastity,

¹⁷⁰ Address by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V. Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022. The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence. <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/#ftoc-heading-5>

¹⁷¹ Al Muminun 23:6

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believers need to be ever cautious of exposure to environments or media featuring nudity or indecency. This caution is extended to online interactions as well, where individuals are urged to maintain boundaries with non-relatives, particularly of the opposite gender, to safeguard against inappropriate relationships. Parents are encouraged to monitor their children's media consumption closely.

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) says:

“Pornography, drugs, online gaming, gambling, immoral and inappropriate relationships, going to nightclubs and many other things are among those satanic influences which are entirely harmful and are taking people away from God Almighty.”

Research underscores the detrimental impact of consuming such content on mental health, contributing to depression, anxiety, and diminished self-esteem, not only for the consumer but also their partner.¹⁷² Furthermore, repeated exposure to explicit sexual content has been associated with marital discord and divorce in a significant portion of cases.¹⁷³ Research also suggests a correlation between

¹⁷² *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 11, 613244, 12 January 2021, *Journal of Adolescence*, Volume 57, 2017, pp. 119-133

¹⁷³ *Covenant Eyes*, 2022, Josh McDowell Ministries and Covenant Eyes with Barna Group

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consumption of explicit sexual content and instances of child sexual abuse, with some experts asserting that pornography serves as a catalyst for sexual violence.¹⁷⁴ Dr. Mary Anne Layden, a prominent psychotherapist, attests to the pervasive influence of pornography in cases of sexual violence.¹⁷⁵

During his Friday Sermon on 6th November 2018, Huzoor (aba) said:

“Many families are destroyed as a result of viewing pornography. The so-called ‘progressive world’ considers such things to be ‘freedom and progress’. However, studies are now proving the harmful effects of pornography and how it often leads to domestic violence and child abuse.”

Viewing pornographic material damages a person psychologically by putting him into the habit of objectifying women, and the human body in general. Further, it creates a view of sexuality that is far removed from reality. Pursuing such unrealistic goals in the real life would lead a person to a life of dissatisfaction, depression, and anxiety. In his Friday

¹⁷⁴ Victor Cline, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of Utah 1988, *Pornography Effects: Empirical and Clinical Evidence*, p. 24, *Pornography Victims Compensation Act of 1992*, US Senate Comm. on the Judiciary

¹⁷⁵ endsexualexploitation.org/articles/video-long-term-consequences-pornography-use-mary-anne-layden-phd/

Sermon, dated 6th July 2012, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) speaks about the issue of pornography and says that “viewing such vain things, such films is a kind of addiction.” Huzoor (aba) advised against forming friendships which cause a person to further indulge in such vain pursuits. Once a person gets into it, it can be very difficult to get out.¹⁷⁶

Islam offers detailed guidance on maintaining chastity in these dark times by prescribing specific actions. Several guiding principles and actions are outlined here:

Marriage:

The Holy Prophet (sas) encouraged young men to marry at an early age.

“Those who can afford it among the young people, should get married.”¹⁷⁷

Amidst the contemporary landscape, characterized by the early exposure of youth to indecent imagery, this instruction carries profound wisdom. Its purpose is to mitigate the temptation of engaging in illicit gazes and desires, ultimately promoting virtuous behaviour. Highlighting the escalating imperative of adhering to Islamic precepts and elucidating

¹⁷⁶ Friday Sermon, 6 July 2012, <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/2012-07-06.html>, Retrieved 16 April 2019

¹⁷⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al Nikah, Hadith 5066

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the contemporary relevance of Islamic injunctions, the Promised Messiah (as) asserts:

“Anyone who lives in a European country can bear witness, indeed any sensible person who has ever visited Europe and spent some time in Paris and other cities will not hesitate to testify, that in certain parts of the continent people no longer consider adultery a sin. They consider polygamy to be unlawful, but find nothing wrong with casting covetous glances at women. In France one can find thousands of women who do not feel the need to get married.”¹⁷⁸

For those who cannot afford to marry, Qur’an guides:

وَلَيْسَتَعَفِيفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

And those who find no means of marriage should keep themselves chaste, until Allah grants them means out of His bounty.¹⁷⁹

The Holy Prophet (sas) advised them to fast to maintain their chastity, as it would restrain their natural urges. The Promised Messiah (as) elucidates:

“Approach not adultery. This means that one should avoid all occasions that might incite one’s mind in that direction

¹⁷⁸ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), How to be free from sin, pg. 19-20, 2008, Islam International publications Ltd

¹⁷⁹ Surah An Nur 24:34

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and should eschew all the paths that might lead to this vice. He who indulges in this vice carries his viciousness to the extreme. The way of adultery is an evil way as it obstructs one's progress towards the goal and is extremely harmful to the achievement of the purpose of life. Those who find no means of marriage should keep themselves chaste through the adoption of other means; for instance, through fasting or dieting or exercise.”

He further guides us that, “God Almighty has not only set forth excellent teaching for acquiring the quality of chastity but has furnished man with five remedies against unchastity. These are:

- to restrain one's eyes from gazing on those who are outside the prohibited degrees;
- to restrain one's ears from listening to their voices and to descriptions of their good looks;
- to avoid occasions which might furnish incitement towards this vice;
- and to control oneself during the period of celibacy through fasting, dieting etc.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Philosophy of teachings of Islam, pg. 45, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

Treachery of the eyes (*Badnazar*) and *Istaghfar*:

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ

He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the breasts conceal.¹⁸¹

While adhering to such high standards of modesty may pose significant challenges within the context of contemporary society, it does not preclude the implementation of prudent measures. In contexts where men and women may interact, both genders are commanded to avert their gazes, thereby safeguarding themselves against the toxic effects of Satan's influence and preserving the purity of their hearts. Strategies such as abstaining from shaking hands with individuals of the opposite gender, exercising caution in conversational exchanges with female colleagues in informal settings, and advocating for early marriage are among the proposed remedies. Nevertheless, the directive of *ghad-e-basar* (lowering the gaze) remains a lifelong practice. Marriage, while potentially beneficial, does not guarantee absolute immunity against the perils of infidelity and deceit, as evidenced by prevalent instances in contemporary society.

¹⁸¹ Surah Al Mumin 40:20

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Hence, the practice of lowering the gaze constitutes an enduring imperative for preserving the purity of one's thoughts. Given that thoughts often stem from external stimuli, the adage "out of sight, out of mind" not only represents a widely recognised principle but also reflects empirical reality. Exposure to visual stimuli invariably influences cognitive processes. Consequently, every action originates from a preceding thought. Thus, the notion that "there's no harm in looking" or "there's no harm in entertaining a thought if it remains unacted upon" fails to align with the essence of true chastity. A surreptitious look at a thing which it is not allowable to look at or looking intentionally at a thing which it is not permissible to see are rendered treacheries of the eyes. Authentic chastity entails eschewing any thoughts or sentiments that harbour even the slightest potential to culminate in immoral deeds. Accordingly, Allah's admonition,

وَأَنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوا بِحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ

Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it,¹⁸²

The verse encapsulates the profound essence of achieving purification, revealing that the key lies in starting at the core: purifying one's heart. The Holy Prophet (sas) said:

¹⁸² Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 285

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"In the body of man there is a piece of flesh; if this piece of flesh is sound, the whole body becomes sound; if it is corrupt, the whole body becomes corrupt. Behold! It is the heart."¹⁸³

Furthermore, it is crucial to recognise that every human action will undergo scrutiny based on the intentions harboured within the hearts. They will be evaluated in light of underlying motives. Even the most concealed thoughts of individuals will not escape the omniscient awareness of God. However, it's imperative to bear in mind that fleeting or transient thoughts that spontaneously occur in one's mind, beyond one's control, will not be subject to scrutiny by God. As it is indeed beyond our ability to restrain passing thoughts that fleetingly cross our minds. It is solely the malevolent thoughts that we nurture and retain within our minds that hold significance.

Marriage and the practice of maintaining a lowered gaze serve as protective measures against occurrences that may instigate unwarranted thoughts. Simultaneously, it is imperative to avoid situations where one may be alone with a woman, whether within a professional environment or elsewhere. As discussed before, such precautions serve not

¹⁸³ Sahih Muslim 1599a, Book 22, Hadith 133

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only to deter inappropriate thoughts and actions but also to prevent potential misinterpretations or false allegations from arising on the part of the other individual. Despite maintaining pure intentions, there remains the risk of misunderstanding, which could lead to significant distress and ambiguity in the future. Consequently, it devolves into a scenario where one's credibility stands in contrast to the other's, devoid of any intermediary arbitration.

Regarding the unintentional glance, it is often impractical to completely evade initial glances. This is precisely why the Holy Prophet (sas) stated: “Do not follow one glance with another; you may be allowed the first [unintentional glance] but not the second.”¹⁸⁴

When the companions asked him about accidental glances, he advised them to divert their eyes.¹⁸⁵

However, there are instances where these inevitable thoughts may arise. The Holy Prophet (sas) has provided reassurance to believers, mitigating their despair regarding matters they may not always exercise complete control over, by saying:

¹⁸⁴ Musnad Ahmad, Hadith 1369

¹⁸⁵ Sunan Abi Dawud, Kitab al-nikah, Hadith 2148

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“Allah has forgiven my followers the evil thoughts that occur to their minds, as long as such thoughts are not put into action or uttered”¹⁸⁶

The Promised Messiah (as) further advises us by saying:

“Turn to God Almighty and supplicate Him to be safeguarded against stumbling and slipping.”¹⁸⁷

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) remind us that *Istaghfar* isn't solely for individuals who have committed wrongdoing; rather, it serves as a supplication essential for seeking protection from all forms of evil deeds, including sexual immorality.

“If even the noble prophets require Allah's grace and mercy to be saved, then what can be said of an ordinary person? Surely it is only by turning towards Allah with true sincerity and humility, seeking His forgiveness and compassion that a person can remain on the right path.”¹⁸⁸

Istaghfar can become a believer's shield and strength, the Promised Messiah (as) elucidates:

¹⁸⁶ Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-talaq, Hadith 5269

¹⁸⁷ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Philosophy of teachings of Islam, pg. 45, 2010, Islam International publications Ltd

¹⁸⁸ Press Release by Press Ahmadiyya, 11 September 2019, MKA UK Ijtema

“Remember, the Muslims have been bestowed two things; one for obtaining strength and the other for the practical demonstration of the strength that has been obtained. *Istighfar* is for obtaining strength. It is also called seeking help. The Sufis have said that as physical strength and power is fostered through exercise, in the same way, *istighfar* is a spiritual exercise. Through it, the soul obtains strength and the heart achieves steadfastness. He who desires strength should do *istighfar*.”¹⁸⁹

As for those who stumble, Qur’an consoles the stumbling heart by declaring:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا ۗ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزَى اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ ۗ نُوهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا لَنَا نُورًا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

O ye who believe! turn to Allah in sincere repentance. It may be that your Lord will remove the evil consequences of your deeds and make you enter Gardens through which rivers flow, on the day when Allah will not abase the Prophet nor those who have believed with him. Their light will run before them and on their right hands. They will say, ‘Our Lord,

¹⁸⁹ The Essence of Islam, Vol. 2, p. 246

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perfect our light for us and forgive us; surely Thou hast power over all things.¹⁹⁰

The Qur'an additionally emphasises that genuine repentance entails a commitment to refrain from persisting in wrongdoing thereafter:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا الذُّنُوبَ وَابْتُغُوا إِلَهًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ وَلَمْ يَصِرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

And those who, when they commit a foul deed or wrong themselves, remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins — and who can forgive sins except Allah? — and do not persist knowingly in what they have done.¹⁹¹

Positive activity:

Nature abhors a vacuum, so as one strives to eliminate harmful media consumption, it's beneficial to simultaneously engage with positive content. Numerous Jamaat media platforms, publications, and websites consistently produce morally uplifting content. Engaging with these resources, such as regularly watching the Friday Sermon and other

¹⁹⁰ Surah At Tahirim 66:9

¹⁹¹ Surah Aal e Imran 3:136

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MTA programs, as well as reading or listening to the works of the Promised Messiah (as), are diverse methods through which individuals can occupy their minds with positive activities, thereby reinforcing a pure thought process.

As noted above, the Qur'anic instruction concerning "lowering one's gaze" extends beyond mere avoidance of direct visual contact with individuals of the opposite gender; rather, it encompasses refraining from observing any stimuli that may potentially stimulate inclinations towards sinful behaviour. This broader interpretation encompasses abstention from viewing indecent materials as well as engaging with "thirst traps," denoting social media content deliberately designed to evoke sexual allure or temptation.

Inappropriate content consumption can be driven by various stimuli such as boredom, loneliness, emotional distraction, or curiosity. To address this, one must first identify the root cause and stimulus triggering the behaviour. To counter this behaviour, individuals can rewire their brains by responding to their unique stimuli with alternative activities that bring joy and fulfilment, such as sports, hobbies, socializing, or intimate moments with a spouse.

Setting specific goals, keeping track of progress, and seeking professional help if needed can provide support and

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guidance. Avoiding triggers and creating a busy daily routine can help distract from the urge to consume inappropriate content. Islam offer additional strategies including discipline in daily matters, prayer, surrounding oneself with supportive company, helping others, and seeking repentance.

Salat:

The Holy Qur'an strongly asserts that performing salat serves as a means of diverting individuals from engaging in immoral behaviour and transgression. This assertion not only underscores the utilization of prayer as a preventive measure against sin but also underscores the verse's admonition regarding Divine Omniscience and the imperative for individuals to uphold personal accountability before Allah. Qur'an states:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

“Surely, Prayer restrains [one] from indecency and manifest evil, and remembrance of Allah indeed is the greatest [virtue]. And Allah knows what you do.”¹⁹²

¹⁹² Surah Al-Ankabut, 29: 46

Salat liberates individuals from the shackles of sin and aids in moral and spiritual elevation. When performed with all requisite conditions, purity of mind and actions inevitably ensue.

Subduing of *Nafs*:

Another unique Islamic principle is subduing the *Nafs*. This fundamental teaching encapsulates a singular principle: Engage in activities that may not inherently align with one's immediate preferences on a consistent basis—ultimately facilitating the regulation of one's cognitive processes and inclinations. Activities like waking up early, praying or meditating, exercising regularly, taking cold showers and fasting are all ways to subdue the *Nafs*.

The Holy Qur'an states:

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلاً

“Verily, getting up at night is the most potent means of subduing the self and most effective in respect to words of prayer.”¹⁹³

The Holy Prophet (sas) once said “Strive against your carnal desires as much as you strive against your visible enemies.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Surah al-Muzzammil, 73: 7

¹⁹⁴ Al-Mufradat Fee Ghareeb al-Qur'an

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Hazrat Musleh Mauood (ra) advises in this context:

“Occasionally, that which is lawful and desirable should be voluntarily given up so that the habit of acting against his wishes may be cultivated. He should sometimes stay awake when he wants to sleep, or abstain from eating something he much desires to eat. In this way, he will strengthen his will.”¹⁹⁵

The company you keep:

Being in the company of individuals sharing common objectives not only enhances levels of personal accountability but also facilitates mutual empathy towards each other's challenges. When one's social circle is collectively driven towards a shared goal of distancing themselves from sinful conduct, it is likely to provide a more stable foundation for individual efforts in this regard. The Holy Qur'an states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O ye who believe! fear Allah and be with the truthful.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ The Way of the Seekers, p. 110

¹⁹⁶ Surah Al-Taubah 9: 119

The example of pious people:

The example of pious people serves as a guiding light for us in this regard. Even during his youth, the Promised Messiah (as) was exceedingly cautious, ensuring not to cast even a single glance towards a woman.

It is narrated that “upon entering his home, to refrain from looking outside whilst closing the door so that his vision would not meet with a woman’s. As soon as he entered, he would close the door with both hands behind his back and then would turn around to place the latch on the door.”¹⁹⁷

The companions of the Promised Messiah (as) also exemplified a path of chastity and modesty in an era beset with its own challenges.

Hazrat Munshi Ismail Sialkoti (ra) once encountered a beautiful lady adorned in beautiful attire approaching him. Satan whispered in his mind, urging him to take a look just to find out who she was. However, Munshi sahib firmly responded, “No, why should I look at her?” Satan then argued, “It’s not forbidden to admire God’s beautiful

¹⁹⁷ The Promised Messiah’s residence in Sialkot: 1861 to 1868, Al Hakam, 19 March 2021, Issue 157, p. 17

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creation; it is only forbidden to look with ill intent.” It is worth noting how Satan attempted to incite him using religious arguments, knowing his religious disposition. Nonetheless, the companion remained steadfast and resolute, refusing to look. The lady passed by without him casting a glance.

On her way back, Satan made another attempt to entice him by saying, “Just take a look; at least find out whose sister or daughter she is and which house she has come from.” However, the companion remained resolute, questioning the need to look. At that moment, he noticed a tall man standing before him, weeping profusely. Curious, Munshi sahib asked the man about his identity and the reason for his tears. The man revealed, “I am Satan, and I am crying because if every person in the world was like you, where would we get our sustenance from? Who would listen to us?”¹⁹⁸

Early Ahmadi preachers also encountered these challenges when travelling from India to other parts of the world. Hazrat Yaqub Ali Irfani (ra) wrote about the prevailing situation where European trends were influencing and introducing certain habits. He noted that smoking was becoming increasingly common and that the sense of

¹⁹⁸ Ashaab-e- Ahmad, Vol.1, pp.195-196

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chastity was diminishing upon witnessing immodesty in those countries. However, despite these temptations, Ahmadi preachers remained steadfast, resolute, and unwavering, just like a rock in the face of storms. “They did not alter their habits, change their attire, or cast their gaze upon indecent beauty. They maintained the highest level of purity and chastity,” he observed.

“Many times, I witnessed Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddin Shams (ra) and Hazrat Maulana Abul Ata Jalandhri (ra), two of the most renowned Ahmadi preachers in Jamaat history, walking in the markets and through the streets, and even sitting in shops, yet their gaze never wandered here and there.”¹⁹⁹

The Holy Prophet (sas) narrated a parable about three men who found themselves trapped in a cave. The first two prayed to God, recounting a good deed they had done, and with each prayer, the rock blocking the cave’s entrance moved slightly. The third humbly appealed to Allah, acknowledging his intention to commit a sinful act with his cousin but refraining from it due to fear of Allah’s commandments. He described how he had gathered a hundred dinars to satisfy her demand, but when she reminded him of the importance of preserving chastity, he

¹⁹⁹ Hayaat-e-Khalid, pp. 318-19

abandoned the act and left the money behind. With his sincere plea, the rock was miraculously removed by Allah, and they were saved, emerging from the cave unharmed.²⁰⁰

Modesty (*Haya*) and Purdah:

The practice of Purdah, which prohibits women from revealing their physical beauty or attire to men who are not closely related to them, along with various other precautionary measures mandated by Islam, effectively mitigate the proliferation of this pernicious moral affliction.

In the contemporary digital landscape, the widespread utilization of social media platforms such as Instagram has fostered a pervasive culture of comparison, particularly impacting the impressionable minds of young individuals who are exposed to idealized beauty standards propagated by celebrities and digitally manipulated imagery. Renowned scholar Professor Renee Engeln explores this phenomenon in her book titled "Beauty Sick: How the Cultural Obsession with Appearance Hurts Girls and Women," elucidating the conflicting pressures faced by women who aspire to reject societal beauty norms while simultaneously feeling compelled to conform to them. Termed "beauty sickness," this phenomenon results in diminished self-esteem and an

²⁰⁰ Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab ahadith al-Anbiya, Hadith 3465

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undue fixation on physical appearance. Studies indicate a disproportionate impact on girls in contrast to boys regarding this societal pressure.

The overarching emphasis on physical attractiveness within Western society imposes unrealistic standards upon women, often tethering their value to their external appearance. Objectification of women pervades various facets of society, manifesting prominently in advertisements and everyday interactions, thereby contributing to a climate of sexual harassment and societal disrespect. Research conducted by Ohio State University underscores the prevalence of sexual objectification experienced by a significant proportion of women across diverse contexts.

These observations underscore the imperative for enhanced safeguards to protect the well-being and dignity of women within Western societies. Islam not only presents hijab as a solution, but Islamic teachings also focus on addressing societal attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate the objectification and mistreatment of women.

Islam imparts a profound wisdom concerning purdah, emphasising that both men and women who believe should exercise restraint in their gaze, refraining from observing

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individuals to whom they are not permitted [*non-mahrams*], and concealing their intimate areas [*satr*].

Additionally, it instructs believing women to extend their head coverings over their bosoms, refrain from displaying their physical attractiveness, and avoid drawing attention to themselves through ostentatious behaviour. These directives aim to maintain modesty and preserve the privacy of personal adornments. Islam teaching of modest attire aims to preserve women's dignity and shield them against societal standards that may lack integrity.

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضُنْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا
وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ^ص وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ
أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ خَوَاتِمَهُنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّبَاعِيْنَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْتِبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا
يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ^ط وَتَوَوُّؤًا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَقْلُدُونَ

And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts, and that they disclose not their natural and artificial beauty except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they disclose not their beauty save to their

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husbands, or to their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands or their sons or the sons of their husbands or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their women, or what their right hands possess, or such of male attendants as have no sexual appetite, or young children who have no knowledge of the hidden parts of women. And they strike not their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may become known. And turn ye to Allah all together, O believers, that you may succeed.²⁰¹

This verse encompasses a comprehensive teaching, every detail about purdah has been elucidated, namely that a believing woman should safeguard her eyes, ears and areas of *satr* and should also ensure that her dress is not so tight that it reveals her physique nor so loose and wide that the chest and other areas of *satr* get exposed.

In the great exegesis 'The five-volume commentary', Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (ra) presents a detailed note on the concept of Islamic Purdah, some parts of that note are reproduced here.

"As a good deal of misunderstanding and lack of proper knowledge as to what constitutes Islamic "purdah" prevails even among Muslims, a somewhat detailed note on this

²⁰¹ Surah An Nur 24:32

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much-vexed question is called for. Here are the relevant Qur'anic verses that embody necessary commandments about "purdah":

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ۗ ذَلِكَ أَذْنَىٰ أَنْ
يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۗ

(i) O Prophet, tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers that they should let down over them their loose outer garments. It is more likely that they will thus be distinguished and not molested (33:60).

The Arabic word used in this verse is جلابيب of which the singular is جلباب meaning, an outer or wrapping garment; a head-covering; the garment with which a woman covers her head and bosom.

(ii) And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts and that they disclose not their natural and artificial beauty except that which is apparent thereof, and that they cast their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they disclose not their beauty... (the verse under comment.)

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يُنِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَحْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَئِنَّ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ
قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى

(iii) O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women if you are righteous. So be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease should feel tempted; and speak a decent speech. And stay in your houses with dignity and do not show off yourselves like the showing off of the former days of ignorance (33:33-34).

(iv) O ye who believe, let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not attained to puberty, ask permission of you three times before coming into your presence: before the morning Prayer, and when you take off clothes at noon in summer and after the night Prayer (24:59).

The following inferences are clearly deducible from the verses quoted above:

(i) When they go out, Muslim women are to wear an outer and wrapping garment which should cover their heads and bosoms in such a manner that the garment should come down from the head to the bosom covering the whole body including the face. This is the significance of the Qur'anic

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words *يدنين عليهن من جلابيهن* (33:60). The outer garment is intended to make known the fact that while a Muslim woman goes about her business, she may be spared the mental anguish of being stared at by persons of questionable character.

(ii) Muslim men and women are to restrain their eyes when they happen to face each other.

(iii) The third commandment though apparently applying to the wives of the Prophet, includes, as is the practice of the Qur'an, other Muslim women also. The words "And stay in your houses" imply that whereas women may go out, when necessary, the principal and primary sphere of their activities is inside the house.

(iv) At three stated hours, even children are not allowed to enter the private apartments of their parents nor are domestic servants or female slaves allowed to enter the sleeping room of their masters.

The first commandment applies to women when they go out. Then they are to use an outer garment which should cover their whole body including the face. The second commandment relates to "purdah" primarily inside the four walls of the house when near male relatives frequently come

and go. In that case men and women are only to restrain their looks and as an additional precaution women are to take care that their زينة i.e. beauty of person, dress and ornaments, is not displayed. They are not required to use جلباب (outer garment) because that would be very irksome and even impracticable in view of the free and frequent visits of near blood relations such as cousins, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, etc. The context shows that this commandment relates to "purdah" inside the four walls of the house, because all the persons mentioned in the verse are very near relations who generally visit the houses of their relatives. The special mention in it of four categories of persons besides near relatives, viz. decent women, old servants, female slaves and minor boys, lends additional weight to the inference that the commandment in this verse relates to "purdah" within the four walls of the house.

The fact that the first commandment refers to "purdah" outside the house and the second commandment basically refers to "purdah" within the four walls of the house is also apparent from the different words that have been used to express the two forms of "purdah" in the relevant verses i.e. 33:60, and the verse under comment. Whereas in 33:60 the garment which a woman is to use when she goes out is جلباب the garment which she has to use inside the house when relatives visit is خمار. Moreover, whereas in 33:60 the words

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used are *جلابيهن من عليهن* i.e. they should let down over them their outer garments; in the verse under comment the words used are *يضرين بخمرهن على حيوبهن* i.e. they should cast their head-coverings over their bosoms. It is clear that in the former case the garment will cover the head, the face and the bosom while in the latter case only the head and the bosom will become covered, and the face may remain uncovered.

It may also be noted in passing that the shape and form of the outer garment which, as mentioned above, a woman must wear when she goes out and which covers her whole body including the face will vary according to the customs, habits, social status, family traditions and usages of various classes of the Muslim community. The commandment with regard to "purdah" within the four walls of the house will also apply to shops, fields, etc. where women of certain sections of Muslim society have to work to earn their living. There a woman will not be required to veil her face. She will have only to restrain her eyes and to cover her *زينة* i.e. her ornaments and other embellishments, as women within the house have to do when their relatives visit them.

In the expression *لا يبدن زينتهن* i.e. they display not their *زينة* (beauty), the word *زينة* includes both natural and artificial beauty. It signifies the beauty of person, and includes the beauty of dress and ornaments which women wear on their

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hands, feet, ears, arms, necks, bosoms, etc. The expression, "except that which is apparent thereof," contains all those things which it is not possible for a woman to cover such as her voice, gait or stature and also certain parts of her body which remain uncovered according to her social status, her family traditions, her avocation and the customs of the society. The permission to keep certain parts of the body uncovered will be subject to certain variations. Thus, the words, "they display not their beauty" will have different connotations with regard to women belonging to different sections and grades of society and the connotation will change with the change in the customs and modes of living and professions of the people.

The words "and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may become known," show that public dancing which is so much in vogue in certain countries is definitely not allowed by Islam.

The commandment about not striking the feet on the ground implies that a believing woman should also refrain from physical movements in a manner which may reveal the various features of her physique, or, if a piece of jewellery such as an anklet etc. is worn on the feet, its sounds may draw people's attention towards it and the eyes of strangers may be drawn to her or, if she has adorned her feet with

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henna or nail polish etc., the eyes of men may be drawn to her. All these things would be in violation of the injunctions of purdah.

The words "stay in your houses" show that the principal sphere of the activities of a woman is her house—not that she is not allowed to leave its four walls. She may go out as many times as she may require for the performance of a legitimate errand or the satisfaction of a legitimate need. But to move about in a mixed society and take part in all sorts of avocations and professions, shoulder to shoulder with man, and to do so to the neglect and detriment of her special domestic duties as the mistress of the house is not the Islamic conception of ideal womanhood.

The Holy Prophet's wives were particularly required to "stay in their houses" because the dignity of their exalted position as "Mothers of the Faithful" demanded this and also because Muslims often visited them to pay their respects and sought necessary information and guidance from them on all important religious matters.

The commandment seems to apply only to the wives of the Holy Prophet (sas) but it equally applies to all Muslim women. It is the Qur'anic way of address that while it appears to be particularly addressing the Holy Prophet (sas),

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the address is meant equally for all Muslims. Similarly, a commandment addressed to the wives of the Holy Prophet applies also to all Muslim women. They are expected to be kind and gentle in speech but their gentleness should not be misunderstood by any evilly-inclined person for pliancy and softness.

Islamic "Purdah" is intended to serve a double purpose. It enjoins privacy and recommends decorum and dignified behaviour. Women are not allowed to meet men promiscuously and they are expected to observe certain rules regarding dress when going out of their houses.

The third commandment requires women to behave with dignity bordering on austerity when talking to stranger men; and they are also required to give their full attention to the discharge of their serious and important duties in regard to the affairs connected with the well-being of their own sex and the management of the household affairs and to looking after and bringing up of children and kindred matters.

The fourth commandment enjoins husband and wife to have, as far as possible, sleeping apartments separate from those of other members of the family which even minor boys are not allowed to enter at stated hours."²⁰²

²⁰² Five vol commentary of 24:32

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Thus, Islam does not consider it adequate for a woman to merely cover her head with a headscarf. It elucidates all other requirements related to purdah, including the appropriate conduct for women in social situations. Her deportment, manner of speech, and overall demeanour are described in detail to ensure her dignity and respect.

The Promised messiah (as) says: "The Islamic veil does not at all mean that women be imprisoned as though they were locked in jail. The purport of the Holy Qur'an is that women cover themselves and refrain from gazing at men that are beyond the permissible bounds. Women are not barred from leaving the house to tend to their societal needs. They are welcome to go out and about but must control their gaze."²⁰³

Punishment of Adultery:

Chastity as a moral virtue holds a very high place in the code of Islamic laws that govern relations between the sexes. As extensively discussed earlier, the Qur'an has established comprehensive directives to safeguard and preserve chastity. Islam strongly condemns any infringement or even the slightest breach of these laws. It is Islam's very great

²⁰³ Malfuzat , Vol 1, Urdu 2022, p. 405

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sensitiveness about chastity that is reflected in the punishment prescribed for adultery or fornication.

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ ۚ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

The adulteress and the adulterer (or the fornicatress and the fornicator) — flog each one of them with a hundred stripes. And let not pity for the twain take hold of you in executing the judgment of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment.²⁰⁴

The punishment prescribed is hundred stripes, no distinction having been made whether the guilty persons are married or unmarried or one of them is married and the other unmarried.

As clearly evident from this verse, the punishment prescribed by Islam for adultery or fornication is flogging, not stoning to death. Nowhere in the Qur'an is stoning to death specified as a punishment for adultery, or indeed for any other crime, no matter how grave. It is noteworthy that the verse employs the terms الزَّانِيَةُ and الزَّانِي (rather than زاني

²⁰⁴ Surah An Nur, 24:3

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and زانية), suggesting a specific category of adulterers and fornicators—perhaps habitual offenders or those who exhibit a complete lack of shame and remorse, openly indulging in this reprehensible act without restraint. Additionally, the verse stipulates that the beating administered to the offender should not be so severe as to cause death or fracture bones, but rather should only be skin deep, as indicated by the word اجلدوا used in the verse.

Chapter 5- Establishing a Fair and Just Society

Man is a cooperative social animal. With cognitive revolution, people began to cooperate with others on a regular basis however the instinct of mass cooperation had not evolved enough to be innate yet. This mass cooperation thus automatically translated into conflict. Throughout history, conflicts over livelihoods and resources necessitated external arbitration when mutual resolution failed.

Religion, as the earliest source of moral guidance, laid the groundwork for human civilization by delineating concepts of right and wrong. Divine revelation provided religious leaders with the authority to guide their followers through such disputes, exemplifying the inseparable relationship between religion and civilization.

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لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ

Verily, We sent Our Messengers with manifest Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that people may act with justice;²⁰⁵

Qur'an presents the idea that two crucial gifts are bestowed by God for humanity's guidance and benefit in this context: "the Book," symbolizing Divine Laws, and "the Balance," representing the standards by which human actions are evaluated.

The term "ميزان" (balance) in Islamic discourse holds various interpretations among scholars. It symbolizes the equilibrium inherent in the universe, encompasses principles of equity guiding human interactions, and serves as a criterion for assessing actions. It also signifies the importance of moderation in fulfilling obligations to both God and humanity.

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ

And the heaven He has raised high and set up a measure,

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ

²⁰⁵ Surah Al Hadid 57:26

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That you may not transgress the measure.

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ

So weigh all things in justice and fall not short of the measure.²⁰⁶

In the vast expanse of the universe, a uniform law governs all its elements, ensuring a sublime harmony of structure and movement. Any disruption to this delicate equilibrium would threaten the very fabric of existence. Yet, the regulation of these laws lies solely within the domain of God, beyond human grasp.

Just as the universe resonates with harmonious balance, so too is humanity, the pinnacle of creation, tasked with upholding fairness and justice in their interactions. Each individual is charged with giving others their due and avoiding extremes, embracing moderation in fulfilling their obligations to the creation and their Creator.

This Balance may also denote the faculty of discernment between right and wrong, or justice itself, signifying the righteous application of divine law. Thus, "ميزان" encapsulates divine laws, social equilibrium, and the

²⁰⁶ Surah Ar Rahman 55:8-10

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authority to enforce adherence to these laws, embodying a multifaceted concept integral to Islamic ethics and governance.

Additionally, "میزان" denotes the exemplary conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (sas) and the judicious application of divine scripture. It represents the leadership capacity through which the Prophet established a just societal framework. Qur'an declares:

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ

Say, 'My Lord has enjoined justice.'²⁰⁷

The judiciary, legal procedures, and penal codes instituted under this divine law serve the dual purpose of maintaining societal harmony and deterring wrongdoing, underscoring religion's enduring role in fostering justice and societal well-being.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) narrated that the Holy Prophet (sas) said:

“There is a *sadaqah* to be given for every joint of the human body; and for every day on which the sun rises, there is a reward of a *sadaqah* [charitable gift] for the one who establishes justice among people.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Surah Al Araf 7 :30

²⁰⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari

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This guidance, exemplified in the legal system established during the era of the Holy Prophet (sas), aimed not only at societal peace but also at individual and collective moral rectification. The Qur'an's comprehensive teachings on justice extend from personal relationships to matters of state governance, encompassing a wide spectrum of societal interactions. Qur'an declares:

وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ

and that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice²⁰⁹

Here the heads of the State and all entrusted with administrative duties are enjoined to be fair and just in their administration, ensuring fairness to individuals, communities, and the State as a whole. They are all commanded to exercise their authority equitably and with integrity.

The Qur'an then addresses a crucial element of dispensing justice: truthful testimony. The superior teaching of the Qur'an becomes evident when it commands that, even when dealing with an enemy or in situations against one's own interests, one must bear truthful witness. Justice and fairness must not be abandoned, even in adversarial circumstances.

²⁰⁹ Surah An Nisa 4:59

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوْمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا^ط
إِعْدِلُوا ۗ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O ye who believe! be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do.²¹⁰

The admonition to not let animosity sway one from the path of justice stresses the principle of complete impartiality. Upholding justice is deemed a step closer to righteousness, highlighting the equitable teachings of Islam, even regarding adversaries. A genuine adherence to Islam entails treating both Muslims and non-Muslims, including those opposed to the faith, with fairness.

The phrase "And fear Allah" serves as a solemn reminder that justice should not be merely superficial but should stem from genuine conviction, rooted in the awareness that God observes all actions. This emphasises the importance of heartfelt adherence to justice, guided by a reverent fear of divine accountability.

²¹⁰ Surah Al Maida 5 :09

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِن يَكُنْ عَنِّيَا أَوْ قَرِيبًا قَادِلُهُ أُولَىٰ بِهِمَا ۗ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا ۗ وَإِنْ تَلَّوْا أَوْ تُعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

O ye who believe! be strict in observing justice, and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both than you are. Therefore follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably. And if you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that Allah is well aware of what you do.²¹¹

The directive to "be witnesses for Allah" highlights the imperative of offering truthful testimony in accordance with divine guidance. The verse commands to bearing witness impartially, even if it entails testifying against one's own community or close relations, including parents or kin.

The inclusion of "parents or kindred" serves to emphasise the gravity of the obligation, extending it beyond one's immediate social circle to encompass familial ties. This highlights the duty to provide truthful testimony, even when it involves individuals with whom one shares close personal connections. This concept of justice extends to forbidding

²¹¹ Surah An Nisa 4 :136

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revenge-seeking, even in cases of mistreatment or prosecution. Overwhelming message is that under no circumstances should justice be flouted.

In the Qur'an, a primary strategic imperative involves the recognition that individuals witnessing inequity are not bound to await permission to bear witness to the victimization they observe. In cases where necessary, allies of the oppressed are urged to provide honest testimony against the oppressor, even if they maintain close ties with the oppressor. From a Qur'anic perspective, truthful testimony regarding oppression is not merely a matter of humanistic concern, but a moral imperative. The Qur'an emphasises the critical importance of speaking truthfully for the sake of justice, even when the allies or the oppressed are affiliated with the oppressor.

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) explains this verse in this way:

‘The key requirement to fulfilling this primary goal [of achieving social peace] is absolute justice and fairness in all matters. The Holy Qur’an, in Chapter 4, Verse 136, has given us a golden principle and lesson, guiding us about this. It states that as a means to fulfil the requirements of justice, even if you have to bear witness and testify against yourself,

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your parents or your closest relatives and friends, then you must do so.’²¹²

Sanctity of Life and property:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ ذِكْرُكُمْ وَصُكُّكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

and that you kill not the life which Allah has made sacred, save by right. That is what He has enjoined upon you, that you may understand.

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ ۗ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْكَيْلِ وَالْبَيْزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۗ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ۗ ذِكْرُكُمْ وَصُكُّكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

And approach not the property of the orphan, except in a way which is best, till he attains his maturity. And give full measure and weight with equity. We task not any soul except according to its capacity. And when you speak, observe justice, even if the concerned person be a relative, and fulfil the covenant of Allah. That is what He enjoins upon you, that you may remember.’²¹³

²¹² Address Peace Symposium, 2012

²¹³ Surah Al Anam 6:152-153

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وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ ۗ وَمَنْ
يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا

And those who call not on any other God along with Allah, nor kill a person that Allah has forbidden except for just cause, nor commit adultery (or fornication), and he who does that shall meet with the punishment of sin.²¹⁴

These verses underscore the sanctity of human life and mandates fair and just treatment of individuals within society. The term "killing" encompasses not only the act of taking a life but also attempts to do so, inflicting serious harm, or implementing boycotts.

Following the directive to safeguard the lives of fellow brethren, the Qur'an enjoins the protection of their property, starting with the vulnerable category of orphans. This entails a duty of trust to manage their assets prudently, refraining from any form of misappropriation. While the Qur'an prohibits encroachment upon their property, it permits beneficial use for the orphans' welfare, emphasising stewardship until they attain maturity.

²¹⁴ Surah Al Furqan 25:69

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Subsequently, the Qur'an addresses the broader obligation to ensure fairness in transactions, emphasising the equitable provision of full measure and weight. This principle extends to all individuals, including those who may be susceptible to manipulation.

Transitioning from the protection of property, the Qur'an then advocates for restraint in speech, emphasising the importance of truthful testimony, even if it implicates close relations. Simultaneously, it warns against unjustly harming loved ones.

Further, the Qur'an directs attention to the guardianship of the heart, emphasising the fulfilment of one's covenant with God. This spiritual injunction complements preceding directives focused on interpersonal relations, underscoring the holistic nature of ethical conduct as prescribed by the Qur'an.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ^ط وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِرِيبِهِ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنصُورًا ^ط

And kill not the soul which Allah has forbidden save for just cause. And whoso is killed wrongfully, We have surely given his heir authority to demand retaliation, but let him not

exceed the prescribed bounds in slaying; for therein he is helped by law.²¹⁵

The Qur'an declares it unlawful to take a life that God has forbidden to be taken. The term "نفس" (soul) encompasses all living beings, but the prohibition is specifically applied to humans, allowing the killing of animals under certain conditions.

In cases of murder, the victim's heir has the right to seek justice. Once the murderer is convicted in a legitimate court, the heir can choose either execution or accept blood money. However, if public peace or morality is at risk, or if the heir's demand seems insincere, the court can mandate execution. Both the heir and the State share the authority to pardon or punish, with the State's prerogative extending to all matters of retaliation (قصاص). Historical precedent, like Caliph 'Ali's decision to execute a pardoned offender to maintain public peace, underscores this balance of justice.²¹⁶

The verse also cautions the aggrieved party against excessive retribution, advocating for moderation and justice. It suggests mercy for the murderer when possible, emphasising that the ultimate goal is moral reformation. The reminder, "for therein he is helped by law," underscores the aggrieved

²¹⁵ Surah Bani Israil 17 :34

²¹⁶ Tafseer of verse 17 :43 Five Vol Commentary

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party's duty to uphold peace and consider the rights of others, reflecting a divine safeguard of equitable justice over vengeance.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا

O ye who believe! devour not your property among yourselves by unlawful means, except that you earn by trade with mutual consent. And kill not yourselves. Surely, Allah is Merciful to you.

وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِ نَارًا ۖ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

And whosoever does that by way of transgression and injustice, We shall cast him into Fire; and that is easy with Allah.²¹⁷

The term "unlawful means" encompasses all methods and practices prohibited by legal statutes. The verse asserts that any commercial transaction lacking the mutual consent of both seller and buyer is deemed invalid.

²¹⁷ Surah An Nisa 4:30-31

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The admonition, "kill not yourselves," elucidates that the appropriation of another individual's property through illicit means or engaging in transactions without the voluntary agreement of all involved parties results in the moral degradation of the transgressor.

Furthermore, the injunction against "killing yourselves" also denotes the prohibition of suicide. The Holy Prophet (sas) said, "Whosoever kills himself with a weapon, will be brought on the Day of Judgement with the said weapon in his hand and will be thrown into the Fire wherein he will abide. And whosoever kills himself with a poison will be thrown into the Fire, with that poison in his hand, where he will continue to take it."²¹⁸

Economic dealings:

The essence of a nation's economic advancement and prosperity resides in the integrity and equity demonstrated in its commercial endeavours. Qur'an says:

أَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِينَ

Give full measure, and be not of those who give less,

²¹⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari 5778, Book 76, Hadith 90

وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

And weigh with a true balance,

وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

And diminish not unto people their things, nor act corruptly in the earth, making mischief.²¹⁹

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ إِذَا كَلَّمْتُمْ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a right balance; that is best and most commendable in the end.²²⁰

Qur'an emphasises the paramount importance of honesty, fairness, and equity in all interactions among individuals.

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُكْفِرِينَ

Woe unto those who give short measure;

الَّذِينَ إِذَا الْكُتِبُوا عَلَيْهِمْ أَن يُقْرِضُوا قَالُوا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

Those who, when they take by measure from other people, take it full;

وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوَّزَّهُمْ أَن يَكْبُرُوا

²¹⁹ Surah Ash-Shuara' 26:182-184

²²⁰ Surah Bani Israil 17:36

But when they give by measure to others or weigh to them, they give them less.²²¹

Emphasis is placed on honesty, justice, and fairness in all interpersonal transactions. There is a strong condemnation of employing deceitful measures to defraud others. These moral values are crucial for the establishment of a just society. The Qur'an emphasises fundamental virtues such as truth and honesty in individuals and proclaims them as the foundation for governance.

Dishonesty, Stealing, Theft-Honesty

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا تَكْلَامًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

And as for the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands in retribution of their offence as an exemplary punishment from Allah. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.²²²

The prescribed punishment for theft as outlined in this verse may appear excessively severe at first glance. However, if one analysis the situation logically without the influence of misguided sentiments, the wisdom of the verse becomes

²²¹ Surah At Tatfif 83:2-4

²²² Surah Al Maidah 5:39

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apparent. Empirical evidence suggests that for punishment to serve as an effective deterrent, it must be severe and exemplary. It is deemed more prudent to be severe with one individual and prevent numerous offenses, rather than being lenient with all and risking the ruin of many. Historical observations reveal that during periods when Islam held sway, instances of the amputation of thieves' hands were rare due to the deterrent effect of the prescribed punishment, resulting in a notable decline in theft cases. Conversely, contemporary leniency towards thieves has led to a troubling surge in theft. The Crime Survey for England and Wales recorded a staggering 2.7 million incidents of theft for the year ending September 2023.²²³

Theological perspectives diverge regarding the minimum value of stolen money or property warranting the prescribed punishment as well as the interpretation of the term "hand" (Arabic: *يد*) in this context.

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظَمِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ حَبِيرٌ لَهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَأَجَلْتُ لَكُمْ الْأَلْعَامُ إِلَّا مَا يُشَلِّ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

²²³ Office of National Statistics

[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2023#:~:text=There%20were%202.7%20million%20incidents,2020%20\(3.3%20million%20incidents\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2023#:~:text=There%20were%202.7%20million%20incidents,2020%20(3.3%20million%20incidents))

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That is God's commandment. And whoso honours the sacred things of Allah, it will be good for him with his Lord. And cattle are made lawful to you but not that which has been announced to you. Shun therefore the abomination of idols, and shun all words of untruth,²²⁴

The verse serves as a firm reminder for the significance of respecting and upholding the sanctity of those entities that God has deemed sacred. This encompasses the dignity, lives, and possessions of others.

Lying- Truthfulness and Giving Truthful Testimony

The distinguishing characteristics of virtuous and morally upright servants of God include abstaining from falsehoods; refraining from frequenting locations where falsehoods and frivolous activities prevail, avoiding association with deceitful individuals; avoiding association with false deities in place of Allah, and refraining from attending gatherings where idolatry is practiced; refusing to bear false witness.

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّوْرَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

²²⁴ Surah Al Hajj 22:31

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And those who bear not false witness, and when they pass by anything vain, they pass on with dignity;²²⁵

Hazrat Abdullah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said, “Verily, truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to paradise. A person keeps on telling the truth until he is counted among the truthful. Falsehood leads to sin, and sin leads to the hellfire. A person may continue telling lies until he is counted as a great liar.”²²⁶

Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Abi Bakr (ra) relates from his mother, “The Holy Prophet (sas) stated, ‘Shall I not tell you what the worst of the grave sins is?’ We replied, ‘Yes, O Messenger (sas) of Allah.’ The Holy Prophet (sas) then stated, ‘To lie and to cut ties with one’s parents.’ The Holy Prophet (sas) was reclining but then sat up and said, ‘Beware of lying and false testimony. Beware of lying and false testimony.’ The Holy Prophet (sas) continued to say this until I thought in my heart that he would not stop.”²²⁷ i.e. he said this in a very heartfelt manner.

These profound words of the Beloved of Allah serve as apt reminders of the paramount significance of truth and honesty, particularly concerning testimonies and

²²⁵ Surah Al Furqan 25:73

²²⁶ Sahih al-Bukhari Kitab al-Adab Hadith 6094

²²⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari Kitab al-Shahadat Hadith 2654

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interpersonal communications, notably within familial and marital contexts. The solemnisation of marriage, symbolized by the Nikah ceremony, entails a pledge to uphold *Qawl-e-Sadeed*, the principle of truthful and forthright speech. Deceit within spousal relationships not only fractures familial bonds but also detrimentally affects subsequent generations. Therefore, believers are exhorted to harbour a deep disdain for all forms of dishonesty, thereby aligning themselves with the ranks of Allah's virtuous servants.

Qawl e Sadeed (the right word) entails uttering what is completely true and appropriate. It refers to a level of truthfulness so absolute that no suspicion or ambiguity can arise from it, allowing no alternative interpretations or meanings. The language is straightforward and unambiguous. Qur'an presents adherence to *Qawl-e-Sadeed* [the right, straightforward word] as a tool for rehabilitation and reformation:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

O ye who believe! fear Allah, and say the right word.

يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

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He will bless your works for you and forgive you your sins. And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, shall surely attain a mighty success.²²⁸

A Hadith relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) advised a man to commit from that day onwards to unwavering honesty. He explained that if the man adhered to this advice, all his weaknesses and failings would be eradicated. The man followed this counsel and subsequently overcame all his major and minor sins.²²⁹ When such a transformation towards truth occurs, it is through the will of God that a person's actions are reformed. Those who remain steadfast in honesty experience not only the reformation of their actions but also the forgiveness of their past transgressions. This is, indeed, the key to rehabilitation.

The Promised Messiah (as) explains *Qawl-e-Sadeed* in these words: “That is to say, one should utter only that which is absolutely true, altogether proper, and entirely free from anything vain, frivolous, and false.”²³⁰

²²⁸ Surah Al Ahzab 33:71-72

²²⁹ Friday Sermon, 21st June 2013, Essence of speaking the truth, <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/printer-friendly-summary-2013-06-21.html>

²³⁰ Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Part III, page 112, 2018, Islam International Publications Ltd

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‘Do not talk randomly and speak at the right time and place.’²³¹

Thus, *Qawl e Sadeed* (the right word) entails uttering what is completely true and appropriate and has no hint of randomness, uselessness and falsehood. One should be scrupulously straightforward in dealings with other people

Qur’an emphasises the importance of upholding truth in every circumstance, whether in times of difficulty or ease. This principle applies to decision-making, giving testimony, interactions within the household, and dealings with friends, family, business transactions, and employers. In all daily matters and exchanges, communication should be completely truthful and unambiguous, avoiding any possibility of misinterpretation. One should remain truthful even at personal detriment.

A fundamental aspect of *qawl e sadeed* is ensuring that one's words are pertinent and appropriate. It is not necessary to express every truth; if a statement lacks relevance or appropriateness, it may cause discord and strife. For instance, revealing others' secrets can damage relationships.

²³¹ Translated from Tafseer Holy Qur’an by the Promised Messiah (as), Vol. III, p. 400, tafseer verse 33:71

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However, what may be inappropriate in one context could be necessary in another. Therefore, wisdom must accompany truth and fairness, with the objective of maintaining societal peace. This wisdom dictates that everything should be said in accordance with the context, time, and appropriateness. Uttering the truth without considering wisdom and appropriateness does not constitute *qawl e sadeed*. True *qawl e sadeed* forms the foundation of societal peace and reformation.

Company of the Truthful:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O ye who believe! fear Allah and be with the truthful.²³²

This verse establishes a fundamental principle of conduct crucial for the enhancement of an individual's moral fibre and spiritual evolution: seeking the company of the truthful and steadfastly adhering to it. Man is recognised by the company he keeps. Associating with the righteous and truthful holds immense significance. It serves to eradicate moral and spiritual impurities from one's heart, exerting an intensely beneficial influence. Such association guides a believer towards the fountain of purity and righteousness,

²³² Surah At Tauba 9:119

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fostering a moral and spiritual environment conducive to personal growth.

Cruelty and dishonesty:

Dishonesty is recognised as a pivotal element in the degradation and eventual downfall of societies and civilizations. The encroachment of dishonest practices among believers jeopardizes their standing as beneficiaries of Allah's Favour and benevolence. The devout servants of Allah and communities guided by divine principles are encouraged to uphold integrity and eschew all manifestations of deceit, thereby safeguarding unimpeded progress and divine favour.

Regarding cruelty, injustice and dishonesty Qur'an says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

Verily, Allah commands you to make over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice. And surely excellent is that with which Allah admonishes you! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.²³³

²³³ Surah An Nisa 4:59

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الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

Those who believe and mix not up their belief with injustice — it is they who shall have peace, and who are rightly guided.²³⁴

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظَلَمًا لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

These are the Signs of Allah, We rehearse them to thee while they comprise the truth; and Allah will not any wrong to *His* creatures.²³⁵

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) narrates the guidance of the Holy Prophet (sas) in this context, “The Holy Prophet (sas) would often say, ‘O Allah, I seek refuge with You from hunger for it is a bad companion, and I seek refuge with You from dishonesty for it is a bad companion.’”²³⁶

He further relates: “The Holy Prophet (sas) said, ‘Do you know who amongst you is considered poor and destitute?’ The people replied that a poor and destitute person is he who does not have a single dirham to his name, nor any provisions. Upon this, the Holy Prophet (sas) replied,

²³⁴ Surah Al Anam 6:83

²³⁵ Surah Aal-e-Imran 3:109

²³⁶ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence

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‘Amongst the people of my ummah, a poor and destitute person is he who has offered their prayers, fasted and paid his Zakat, but presents himself on the Day of Judgment as someone who also slandered, falsely accused someone, exploited another for their wealth, killed someone and abused another. His virtues and good deeds would be distributed amongst those [whom he was cruel to] and the burden of their sins would be put on him (those whom he was cruel to will be given his virtues, and their sins will be placed on him). Thereafter, he would be cast into the hellfire.’²³⁷ In other words, due to his cruelty, prayers, fasting, and Zakat will all be rendered futile.

This account is further elucidated by another narration from Bukhari. “One who is disrespectful and cruel to another should make amends and seek forgiveness in this very world before the time comes when he does not possess a single dinar or dirham. The virtuous deeds of a cruel person will be given as compensation to their victim relative to the cruelty they faced. In the case that there are no virtuous deeds, the cruel person will be made to carry the sins of the victim.”²³⁸

²³⁷ Sahih Muslim Kitab al-Birr wal-Sillah Hadith 2581

²³⁸ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, The Nine Evils

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Hazrat Ibn Abbas (ra) relates, “The Holy Prophet (sas) sent Hazrat Mu’adh (ra) to Yemen and said, ‘Save yourself from the prayers of those you oppress, for there is nothing between them and Allah.’”²³⁹

In essence, these teachings emphasise the profound accountability individuals hold for their treatment of others, stressing the importance of sincerity, honesty, compassion, and integrity in all actions and interactions. The pursuit of one's own interests should always be accompanied by a sincere commitment to uphold the rights and interests of others. These principles are deemed essential for attaining true peace and security.

The Promised Messiah (as) has issued a stern warning regarding dishonesty, he states:

“One who does not repent from every kind of ill deed and vice, for example drinking alcohol, gambling, trespass of the eye, dishonesty, bribery and every type of unlawful pursuit, they are not from my community. Every husband who is dishonest to his wife and every wife who is dishonest to her husband, they are not from my community.”²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Jami' al-Tirmidhi Kitab al-Birr wal-Sillah Hadith 2014

²⁴⁰ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence

Absolute Justice:

Throughout human history, conflicts and disputes have marred societal harmony. However, Islam stands apart by championing the principles of absolute justice. It is an idea entirely unique to Islamic moral conduct.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonished you that you may take heed.²⁴¹

In this verse the Holy Qur'an imparts a great principle for fostering peace within society. Muslims are enjoined not only to uphold justice but to transcend it by treating all individuals with love and compassion, regardless of their religious beliefs. This directive encourages selfless assistance to others, without expecting anything in return. The Promised messiah (as) explains various aspects of these three degrees that can establish absolute justice, He says:

<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/>

²⁴¹ Surah An Nahl 16:91

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“Allah the Almighty commands that you observe justice, and greater than justice is that—despite having dispensed justice—you go beyond and show kindness, and even greater than kindness is that you show such consideration to others as if they are your loved ones and, indeed, as if they are your kindred. ... Firstly, man observes justice; that is to say, he asks for rights in lieu of granting rights. Then, if he advances further, comes the stage of showing kindness to others. And if he advances yet further, then he ... displays sympathy for others with the same love with which a mother shows sympathy to her child; that is to say, with a natural passion and not with the intention of being kind to others.”²⁴²

Islamic teachings aim to establish a harmonious society that upholds the rights owed to both Allah and humanity. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

“God commands you to be just towards Him as well as His creation. That is, you should fulfil the rights of Allah and the rights of mankind and if you are able to go beyond that, then you should not only enjoin justice but also do good to others. That is, you should go beyond what is obligatory and worship God with such sincerity as if you were able to see Him.”²⁴³

²⁴²Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Holy War [Jang-e-Muqaddas]*, pp. 66-67, 2021, Islam International Publications Ltd

²⁴³Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *Shahna-e-Haqq*, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 2, pp. 361-362

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The Promised Messiah (as) further delves into this three-tier idea of justice and explains:

“The lowest stage is ‘*adl* [justice], meaning whatever you take from someone, you give the same in return. (‘*adl* means to give back as much as one takes) meaning this is the lowest stage of justice. If one progresses on from this, they reach the stage of *ibsan*, meaning to give back at least what one takes and even more than that. This is called ‘*ibsan*’ (i.e., not only to return the favour in kind, but to give back more than that). Then the stage beyond this is called ‘*ita’i dbil qurba*’ i.e., for one to deal with others in the same way a mother deals with her own child, out of the innate love she has and without expecting any favour in return.”²⁴⁴

He further elaborates:

“This verse means to do justice to your brothers and to mankind, and do not make any undue demands for your rights and remain firmly established in equity. (Observe justice within one’s rights. One can, of course, seek their rights, provided they remain established upon justice. There should not be any undue requests.) If one desires to progress from this to the stage of ‘*ibsan*’ [doing good], which means to do good in response to a brother’s evil. (If one treats you

²⁴⁴ Malfuzat, Vol. 7, p. 375, Urdu 1984

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badly, you should do good to them – this is *'ibsan'*.) In exchange for the hurt he gives; one should afford them comfort. (If they cause you harm, you should strive to give them ease and happiness) and to help them with benevolence and favour.

Thereafter, there is the stage of *'ita'i dbil qurba'* [giving like kindred], which is to carry out whatever good is possible for one's brothers and wish well for mankind, without any desire for recompense. (One should not have the aim of receiving any favour in return); rather, it should emanate naturally, without any desire for recompense. (One should act in a completely natural manner. It is the ultimate perfection of moral progress when one has no personal desires or motives when showing sympathy to mankind, rather, a fervour of brotherhood and kinship should sprout from this highest stage, whereby this virtue emanates automatically and instinctively, without any pretentiousness, and without any desire for recompense, gratitude, prayer or reward."²⁴⁵

Hazrat Khalifatul-Maish V (aba) stated: "Thus, we are commanded not only to exercise goodness towards our own

²⁴⁵ Izala-e-Auham, Part 2, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 3, pp. 550-552

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people, but towards humanity at large, without any expectation of reward.”²⁴⁶

It is essential to approach all individuals with fairness and extend benevolence, regardless of whether they have directly benefited us. Additionally, it is crucial to cultivate a deep reverence for the entirety of God's creation, akin to the nurturing love mothers shower upon their children. This principle serves as a foundation for ensuring societal and global peace.

As is the case for every moral virtue in Islam, we're instructed to adopt it, but we're also encouraged to employ reason and balance in its application to ensure positive outcomes. The aim is to benefit society rather than sow chaos. Just as a loving mother won't fulfil her child's request to touch fire, the goal of practicing these virtues is to avoid harm and ultimately to bring about improvement and benefit.

The Promised Messiah (as) explains the appropriate use of these moral traits at the right time and place:

²⁴⁶ Friday Sermon – Justice, kindness and kinship: Scaling the three levels of goodness (5 May 2023) <https://www.alhakam.org/friday-sermon-justice-kindness-and-kinship-scaling-the-three-levels-of-goodness-5-may-2023/>

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“This means that we are commanded to return good for good, and to exercise benevolence when it is called for, and to do good with natural eagerness as between kindred, when that should be appropriate. God Almighty forbids transgression or that you should exercise benevolence out of place (there must be a balance in exercising these virtues) or should refrain from exercising it when it is called for. (One must act with intelligence and exercise these virtues appropriately. Benevolence should not be demonstrated where it is not necessary, nor should one refuse to show benevolence where it is required. Reason and a beneficial outcome must be factored in); or that you should fall short of exercising graciousness as between kindred on its proper occasion or should extend it beyond its appropriate limit. This verse sets forth three gradations of doing good.”

In conclusion, the Promised Messiah (as) sheds light on the perfection of this model of Justice by saying:

“Morals are of two kinds; firstly, there are morals described by those who have been educated in this modern era. They are apologetic and speak with adulation, yet their hearts are full of hypocrisy and malice. Such morals are opposed to the Holy Qur’an. The second kind of morals originate from true compassion and are free of hypocrisy and words of adulation, as God Almighty states:

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إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَائِي ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

This is a complete and perfect method, and every perfect method and guidance is contained in the Word of God. Those who turn away from this cannot find guidance elsewhere. A good teaching is impactful and purifies the heart; if you closely observe those who are far removed from such a teaching, you will surely find impurities within them. One can never be certain about life. Thus, you must progress in prayer, sincerity and purity.”²⁴⁷

Standing up for Justice:

Qur'anic principles underscore the intrinsic worth of every human being and advocate for their freedom to connect with God and their conscience. Anything contrary to this ethos goes against Islamic values of human dignity and equity.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَىٰ مَوْلَاهُ أَيْنَمَا يُوَجِّههُ لَا يَأْتِ
بِخَيْرٍ ۗ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

And Allah sets forth another parable of two men: one of them is dumb, having no power over anything, and he is a burden to his master; whithersoever he sends him, he brings

²⁴⁷ Malfuzat, Urdu published in 1984, Vol. 6, p. 200

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no good. Can he be equal to him who enjoins justice and who is himself on the straight path?²⁴⁸

This Qur'anic parable illuminates the unique moral teaching of the Qur'an, where a morally upright and conscientious Islamic model citizen is described alongside one who is abstaining his moral duties. The parable portrays one man as silent witnesses to various crimes and sins yet failing to speak out against them or uphold the honour of God. While the other consistently raises his voice against wrongdoing, oppression and injustice.

Qur'an looks down upon the one who remained passive, complacent and indifferent in the face of cruelty in society. God expects a moral person to speak for those who do not have a voice and stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. It encourages people to establish fairness within their spheres of influence and stand up for the rights of others. Qur'anic morality emphasises not only practicing virtue personally but also encouraging others to uphold justice, equity, and piety. A moral man is the one carrying their own burdens while assisting others in theirs.

The teachings of the Holy Prophet (sas) reinforce this stance, emphasising the duty to assist both the oppressor

²⁴⁸ Surah An Nahl 16:77

and the oppressed, with a directive to restrain the oppressor from their wrongdoing. The Holy Prophet (sas) stated that Muslims should, 'help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is oppressed.' When asked how to help both the oppressor and the oppressed, he responded, 'hold the oppressor's hand' (i.e. restrain him from his oppression).²⁴⁹

The term "brother" in this context extends beyond religious boundaries, encompassing all humanity. An Islamic society, guided by Qur'anic principles, acknowledges the value of every life and supports those who resist oppression, recognizing them as the true heroes who propel society towards its loftiest ideals.

In the context of conflict resolution Qur'an says:

وَإِن طَافَئْتَنِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا^ع فَإِن بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي
تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَنْفِرَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ^ع فَإِن فَأَتْت فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا^ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُقْسِطِينَ

And if two parties of believers fight against each other, make peace between them; then if after that one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that

²⁴⁹ Ahmad, Bashir (2016). 40 Gems of Beauty. P.58-61. Commentary on Bukhari, Vol. 3, #624.https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Forty_Gems_of_Beauty.pdf

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transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the just.²⁵⁰

The verse primarily addresses the resolution of disputes between Muslim parties, yet it also embodies principles conducive to the establishment of an effective international peacekeeping body akin to the "United Nations". It advocates that when disagreements arise between nations, instead of taking sides, other nations should urge the disputing parties to submit their differences to such an organisation for arbitration. If both parties agree, the conflict can be peacefully resolved. However, if one party refuses to comply or rejects the organisation's ruling and resorts to war, the other nations should collectively intervene. The combined strength of multiple nations would compel submission from the recalcitrant party, paving the way for a negotiated peace settlement.

Crucially, the peace terms should address the original dispute, remaining just and equitable without introducing new grievances. This approach ensures that peace negotiations remain focused and do not sow the seeds for future conflicts.

²⁵⁰ Surah Al Hujurat 49:10

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The verse highlights the necessity of entrusting international peacekeeping to an impartial and robust organisation, one not contingent upon the goodwill of others but equipped to uphold peace through impartial mediation and enforcement mechanisms. It is imperative that such an organisation is completely unbiased and rooted in the idea of absolute justice. Its laws should be uniformly applicable to everyone, without double standards or hypocrisy. It must be effective and uphold its values of equity and justice on a global scale.

Spending habits-Frugality, Niggardliness, Extravagance-Moderation:

A fair society cannot be established without addressing economic disparity. True fairness in a society is achieved when the fortunate care for the less privileged and provide opportunities for social progression. The Qur'an addresses these issues by fostering a culture of spending in the way of Allah, urging those who have to extend a helping hand to those who have not.

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُؤْتِكُمْ شَيْئًا فَمِنْ لَدُنْكُمْ هُوَ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ

So fear Allah as best you can, and listen, and obey, and spend in His cause; it will be good for yourselves. And whoso is rid

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of the covetousness of his own soul — it is such who shall be successful.²⁵¹

Qur'an invites believers to spend, when they are called upon to make monetary sacrifice for the advancement of a good cause, as their success and prosperity lies in this expenditure. While the Qur'an advocates expenditure for noble causes, it also establishes limits for such actions. It restrains both miserliness and extravagance.

There is a growing trend of excessive spending on lavish weddings, often fuelled by the desire to flaunt affluence and attract attention. This trend extends to pre-wedding celebrations, which are deemed unnecessary and are innovations in religious practices.

Participating in these excessive displays of wealth is cautioned against, with emphasis placed on the virtuous alternative of redirecting such resources towards charitable endeavours, such as aiding the needy and supporting orphanages.

Those who thoughtlessly squander their wealth find themselves devoid of resources when confronted with genuine national needs, thereby forfeiting the opportunity to

²⁵¹ Surah At Taghabun 64:17

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contribute meaningfully. This recklessness not only hampers their ability to aid the collective good but also erodes their self-respect, leading to permanent exclusion from serving their community during times of need.

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ ط وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا

Verily, the extravagant are brothers of satans, and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord.²⁵²

The verse conveys that God has bestowed His blessings upon humanity with the expectation that they will utilize them judiciously. An individual who fails to utilize God's gifts appropriately is deemed ungrateful. Those who recklessly dissipate their wealth effectively evade the responsibilities incumbent upon them concerning its rightful utilization.

Miserliness is also depicted as a pernicious moral ailment that corrodes one's moral and spiritual well-being. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: Every day that rises two angles descend, one of them saying: Allah, bestow increase upon the spender; and the other saying: Allah, ruin the miser.²⁵³

²⁵² Surah Bani Israil 17:28

²⁵³ Bokhari 1442

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The Qur'an employs potent language to denounce misers or those inclined towards niggardliness.

الَّذِينَ يَبِخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابًا مُهِينًا

Who are niggardly and enjoin people to be niggardly, and conceal that which Allah has given them of His bounty. And We have prepared for the disbelievers an humiliating punishment,²⁵⁴

There are individuals whose stinginess extends to the point where they refrain not only from spending their wealth for the betterment of others but also on themselves, out of fear that their acts of generosity may become known to others. In essence, they conceal the blessings bestowed upon them by Allah by withholding the bounty bestowed upon them by God for the welfare of humanity. They also blatantly propagate such miserly behaviour. The Qur'an issues a severe warning to all those who act in such a manner.

Qur'an comments on a fundamental psychological aspect of human behaviour when says:

²⁵⁴ Surah An Nisa 4:38

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قُلْ لَوْ أَنْتُمْ تَبَدَّلُونَ خَيْرًا مِّن رَّحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذَا الْأُمُوسَاتُ خَشِيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ ۗ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَنُورًا

Say, 'Even if you possessed the treasures of the mercy of my Lord, you would surely hold them back for fear of spending, for man is niggardly.'²⁵⁵

The Qur'an identifies miserliness as an inherent base instinct in human nature and urges believers to transcend it. It highlights the underlying root of this instinct: the fear of scarcity and deprivation. However, one who places unwavering faith in God as the ultimate Provider, and entrusts their sustenance to Him, is liberated from this fear. Such a person rises above miserliness and is empowered to be generous and charitable towards others.

Miserliness, coupled with greediness, constitutes two aspects of the same undesirable quality. A miser exhibits both traits, demonstrating reluctance to part with anything to benefit others, while simultaneously harbouring an insatiable desire to acquire from others.

The exploiters of labour constitute a distinct socioeconomic class. They employ tactics to deprive labourers of the rewards of their toil, all the while indulging in opulence.

²⁵⁵ Surah Bani Israil 17:101

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Meanwhile, the impoverished endure lives of deprivation and degradation, visible to these exploiters.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ آخَىٰ

Then as for him who gives and is righteous,

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ

And testifies to *the truth of* what is right,

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

We will facilitate for him *every* facility.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ ۖ

But as for him who is niggardly and is *disdainfully* indifferent,

وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ

And rejects what is right,

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ

We will make easy for him the path to distress.

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّىٰ

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And his wealth shall not avail him when he perishes.²⁵⁶

These verses delineate three key attributes of individuals who achieve success in life: their commitment to spending in the pursuit of truth from the resources bestowed upon them by God, their vigilance against causing harm to others, and their adherence to principles and ideals of righteousness. In essence, right action, right sentiment, and right ideology represent the trifecta essential for individual as well as national progress and prosperity.

These verses proclaim that an individual embodying these three characteristic qualities will witness the fruition of their endeavours, as their actions yield the desired outcomes. Simultaneously, it suggests that such a person will find the execution of good deeds to be effortless and enjoyable. Conversely, juxtaposed with the three positive qualities outlined in the preceding verses, the subsequent verses delineate three negative qualities that precipitate an individual's downfall. The verses indicates that the actions of an individual characterized by these negative traits fail to achieve their intended objectives, yielding outcomes contrary to their expectations or desires.

²⁵⁶ Surah Al Lail 92:6-12

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In essence, prudent expenditure of one's resources is deemed a manifestation of righteousness and servitude to Allah. As advocated by Qur'an, creating a balanced approach and moderation in life is paramount.

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا

And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly but moderate between the two;²⁵⁷

This verse imparts guidance on the conscientious utilization of funds. The balance and moderation of behaviour serve as the backbone of Qur'anic moral conduct. The concept of balance is revisited here in the context of spending habits, both personal and communal.

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا

And keep not thy hand chained to thy neck, nor stretch it out an entire stretching, lest thou sit down blamed *or* exhausted.²⁵⁸

Qur'an advises against both excessive stinginess, wherein one withholds spending even in genuine necessity, akin to one whose hands are tightly bound to his neck, and extravagant generosity, which leads to purposeless

²⁵⁷ Surah Al Furqan 25:68

²⁵⁸ Surah Bani Israil 17:30

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squandering of wealth. Instead, it advocates for a balanced approach, striking a middle ground.

Hoarding -selflessness:

The hoarding of wealth and not spending it in the service or promotion of good causes is strongly condemned in Qur'an. Hazrat Musleh Mauood (ra) stated:

“Islam also demands that supplies should not be deliberately withheld from the market with the purpose of artificially boosting prices. If a person hoards goods for this reason, he does so by going against Islamic principles. If a trader has wheat but deliberately withholds its supply from the public in order to raise prices, he is engaged in a sinful activity, according to Islamic teachings...An Islamic government would require that no trader could hoard his goods, and if any trader were found to be doing so, the government would be entitled to force liquidation of his inventory at appropriate market prices. Thus, the broader Islamic principal mandates that any good that is a need of the people must not be artificially hoarded. The word used for hoarding is *ibtikar* which primarily refers to the hoarding of food grains. But in line with the Islamic rules of jurisprudence, this injunction would be interpreted broadly to cover all goods

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that are withheld from the market with the intent of raising the price.”²⁵⁹

Several Qur’anic observations regarding human spending behaviour are as follows.

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا

Verily, man is born impatient and miserly.(70:20)

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ

Who amasses wealth and counts it over and over.²⁶⁰

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَبًّا

And you love wealth with exceeding love.²⁶¹

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner,

إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لِرِجَاءِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

Saying, ‘We feed you for Allah’s pleasure *only*. We desire no reward nor thanks from you.’²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (ra), The Economic System of Islam, pp. 56-57, 2013, Islam International Publications Ltd

²⁶⁰ Surah Al Humazah 104:3

²⁶¹ Surah Al Fajr 89:21

²⁶² Surah Ad Dahr 76:9-10

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Qur'an comments that wealth is bestowed upon you with the expectation that you will utilize it to address the needs of the orphaned and the impoverished. Yet, it is often squandered in pursuits devoid of moral virtue, thereby depriving others of their rightful share, or hoarded selfishly, withheld from noble causes.

Qur'an enlightens that an excessive attachment to wealth yields three inevitable consequences: firstly, it fosters an insatiable desire for accumulation, neglecting the imperative of charitable giving to benefit the marginalized; secondly, it creates indifference towards the ethics of acquisition, blurring the distinction between fair and dishonest means of procurement; thirdly, during times of national peril, the fear of potential loss prompts selfish behaviour. In such circumstances, prioritizing personal safety and asset preservation, individuals abstain from active participation in national defence efforts. These factors collectively contribute to the decline of a society. Islam extends its concern for the moral welfare of society, alongside its regard for an individual's moral integrity. A healthy society necessitates equitable distribution of material resources and fluid circulation of wealth.

Spending for Love:

The Qur'an depicts the moral character of a believer as one who engages in expenditure out of the love for God, emphasising that genuine morality resides in this intention. Qur'an declares that true moral individuals are those whose motivation stems from their love for God, prompting them to provide sustenance to the needy and the captives as a means to attain divine Favour.

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى

Except *that he gives his wealth* to seek the pleasure of his Lord, the Most High.²⁶³

Their love for God surpasses their love for material possessions. They extend assistance to the impoverished purely for the sake of benevolence, performing the act of charity without seeking reward, recognition, or approval. They help the needy despite their own financial constraints, symbolizing a willingness to donate the possessions they cherish the most.

Thus, the Qur'anic concept of a just and fair society is steeped in the morality of its individuals. It is founded on

²⁶³ Surah Al Lail 92:21

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justice, elevated by the commitment to doing good to others, and ultimately culminates in the instinctive service to others, inspired by a profound love for the Creator and His creation.

Chapter 6- Removing Social Divisions, Fracture and Discontent

In the first millennium BC, a remarkable shift in human thought occurred. Ideas of universal orders began to take shape—visions that saw the entire human race as a single unit, governed by a unified set of laws. This concept transcended the primal evolutionary division of "us" and "them." It was during this era that the seeds of global empires, universal religions, and worldwide trade were sown—each carrying the potential for uniting mankind under a shared vision. These ideas heralded the possibility of a world where the boundaries of tribe and nation could dissolve, giving way to a global vision of unity and shared destiny.

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The Kaaba was originally founded, and later reestablished, as a symbol of the unity of mankind. It was constructed at a time when humanity was one—before the divisions of religion and race had splintered us into separate paths. The Kaaba stood as a testament to a time when all of humankind was united, a sacred place meant to gather people under a common bond, transcending the divides that would later arise.

Qur'an perfectly mirrors this vision of a unified mankind. Alongside this vision, the Qur'an also illuminates the pitfalls and threats that endanger it. It warns of the obstacles that can undermine the pursuit of unity and harmony, urging vigilance against the forces that seek to disrupt the fulfilment of this noble ideal. It draws attention to the fundamental social evils that sow the seeds of division, fracture, and discontent within society. It identifies these destructive behaviours, urging believers to cleanse themselves of these ills and to embrace the virtues that cultivate unity. Let us enumerate these vices and explore them one by one, as we seek to understand how to foster a more harmonious and united world through a moral revolution.

Removing Prejudice, Rancour, Malice, Vanity, Backbiting, Suspicion, Slander:

Prejudices:

If we look at the teachings of the Holy Qur'an in this regard, first we come across the universal message that was given in Surah Al Hujarat. Allah Taala says:

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognise one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware. ²⁶⁴

The Holy Prophet (sas) described this message of Allah the Almighty on the occasion of the Farewell Sermon in the following words:

“All Muslims are brethren. All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal. (Raising his hands and joining the fingers of the one hand with those of the other, he added,) Even as the fingers of the two hands are

²⁶⁴ Surah Al Hujurat 49:14

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equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any right, any superiority over another. O people! your God is One and your ancestor is one. An Arab possesses no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab over an Arab. A white man is in no way superior to a black nor for that matter, is a black man better than a white, but only to the extent to which he discharges his duty to God and man. The most honoured among you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you.”²⁶⁵

What occasion could be more fitting to reaffirm the essence of human equality than the sacred pilgrimage of Hajj? At the House of God, pilgrims from every corner of the earth set aside their markers of identity—whether of colour, status, or heritage. Clad in the same simple garments, they leave behind all worldly adornments, standing before their Creator with bare feet, hands, and heads. In this profound gathering, all distinctions fade away, revealing only one race: humanity.

This profound lesson in equality, embodied in the rites of Hajj, stands as a testament to the Magna Carta of human brotherhood. It declares that the entire human family shares a singular origin: one father, one Creator, one Lord. As children born of the same mother, what else can humanity

²⁶⁵ Masnad Ahmad Bin Hambal Vol 7, pg. 760 Hadith 23885

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be but siblings? The divisions of peoples, tribes, colours, and races are mere superficialities—tools of introduction rather than measures of worth. True value lies not in the hue of one's skin, ancestral lineage, or social standing but in one's piety, which alone constitutes the true measure of human greatness.

Our notions of personal identity are often confined to narrow, superficial categories—race, country and nation, language, caste, and tribe. Yet, when we turn to the Qur'an and Hadith, we are confronted with the stark realisation of how flimsy and inconsequential these distinctions truly are. Allah the Almighty says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ إِذَا فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that surely are Signs for those who possess knowledge.²⁶⁶

The creation of the universe, with its vast diversity stands as a profound sign of Allah the Almighty, meant not as a basis for human pride or discrimination but as a testament to His grandeur.

²⁶⁶ Surah Ar Rum 30:23

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Can any of us, with certainty, trace the origins of our ancestors, even just a few generations back? Who were our forebears a thousand or two thousand years ago? Where did they dwell, and what language did they speak? The history of humanity is a tale of perpetual migration and transformation. In this light, we find no grounds for pride or prejudice, for the essence of our existence transcends these fleeting distinctions. It was narrated from Hazrat Ayaz bin Hamar (ra) that the Holy Prophet (sas) said, "Allah has revealed to me that you should show humility to the extent that none of you should be proud of anything."²⁶⁷

Then he advises his daughter, Hazrat Fatima (ra) saying: "O Fatima, don't be proud of the fact that you are the daughter of a prophet. In the eyes of God, there is no consideration of ancestry. The status you get (in Allah's eyes) is based on piety alone."²⁶⁸

Then he brought this teaching to its epitome when he said:

أَنَا سَيِّدُكُمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَدْرِكُكُمْ وَلَا أَفْتَحُكُمْ I am the chief of all the sons of Adam but that is not a source of pride (for me).²⁶⁹ As he expressed his great status, he also showed a perfect example of humility in the

²⁶⁷ Muslim Hadith 2865

²⁶⁸ Tafseer Surah Al Hujurat by The Promised Messiah (as)

²⁶⁹ Masnad Ahmad bin Hambal Vol 3, pg. 2

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same breath, saying even being the chief of all human race was not a matter of personal pride.

In essence the teaching of Islam is that unnecessary pride gives birth to prejudice and prejudice is a deadly poison that erodes social harmony. The root of all sin and disbelief is deeply entwined with false pride, conceit, and arrogance. The first sin ever recorded was that of Satan, who, driven by a delusion of superiority, refused to bow before Adam. His defiant assertion, "I am better than he" (17:13), has become the enduring anthem of disbelievers throughout the ages, obstructing them from recognizing the truth in every era. This arrogance keeps them from submitting to one they deem no different from themselves, or even inferior in certain ways, making them blind to the wisdom and guidance offered by the Prophets. Qur'an says,

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ

But those who disbelieve are *steeped* in *false* pride and enmity.²⁷⁰

The Promised Messiah (as) explains that in the rage of prejudice, a person cannot see the light of the truth and

²⁷⁰ Surah Sad 38:3

cannot even hear the discourse of the Appointee.²⁷¹ He says, “prejudice is such an affliction that they are unable to perceive despite seeing, and they fail to comprehend despite coming to know of it. They do not hear despite having ears. Alas! Prejudice and stubbornness have even deprived them of the ability to distinguish between what is wholesome for them and what is harmful to them.”²⁷²

He further advises everyone to become pure hearted, devoid of every hypocrisy and prejudice. He says: “Remember! that only those are guided who refrain from prejudice.”²⁷³

Then he explains, “This book (i.e. the Holy Qur'an) bestows guidance only upon those who adopt *taqwa*, and those who do not have *taqwa* are blind. If one explores it with purity of heart and fear of God Almighty, then he is able to see everything in it. On the other hand, if he wears the blindfold of obstinacy and prejudice upon his eyes, he cannot see anything out of it. Just as a blind person cannot benefit at all from the sun, one who is not a *muttaqi* [God-fearing individual] would not derive any light from the Qur'an. One who looks with prejudice and yields to scepticism in every

²⁷¹ Malfuzat-English Vol 10, page 128, 2022, Islam international publications

²⁷² Malfuzat-English Vol 10, page 419, 2022, Islam international publications

²⁷³ Malfuzat-English Vol 1, page 178, 2018, Islam international publications

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issue, would not believe even if an angel appears, let alone believing a mortal.”²⁷⁴

What else might obscure the perception of the Divine Call, if not the veil of prejudice? History tells us that prophets, throughout the ages, faced scorn not only for their lofty messages but for their very humanity. They were mocked for their simple acts of eating, drinking, and mingling in the marketplaces, as though their ordinariness could undermine their message. At other times, the scorn was directed at their lineage, as if their ancestral roots could discredit the celestial truths they bore. Yet perhaps the most insidious barrier was the rigid grip of ancestral belief, as new teachings clashed with the cherished dogmas of the past, rendering the divine revelations unrecognizable to those ensnared in the familiar shadows of tradition. The Promised Messiah (as) in another verse says:

*However corrupt their way or custom be, Or falsehood of their belief be quite evident, Even then they will accept it anyway, How terrible! What prejudice has done to them!*²⁷⁵

The arrogance born of a misguided sense of superiority has clouded the judgment of people throughout the eras of every

²⁷⁴ Malfuzat-English translation of Urdu Vol 10, page 73, footnote, 2022, Islam international publications

²⁷⁵ The Promised Messiah (as), Dure Sameen-Eng translation page 27

messenger. This hubris was so profound that even when the light of Prophethood shone upon them, they remained bereft of its blessings. Some incurred the wrath of God, becoming the *Maghẓoob* (those who have incurred His anger), while others strayed so far from the path that they were labelled as the *Aẓaleen* (those who are lost).

Take, for instance, Abu al-Hakam—once hailed as the wisest of the Meccans, known to history as Abu Jahl. Despite witnessing the divine signs and the arrival of the true Prophet, he succumbed to a death of utter ignorance, his mind sealed against the truth.

In the present day, the Muslim Ummah still casts its gaze towards the Hijaz and the lands of *Balad al-Sham*, eagerly awaiting the descent of an Arab Messiah from the heavens. They remain oblivious to the fact that the awaited one has already appeared in a humble, obscure village in Punjab, having already imparted his spiritual treasures and departed from this world. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (rh) in his poetry says:

*For once! see us with your own eyes, take off the lens of prejudices, Christ has descended at the white Minaret, take notice, sit up and show reverence.*²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), Kalam e Tahir

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Having explored the myriads of weaknesses and ailments that stem from the corrosive nature of prejudice, let us now turn to the arsenal that the Qur'an and Sunnah bestow upon us for this sacred struggle, this Jihad, against the blight of prejudice. Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an:

Surely all believers are brothers. So make peace between brothers, and fear Allah that mercy may be shown to you.²⁷⁷

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) says:

“A believer who has taqwa is commanded to fully apply this teaching of brotherhood to himself and spread it to the world. This is the teaching through which connections of love and brotherhood can be established in the world. . . . Therefore, the security of the world can be guaranteed, the anxiety of the world can be removed only when the false and cruel concept of national supremacy ends. This anxiety cannot be removed until the arrogance of racial and national superiority leaves the hearts and minds. Peace in the world cannot be established until it is firmly embedded in the minds of individuals as well as governments who have a sense of the superiority of race, nation and country that we are all the children of Adam, and our existence is subservient

²⁷⁷ Surah Al Hujurat 49:11

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to the same laws of nature. And as humans we are all equal in the eyes of God.²⁷⁸

The Qur'an, like a beacon, illuminates the path of righteousness, guiding us to dismantle the walls of ignorance and intolerance. It exhorts us to recognise the inherent dignity in every soul, reminding us that we are all fashioned from the same essence, equal in the sight of God.

The Sunnah, the living example of the Prophet Muhammad (sas), offers us the shield of empathy and the sword of fairness. His life, a testament to mercy and wisdom, teaches us to rise above our baser instincts, to see beyond the superficial divisions of race, tribe, or creed, and to embrace the unity of humanity.

Together, the Qur'an and Sunnah arm us with the strength to confront and conquer the prejudices that seek to divide us. They call us to wage this Jihad not with hatred or violence, but with patience, understanding, and unwavering faith in the power of divine justice. Through these sacred teachings, we are empowered to heal the wounds of bigotry and to build a world where the light of God's truth dispels the shadows of prejudice.

²⁷⁸ Friday Sermon delivered 22nd June 2007.

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The Holy Qur'an also describes some common signs of pride and bigotry along with everyday situations in which these attitudes can be observed and completely condemns them:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُوا قَوْمًا مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْبَسُوا أَلْسِنَةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا بِاللُّغَابِ بَغْسَ الْأَسْمِ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ
وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُوبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

O ye who believe! let not one people deride *another* people, who may be better than they, nor let women *deride other* women, who may be better than they. And defame not your own people, nor call *one another* by nicknames. Bad *indeed* is evil reputation after *the profession of belief*; and those who repent not are the wrongdoers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

O ye who believe! avoid most of suspicions; for suspicion in some cases is a sin. And spy not, nor back-bite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is

dead? Certainly you would loathe it. And fear Allah, surely, Allah is Oft-Returning *with compassion and* is Merciful.²⁷⁹

These verses focus on the theme of fostering unity, harmony, and goodwill among people. It addresses various social ills that disrupt this unity, sow discord, and erode the fabric of society. The preceding verses highlight vices such as ridicule, espionage, the use of derogatory nicknames, suspicion, and backbiting—each of which undermines communal cohesion. Categorically prohibiting taunting, ridicule, curiosity, abuse, name-calling, suspicion and backbiting. Women are specifically mentioned as they are often more susceptible to these malignancies. The root cause of these social ills is a false sense of superiority and arrogance. By addressing and removing these fundamental sources of discord, Qur'an establishes a solid foundation for human brotherhood.

Backbiting and Suspicion:

Studies reveal that the average person spends an astonishing 52 minutes daily engaged in gossip.²⁸⁰ The pressing question is: what impact does backbiting and malicious gossip have

²⁷⁹ Surah Al Hujurat 49: 12-13

²⁸⁰ Robbins, M. L., & Karan, A. (2020). Who Gossips and How in Everyday Life? *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 11(2), 185-195.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619837000>

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on our moral and spiritual well-being? Is it mere trivial chatter, or does it bear significant consequences? Backbiting, for instance, spreads like a contagion, beginning with one individual and eventually permeating an entire community and can wield profound and far-reaching effects on society.

Some might justify speaking ill of others by asserting that their comments are truthful and that they would say the same thing if the person were present. The Prophet Muhammad (sas) defined backbiting, offering insight into its true nature. ‘Backbiting implies your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like.’

When his Companions inquired if the fault mentioned was indeed present in the person being discussed, the Prophet (sas) responded, saying that it is backbiting if it’s true otherwise it becomes slander.²⁸¹

During the night of *Mi’raj*, a spiritual journey where the Prophet Muhammad (sas) was shown the heavens among other things in a vision, he recounted, ‘I passed by people who had nails of copper and were scratching their faces and their breasts. I said: Who are these people, Gabriel? He

²⁸¹ Sahih Muslim, Kitab Al-Birr Wa-Silah Wal-Adaab

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replied: They are those who were given to back biting and who aspersed people's honour.²⁸²

It is narrated that once the Holy Prophet (sas) passed by two new graves, mentioning that one of the deceased was being punished because they used to walk around spreading malicious gossip.²⁸³

Again, commenting on the state of those given to backbiting, the Prophet Muhammad (sas) stated, 'On the Day of Judgment, every person will be given their record of deeds. They will read it and say, O my Lord! I had performed such and such good deeds in the world, but they are not here!' Allah will reply, it is because your good deeds were wiped out due to your backbiting of others.²⁸⁴

The severity of this transgression becomes evident upon examining these narrations. It is particularly lamentable for an individual who dedicates their life to achieving spiritual reward and moral excellence to have their efforts nullified by engaging in disparaging remarks about others. Such behaviour undermines the very virtues one strives to

²⁸² Sunan Abi Daud, Kitab al-Adab

²⁸³ Sunan Ibn Majah, Kitab Atihara Wa Sunnanhaa

²⁸⁴ Khutbat-e-Masroor, Vol.1 p.574

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cultivate, leading to a significant loss of the spiritual gains accumulated over a lifetime.

Qur'an addresses the fundamental sources of suspicion that leads to gossip and backbiting—namely, "the ear," "the eye," and "the heart."

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۗ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

And follow not that of which thou hast no knowledge. Verily, the ear and the eye and the heart — all these shall be called to account.²⁸⁵

"The ear" often serves as the initial gateway through which suspicions and gossip infiltrate one's mind, typically fuelled by unfounded reports about another individual. The second source, "the eye," involves witnessing actions and misinterpreting their motives, leading to erroneous judgments about others' intentions. The most insidious form of suspicion originates purely from the distorted imaginings of an individual's own troubled mind, independent of any actual misconduct or malign reports.

Muslims are admonished to avoid these detrimental forms of suspicion, as they undermine harmonious social relations.

²⁸⁵ Surah Bani Israil 17:37

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Human life and property, already recognised as sacred in prior teachings, are joined by human honour, which is equally inviolable. Violations of this honour, such as engaging in unfounded gossip, witnessing things one should not, or nurturing baseless negative thoughts, will be held to account. Individuals will be judged for eavesdropping on matters that do not concern them, for observing actions that are none of their business, and for fostering malign thoughts without evidence.

The teachings emphasise that our judgments and opinions must be grounded in verifiable knowledge rather than mere hearsay or conjecture. This high moral standard insists that forming opinions and making judgments about others requires solid evidence and thorough investigation, not the fleeting impressions of the ear, the eye, or the heart. This underscores the profound moral rigor embedded in these guidelines.

Hazrat Musleh Mauood (ra) commenting on the perils of listening to backbiting offers simple and readily applicable advice:

‘Backbiting itself is not only wrong... but listening to backbiting is also wrong. Because those who listen to backbiting, they provoke backbiting... So, a believer should

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be careful that if someone backbites about their brother in their presence, they should reject it. Meaning, they should respond with an answer. They should have reasons to reject it. So, present them and if they don't know how to reject it and don't understand it, then stop the backbiter... and if they don't stop, then stand up and leave from there.²⁸⁶

In an era increasingly influenced by *cancel culture*, where a single misstep can irreversibly damage an individual's reputation regardless of their true culpability, it is imperative to avoid hasty judgments and premature conclusions. We must refrain from presuming the role of arbiter concerning another's character, as only God possesses the complete understanding of a person's inner state. Rather than condemning someone for their apparent flaws, it is more prudent to offer earnest prayers for their betterment. The Promised Messiah (as) imparted enduring wisdom over a century ago, which continues to resonate. He advocated for measured restraint, articulating the importance of holding back from swift criticism and embracing a spirit of empathy and reflection. He advises:

‘After noticing someone’s flaw, you should be careful not to immediately become incensed. It is possible that they may

²⁸⁶ Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol.6, p.530

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rectify themselves. Sometimes, even a saint or a righteous person may commit a mistake. To renounce someone out of haste and impatience are not our ways. It is unfortunate that some individuals may repeatedly mention someone's flaws a hundred time over yet fail to offer even a single prayer for them.²⁸⁷

The Holy Prophet (sas) once stated, "The servant who conceals the faults of others in this world, Allah would conceal his faults on the Day of Resurrection."²⁸⁸

Slander:

Another grave social transgression, second only to adultery in its severity, is the act of slandering innocent individuals. Islam harshly condemns this social malady, which has become prevalent in contemporary societies, and imposes strict penalties on those who falsely accuse others.

وَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ هُمْ يُغْتَابُونَ

Woe to every backbiter, slanderer,²⁸⁹

Humazab means, one who finds fault with others behind their backs and *Lumazab* is he who finds fault with them

²⁸⁷ Malfuzat, Vol.4, p.60-61 [1988 Online Edition]

²⁸⁸ Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Bir Wa Sillah Wal Adaab

²⁸⁹ Surah Al Humazah 104:2

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behind their backs or before their eyes (Aqrab). Two evil qualities which cut at the root of all social peace and harmony have been mentioned here. Qur'an prescribes goodness and patience (in surah *Al Asr*) as the two basic good qualities that can address and negate these evils from society.

Qur'an explicitly lays down fundamental principles while dealing with slander, noting that accusations are considered false unless supported by adequate evidence. A person accused of adultery will be deemed innocent unless four witnesses can substantiate the claim. Similarly, an accuser must provide four witnesses to substantiate their allegations: otherwise, both the accuser and their witnesses face punishment. This rigorous requirement aims to prevent the spread of indecent rumours and reinforces the notion that the penalties for adultery are meant to serve as a deterrent, given the extreme difficulty of proving such crimes.

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

And those who calumniate chaste women but bring not four witnesses — flog them with eighty stripes, and never admit

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their evidence *thereafter*, and it is they that are the transgressors,²⁹⁰

The act of slandering innocent individuals is deemed a grave offense, Qur'an prescribes a three-tiered system of punishment for the slanderer: first, physical flogging; second, public disgrace as a perjurer and liar, which invalidates their testimony; and third, spiritual condemnation as a wicked transgressor. This hierarchy of penalties highlights the serious nature of slander, intended to curb its spread and mitigate its impact.

Islam regards the dissemination of false accusations with the same gravity as crimes against chastity. It condemns and prescribes punishments for both, with scandal-mongering incurring even severer penalties due to its potential to cause more profound social damage. Allowing such behaviour to go unchecked can erode societal norms and desensitize a community to immorality, thereby threatening the moral fabric of society itself. The stringent measures against slandering reflect Islam's commitment to protecting both individual honour and community integrity.

²⁹⁰ Surah Nur 24:5

A Simple Solution:

A very sweet and easy way of eradicating schisms and widespread ill will within the society is taught to us by our master and teacher, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (sas) who stated that 'Indeed, Salam is one of the names of Allah Ta'ala. He has put it on earth, so spread the greeting of salaam among yourselves.'²⁹¹

On another occasion he said: 'By the One in Whose hand is my life. You will not enter Paradise until you have perfect faith, and you cannot have perfect faith until you love one another. And shall I not tell you about the thing that will strengthen this love in you, that is, that you practice salaam among yourselves.'²⁹²

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) says:

“So, spreading Salam is the best way of creating mutual love and establishing peace in the society. Therefore, in order to receive the peace of God, we need to be the ones who spread true peace in our society, only then shall we be able to receive it.”²⁹³

²⁹¹ Bukhari, Hadith 1019

²⁹² Muslim, Hadith 3978

²⁹³ Friday Sermon delivered 11th May 2007

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The Prophet of Islam (sas) laid the foundation of religious harmony within the society by respecting other religions and fostering religious freedom. On the one hand, he taught us that do not give me superiority over Moses (as) or Jonah (as). At the same time, he gave a guarantee of security to the Christian churches for all future times. This is the *uswa* of the Prince of Peace (sas) who practically established Salam as a practice in the society.

Let us briefly consider the conduct of the Promised Messiah (as), the epitome of a perfect follower. He persistently urged his detractors to honour the sacred figures of other faiths and advocated for the prohibition of texts that defamed the founders of religions. His teachings were a clarion call for respect and reverence, striving to uphold the sanctity of all divine messengers. He articulates his wish saying: " A breeze should begin to blow that enables mutual love and goodwill to flourish... now a breeze should blow to enhance mutual brotherhood and unity, and to eliminate malice, rancour, and prejudice from hearts." ²⁹⁴

Cleansing the Heart from Rancour:

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba), in one of his Friday sermons mentioned that a few days ago he was most pleased

²⁹⁴ Malfuzat, English translation of Urdu Vol 10, page 567, 2022, Islam international publications

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to see a family that came for *mulaqat* (meeting). Huzur (aba) said seeing them spontaneously stirred up emotions of glorification of Allah. The family constituted of African Americans, white Americans and they also had a Pakistani daughter-in-law. Huzur said this is the true picture of Ahmadiyyat and Islam because Ahmadiyyat has come to join hearts.²⁹⁵

This is the glorious brotherhood of which Allah the Almighty has informed us in the Holy Qur'an:

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ

We shall remove whatever of rancour may be in their breasts so that they will become as brothers seated on thrones, facing one another.²⁹⁶

What a splendid vision of paradise! In that sublime realm, hearts are unburdened by rancour, and every trace of prejudice and malice is absent. If we could cultivate such pure, prejudice-free hearts here on earth, we might truly experience a celestial existence, crafting a paradise amidst our daily lives. Allah mentions His great favour on believers in the Holy Qur'an when He declares:

²⁹⁵ Friday Sermon delivered 20th June 2008.

²⁹⁶ Sura Al Hijr 15:48

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وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ
فُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا ۗ وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah and be not divided; and remember the favour of Allah which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became as brothers; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah explain to you His commandments that you may be guided.²⁹⁷

Today, the world teeters once more on the precipice of destruction, whether in Europe or Asia, among Arabs or non-Arabs alike. Humanity finds itself locked in enmity with itself. In this critical hour, the divine intervention has descended once more, manifesting as *Hubalullah*, the rope of Allah. This *Hubalullah* is embodied in the Jamaat of the *Masibe Muhammadi* and the Caliphate of the *Masibe Muhammadi*. The salvation of the world today hinges on our steadfast adherence to this sacred rope of Allah. The Promised Messiah (as) says:

²⁹⁷ Surah Aale Imran 3:104

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“You are the last community of God, so practice virtue at its best.”²⁹⁸

This honour is profound, and the accompanying responsibility is equally monumental: the task of rekindling the forgotten virtues of the world. It is incumbent upon us to undertake a rigorous self-examination and to eradicate prejudice wherever it lurks. Our mission is to cultivate a society that mirrors paradise—one that flourishes with kindness, humility, love, patience, and peace. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (ra) says: 'Always remember! the favour of Allah Ta'ala is given to the jamaat only when they attain the status of brotherhood.'

As always, the Qur'an not only offers guidance but also imparts a prayer for the purification of our hearts. It teaches us to seek divine aid in attaining inner purity, aligning our hearts with the virtues that lead to true harmony and righteousness.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا
غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

²⁹⁸Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as). Noah's Ark, page 25, 2018, Islam International Publications Ltd

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Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in the faith, and leave not in our hearts any rancour against those who believe. Our Lord! Thou art indeed Compassionate, Merciful.’²⁹⁹

Moral Attributes of Muslim Men and Women:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَالصَّالِحَاتِ وَالْحَفِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

Surely, men who submit themselves *to God* and women who submit themselves *to Him*, and believing men and believing women, and obedient men and obedient women and truthful men and truthful women, and men steadfast *in their faith* and steadfast women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard *their chastity*, and men who remember Allah much and women who remember *Him* — Allah has prepared for *all of* them forgiveness and a great reward.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Surah Al Hashr 59:11

³⁰⁰ Surah Al Ahzab 33:36

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The ten profound attributes of Muslim men and women highlighted in this verse are presented in a deliberate and ascending order, each marking a distinct stage in the spiritual and moral evolution of a believer.

The journey begins with *Islam*, which, in this context, represents the intellectual acceptance of truth. It is the first step in spiritual development, where reason and common sense compel the believer to embrace the truth.

Following Islam is *Iman*, a stage that transcends mere intellectual acknowledgment. Here, the believer not only accepts the truth but also becomes a source of peace and security for others, bearing witness to the Divinely revealed teachings. At this level, faith is no longer just a matter of reason; it intertwines with emotion, transforming the believer into one who is both intellectually and emotionally committed to their faith.

The third stage is *Qunut*, a state of complete obedience to God's commandments. At this point, the spiritual seeker feels an irresistible pull towards the Creator, and their submission to the Divine stems from a deep love for the Supreme Being.

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Advancing further, the believer reaches the stage of *Sadiq*, where they wholly embody the truth. This is a phase of unwavering integrity, where the believer confronts trials and temptations with serene composure. Their faith is purified, free from any trace of hypocrisy or attachment to worldly things.

Next comes *Sabr*, where the believer's identification with truth becomes a permanent aspect of their character. This stage is characterized by steadfastness and resilience, even in the face of adversity.

Khushu follows, a higher stage of spiritual ascent, where the believer develops profound humility. This humility arises from an acute awareness of their own weaknesses, contrasted with the perfection and completeness of the Divine.

The stage of *Mutasaddiq* is marked by a shift in consciousness; the believer realises that life is not solely for their own benefit. They become generous, sharing God-given blessings with others.

As the believer progresses to *Sa'im*, they learn the art of self-denial, sacrificing even their legitimate needs and comforts for the sake of others.

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In the ninth stage, *Hafizin Furujahum*, the believer meticulously guards all avenues through which sin might infiltrate their mind. This stage is about maintaining spiritual purity and vigilance.

Finally, the journey culminates in the stage of *Dbakirin Allah*, the pinnacle of spiritual growth and development. Here, the believer is so utterly absorbed in the remembrance of God that they become entirely lost in it, reaching the ultimate state of divine consciousness.

Cultivating Humility (Ajzi):

وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا

And walk not in the earth haughtily, for thou canst not rend the earth, nor canst thou reach the mountains in height.³⁰¹

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

‘And turn not thy cheek away from men in pride nor walk in the earth haughtily; Surely, Allah loves not any arrogant boaster.

³⁰¹ Surah Bani Israil 17:38

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وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۖ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَبِيرِ

‘And walk thou at a moderate pace, and lower thy voice; verily, the most disagreeable of voices is the voice of the ass.’³⁰²

The moral guidance offered in these verses centres on self-conduct and personal humility. It begins by cautioning us against pride and exultation over our accomplishments, for such attitudes breed complacency and hinder further moral growth. The reminder that "thou canst not rend the earth nor canst thou reach the mountains in height" serves to temper our pride by highlighting the inherent limitations of our achievements. No matter how significant our successes, they remain finite, and it is foolish to lose perspective over what is, in the grand scheme, so limited.

Moreover, despite any real or imagined achievements, we must remember that we live on this earth, among its people. Therefore, our behaviour should be considerate, ensuring that we do not become intolerable to those around us. A proud person’s life often turns bitter, as they cannot function in daily life without the support of others, yet their arrogance drives them to scorn the very cooperation they need. This

³⁰² Surah Luqman 31:19-20

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contradiction between their need for assistance and their disdain for others creates a life of bitterness and alienation.

Arrogance inevitably leads to the infringement of others' rights and the erosion of societal harmony. Allah the Almighty questions the rationale behind such arrogance, reminding us that no individual can alter the course of the earth or escape its limits. We are all dependent on the resources and provisions it offers. Thus, it is incongruous for one to display arrogance when those around them, often less fortunate, play a crucial role in their comfort and success.

No matter how prosperous or influential one may become, their success is intertwined with the efforts of those less privileged. The affluent enjoy their comfort because of the labour and support of these individuals. Recognizing this interdependence should foster humility rather than disdain. Those who exploit or belittle the less fortunate are blind to the fact that without them, their own comfort would be unattainable.

Allah instructs humanity to eschew arrogance and to respect those of lower worldly status. Disregarding the dignity and rights of others will lead to alienation and unrest. When the marginalized rise against unfair treatment and unmet rights, it can precipitate rebellion against leadership and

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governance. Such upheaval disrupts societal peace and order, underscoring the necessity of respect and fairness in maintaining harmony.

If we interpret the word "جبال" (mountains) to mean "leaders" or "learned men," as is one of its possible meanings, the verse offers a subtle rebuke to the haughty and arrogant. It reminds them that they can never attain the heights of greatness and honour that true leaders and scholars achieve through their knowledge and service. Yet, these towering figures of wisdom and learning are often paragons of humility and compassion, standing in stark contrast to the prideful who fail to recognise the value of these virtues. One must remember that true leadership cannot be achieved through the usurpation of others' rights or by maintaining a distant demeanour. Arrogance, therefore, does not bestow genuine authority or respect. Instead, it is humility that elevates a person to true leadership and commands the respect of others. Such leadership, rooted in humility and integrity, is the foundation for enduring peace and stability.

Qur'an considers humility to be a prerequisite to success in spiritual and moral progression. In the moral journey of man, the first stage or milestone is that a believer turns to

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God in all humility, overawed with Divine majesty, and with a penitent heart and humbled soul.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

Who are humble in their Prayers,³⁰³

أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُبْتَغِيِينَ

Call upon your Lord in humility and in secret. Surely, He does not love the transgressors.³⁰⁴

A prayer spoken aloud holds value only when offered with true humility. The power of prayer lies in the sincerity and humility with which it is expressed.

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

And the servants of the Gracious *God* are those who walk on the earth in a dignified manner, and when the ignorant address them, they say, 'Peace!'³⁰⁵

Every decision made by those who strive for spiritual and moral excellence is grounded in moderation. Their demeanour is free from undue anger or harshness, which might otherwise evolve into arrogance. Equally, there is no

³⁰³ Surah Al Muminun 23:3

³⁰⁴ Surah Al Araf 7:56

³⁰⁵ Surah Al Furqan 25:64

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excessive leniency that veers into shamefulness or complacency. This principle extends beyond the individual to the community, suggesting that Allah's servants collectively embody this balanced trait.

Moreover, the verse contains a prophetic warning: when Allah's servants attain victory, they must guard against arrogance and egotism. They should avoid seeking vengeance or retribution, remaining mindful of Allah the Almighty. Instead, they should cultivate humility and ensure that justice and people's rights are upheld.

Each servant of Allah is called to eschew conflict and to offer gentle counsel to those who are harsh or contentious. Furthermore, when entrusted with authority, they should remember the humility and dignity acquired through previous obedience to Allah's commands, and which they have fostered within their community. In moments of provocation, when faced with challenges designed to inflame emotions and passions, it is crucial to exercise restraint.

Denouncing Secret plotting and Disorder:

Secret plotting:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا آذُنٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَمْتٌ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ آيِنٌ ۚ مَا كَانُوا ۚ ثُمَّ يَنْبِتُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Dost thou not see that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth? There is no secret counsel of three, but He is their fourth, nor of five, but He is their sixth, nor of less than that, nor of more, but He is with them wheresoever they may be. Then on the Day of Resurrection He will inform them of what they did. Surely, Allah knows all things full well.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَبَّجُونَ بِالَّذِينَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُولِ ۚ وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ حَيْثُكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحِبُّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ ۖ يَقُولُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ ۚ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ يَضَلُّونَهَا ۚ فَمِئْسَ الْبَصِيرُ

Hast thou not seen those who were forbidden to *hold* secret counsels and again return to what they were forbidden, and confer secretly for sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger? And when they come to thee, they greet thee with a *greeting with* which Allah has not greeted thee; but

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among themselves they say, 'Why does not Allah punish us for what we say?' Sufficient for them is Hell, wherein they will burn; and a most evil destination it is!

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ
وَالتَّقْوَى وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

O ye who believe! when you confer together in secret, confer not for *the commission of* sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger, but confer for *the attainment of* virtue and righteousness, and fear Allah unto Whom you shall *all* be gathered.

إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَيَسَّ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ
فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

*Holding of secret counsels for evil purposes is only of Satan, that he may cause grief to those who believe; but it cannot harm them in the least, except by Allah's leave. And in Allah should the believers put their trust.*³⁰⁶

These verses speak to the clandestine schemes and conspiracies that various factions within society may harbour

³⁰⁶ Surah Al Mujadalah 58:8-11

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against one another. It serves as a divine admonition from the Omnipresent and Omnipotent God, warning us against engaging in secret plots that sow discord and foster mistrust within the social fabric. Such actions, God reminds us, are detrimental to the harmony and cohesion that should ideally prevail among individuals and communities.

In these verses, there is a clear denunciation of secretive organisations—such as Freemason Lodges—known historically for their covert operations and exclusive gatherings. However, this condemnation is neither absolute nor without nuance. The text does not outright forbid the existence of all secret meetings; rather, it emphasises that the true measure of any clandestine gathering lies in its purpose. It is the intent and objective behind these secret conferences that determine their moral and ethical standing.

Qur'an, therefore, does not universally denounce secrecy but instead places a critical lens on the motivations driving such secrecy. It acknowledges that there can be occasions where private consultations are necessary and even commendable, particularly when they are aimed at promoting virtue, righteousness, and the greater good. Believers are thus permitted to convene in secret, but only if their intentions align with the principles of justice and moral uprightness.

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This divine guidance urges us to reflect on our intentions and to ensure that our actions, whether public or private, contribute to the well-being of society rather than to its fragmentation. It underscores the importance of transparency and trust, reminding us that while secrecy may sometimes be necessary, it should never be wielded as a tool for malice or divisiveness. Instead, it should be employed solely to advance noble causes, fostering unity and righteousness in the process.

Disorder:

The teachings of the Qur'an, in their infinite wisdom, not only guide individuals in fulfilling their private and public duties but also provide clear directives to those in positions of authority, outlining their sacred responsibilities. Moreover, the Qur'an delves deep into the fundamental human traits that often lie at the heart of societal discord. With remarkable insight, it identifies the very essence of these issues, urging believers to be vigilant of such behaviours in others while also focusing on the reformation of their own character. Through this profound guidance, the Qur'an calls upon all to cultivate a society rooted in justice, harmony, and moral integrity.

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ

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Would you then, if you are placed in authority, create disorder in the land and sever your ties of kinship?³⁰⁷

Those who hold positions of authority are solemnly reminded of the weighty responsibility they bear towards the preservation of societal harmony. They are urged to exercise caution, ensuring that their actions do not sow the seeds of disorder within the land, sever the sacred bonds of kinship, or trample upon the rightful claims of others. Such reckless behaviour, if unchecked, can lead to widespread disruption and the eventual disintegration of social cohesion, allowing the forces of evil to gain a foothold and wreak havoc across the land.

The Qur'an delivers a clear and stern warning to those in power: it is their sacred duty to foster communities rooted in peace and love. Those entrusted with authority must recognise that their role is not merely one of governance but of stewardship, charged with nurturing the delicate fabric of society. It is incumbent upon them to act with wisdom and justice, creating an environment where harmony thrives, and where the bonds of brotherhood and mutual respect are strengthened. In doing so, they fulfil their divine mandate and help to ensure that the forces of righteousness prevail over those of discord and malevolence. Addressing the

³⁰⁷ Surah Muhammad 47:23

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hypocrisy of certain individuals and holding up a mirror for all to reflect upon their own conduct, Qur'an speaks with piercing clarity.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ

And of men there is he whose talk on this life would please thee, and he would call Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart, and yet he is the most contentious of quarrellers.

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفٰسَادَ

And when he is in authority, he runs about in the land to create disorder in it and destroy the crops and the progeny of *man*; and Allah loves not disorder.³⁰⁸

These verses describe a distinct type of individual who, with silver-tongued eloquence, speak passionately about the need to improve the conditions of life for humanity. They invoke the name of God as a witness to their sincerity, their words ringing with apparent love and concern for their fellow beings. Yet, beneath this polished exterior lies a heart devoted solely to selfish interests. These individuals are quick to dispute, vehemently defending even the smallest of

³⁰⁸ Surah Al Baqarah 2:205-6

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their supposed rights, real or imagined. They display none of the spirit of sacrifice that is essential for genuine human progress, their concerns limited to their own welfare, the well-being of their family, or the interests of their community or nation. In their hearts, there is no room for the broader, more selfless justice that true progress demands.

The phrase "he would call Allah to witness" reveals the duplicity of such people. Outwardly, they profess faith in God, yet they lack the quality of universal brotherhood that naturally stems from a sincere belief in a Universal God—the "Lord of all the worlds," as the Qur'an eloquently states.

Qur'an elaborates that such a person becomes unmasked when circumstances change. When such a person rises to power or finds himself in the company of his inner circle, away from the public eye, his true nature is revealed. The Qur'an captures this duality with the word *تولى*, which carries two significant meanings: (1) While in the presence of sincere individuals, he speaks pleasingly; but once he departs and meets his comrades in private, he strives to create disorder on earth. (2) When he attains power, the façade of reform and progress evaporates, exposing him as a source of chaos rather than a force for good.

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The phrase "destroy the crops and the progeny" metaphorically captures the extent of his malevolence. His efforts are not merely limited to petty disputes but extend to causing harm to people and their property in myriad ways. The terms حرث (crops) and نسل (progeny) symbolize the destruction he brings upon the livelihoods and futures of those he pretends to serve.

Finally, the statement "Allah loves not disorder" serves as a divine rebuttal to his hypocritical invocation of God's name. Though he may call upon Allah as a witness to his supposed sincerity, the reality of his actions stands in stark opposition to divine will. For in truth, this man seeks disorder, and Allah, in His infinite wisdom, despises such chaos. Thus, the verse unravels the hypocrisy of those who, under the guise of concern for humanity, sow the seeds of destruction.

Rising Above Base Instinct of Haste and Cowardice and Cultivating Patience, Perseverance, Steadfastness, Forbearance (Bard), Cheerfulness:

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ

Man is made of haste.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁹ Surah Al Anbiya 21:38

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فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعُرْسِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ

Have patience, then, as the Messengers *possessed* of high resolve had patience; and be in no haste about them.³¹⁰

وَلَكِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ نِعْمَاءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لِيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّئَاتُ عَنِّي إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُورٌ

And if after an adversity has touched him We cause him to taste of prosperity, he will assuredly say, ‘Gone are the ills from me.’ Lo! he is exultant, boastful;

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَبُوا الصَّالِحِينَ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

Save those who are steadfast and do good works. It is they who will have forgiveness and a great reward.³¹¹

A vivid contrast is drawn between the hasty, unstable dispositions of those who reject Divine revelation and the steadfastness of true believers. The former, engulfed in disbelief, are easily swayed by the fickle tides of fortune, quick to falter, reacting to each change with either irrational exuberance or utter despair. Should misfortune strike, they succumb to hopelessness; yet, when fortune smiles upon them, they are prone to unbridled pride. This erratic behaviour stems from a profound misunderstanding of

³¹⁰ Surah Al Ahqaf 46:36

³¹¹ Surah Hud 11:11-12

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Divine law, which teaches that life's vicissitudes—both sorrow and joy—serve to test and refine the human spirit. Those who fail to grasp this divine purpose are overwhelmed by their circumstances, rather than growing through them.

In stark contrast, the true believer remains unwavering. They do not allow the pendulum of joy and sorrow to disrupt their inner equilibrium. Adversity does not plunge them into despair; instead, they meet challenges with patience and resolve. Likewise, prosperity does not lead them to arrogance; rather, they use their blessings to deepen their piety and righteousness. The verse promises that such individuals, who maintain their moral integrity through all trials, will be granted forgiveness and a grand reward. Their patience amidst hardship and their humility amidst success earn them divine grace. Their deeds, though finite in their earthly existence, are rewarded with eternal peace and boundless blessings.

The verse underscores a fundamental truth about both individual and collective success: constancy and perseverance are the cornerstones of true achievement. It reassures the faithful that their steadfast virtue, despite the inevitable end of their mortal life, is recognised and rewarded by God. It answers the profound question of how temporal actions can yield eternal rewards, affirming that

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those who remain devoted to righteousness, undeterred by trials, are assured of divine favour.

Moreover, the verse reflects on the remarkable character of those who, despite severe persecution and displacement, never faltered in their devotion. Their resilience in the face of adversity and their unwavering faith draws down the mercy of God, ensuring their place in divine grace.

Qur'an outlines three essential paths for man to achieve success:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

And obey Allah and His Messenger and dispute not with one another, lest you falter and your power depart *from you*. And be steadfast; surely, Allah is with the steadfast.³¹²

1. Obedience to Divine Commandments: Those seeking success are instructed to adhere faithfully to the commands of God and His Messenger, embracing their guidance with unwavering commitment.

³¹² Surah Al Anfal 8:47

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2. Unity and Harmony: They are urged to avoid disputes and divisions, fostering a spirit of unity and collective strength within their community.

3. Endurance and Patience: They are commanded to cultivate patience and resilience, standing firm in the face of trials and challenges.

In describing those whom the Qur'an refers to as "enlightened individuals," it illuminates four core attributes that define their character.

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً وَيَدْرءُونَ
بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

And those who persevere in seeking the favour of their Lord, and observe Prayer, and spend out of that with which We have provided them, secretly and openly, and repel evil with good. It is these who shall have the *best* reward of the *final* Abode —³¹³

1. Patience (صبر): These individuals exhibit patience, which encompasses abstaining from sin, remaining steadfast in virtue, and avoiding impatience and lamentation. Their patience is not born of weakness or self-interest but is a sincere effort to earn God's favour. Even when they possess

³¹³ Surah Ar Rad 13:23

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the power to retaliate, their forbearance is driven solely by the desire to please God, not by personal gain or natural timidity.

2. Regular Prayers: They observe their prayers with unwavering consistency and adherence to the required conditions, demonstrating a persistent and enduring connection with God.

3. Charity: They generously give from what God has bestowed upon them, both openly and discreetly, to support the needy and destitute. Their generosity is a reflection of their commitment to alleviating the hardships of others.

4. Repelling Evil with Good: They address evil with acts of goodness, setting an example that encourages others to forsake wrongdoing. Their approach goes beyond mere advocacy of good; they actively demonstrate virtuous behaviour, thereby undermining evil. Alternatively, their promotion of good leads to the gradual disappearance of evil.

The phrase "repel evil with good" suggests that these individuals approach wrongdoing with a strategy that is contextually appropriate, opting for retaliation if it serves a greater purpose or choosing forgiveness if it achieves the desired outcome. Their actions are driven by justice and equity, never responding to evil with further evil, but always

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aiming to address wrongs in the most effective and principled manner.

Forbearance is a divine attribute that embodies the art of mastering one's anger and subduing feelings of revenge, jealousy, hatred, and frustration. It invites us to endure unkind words and abusive behaviour with grace and dignity. It calls upon us to forgive whenever possible, echoing the noble footsteps of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (sas), who exemplified forgiveness even toward those who wronged him with utmost disrespect and cruelty.

In the act of striving to forget the pain and humiliation inflicted by others, we seek a path toward inner peace, ultimately drawing closer to Allah, the Almighty. When we cultivate contentment and happiness in our lives, we discover an inner strength that makes it easier to confront the hardships and struggles that life may present. In this journey of forbearance, we find not only solace but also a profound connection to the divine. In reward of forbearance and steadfastness, Allah the Almighty promises in the Holy Qur'an:

فَوْقَهُمُ اللَّهُ سَبَّحَ ذِكْرَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّهْمُ نَصْرًا تَوَسُّدًا

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So Allah will save them from the evil of that day, and will grant them cheerfulness and happiness.³¹⁴

Hazrat Abu Dharr (ra) reported that the Messenger (sas) of Allah said: "Do not disdain a good deed, (no matter how small it may seem) even if it is your meeting with your (Muslim) brother with a cheerful face."³¹⁵

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) explained in his Friday sermon on the 28th May 2008:

“Once a man came to the Prophet (sas) and said that he did nothing but good to his relatives whereas they were always bad to him in return. The Holy Prophet (sas) told the man that his actions covered the malice of the relatives and that as long as he was firm on his way Allah’s help would be with him. The Holy Prophet (sas) said that Allah liked two qualities; one was forbearance and the other dignity.”

The difficult path of the Moral Preacher:

In Qur’anic philosophy believers are called not only to embrace righteous principles and noble ideals themselves but also to share them with others, fostering a healthy and

³¹⁴ Surah Ad Dahr 76:12

³¹⁵ Sahi Muslim Book 2, Hadith 15

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virtuous environment around them. Qur'an imparts a profound truth: the proclamation of truth invariably ushers in hardships for the preacher.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ ۖ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

Except those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to *accept* truth, and exhort one another to be steadfast.³¹⁶

They are instructed to remain undeterred by opposition or persecution encountered in this challenging endeavour, meeting such adversity with patience and fortitude. In this manner, the Surah succinctly encapsulates guidelines for conduct that, when followed, pave the way to a life of happiness, contentment, prosperity, and progress.

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۗ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ

حَبِيبٌ

And good and evil are not alike. Repel *evil* with that which is best. And lo, he between whom and thyself was enmity will become as though he were a warm friend.

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ۖ وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا دُونَ حَظِّ عَظِيمٍ

³¹⁶ Surah Al Asr 103:4

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But none is granted it save those who are steadfast; and none is granted it save those who possess a large share of good.³¹⁷

Qur'an counsels the preacher to endure these trials with unwavering patience and resilience, advocating for the return of goodness even in the face of malevolence from those who persecute him. The lofty ideals of moral conduct mentioned in the preceding verse can only be achieved by facing the trials of divine service with grace and composure, without complaint or discontent. Truly fortunate is the soul who masters such self-discipline, attaining a standard of virtue so high and noble.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

O ye who believe! seek help with patience and Prayer; surely, Allah is with the steadfast.³¹⁸

The verse enshrines a timeless principle of success: a person must persist in their efforts with unwavering resolve, avoiding harm and clinging steadfastly to what is good. Concurrently, one must seek divine assistance through prayer, for God alone is the ultimate source of all that is beneficial. The final part of the verse, “Allah is with the steadfast”, conveys that Allah supports those who are unwavering in their efforts and consistent in their prayers,

³¹⁷ Surah Ha Mim As Sajdah 41:35-36

³¹⁸ Surah Al Baqarah 2:154

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offering a profound key to achieving success. Qur'an declares:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ

Do you suppose that you will enter Heaven while Allah has not yet distinguished those of you that strive *in the way of Allah* and has not yet distinguished the steadfast?³¹⁹

Trials and afflictions serve as the crucible that reveals the true mettle of a person. Without such challenges, there can be no real progress or spiritual refinement. These tests serve a fourfold purpose:

1. Distinguishing True Faith: They separate the hesitant and the weak from those whose faith is resolute and unwavering.
2. Fostering Spiritual Growth: For the devout, trials act as a catalyst for spiritual advancement, deepening their commitment and understanding.
3. Self-Assessment: Through adversity, individuals gain insight into the strength of their own faith, allowing them to adjust their conduct in accordance with this self-awareness.
4. Earning Divine Reward: Trials validate and establish the right to divine reward for those who endure them with sincerity and fortitude.

³¹⁹ Surah Aal e Imran 3:143

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In essence, it is through these challenges that the worth of a person is tested and refined, paving the way for genuine moral and spiritual elevation. Qur'an guides,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

O ye who believe! be steadfast and strive to excel in steadfastness and be on *your* guard and fear Allah that you may prosper.³²⁰

The verse delineates five essential prerequisites for success in face of adversity:

1. Patience and Steadfastness: The first requisite is the exercise of patience and unwavering resolve in the face of challenges.
2. Surpassing the Enemy: One must exhibit even greater patience and steadfastness than one's adversaries, ensuring resilience in adversity.
3. Diligent Service: Constant and diligent effort in the service of one's faith and community is crucial, reflecting a commitment to the greater good.
4. Vigilance: Maintaining vigilant watch at the frontiers is essential, both to defend against threats and to capitalize on opportunities for advancement.

³²⁰ Surah Aal e Imran 3:143 & 201

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5. Righteous Living: Leading a life grounded in righteousness is fundamental to achieving success and maintaining integrity.

The Qur'an offers a stern warning that the journey of a devout preacher is fraught with countless trials, where progress can only be forged through enduring hardships and making great sacrifices.

قُلْ يُعْبَادُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ ۗ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۗ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Say, 'O ye My servants who believe, fear your Lord. There is good for those who do good in this life. And Allah's earth is spacious. Verily the steadfast will have their reward without measure.'³²¹

The verse solemnly admonishes the faithful that they will be subjected to trials and tribulations, compelling them to forsake their familiar hearths and homes in the pursuit of divine purpose. Yet, it is through their steadfast endurance and successful navigation of these formidable tests that they will discover the boundless expanse of God's earth, open to them as a vast sanctuary. In their perseverance, they will

³²¹ Surah Az Zumar 39:11

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receive from God an immeasurable reward, generously bestowed without limit or restraint.

The Key is Cooperation and Unity:

The true strength of our species lies in this remarkable ability to collaborate with others. The essence of social cooperation that leads to success of mankind is described by the Qur'an in pure and simple terms:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

And help one another in righteousness and piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression.³²²

Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar (ra) narrated that the Holy Prophet (sas) instructed: 'Do not be jealous of each other. Do not raise prices to harm each other. Do not hold grudges against each other. Do not turn your backs on each other, and do not be indifferent to each other. And do not bid on deals that are closed. Instead, you should live like servants of God and be brotherly to each other. A Muslim does not wrong his brother. He does not insult him, and he does not embarrass or humiliate him.' He pointed to his chest and said: 'Piety is here.' He repeated these words three times and

³²² Surah Al Maidah 5:3

said: 'It is enough misfortune for a man that he should look at his Muslim brother with disdain. Every Muslim's blood, wealth, honour and respect are sacred and sanctified for the other Muslim.'³²³

The Promised Messiah (as) says:

“It is the intention of Allah the Almighty to make all human beings like a single soul. Its name is *Wahdat-e-Jombori* (unification of mankind), by which many people are collectively considered, a single entity or a single human being. That is the intention behind religion that collectively all are weaved into a single thread of *Wahdat-e-Jombori* like prayer beads. congregational prayers are performed for the same unification, so that all the worshipers are counted as one entity and the command to stand together in prayers is so that the *Nur* (light) possessed by the stronger is dispersed into the weak. Even Hajj is for this very reason.”³²⁴

It is not enough simply to harbour no malice or hatred toward others. Islam does not advocate for a life of isolation or emotional detachment. Rather, it calls for a deep, active love and genuine compassion for our fellow beings. Without this heartfelt connection, one cannot claim to possess true faith.

³²³ Sahih Muslim, Kitab-ul-Birri was-Silah, Babu Tahrimi-Zulmil Muslimi Wa Khadhlih

³²⁴ Malfuzat, Vol 4. Pg 101 (Urdu)

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وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَرِى الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ۗ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ
مُعْرِضُونَ

And *remember the time* when We took a covenant from the children of Israel: ‘You shall worship *nothing* but Allah and *show* kindness to parents and to kindred and orphans and the poor, and speak to men kindly and observe Prayer, and pay the Zakat;’ then you turned away in aversion, except a few of you.³²⁵

The verse begins with the fundamental principle of worshipping the One God, setting the stage for the subsequent discourse on human relationships. Mankind is categorized into two distinct groups: first, those who are entitled to kindness as a matter of duty, and second, those who receive benevolence as an act of charity. The former group is addressed initially because their right to kindness constitutes an obligation, a debt that must be fulfilled. In contrast, the latter group is mentioned subsequently, with the level of need influencing the order of priority.

The final aspect of the verse turns to acts of obedience to God, focusing on those that are central to spiritual

³²⁵ Surah Al Baqarah 2:84

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purification and the fulfilment of religious obligations, such as the payment of religious taxes. These acts are placed after the emphasis on fellow feeling because genuine compassion and empathy represent the foundational step towards moral and spiritual elevation. Such fellow feeling often arises from an innate sense of duty, preceding any formal legal mandates.

It is the moral conduct of individuals that holds the power to foster unity and cooperation within society, even when it goes against our natural instincts. It is through the ethical choices we make, and the integrity with which we live, that we can bridge the divides among us and cultivate a spirit of togetherness. It is through the enduring virtues of patience and unwavering steadfastness that we can transcend discord, allowing our hearts to be imbued with genuine compassion and untainted intent toward others. In nurturing these qualities, we lay the foundation for a society rooted in goodness and brotherhood, where the bonds between individuals are strengthened by mutual respect and kindness. Through such a collective spirit, we create a community that thrives on shared values and a deep sense of unity, where the common good prevails, and the light of humanity shines bright. In a world often driven by self-interest, it is the moral compass within each person that can guide us toward a more harmonious and cooperative society.

Chapter 7-Social Contract and Trust

In political philosophy, the concept of the social contract serves as a foundational model for understanding the legitimacy of state authority over individuals. At its core, the social contract represents an implicit agreement between the governed and their rulers. Citizens, in essence, consent to relinquish a portion of their personal freedoms and submit to the authority of the state. In return, they receive the benefits of protection, law, and order that allow society to function smoothly.

This mutual exchange is the bedrock of civil society. Without such a contract, life in the state of nature, as some philosophers describe it, would be chaotic and fraught with

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constant threats to life and property. The social contract thus forms the invisible yet binding framework within which the rights and responsibilities of both the individual and the state are defined and balanced.

The social contract is not merely a one-time transaction but an ongoing covenant that evolves with the needs and aspirations of society. It embodies the collective will of the people, acknowledging that individual liberties must sometimes be tempered by the common good. In surrendering certain freedoms, citizens entrust the state with the power to enforce laws, administer justice, and safeguard the public welfare. This trust, however, is not without limits. The legitimacy of the state's authority is contingent upon its ability to honour and uphold its side of the contract—maintaining peace, ensuring justice, and protecting the rights of its citizens.

In essence, the social contract is the philosophical cornerstone that justifies the existence of government and its role in society. It underscores the delicate balance between freedom and order, individual rights and collective responsibilities, forming the basis for the moral and political obligations that bind us together as members of a civil community.

Sanctity of Covenants:

The Qur'an places great importance on the sanctity of covenants, urging believers to uphold their commitments with unwavering integrity. This devotion to honouring one's word is portrayed as a defining attribute of true righteousness, a virtue that distinguishes the devout and reflects the moral nobility expected of those who follow the divine path.

الَّذِينَ يُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْقُضُونَ الْعَيْثَاقَ

Those who fulfil Allah's pact, and break not the covenant;³²⁶

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْعَيْثَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

And fulfil the covenant of Allah when you have made; and break not the oaths after making them firm, while you have made Allah your surety. Certainly, Allah knows what you do.³²⁷

This verse emphasises the sacred duty of believers to faithfully fulfil their obligations—both those owed to God

³²⁶ Surah Ar Rad 13:21

³²⁷ Surah An Nahl 16:92

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and those owed to fellow human beings. The injunction to "break not the oaths after confirming them" speaks to the solemnity of covenants made between individuals in the name of God. Since these agreements are sealed with divine invocation, God Himself is regarded as their guarantor. Thus, should anyone break such a covenant, they do so at the risk of divine retribution, as God will intervene to punish the transgressor.

وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا

Fulfil the covenant; for the covenant shall be questioned about.³²⁸

The term عهد (covenant) carries the meaning of an obligation, emphasising the importance of fulfilling every responsibility with utmost integrity and sincerity. However, this word may bear an even broader significance. It can refer to the profound duty placed upon a powerful nation that assumes the protection of a weaker, less capable sister nation. Such a powerful nation is reminded that its guardianship is only justified for as long as the weaker nation remains unable to govern itself. The original context of the verse is conduct of a person in regard to care of orphans however the weaker nation is metaphorically depicted as an

³²⁸ Surah Bani Israil 17:35

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orphan, whose period of dependency is a sacred trust. This trust must be managed with honesty and care until the weaker nation "comes of age" and is ready to take charge of its own affairs.

This verse, therefore, serves as a poignant lesson for powerful nations, urging them to recognise the sanctity of their responsibility and to fulfil it with the same care and fidelity expected of a guardian overseeing the growth and development of an orphan until maturity.

Islam places profound importance on the sanctity of covenants, guiding Muslims on the path of fulfilling their obligations with unwavering integrity. It teaches that these covenants must be honoured under all circumstances, no matter how challenging. Even in instances where opponents have craftily secured an agreement that favours them, the Caliph of the Muslims has historically commanded that the covenant be upheld, demonstrating a commitment to justice and moral righteousness above all else.

During the Khilafat of Hazrat Umar (ra), an Abyssinian slave made a contract with some people that they would be granted certain concessions. When the Muslim army went there, the people said there was a covenant between them. When, the commander of the army showed some hesitation,

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and the matter was brought before Hazrat Umar (ra), he said that a Muslim must not dishonour his word, even if a slave had made the contract. Once a contract had been signed, it had to be honoured.³²⁹

Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr (ra) narrates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said:

“Whoever killed a person under a treaty with the Muslims, shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise though its fragrance is such that it can be perceived from a distance of forty years.”³³⁰

In another narration the messenger (sas) of Allah said:

“On the Day of Resurrection, I shall be the adversary of the one who oppresses a *dhimmi* [*a non-Muslim who lives under Muslim rule*] or violates his right or puts a responsibility on him which is beyond his capacity or takes something from him against his will.”³³¹

³²⁹ Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (ra), *Sair-e-Ruhani* 7 [Urdu], *Anwar-ul-Ulum*, Vol. 24, pp. 293-294

³³⁰ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Kitab al-Jizyati wal-Mawada'ah, Bab *ithmi man qatala mu'abadan bighairi jurm*

³³¹ *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Kitab al-Khiraji wal-Imarati wal-Fay, Bab *fi ta'shiri abli ʿ- zimmati iza-khatalaju bil-tijarat*

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This obligation arises from the sacred contract with the *dhimmi*, binding Muslims to uphold and protect their rights with unwavering commitment. It is a duty enshrined in the principles of Islam, where the protection and fair treatment of those under the care of the Muslim community is not merely an expectation but a solemn responsibility. Thus, the honour and security of the *dhimmi* are entrusted to Muslims, and safeguarding their rights becomes an integral part of the Muslim's moral and spiritual duty. Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Al-Bailamani (ra) narrates:

“Allah’s Messenger (sas) gave a Muslim the capital punishment, who had killed a *dhimmi* who had made a covenant with the Muslims, and said, ‘I am closest to the ones who honour their covenants of protection.’”³³²

During the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Holy Prophet (sas) upheld the principle that even a treaty with disbelievers must be honoured without compromise. As the terms of the treaty were being finalized, a condition was set by the disbelievers that if a Muslim sought refuge with them, they could keep him, but if one of their own joined the Muslims, he would have to be returned. This condition was severe and unfair.

³³² *Bulugh al-Maram Fi Adillat al-Abkam*, Dar Arqam [Beirut, 2016], p. 248)

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Before the treaty was signed, a man named Abu Jandal, who had endured great suffering in chains for being a Muslim, managed to escape and reached the Holy Prophet (sas). He pleaded for sanctuary, recounting his torment at the hands of the disbelievers. The Companions urged the Prophet (sas) to protect him, but Abu Jandal's father insisted that taking him in would be a breach of the treaty, even though it had not yet been signed.

The Holy Prophet (sas), adhering strictly to the terms of the covenant, ordered Abu Jandal to be returned to his captors, despite the anguish it caused among his followers. The Prophet (sas) emphasised that they could not violate the agreement, even in such distressing circumstances.

Later, Abu Jandal escaped again and returned to the Prophet (sas) in Medina. Despite his pleas for refuge, the Prophet (sas) remained steadfast, saying, "God has commanded me not to commit treachery," and sent him back once more, fully honouring the treaty. Even when Abu Jandal managed to evade his captors, the Prophet (sas) maintained that the promise made must be upheld, illustrating his unwavering commitment to justice and integrity, even when a fellow Muslim's suffering was at stake.³³³

³³³ Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (ra), *Khutbat-e-Mahmud* [Urdu], Vol. 5, No. 31, 29 September 1916, pp. 275-276

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وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ³³⁴

And who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants,³³⁴

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ³³⁵

And those who are upright in their testimonies,³³⁵

The verse speaks of those truly righteous individuals who not only fulfil their obligations to God and to others but do so with meticulous attention to detail. Their good deeds are not performed casually or haphazardly; instead, they approach their responsibilities with extreme caution, ensuring that no aspect of their actions is overlooked.

These individuals possess an unwavering commitment to their duties, demonstrating a punctilious regard for the trusts placed in them. They are scrupulously faithful to the covenants and treaties they establish with others, embodying the true meaning of the word راعون. Dishonesty and hypocrisy are vices that endanger the very fabric of societal harmony. These vices stand in stark contrast to the trustworthy and morally upright believer that the Qur'an seeks to cultivate, and Islam speaks with profound severity against such moral decay.

³³⁴ Surah Al Muminun 23:9

³³⁵ Surah Al Maarij 70:33-34

Hypocrisy:

At the heart of Islam lies a foundational principle: a person's words and actions must embody unwavering integrity, free from any semblance of double standards or hypocrisy. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (sas) said: Whoever has the following four (characteristics) will be a pure hypocrite and whoever has one of the following four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up: whenever he is entrusted, he betrays; whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; whenever he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous, whenever he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner.³³⁶

The Qur'an describes hypocrisy as a disease of the soul, a corruption that undermines the purity and integrity of one's inner being.

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ ۖ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۗ وَكَهُمْ عَذَابُ أَلِيمٌ ۗ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

In their hearts was a disease, and Allah has increased their disease to them; and for them is a grievous punishment because they lied.³³⁷

³³⁶ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith 34

³³⁷ Surah Al Baqarah 2:11

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In this verse, God speaks to the two afflictions of the heart: disbelief and hypocrisy. Highlighting that those who suffer from hypocrisy behave in ways that deviate from the conduct of healthy, sincere individuals.

The Promised Messiah (as) warns, “Be not afraid of the curses of the world, for they shall vanish before your eyes like smoke and cannot turn day into night. Fear instead the curse of God which descends from heaven and uproots its victims in both worlds. You cannot save yourselves with hypocrisy, for your God is He Who sees the innermost depth of man. Can you then deceive Him? So become straightforward, clean, pure and truthful.”³³⁸

The Qur’an was revealed as a remedy for these spiritual maladies, offering healing and guidance to those who seek it. Says Allah:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ ۗ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O mankind! there has indeed come to you an exhortation from your Lord and a cure for whatever *disease* there is in the hearts, and a guidance and a mercy to the believers.³³⁹

³³⁸ *Noah's Ark*, P.20

³³⁹ Surah Yunus 10:58

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The Qur'an guides that the cure for this spiritual malady lies in sincere repentance, steadfastness in truth, and a commitment to uphold justice and righteousness in all aspects of life.

Dishonest dealings:

Regarding the outcome of those who are dishonest and untrustworthy, Allah the Almighty states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ خَوَّاتًا أَثِيمًا

Surely, Allah loves not one who is perfidious *and* a great sinner.³⁴⁰

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) narrates the guidance of the Holy Prophet (sas). He relates, “The Holy Prophet (sas) would often say, ‘O Allah, I seek refuge with You from hunger for it is a bad companion, and I seek refuge with You from dishonesty for it is a bad companion.’”³⁴¹

The Promised Messiah (as) has given a great warning regarding dishonesty. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

³⁴⁰ Surah An Nisa 4:108

³⁴¹ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence
<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/>

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“Whosoever does not repent of every vice and every evil deed, such as drunkenness, gambling, lustful glances, deceit, bribery and every misappropriation, is not of my community.”³⁴²

Fraud, deceit, and dishonesty are abhorred by Islam. While individuals may view their deceitful actions and trickery as mere strategies for "getting by" or navigating life's challenges, such conduct harbours the potential to undermine the very integrity of a nation. Speaking on this issue, The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Fraud in business is a national vice for it destroys the credibility of a nation. When I last visited Kashmir, I found the annual trade of silver utensils and shawls at an ebb. It had come down from 10 million rupees annually to 1.7 million owing mainly to the dishonesty of those engaged in this trade and industry.”³⁴³

Qur'an also guides that those who engage in unfaithful and dishonest conduct should not be supported. Their lack of integrity makes them undeserving of support, not only because they betray their own souls and those of their

³⁴² Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Noah's Ark, pg. 31, 2018, Islam International Publications Ltd

³⁴³ Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (ra), The Way of the Seekers, p. 81-82, 2002, FAZL-I-UMAR PRESS, CHAUNCEY, OH

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brethren, but also because their actions tarnish the reputation of the entire community.

وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْعُقُودَ الَّتِي لَكُمْ وَالْهَيْزَانَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيطٍ

And give not short measure and short weight. I see you in *a state of prosperity* and I fear for you the punishment of a destructive day.³⁴⁴

Such actions would be nothing short of cruel, sowing seeds of enmity and discord. This verse places significant emphasis on the way individuals conduct their dealings with others, particularly highlighting the ruthless exploitation by Western powers of weaker, less developed nations, stripping them of their freedom and autonomy. The Surah concludes with a stern warning to those who engage in injustice and dishonesty, assuring them that they will not escape punishment. Throughout this Surah, the principles of honesty, justice, and equity in all interactions with others are strongly emphasised, serving as a clear moral directive.

In a world where materialism runs rampant, individuals and nations alike often seek to seize others' wealth through deceitful means. This rampant injustice extends beyond local

³⁴⁴ Surah Hud 11:85

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boundaries, manifesting on an international scale where affluent nations exploit the resources of poorer countries under various pretences.

Some African nations, for instance, argue that despite their formal independence, wealthy countries continue to lay claim to their resources, masquerading their exploitation as aid for progress and security. Consequently, millions of dollars are siphoned off annually, leading to growing resentment among the poorer nations towards the developed world. This resentment harbours the potential for catastrophic consequences, as the wealth extracted is rarely invested back into the countries from which it was taken but instead retained by the wealthy nations.

Similarly, the realm of business, whether small or large scale, is fraught with injustices. Such practices, driven by the pursuit of gain at the expense of fairness, disrupt societal peace and harmony. Allah the Almighty thus condemns these acts of injustice, recognizing that they undermine the very fabric of both society and the world at large. Islam curses those who usurp the rights of others; those who measure one way for themselves and use a different scale for others. Islam has forbidden all types of dishonesty, thereby safeguarding life, wealth and honour.

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Consider the story of a companion who, while attempting to sell his horse, set the price at 200 Dinars. Another companion in the market, however, insisted that the horse was worth 500 Dinars and offered the higher amount. The seller, adhering strictly to his principles, refused the additional profit, asserting that it would be improper to accept more than the set price. This incident exemplifies the profound integrity of faith practiced by early Muslims, highlighting the practical application of Islamic teachings.³⁴⁵

In contrast, contemporary attitudes often regard such a refusal to accept extra profit with scepticism, perceiving it as foolishness rather than virtue. Modern society frequently praises those who maximize their gains, even if it means exploiting others. This is evident not only in personal transactions but also on a global scale.

Wealthy nations exploit poorer countries under the guise of aid, claiming to support their development while effectively siphoning their resources. These nations purchase raw materials at minimal prices, manufacture goods with cheap labour, and sell the finished products at exorbitant rates. Such practices deepen the disparity between rich and poor,

³⁴⁵ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2021 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, Islam's Principles for Establishing True Peace <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/36457/islams-principles-for-establishing-true-peace/>

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leading to significant unrest and dissatisfaction among the disadvantaged.

The disparity fuels growing resentment as people become more aware of their exploitation through global communication channels. This increasing awareness and perceived injustice could eventually lead to widespread unrest. To prevent such turmoil and ensure lasting peace, Islam advocates for fairness and respect in all transactions and dealings. Upholding these principles is crucial for fostering a just and harmonious society.

Trustworthiness:

The Qur'an advises that authority should be entrusted to individuals who possess the necessary qualifications to govern. It describes the power to rule as a "trust" of the people, emphasising that it rightfully belongs to the community and is not the inherent right of any individual or dynasty.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا ۗ وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

Verily, Allah commands you to make over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you judge between men, you

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judge with justice. And surely excellent is that with which Allah admonishes you! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.³⁴⁶

This verse calls the attention of believers to the grave responsibility they bear when selecting a leader. They are warned that if they allow personal preferences or nepotism to influence their choice, at the expense of the state, community, or religion, they will be held accountable as betrayers of this trust. The verse clearly rejects dynastic or hereditary rule, it describes authority as a "trust" bestowed upon the people, emphasising that it belongs to the community at large, advocating for a representative form of government where the Khalifah, or ruler, is elected. In this election, people are urged to choose the candidate best suited for the office.

The Khalifah, or ruler, is in turn commanded to administer with fairness and justice—being fair to individuals, to communities, and to the state. The directive "that you judge with justice" applies not only to the head of the Muslim state but also to all who hold positions of administrative authority. They are all instructed to exercise their power justly and equitably.

³⁴⁶ Surah An Nisa 4:59

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Those who hold positions of governance are warned against letting personal biases or nepotism influence their decisions, as such behaviour constitutes a breach of this sacred trust and will be subject to accountability. The verse explicitly rejects hereditary rule and advocates for a representative system, wherein leaders are elected based on their merit. This trustworthiness extends to all avenues of human interaction including trade and commerce. On one occasion, whilst explaining a crucial principle of trade, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (ra) said:

“The meaning of *siyasah* [statecraft and governance] also implies that one should make use [of people] with such moderation that they should neither be exploited nor underwhelmed. *Siyasah* does not only relate to the government, rather all traders and professional people have their respective *siyasah*. The *siyasah* of a trader is that they should neither bulk-buy without due diligence to such an extent that [unsold] stocks start to rot in their warehouse, nor should they acquire goods in such low quantity that the demand of the customers cannot be met. In fact, they should buy goods according to the demand, so that neither the goods are wasted while waiting for customers, nor that the customers have to be turned away due to a lack of goods. Similarly, a manufacturer’s or a workman’s *siyasah* is that they should neither take so long in producing the goods

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that the trading season elapses nor should they start churning out goods before any signs of demand have arisen.”³⁴⁷

With regard to justice and honouring contracts honouring agreements, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (ra) said:

“There are many people who do not act according to justice. Whenever they deal with someone, they try their utmost to usurp their belongings. These people do not honour promises. When a deal has been sealed, it is a matter of shame for someone to expect from X to abide by [the agreement], but not themselves, and [to expect that] they must get some profit under all circumstances, even if the other person suffers a loss. The traders wish to sell their goods at the full price, despite their being damaged and of a low quality. On the other hand, the buyers desire to pay less but get items of a higher quality... In short, everyone wishes to inflict loss upon others in their own favour but does not wish to benefit others...

Although it has become a norm to commit fraud against fellow humans, people also wish to commit fraud against Allah... They do not fulfil their agreements with God but hope from God to fulfil His end of the promise. They say that as they have declared themselves Muslims, so God will

³⁴⁷ Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 5, p. 381

indeed consider them as such. No matter how much malice, grudge and enmity they may be harbouring or evil they may be committing, God [they believe] would treat them as Muslims by getting deceived [Himself]. However, they do not know that He is the Knower of the unseen. Humans may be tricked, shopkeepers may defraud their customers, servants may deceive their masters, and masters may trick their servants, but God can never be deceived because He is fully aware of man's each and every weakness.”³⁴⁸

Written loan contracts:

Qur'an commands that all loan transactions be documented in writing, an instruction notably progressive given the era of its revelation.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَيْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ ۗ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ ۗ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۗ فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلَئَ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلِ لِلَّذِي بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ ۗ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَقُولَ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَىٰ ۗ وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا ۗ وَلَا تَسْبُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ۗ ذَلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا ۗ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا ۗ

³⁴⁸ Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 4, pp. 81-83

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وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ ۖ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ ۗ وَإِنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ^ط
وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

O ye who believe! when you borrow one from another for a fixed period, then write it down. And let a scribe write *it* in your presence faithfully; and no scribe should refuse to write, because Allah has taught him, so let him write and let him who incurs the liability dictate; and he should fear Allah, his Lord, and not diminish anything therefrom. But if the person incurring the liability be of low understanding or be weak or be unable himself to dictate, then let someone who can watch his interest dictate with justice. And call two witnesses from among your men; and if two men be not *available*, then a man and two women, of such as you like as witnesses, so that if either of two *women* should err *in memory*, then one may remind the other. And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called. And do not feel weary of writing it down, whether it be small or large, along with its appointed time *of payment*. This is more equitable in the sight of Allah and makes testimony surer and is more likely to keep you away from doubts; *therefore omit not to write* except that it be ready merchandise which you give or take from hand to hand, in which case it shall be no sin for you that you write it not. And have witnesses when you sell one to

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another; and let no harm be done to the scribe or the witness. And if you do *that*, then certainly it shall be disobedience on your part. And fear Allah. And Allah grants you knowledge and Allah knows all things well.

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهَانٌ مَّقْبُوضَةٌ ۖ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِيَ
أَمَانَتَهُ وَيُؤْتِيَ اللَّهُ رَبَّهُ ۖ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ أَمَسَ لِقَلْبِهِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

And if you be on a journey, and you find not a scribe, then let there be a pledge with possession. And if one of you entrusts another with something, then let him who is entrusted surrender his trust and let him fear Allah, his Lord. And hide not testimony; and whoever hides it, his heart is certainly sinful. And Allah is Well-Aware of what you do.³⁴⁹

These verses outline the terms and conditions for managing interest-free loans, mandating that every loan agreement be meticulously documented in writing. The directive to document loans is not limited to those with fixed repayment terms but applies broadly to avoid disputes and ensure clarity regarding the amount and terms of the loan. The addition of "for a fixed period" underscores the importance of specifying a repayment term.

³⁴⁹ Surah Al Baqarah 2:283-284

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These verses also stipulate that loan documents should be prepared by a neutral third party to reduce the potential for fraud and ensure fairness. The borrower, not the lender, should dictate the terms of the loan for reasons of justice and accuracy, ensuring that the borrower is accountable for the details of the loan.

Qur'an further instructs that two trustworthy witnesses from the local community should be present, emphasising their reliability and ease of summons. It is also essential that the scribe and witnesses are treated fairly and compensated appropriately for their roles, and that they are not coerced or bribed. If a scribe is unavailable, loans may be secured through pledges, with one party receiving the loan and the other providing collateral. Such transactions are considered a trust, or *amanah*, highlighting the importance of returning loans with the same care and integrity as entrusted property.

Finally, the verses condemn the concealment of testimony, whether from witnesses or the parties involved. Concealing the truth is portrayed as a profound moral failing that corrupts the heart, signifying a deeper moral decay. This guidance ensures that loans are managed with the utmost honesty and transparency, reflecting the serious responsibility associated with such transactions. Hazrat Musleh Mauood (ra) explained in this regard:

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“Those who borrow [money] and then use excuses, show laziness or even deny returning [the money], are not only the enemies of their own selves but also of their country and nation. When they feel any need [for money], they cry, but when the lender demands [the money], they show indifference ... Such people are harmful in two ways for two kinds of people. [As a result of their behaviour...]: 1) Those who have a real need, cannot borrow [money]. 2) Those who lend money to them, are deprived of this good deed in the future. Remember well, that just as the shariah commands us to do good to others, it also commands us to value the generosity of a benefactor, and not to be ungrateful. One who lends you money in time of need, is your benefactor. You should treat them in a civilised manner and return them [the borrowed money] in the same vein as you received it.”³⁵⁰

Bribery:

The divine injunction concerning fasting instructs Muslims to abstain from lawful sustenance during prescribed times, with the noble aim of cultivating piety and righteousness. This period of spiritual discipline serves as a poignant reminder of the necessity to shun unlawful gain, emphasising that illicit acquisition of wealth is to be avoided with even greater vigilance.

³⁵⁰ Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 6, pp. 549-550

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وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْخِلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِيَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

And do not devour your wealth among yourselves through falsehood and offer it not *as bribe* to the authorities that you may knowingly devour a part of the wealth of *other* people with injustice.³⁵¹

Indeed, one of the most grievous transgressions that plagues the world today is the unjust appropriation of others' property through deceit, fraud, and litigation. This sin is often the progenitor of many other moral failings. The verse challenges the root of this malevolent practice, which persists even among the modern enlightened and cultured world. In contemporary society, the notion of justice is often distorted; many focus solely on judicial outcomes, without regard to the righteousness of the claim. When a court grants a person ownership, they might seize it with little regard for its rightful owner, oblivious to the fact that, in God's eyes, they are no less a usurper than someone who uses force.

Islam unequivocally condemns the theft of another's possessions, whether through direct deceit or fraudulent legal claims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas)

³⁵¹ Surah Al Baqarah 2:189

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emphasised this by stating, "Beware! I am but a man like you. It sometimes happens that a litigant appears before me, and if he presents his case more persuasively than his opponent, I may rule in his favour. But if the property truly belongs to someone else, my ruling does not change its rightful ownership in the eyes of God. If someone takes what is not rightfully his, he is merely feeding on a piece of burning fire; let him choose whether to consume this fire or forsake it."³⁵²

Moreover, the verse vehemently denounces the rampant practice of bribery, which undermines justice and fairness. In many places, justice is compromised by the need to 'buy' it, thereby shutting the doors of equity to those who deserve it. This corrupt practice is not confined to underdeveloped or developing world but is also reported in advanced Western nations and parts of the developed world, illustrating its pervasive and enduring nature. The Holy Prophet (sas) has condemned it in the strongest of terms saying: "The taker and giver of a bribe are alike, and both stand accursed."³⁵³

وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ إِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

³⁵² Bukhari, 6967, Book 90, Hadith 14

³⁵³ Musnad Ahmad, 9031

And barter not the covenant of Allah for a paltry price. Surely, that which is with Allah is better for you if you only knew.³⁵⁴

The Qur'an underscores the critical importance of loyalty during challenging times when enemies of the state deploy spies and informers, luring them with substantial bribes to divulge confidential state affairs. The verse underscores that while the bribes offered are fleeting and transient, the rewards bestowed by God will be enduring, not only in this world but extending into the hereafter. Resisting such temptations and remaining faithful to one's nation is not only a mark of integrity but a noble and virtuous act. Qur'an beckons the morally steadfast to place their trust in God, especially in times of trial and adversity.

وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانَا سُبُلَنَا ۗ وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلَىٰ مَا آذَيْنَاهُمْ بِهَا ۗ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

‘And why should we not put our trust in Allah when He has showed us our ways? And we will, surely, bear with patience *all* the harm you do us. So in Allah let those who trust put their trust.’³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Surah An Nahl 16:96

³⁵⁵ Surah Ibrahim 14:13

Social contract and Disobedience, Riots and Rebellion:

Islam exhorts believers to seek solace and strength through prayer in times of adversity, and it holds the sanctity of human life in the highest regard. Echoing this profound respect for life, the Holy Prophet (sas) declared that love for one's country is an integral part of faith. Thus, no true Muslim can ever contemplate causing harm to their nation or its people, regardless of the injustices perpetrated by its rulers.

The Promised Messiah (as) has emphasised to his community to safeguard against – which has also been made a part of the conditions of bai'at – disobedience and rebellion. Allah the Almighty has used very harsh words in the Holy Qur'an in respect to those who are disobedient and rebellious. He states:

إِنَّا مُنْزِلُونَ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

We are surely going to bring down on the people of this town a punishment from heaven, for they have been rebellious.³⁵⁶

Man's success is inextricably linked to his capacity for obedience. Without it, he is fated to share the same destiny

³⁵⁶ Surah al-Ankabut 29:35

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as Iblis (Satan). Today, disobedience and rioting are widespread, manifesting in every city and across all corners of the world. This is a peril we must remain ever vigilant against. We should continuously seek Allah's forgiveness through *Istighfar* and earnestly strive to remain enveloped in His divine protection. The Promised Messiah (as) has taken a pledge from us to abstain from every kind of treacherous or rebellious act. Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

O ye who believe! obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you. And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most commendable in the end.³⁵⁷

When disputes arise among people, they are advised to turn to Allah and His Messenger (sas) for resolution. This guidance entails making decisions in accordance with the divine wisdom imparted by God and His Messenger. The

³⁵⁷ Surah an-Nisa' 4:60

prescribed course of action is to inform the government of any grievances. Should the government fail to address these concerns, then one should place their trust in Allah the Almighty, leaving the resolution of the matter to His will. It is crucial to continue praying for divine assistance, asking that Allah may guide the authorities to act with justice.

The Holy Prophet (sas) advised that one should abstain from all forms of rebellion and remain obedient to the government. His counsel emphasised the importance of maintaining order and respect for authority, while also advocating for just and righteous governance. It is narrated by Hazrat Abdullah (ra) that the Holy Prophet (sas) stated:

“Indeed, after I depart, you shall see people receiving preferential treatment. You shall witness such things which you will deem strange (i.e. contrary to the teachings of Islam).” Upon this, the people submitted, “O Messenger (sas) of Allah! What is your instruction for us in such a time?” The Holy Prophet (sas) stated, “You should give them what is due to them and seek from Allah what is yours.”³⁵⁸

In essence, individuals are called upon to honour their rights while steadfastly avoiding rebellion. They are to humbly

³⁵⁸ Jami' al-Tirmidhi Kitab al-Fitan Hadith 2190

surrender to the will of Allah the Almighty, earnestly beseeching Him through heartfelt prayers. They should implore Allah to liberate them from the grasp of oppressive rulers or to steer these leaders toward the path of justice and fairness. The Promised Messiah (as) stated:

” وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ³⁵⁹

In other words, disturbing the peace of society is worse than killing. If the ruler is oppressive, do not speak ill of him, rather try to reform your own selves. God will remove him or bring a pious change in him. The afflictions one experiences is owing to their own ill deeds. Otherwise, a believer is one who is accompanied with a star from God and He Himself provides the means for him. My advice is that you should demonstrate an example of piety in every respect. Do not usurp the rights of God and nor of His creation. Be a good example and leave the matter with Allah the Almighty.”³⁶⁰

Whilst mentioning injustices against a nation, Hazrat Musleh Mauood (ra) states: ‘A grave moral injustice committed against a nation is for one to ruin the morals of their people.

³⁵⁹ Surah Al Baqarah 2:218

³⁶⁰ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence
<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/>

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Allah the Almighty stops mankind from doing this by saying:

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوِّءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا

"Allah likes not the public declaration of evil, except on the part of one who is wronged. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."³⁶¹

Expanding upon this verse, Hazrat Musleh Mauood (ra) says: 'People usually take the purport of this verse to mean that if a person has been wronged, then they are permitted to openly do and say whatever they please, but other people are not permitted to do the same. However, in my view, the actual meaning of this verse is that even if a person has been wronged, it is not appropriate to speak about immoral acts in front of other people. Allah the Almighty forbids everyone from doing this and says that if a person raises a hue and cry about the injustice committed against them, then that person is raising their voice against the injustice but also destroying the morals of their own people. For example, if a person uses foul language and women and civilised people pass by and stop him by saying: "has he no shame? He is corrupting the morals of people while there are people

³⁶¹ Surah An Nisa 4:149

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including women and children are passing by and others who cannot tolerate such shameful behaviour.”

In this profound guidance, it is as though Allah the Almighty inquires, "Why the clamour and outcry?" Is it because one feels wronged? The individual may speak fervently against the injustices inflicted upon them yet remains unaware that their agitation not only seeks justice for themselves but also threatens to undermine the moral fabric of those around them. In this divine counsel, Allah advises the oppressed to address their grievances through the proper channels and await a just resolution, cautioning them against allowing their plight to transform them into oppressors of others. It is a reminder that even in their suffering, one must not become a perpetrator of injustice. Thus, while Islam unequivocally affirms an individual's rights, it also safeguards the rights of all, striving to foster an environment of peace and harmony.

Loyalty to One's Nation:

True loyalty is a virtue rooted in sincerity, integrity, and the alignment of outward actions with inner beliefs. This principle is especially significant when it comes to one's relationship with their nation, where loyalty demands a deep, unwavering commitment, regardless of whether one is a native or a naturalized citizen. The Prophets of God

exemplify the highest standards of loyalty, displaying unwavering faithfulness to God's commands, which should serve as a model for all.

In Islam, loyalty is defined as the absolute fulfilment of pledges and covenants, regardless of circumstances. The Holy Qur'an emphasises that Muslims must honour all their commitments, whether to God or to others, with the utmost sincerity. This includes the pledge of loyalty to one's nation, which is not in conflict with loyalty to God. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) taught that "love for one's nation is a part of faith,"³⁶² making it clear that true patriotism is integral to Islam. A Muslim's devotion to God should naturally extend to a sincere love and loyalty for their country.

Even in situations where a government is oppressive or unjust, such as the persecution faced by Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, Islam teaches that loyalty to the nation must be maintained. Although the law may be unjust, Muslims are instructed to abide by it while continuing to contribute positively to society. Islam does not permit rebellion or conspiracy against the state; instead, it advocates for patience and moral conduct.

³⁶² Al-Durar al-Muntathirah fi al-Ahadith al-Mushtahirah (the letter ha, part 1, p. 9) by 'Allamah Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti [d. 911 AH]

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Loyalty also extends to the way citizens engage with their government. In democratic societies, change should be sought through lawful means, such as voting, rather than through protests or strikes that harm the nation. Ultimately, Islam calls for a balance where loyalty to one's country is intertwined with loyalty to God.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمْنِيَّتَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

O ye who believe! prove not false to Allah and the Messenger, nor prove false to your trusts knowingly.³⁶³

This verse addresses the two fundamental loyalties that define a person's life: the unwavering and eternal loyalty to God, our Creator and Sustainer, and the loyalty to fellow human beings, which arises from the obligations we owe to them.

The verse commands Muslims to remain faithful both to the commandments of God and to the rights of others. A true Muslim is one who is loyal to God and just in his dealings with his fellow beings. Notably, the verse directly states, "prove not false to Allah," when referring to the duty towards God, while it uses the phrase "prove not false to

³⁶³ Surah Al Anfal 8:28

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your trusts" when addressing the duty towards others. This distinction emphasises that while our loyalty to God is absolute and eternal, rooted in our very creation, our loyalty to others is based on the specific trusts and obligations we undertake in our relationships with them. The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Man is endowed with two kinds of qualities. One of them is good ethics, that is, one should do his utmost in ensuring that no opportunity is missed in relation to fulfilling the trusts and covenants related to God Almighty.”³⁶⁴

Leaders and governments are urged to foster justice and truth, recognizing that true loyalty and peace are achieved through a collective acknowledgment of the Creator. If this divine connection is established, it will pave the way for unparalleled loyalty, peace, and security across the globe.

³⁶⁴ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence
<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/>

Chapter 8- Positivity and Peaceful Society

The creation of humanity, as symbolized by the creation of Adam, is imbued with profound purpose. It is not a mere act of existence but a deliberate intention to forge a single, unified nation—one that draws upon the boundless mercy (*rehm*) and grace (*fazal*) of God. This nation is envisioned as a collective that comes together in the pursuit of goodness, unified in their obedience and service to Allah, and bound by the principle of mutual assistance.

At the heart of this divine purpose is the formation of a moral community that stands as a beacon of righteousness, one that embodies the highest ideals of cooperation and solidarity. For this objective, small groups of virtuous individuals are preserved and protected, while those who deviate from this path of goodness are left to perish. This

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cyclical process of preservation and destruction, as alluded to in Surah Hud, serves as a reminder of the eternal struggle between good and evil, and the ultimate triumph of those who remain steadfast in their devotion.

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْدِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلِهَا مُصْلِحُونَ

And thy Lord would not destroy the cities unjustly while the people thereof were righteous.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَرِ الْأُنثَىٰ مُخْتَلِفِينَ

And if thy Lord had *enforced* His will, He would have surely made mankind one people; but they would not cease to differ,

إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ ۗ وَيَذُرِكَ خَلْقَهُمْ

Save those on whom thy Lord has had mercy, and for this has He created them.³⁶⁵

The term "مصلحون" (righteous) also carries the meaning of "making peace among themselves," highlighting that to avert divine punishment, people must strive for unity and concord. Decline and degradation only ensue when a community is fractured by dissension and moral decay.

³⁶⁵ Surah Hud 11:118-120

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This ethos, rooted in divine wisdom and mercy, is designed to establish peace among humankind. It promotes progress by fostering a sense of collective responsibility and trust, essential ingredients for the flourishing of any society. By encouraging individuals to unite in their worship of Allah and in their efforts to help one another, this purpose ensures that humanity not only survives but thrives, benefiting all of creation. Thus, the creation of humanity is not an end in itself, but a means to a higher, more noble existence—one that reflects the divine will and brings forth the best in humankind. Qur'an says:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

And help one another in righteousness and piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression.³⁶⁶

Righteousness in isolation, while commendable, is not the ultimate goal. The true aspiration is to cultivate a society grounded in collective righteousness—a community where goodness is not just an individual trait but a shared ethos.

The verse;

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

Except those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to *accept* truth, and exhort one another to be

³⁶⁶ Surah Al Maidah 5:3

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steadfast³⁶⁷; captures this essence beautifully. It urges believers to enjoin one another to truth and to steadfastness, underscoring the idea that righteousness flourishes in a community where individuals support and uplift each other in their pursuit of what is just and true.

The prayer:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَالْحَقِّقْ بِي الصَّالِحِينَ

My Lord, bestow wisdom on me and join me with the righteous;³⁶⁸—further emphasises the longing to be part of a society of the righteous, the "*salebeen*." This is not merely a plea for personal piety, but a desire to be surrounded by those who embody righteousness, creating a community where moral integrity and spiritual excellence are the norm.

Such a society of the "*salebeen*" is one where individuals are not content with their own righteousness alone but are deeply committed to the righteousness of the collective. It is a society where each person feels a responsibility towards the moral and spiritual well-being of others, fostering an environment where truth, patience, and justice prevail. This communal righteousness is the foundation of a benevolent

³⁶⁷ Surah Al Asr 103:4

³⁶⁸ Surah Ash Shuara 26:84

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and harmonious society, one that reflects the divine will and serves as a beacon of light for all humanity.

The promised Messiah (as) remarks on the conduct of a moral person, noting that their actions are guided by a deep sense of responsibility toward the welfare of others, embodying the principles that sustain a just and compassionate society. He delves into the root from which their virtues stem from—those concerned with the well-being of others and essential for nurturing a collective, moral society. He states:

“A person sometimes seeks to relieve the oppressed from the oppression of tyrants, or desires to make provision for the indigent and the hungry or wishes to serve his fellow beings in some other way, and corresponding to such action there is an inner quality which is designated mercy. Sometimes a person punishes a wrongdoer and corresponding to such action there is an inner quality which is called retribution. Sometimes a person does not wish to attack one who attacks him and forbears to take action against a wrongdoer, corresponding to which there is a quality which is called forbearance or endurance. Sometimes a person works with his hands or feet or employs his mind and intellect or his wealth in order to promote the welfare of his fellow beings, corresponding to which there is an inner

quality which is called benevolence. Thus, when a person exercises all these qualities on their proper occasions and at their proper places they are called moral qualities.”³⁶⁹

Retribution:

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوذِبَ بِهِ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ لِيُصْرَفَهُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَكَفُورٌ عَفُورٌ

That *shall be so*. And whoso retaliates with the like of that with which he has been afflicted and is then transgressed against, Allah will surely help him. Allah is indeed the Effacer of sins *and* is Forgiving.³⁷⁰

The Qur'an offers profound guidance on how to respond when oppressed or wronged. It acknowledges that those who have suffered injustice may seek retribution, but it emphasises that such retaliation must never exceed the bounds of fairness. The harm inflicted in return must mirror the harm received, no more, no less. The fear that the oppressor, being stronger, might retaliate with even greater force should not dissuade the wronged from defending themselves. In such circumstances, they are assured of divine support and protection, which will be granted abundantly.

³⁶⁹ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Philosophy of the teachings of Islam, pages 28-29, 2010, Islam International Publications Ltd

³⁷⁰ Surah Al Hajj 22:61

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Yet, the Qur'an also extols the virtues of mercy and forgiveness. It is far nobler, in the moment of triumph, to choose clemency over vengeance, thus emulating the Divine qualities of compassion and grace. From the verse, four crucial principles emerge:

1. Self-defence: Muslims are permitted and encouraged to defend themselves if attacked, but they must never initiate aggression.
2. Proportionality: In retaliation, they must ensure that their response is proportionate to the harm they have endured; any excess is forbidden.
3. Divine Judgment: Should they exceed these limits, they would themselves become transgressors, forfeiting the favour and protection of God.
4. Continued Aggression: If the offending party, after being justly punished, resumes its hostility, it is guilty of further aggression.

It is important to note that this guidance does not apply to personal vendettas or individual acts of retaliation. The Qur'an insists that justice must be sought through lawful and established authorities, and that individuals must not take the law into their own hands.

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Mercy:

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۚ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

And the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and his act brings about reformation, his reward is with Allah. Surely, He loves not the wrongdoers.

وَلَكِنَّ اتِّصَرَ بِعَدُوِّهِمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

But there is no blame on those who defend themselves after they have been wronged.

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

The blame is only on those who wrong men and transgress in the earth without justification. Such will have a grievous punishment.

وَلَكِنَّ صَبْرًا وَعَفْوًا ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

And he who is patient and forgives — that surely is a matter of strong determination.³⁷¹

The verse serves as a cornerstone of Islamic penal law, where the aim of punishment is the moral reformation of the guilty. Islamic teachings suggest that if forgiveness can lead to a

³⁷¹ Surah Ash Shura 42:41-44

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person's moral improvement, then it is the preferred path. However, if punishment is more likely to bring about reformation, then it must be administered, though it should never exceed the severity of the offense.

Islam rejects the extremes of turning the other cheek, as in monastic teachings, and the rigid application of "an eye for an eye" as prescribed in Jewish law. Instead, it embraces a balanced, pragmatic approach. Islamic principles of justice offer practical solutions to the complexities of law, economics, and morality. Islam not only grants the wronged party the right to seek redress but also considers self-defence a moral obligation. The Holy Prophet (sas) emphasised this by declaring, "He who is killed in defence of his property and honour is a martyr."³⁷²

This verse further clarifies that the fault lies not with those who seek justice for wrongs done to them, but with those who violate the rights of others, spreading mischief and disorder. Such transgressors will—and must—be held accountable. While Islam grants the aggrieved the full right to seek recompense, the highest virtue it recommends is patience and forgiveness.

³⁷² Bukhari, Kitabul-Mazalim wal ghasab

Peace-making:

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتِلُوا فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَعَثَ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْآخَرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا أَلَيْسَ
تَبَغْيًا حَتَّىٰ تَنفِرَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

And if two parties of believers fight *against each other*, make peace between them; then if *after that* one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the just.³⁷³

Qur'an provides a detailed framework of principles and guidelines designed to foster and sustain unity, cohesion and solidarity. One of the greatest threats to the stability and unity of a community or state arises from the potential disputes and conflicts that might emerge between different groups or factions. This verse offers a highly effective solution for resolving such conflicts.

Qur'an also differentiates between beneficial and harmful gatherings, providing a clear criterion for what constitutes a constructive conference or assembly.

³⁷³ Surah Al Hujurat 49:10

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لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

There is no good in many of their conferences except *the conferences of* such as enjoin charity, or goodness, or the making of peace among men. And whoso does that, seeking the pleasure of Allah, We shall soon bestow on him a great reward.³⁷⁴

The verse outlines that only three types of meetings can genuinely contribute to the common good. Firstly, those gatherings that are convened with the purpose of promoting the welfare of the poor, the needy, and the vulnerable. Such assemblies are aimed at fostering social justice and alleviating poverty, thereby serving the broader community.

Secondly, those whose objective is to advance the spread and propagation of knowledge, including the exploration and research into various sciences, laws, education, arts, and other fields of intellectual pursuit. These conferences are dedicated to the dissemination of wisdom and the pursuit of learning, which are essential for the progress and enlightenment of society.

³⁷⁴ Surah An Nisa 4:115

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Thirdly, those established with the intention of resolving disputes and eliminating sources of conflict in domestic, social, national, or international contexts. This category also encompasses organisations dedicated to managing the political affairs of a nation or country, as their ultimate aim is to foster peace and harmony among humankind.

The verse suggests that adherence to these principles in the conduct of meetings and conferences can play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining peace and harmony on a global scale. Such guidance, if followed with sincerity and dedication, has the potential to greatly contribute to the betterment of society and the world at large.

Forgive and turn away:

فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ

But forgive and turn away *from them*, till Allah brings about His decree.³⁷⁵

There exists a subtle yet significant distinction between the terms *Afw* (forgive) and *Safb* (turn away). While *Afw* implies refraining from exacting punishment, *Safb* conveys the notion of turning away or leaving something untouched. By employing these terms together, God urges Muslims not

³⁷⁵ Surah Baqarah 2:110

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only to forgive others and withhold retribution for their overtly hostile actions and covert schemes but also to distance themselves and remain detached from them until God Himself provides a resolution.

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِيُنْتَ لَهُمْ ۖ وَكَوُنتُمْ فِطْرًا غَلِيظًا لَّا تُنْفِضُوا مِن حَوْلِكَ ۖ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۚ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

And it is by the *great* mercy of Allah that thou art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough *and* hard-hearted, they would surely have dispersed from around thee. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them in matters *of administration*; and when thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah. Surely, Allah loves those who put their trust *in Him*.³⁷⁶

This verse provides profound insight into the exemplary character of the Holy Prophet (sas), highlighting his unparalleled mercy, a trait that defined his interactions with both followers and foes. His compassion extended even to those who sought to harm him, as exemplified by his decision to refrain from punishing the hypocrites who deserted him during the Battle of Uhud, and to even consult them in state matters.

³⁷⁶ Surah Aal e Imran 3:160

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The verse also effectively counters the hypocrites' claim that the Prophet (sas) disregarded their advice and acted solely according to his own will. The Qur'an refutes this accusation by stating that if the Prophet (sas) had not been kind and gentle, they would have abandoned him long ago. Their continued allegiance disproved their claims and underscored the Prophet's (sas) kindness and adherence to divine commands, which included consulting them on state affairs. This led many of them to repent and embrace Islam sincerely.

In an Islamic State, the Khalifah, or leader, is mandated to seek the counsel of representatives of the people when making decisions of significant national import. This practice not only enhances the wisdom and experience of those involved but also fosters their engagement and interest in state affairs. The Prophet (sas) frequently sought his companions' counsel, as seen before the Battles of Badr, Uhud, and Ahzab, and during the incident involving the false accusation against his wife, A'ishah (ra).

While the Prophet (sas) and subsequent Caliphs were required to seek advice, they were not bound to follow it. The final decision always rested with them, reflecting a balance between consultation and autonomous leadership. This is evident in instances where the Prophet (sas) chose to

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reject the majority's advice, such as in the treatment of the prisoners of Badr or the signing of the Treaty of *Hudaibiyyah*, while at other times, he accepted his followers' counsel, as before the Battle of Uhud.

The concept of complete trust in God is central to this discussion. In Islamic teaching, trust in God involves utilizing all available resources and then relying on divine will for success. The command to "put thy trust in Allah" in this context implies that while consultation is essential, ultimate trust must be placed in God, and not in human counsel alone.

The advantages of consultation are manifold: it allows the leader to understand the perspectives of his followers, aids in making informed decisions, provides training in governance for representative Muslims, helps assign tasks according to individual capabilities, and fosters an understanding of the community's aspirations and moral condition.

In essence, this verse underscores the importance of mercy, consultation, and trust in God as guiding principles for leadership in Islam, balancing the need for collective input with the autonomy of decisive leadership.

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إِنْ تُبْدُوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُوا عَنْ سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا

Whether you make public a good deed or conceal it, or pardon an evil, Allah is certainly the Effacer of sins, *and is All-Powerful.*³⁷⁷

As far as possible man should try to pardon the wrongs done him by his brethren; for is not God, before Whom all of us will one day stand, the great Pardoner and the Effacer of sins?

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

Take to forgiveness, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.³⁷⁸

The Holy Prophet (sas) exemplified an unmatched standard of patience and resilience. Yet Allah the Almighty instructed him to endure the persecution of his enemies with patience and to ensure that his followers do the same. Even when encircled by hostile enemies' intent on the destruction of Islam, the faith steadfastly adhered to its core principles of tolerance and mercy.

Qur'an beautifully illuminates the nobility of Prophet Joseph's (as) character, dedicating a Surah in his name. The

³⁷⁷ Surah An Nisa 4:150

³⁷⁸ Surah Al Araf 7:200

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verses of the surah immortalize his act of magnanimity towards his brothers. Without hesitation or allowing his brothers a moment to plead for forgiveness, Joseph (as) immediately dispelled their fears and anxieties, assuring them of his complete and unconditional pardon.

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمْ اَلْيَوْمَ يُعْفِرُ اللهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيْمِيْنَ

He said, 'No blame *shall lie* on you this day; may Allah forgive you! And He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.'³⁷⁹

Joseph's generous and large-hearted forgiveness of his brothers finds its greatest parallel in the life of the Holy Prophet (sas). Like Joseph(as), the Holy Prophet (sas) attained honour and power through trials of exile and banishment. When, after years of hardship, he returned to his birthplace as a conqueror, leading ten thousand Companions, and with Mecca lying humbled before him, he asked the people what treatment they anticipated from him. They invoked the memory of Joseph's mercy toward his brothers, and in response, the Prophet (sas) declared, "Go, you are all free. No blame shall lie on you this day; may Allah also forgive you."³⁸⁰

³⁷⁹ Surah Yusuf 12:93

³⁸⁰ Hisham

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In the context of seeking Divine forgiveness, Qur'an teaches that seeking verbal forgiveness, while a significant first step, is merely the beginning of a journey towards true redemption. To genuinely embrace forgiveness, one must go beyond mere words and actively strive to transform one's life. It is not enough to seek absolution with our lips; we must also commit to a path of righteousness, taking deliberate steps towards becoming better, purer versions of ourselves.

This transformation requires more than passive remorse—it demands active engagement with the principles of goodness. We must turn our repentance into a resolve to leave behind old habits, to break free from the chains of past misdeeds, and to embrace a new life filled with virtue. It is in this active pursuit of a better self that we find the essence of true forgiveness.

God's mercy, infinite and encompassing, is ever ready to embrace those who seek it. But it is not granted lightly; it is bestowed upon those whose intent is genuine, and whose actions reflect that sincerity. When we align our deeds with our desire for forgiveness, when our actions speak as loudly as our prayers, then we open ourselves to the full grace of divine mercy.

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In this process, we are not simply seeking to erase the past, but to build a future that is more aligned with the ideals of goodness and righteousness. Each step we take towards becoming a better person is a step towards the fulfilment of our potential as moral beings, capable of reflecting the divine light in our lives. Thus, forgiveness becomes not just a moment of absolution, but the beginning of a new and pure life—one marked by continuous growth, improvement, and an unwavering commitment to goodness.

Cleansing the public spaces:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

And who shun all that which is vain,³⁸¹

Avoiding vain talk, thoughts, and actions is essential, for life is a grave and significant reality that demands seriousness. A believer must use every moment meaningfully and steer clear of futile and unproductive pursuits that contribute nothing to their own well-being or to the welfare of their community and country. This conscientious avoidance of empty activities is a natural consequence of the humility cultivated through sincere prayer, as underscored by another verse of the Qur'an.

³⁸¹ Surah Al Muminun 23:4

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أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ
الْكَبِيرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book, and observe Prayer. Surely, Prayer restrains *one* from indecency and manifest evil, and remembrance of Allah indeed is the greatest *virtue*. And Allah knows what you do.³⁸²

The verse delineates three fundamental practices: preaching and reciting the Qur'an, observing prayer, and remembering Allah. Each of these practices aims to liberate humanity from sin and elevate them both morally and spiritually, reflecting the core objective of all Divine scriptures. The essence of revealed religions is to instil a profound belief in a Supreme Being to whom we are accountable for our deeds in an afterlife. This belief serves as a powerful deterrent against evil inclinations and actions.

The Qur'an frequently revisits the themes of God's existence, His immense power, glory, and love, emphasising Divine remembrance as central. The Islamic Prayer embodies the most complete form of this remembrance. When performed with sincerity and adherence to its essential conditions, prayer leads to purity of both mind and actions.

³⁸² Surah Al Ankabut 29:46

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وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَأَعْمَالُكُمْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا نَبْتَغِي الْجَاهِلِينَ

And when they hear vain talk, they turn away from it and say, 'Unto us our works and unto you your works. Peace be to you. We seek not the ignorant.'³⁸³

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي حَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ

Who sportingly indulge in idle talk.³⁸⁴

مَا سَأَلَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ

'What has brought you into the Fire of Hell?'

وَكُنَّا نَحْوُ مَعَ الْخَاطِئِينَ

'And we indulged in objectionable talk with those who indulge therein.'³⁸⁵

In a sitting with Waqfeen e nau, Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (aba) was once asked about people who pride themselves on "saying things how they are," even when their words are hurtful. In response, Huzoor (aba) explained that bluntness is not a virtue, particularly when it causes harm.

³⁸³ Surah Al Qasas 28:56

³⁸⁴ Surah At Tur 52:13

³⁸⁵ Surah Al Muddaththir 74:43 & 46

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He illustrated this with the example of an ignorant man who criticised the clothes of Hazrat Umar (ra). This man was not remembered as a great companion, but rather as someone foolish. It was Hazrat Umar's (ra) remarkable patience that allowed him to tolerate such behaviour. Similarly, Huzoor (aba) recounted an incident where a man tried to strangle the Holy Prophet (sas) by wrapping a cloth around his neck. Despite the man's aggression, the Holy Prophet (sas) responded with patience, recognizing the act as one of ignorance.

Huzoor (aba) emphasised that those who lack the wisdom to speak respectfully should not be considered praiseworthy. He advised that when offering guidance or correction, it should be done with pure intentions and in a manner that encourages positive change, rather than provoking defensiveness. Huzoor (aba) stressed the importance of good morals, urging that interactions should be marked by respect and dignity, avoiding the reckless speech of the ignorant.³⁸⁶

Etiquette of public discourse:

Evil individuals are characterized by their malevolent actions and their involvement in scandalous and vulgar speech. In

³⁸⁶ <https://www.alhakam.org/finland-waqifeen-and-waqifaat-e-nau-meet-hazrat-khalifatul-masih/>

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contrast, those who are virtuous and morally upright are distinguished by their commitment to righteous deeds and the expression of pure and noble words.

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوِّءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَن ظَلِمَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا

Allah likes not the uttering of unseemly speech in public, except *on the part of* one who is *being* wronged. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.³⁸⁷

Islam advises against public disparagement of individuals, emphasising that a wronged person should not engage in widespread complaints that could foster ill will and disrupt communal harmony. Instead, if someone is being wronged, they are permitted to express their grievance and seek support from others or pursue justice through legal channels. However, publicizing grievances is discouraged as it may incite animosity and disturb the peace, which the Qur'an unequivocally rejects.

The verse underscores that, despite the right to seek justice, patience and restraint are preferable. Even when wronged, one should remember that Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Thus, seeking justice through lawful means or

³⁸⁷ Surah An Nisa 4:149

through prayer to God for relief and guidance is both a righteous and preferable course of action.

Bravery, Courage and Resolve:

The Promised Messiah (as) explains:

“A person must not lose hope. Determination is also a high moral quality, and a believer is characterised by high resolve. One ought to always be ready to serve and support the faith, and should never show cowardice, for cowardice is the mark of a hypocrite. A believer is gallant and courageous, but courage does not imply that they lack good judgement. Any action done without appropriate consideration of the prevailing circumstances is recklessness.

A believer is free from haste. In fact, a believer remains prepared to serve the faith with immense sagacity and forbearance and is never cowardly.”³⁸⁸

The Qur'an exalts the virtues of high resolve, courage, and steadfastness, holding them as noble qualities that every believer should aspire to embody. These traits are the hallmarks of a deep and unwavering faith, a true reflection of trust in Allah. They are the pillars upon which a believer's spiritual strength is built, manifesting a commitment to

³⁸⁸ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Malfuzat-Volume 2, p.15, 2019, Islam International Publications Ltd

righteousness and an unshakeable confidence in the Divine. In cultivating these virtues, a believer not only strengthens their own faith but also mirrors the profound trust and reliance upon Allah that lies at the heart of true devotion.

وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانَا سُبُلَنَا ۗ وَنُصَبِّرَنَّ عَلَى مَا آذَيْنُونَنَا ۗ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

‘And why should we not put our trust in Allah when He has showed us our ways? And we will, surely, bear with patience *all* the harm you do us. So in Allah let those who trust put their trust.’³⁸⁹

The expression "when He has showed us our ways" alludes to the profound truth that Divine law comprises only those commandments that serve the ultimate welfare of humanity, with "our ways" referring to the paths that facilitate all forms of human progress.

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهِ ۗ وَكُنْ بِمَذْنُوبٍ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا

And trust thou in the Living One, Who dies not, and glorify *Him* with His praise. And sufficient is He as the Knower of the sins of His servants,³⁹⁰

³⁸⁹ Surah Ibrahim 14:13

³⁹⁰ Surah Al Furqan 25:59

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Qur'an declares that what anxiety or despair could possibly disrupt the serenity and inner strength of a true believer, who, amidst the harshest of trials, harbours an unshakable faith in the Supreme Creator and Sustainer of the universe?

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Verily, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast — no fear *shall come* upon them, nor shall they grieve.³⁹¹

Suppression of Rage:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُظَيْبِ وَالْعَافِيَةِ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Those who spend in prosperity and adversity, and those who suppress anger and pardon men; and Allah loves those who do good;³⁹²

The verse delineates a progressive approach to dealing with offenses, encapsulating three stages of conduct. In the initial stage, a believer, when affronted, exercises self-restraint by suppressing his anger. In the subsequent stage, he extends forgiveness, granting pardon to the wrongdoer. In the final

³⁹¹ Surah Al Ahqaf 46:14

³⁹² Surah Aal e Imran 3:135

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stage, he goes beyond mere forgiveness by performing an act of kindness, offering additional favour to the offender.

An illuminating example of these stages is found in the life of Hazrat Hasan (ra), the son of Hazrat Ali (ra) and grandson of the Holy Prophet (sas). On one occasion, a slave of Hazrat Hasan (ra) committed an offense, provoking his initial anger and prompting him to consider punishment. However, upon the slave reciting the first part of the verse, “those who suppress anger,” Hazrat Hasan (ra) halted his decision, reflecting on the command to restrain anger. When the slave continued with, “and pardon men,” he promptly forgave him, expressing his willingness to pardon. Finally, as the slave recited the concluding portion of the verse, “and Allah loves those who do good,” Hazrat Hasan (ra), moved by the Divine directive, set the slave free, declaring, “You are a freeman; go where you wish.”

Qur’an says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ

And who eschew the more grievous sins and indecencies, and, when they are wroth, they forgive,

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

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And those who hearken to their Lord, and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are *decided* by mutual consultation, and who spend out of what We have provided for them,

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ

And those who, when a wrong is done to them, defend themselves.³⁹³

The phrase “grievous sins and indecencies” broadly encompasses all varieties of moral failings and transgressions. Yet, anger is explicitly highlighted, for it frequently serves as the root of many sins when allowed to escalate unchecked. The Promised Messiah (as) says:

“One should always abstain from inner passions for such a thing causes one to fall prey to the attack of Satan.³⁹⁴ Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Qur’an:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْكُلُوبِ الْعَظِيمِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

³⁹³ Surah Ash Shura 42: 38-40

³⁹⁴ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence
<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/>

“Those who spend in prosperity and adversity, and those who suppress anger and pardon men; and Allah loves those who do good.”³⁹⁵

On one occasion, whilst advising how one can overcome ego and anger, the Holy Prophet (sas) stated that a strong person is not one who wrestles the other to the ground, rather the strong one is he who controls himself when he is angry.³⁹⁶

In another narration Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that someone asked the Holy Prophet (sas) to grant him a piece of advice. Upon this, the Holy Prophet (sas) stated that he should not become consumed by anger. He continued asking for advice and the Holy Prophet (sas) gave him the same response in that he should not become angry.³⁹⁷

The Promised Messiah (as) explains, “This is a branch of Taqwa through which we have to do battle against unjustified anger and rage. Safeguarding oneself against anger is the toughest test in the final stages of their path to success, even for great people of truth and knowledge. Pride and arrogance develop from the emotion of anger and sometimes anger itself is the result of pride and arrogance as

³⁹⁵ Surah Aal-e- ‘Imran, 3:135

³⁹⁶ Sahih al-Bukhari Kitab al-Adab Hadith 6114

³⁹⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari Kitab al-Adab Hadith 6116

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anger comes to the fore when one gives oneself preference over others.³⁹⁸

We must avoid not only physical but also verbal and emotional harm, controlling anger, jealousy, and malice to foster compassion and harmony. True believers are called to manage emotions and refrain from oppression or quarrels, as these undermine faith and relationships. The Promised Messiah (as) taught that one's faith is validated by putting others' comfort before one's own. The essence of good conduct lies in the conscious effort to avoid harming others, whether through actions, words, or thoughts, and in fostering an environment of mutual respect and benevolence.³⁹⁹

The human struggle against negativity is a battle as old as time itself. Among the most corrosive of human emotions is anger, a force that divides, corrupts, and drives the soul towards sin. From anger springs jealousy, backbiting, greed, and a host of other vices, each taking root in the fertile soil of unchecked emotion.

Anger, like a corrosive acid, eats away at the soul that harbours it, eroding peace and clarity. Its destructive force turns inward, damaging the bearer far more than the

³⁹⁸ Malfoozat Vol1, Urdu 1988, pp22-23

³⁹⁹ <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/printer-friendly-summary-2012-06-01.html>

intended target. In the face of this destructive force, humanity has sought various ways to temper its wrath. Some turn to professional help, others channel their emotions into physical activity or creative pursuits. Yet, Islam offers a unique remedy—an annual, 30-day spiritual regimen designed to teach self-control and inner peace.

Fasting in Islam goes far beyond abstaining from food, drink, and physical pleasures. It is a holistic discipline that commands the believer to strive for self-improvement. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) emphasised this broader purpose of fasting when he said, ‘Fasting is a shield; when one of you is fasting, he should neither behave in an obscene manner nor foolishly. If a man fights or abuses him, he should say: I am fasting, I am fasting.’⁴⁰⁰

The month of Ramadan, therefore, is not merely a period of physical restraint, but a time for curbing anger and fostering tranquillity. The Promised Messiah (as) highlighted the profound challenge of overcoming anger, stating:

‘To refrain from anger is the ultimate and most arduous stage for many wise men and pious individuals. Arrogance and pride are borne out of anger. One only becomes angry when

⁴⁰⁰ Sunan Abi Dawud, The Book of Fasting, Chapter on a Fasting Person Backbiting, Hadith 2263. 10. Friday Sermon, Delivered 18 May 2018, <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/printer-friendly-summary-2018-05-18.html>

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he considers himself to be superior to the other. I do not wish for the members of my community to consider others to be superior or inferior, or to look upon others with conceit and disdain.⁴⁰¹

Indeed, when anger is misdirected, it breeds immorality, poisoning the fabric of society. But Ramadan champions the art of conflict resolution. The sanctity of the fast demands that Muslims refrain from obscene language and provocative behaviour. If confronted with a dispute, the fasting person is encouraged to simply state, "I am fasting," and withdraw from the argument.

In this way, Ramadan serves as a profound reminder of the power of restraint, teaching that true strength lies not in the expression of anger, but in the ability to control it. Through fasting, the believer learns to rise above the pettiness of conflict, fostering a society built on mutual respect and peace.

Speaking on the virtues of suppressing anger and fostering forgiveness, Huzoor (aba) articulated that Allah the Almighty has reserved the promise of paradise for those who forgive

⁴⁰¹ Friday Sermon, Delivered 18 May 2018, <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/printer-friendly-summary-2018-05-18.html>

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and overlook the faults of others, emphasising that such behaviour is dearly loved by Allah.

Huzoor (aba) emphasised the transformative impact of replacing anger and resentment with humility, kindness, and gentleness. He recalled the teachings of the Holy Prophet (sas) on fostering love through giving gifts, suggesting that such actions enhance fraternity within the community.

Huzoor (aba) clarified that the suppression of anger and avoidance of vengeance holds such significant spiritual rewards that they surpass many other deeds. He underscored the critical nature of these practices in attaining the blessings of Allah and in avoiding the hard-heartedness that erodes kindness and impedes the believers from exemplifying the high moral standards set by the Promised Messiah (as). Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih (aba) said:

“Those who harbour any grudges against one another should use these days to seek forgiveness and resolve their differences. By sincerely forgiving each other and removing all bitterness, we can establish a beautiful Islamic society. Otherwise, the purpose of doing the *bai'at* of the Promised Messiah (as) will not be fulfilled.”

Huzoor (aba) further underscored that a key attribute of believers, as stated by Allah, is to exhibit tenderness and

mercy towards each other (*ruhama'u baynahum*). Huzoor (aba) recounted a promise from Allah mentioned in a hadith: On the Day of Judgement, those who have loved each other for the sake of Allah's glory will be granted refuge in His merciful shade, a place where no other shade exists.⁴⁰²

The Dangers of Intoxication, Gambling and Addictions in Light of Islamic Teachings:

Islam's stance on these matters is distinctive. Unlike other religious traditions where alcohol might play a role in certain rituals, Islam is unequivocal in its prohibition, recognizing the profound harm that outweighs any potential benefit. The remarkable success of this prohibition in 7th-century Arabia, where a society steeped in drinking transformed into one of teetotallers, underscores the deep influence of Islamic teachings.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ

O ye who believe! wine and the game of hazard and idols and divining arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So shun *each one of* them that you may prosper.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² Inaugural Address by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V at Jalsa Salana UK 2024
<https://www.alhakam.org/inaugural-address-jalsa-uk-2024/>

⁴⁰³ Surah Al Maidah 5:91

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يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ ۖ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا

They ask thee concerning wine and the game of hazard. Say: 'In both there is great sin and also *some* advantages for men; but their sin is greater than their advantage.'⁴⁰⁴

The term *Khamr* refers to substances that obscure or impair the intellect, such as wine and other intoxicants, which are known to affect the brain's ability to control and judge. Alcohol, in particular, is recognised for its detrimental effects on health, behaviour, and moral conduct. It impairs judgment, lowers resistance to disease, and contributes significantly to crime and moral degeneration. The adverse effects extend to the offspring of alcoholics, manifesting in various forms of physical and mental degeneration.

Gambling, similarly, is a harmful practice rooted in the pursuit of easy wealth without the effort of honest labour. It fosters anti-social behaviour, cultivates greed, and leads to moral and social decay. The desire for quick gains through gambling disregards ethical standards and undermines societal stability.

Islam's prohibition of intoxicants and gambling is grounded in its recognition of their overwhelming harm despite any

⁴⁰⁴ Surah Al Baqarah 2:220

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potential benefits. Unlike other religions or societal attempts to address these issues, Islam's ban has been notably effective, as evidenced by historical transformations in Arabia.

Intriguingly, Islam links their absolute prohibition to the advancement of humanity. It posits that true progress can only be achieved when these practices are entirely forsaken. In Islam's view, the path to human flourishing is paved with the renunciation of these harmful behaviours, suggesting that the full potential of humanity can only be realised in their absence.

Islam's approach is also notable for its nuanced view: it does not condemn things heedlessly but evaluates their impact. It acknowledges any minor benefits but prohibits practices when their harms far outweigh their advantages. This principle is consistent with Islam's broader ethical framework, which emphasises the importance of weighing good against harm.

In Islamic thought, the prohibition of alcohol and gambling is far from arbitrary; it is a profound recognition of the inherent dangers these vices pose to the individual and society. The Arabic term *Khamar*, which stems from *Khamarush-Shai'a*—meaning "to veil or cover up"—captures

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the essence of how intoxicants, especially wine, obscure the intellect and distort the senses. Though traditionally associated with grape wine, *Khamar* extends to all intoxicants, underlining their power to cloud judgment and provoke irrational behaviour. Islam, in its wisdom, acknowledges that while these substances may offer brief moments of pleasure, they ultimately unleash far greater harm.

Similarly, gambling, known as *Maisar* in Arabic, is prohibited in Islam for its corrupting influence on the soul and society. The term *Aisarar-Rajulu*, meaning "man became well off," reflects the gambler's desire for quick and easy wealth, bypassing the honourable path of hard work and honest earnings. Like alcohol, gambling is inherently antisocial, fostering greed and eroding empathy. It is an insidious habit that isolates individuals and cultivates a hardened egoism, leading to a gradual deterioration of character.

In these prohibitions, Islam offers a timeless wisdom: that the fleeting pleasures of alcohol and gambling are far outweighed by the lasting harm they inflict, both on the individual and the society at large.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَلْزَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ

O ye who believe! wine and the game of hazard and idols and divining arrows are only an abomination of Satan's

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handiwork. So shun *each one of* them that you may prosper.

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ

Satan desires only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of wine and the game of hazard, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from Prayer. But will you keep back?⁴⁰⁵

The term "abomination" is derived from the Arabic word "رجس" (rijs), which connotes something unclean, dirty, or filthy, and by extension, something detestable or despised or to something inherently loathsome due to its impurity. It also implies performing an evil or abominable action. It may signify a sin or crime, an act that invites punishment, or even unbelief and infidelity. In a more abstract sense, it can also denote the whisperings of the devil, or a noise or disturbance that disrupts peace.⁴⁰⁶

The text offers additional reasons for their prohibition, which are grounded in political, social, spiritual, and socio-religious concerns. These concerns are subtly expressed through the phrases "enmity and hatred," and "keeping back from the remembrance of Allah and from Prayer."

⁴⁰⁵ Surah Al Maidah 5:91-92

⁴⁰⁶ As explained by Lane and Aqrab

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Qur'an refers to the devastating impact these vices have on the very fabric of society. Intoxicants and drugs are not merely personal failings; they are deeply intertwined with antisocial behaviour, tearing at the seams of communal life. These substances do not simply destroy the individual; they unravel the bonds that hold society together, attacking its most fundamental unit—the home. Marriages crumble, relationships fracture, and the innocent—children, parents, and loved ones—find themselves ensnared in a cycle of destruction and despair.

The statistics are harrowing. Nearly 85% of domestic violence crimes are rooted in drug abuse.⁴⁰⁷ When a person falls prey to addiction, the delicate balance of their mind is disrupted. The chemicals within their brain are rewired, driving them to seek the substance above all else, heedless of the consequences. This alteration in brain chemistry often manifests as irrational, violent, or controlling behaviour, particularly within intimate relationships. The home, once a sanctuary, becomes a battleground, and the echoes of this turmoil ripple outward, leaving scars not only on those directly involved but on the very society that witnesses and endures the fallout.

⁴⁰⁷ <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/police-pilots-find-high-levels-of-drug-use-in-domestic-abuse-offenders>

In this way, the vice of addiction becomes a corrosive force, eroding trust, safety, and the sense of community, leaving in its wake a trail of devastation that spreads far beyond the individual, seeping into the collective soul of society.

Dangers of Alcohol:

In many countries, alcohol has woven itself seamlessly into the fabric of both social and professional life. At formal dinners, wine is often the drink of choice, while social gatherings frequently revolve around the shared experience of drinking. For many, the presence of alcohol is considered a natural and accepted aspect of daily life, with its use being the norm rather than the exception—except, of course, for those who grapple with the affliction of alcoholism.

The dangers of alcoholism have been well-documented throughout history. Alcohol is not just a personal vice; it is a significant contributor to disease, mortality, and social decay. Despite being consumed by 2.4 billion people worldwide (equivalent to one in three people), of whom 400 million suffer from an alcohol-related disorder,⁴⁰⁸ alcohol is perceived as just another routine of daily life. Statistics bear witness to the fact that the devastating impact of alcohol consumption on human civilisation is no myth and is

⁴⁰⁸ <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/>

becoming increasingly apparent as society continuously fails in its attempts to control drinking.

In the UK, one in six patients attends the emergency department due to acute alcohol intoxication. Around the Christmas festivities, as many as 70% of hospital attendances can be alcohol-related, according to NHS England.⁴⁰⁹ The Global Burden of Disease Study 2016 ranked alcohol as the seventh leading cause for death and in 2016 alcohol use led to 2.8 million deaths. In the UK, 10 million adults regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol each week – it is estimated that alcohol and other life-style-related factors may lead to 63,000 preventable deaths over the next five years.⁴¹⁰

In the United States from 2006 to 2010, excessive alcohol use led to nearly 88,000 deaths each year—making alcohol consumption America’s third leading preventable cause of death.⁴¹¹ More recently, a large study carried out in the U.S. found that “roughly three in ten U.S. adults have a drinking problem or have misused alcohol at some point in the

⁴⁰⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/dec/29/were-not-the-national-hangover-service-nhs-boss-warns-revellers>

⁴¹⁰ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32866-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)32866-0/fulltext)

⁴¹¹ CDC – Fact Sheets-Alcohol Use And Health – Alcohol,” accessed 14 January, 2016, <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>.

“Alcohol Facts and Statistics.” National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Mar. 2015. Web. 8 Dec. 2015, <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>.

past.”⁴¹² Globally, alcohol misuse is the fifth leading risk factor for premature death and disability, and among people between the ages of 15 and 49, it is the first.⁴¹³

While the harms associated with high and frequent alcohol consumption have been well-understood, recently emerging evidence demonstrates that even light-to-moderate alcohol consumption is associated with physical, psychological and social harm to individuals and society.⁴¹⁴ The guideline published by the UK's Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies, stated that there is "no safe level of alcohol consumption".⁴¹⁵ Alcohol-use disorders, cardiovascular disease, pancreatitis, liver cirrhosis, and mental health issues are all closely linked to alcohol. Even then, alcohol consumption has been increasing in some parts of the world such as India and China; and more worryingly, alcohol consumption in younger people is on the rise. With nearly 2 billion people consuming alcoholic beverages regularly, this is a self-inflicted, preventable and modifiable risk-factor for acute and chronic ill-health.

⁴¹² "Three in 10 American Adults Have a Drinking Problem: Study." NY Daily News, 8 June 2015, <https://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/10-american-adults-drinking-problem-study-article-1.2250854>.

⁴¹³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/alcohol>

⁴¹⁴ DJ Nutt, LA King and LD Phillips, "Drug Harms in the UK: A Multicriteria Decision Analysis," *The Lancet* 376, 9752 (November 2010):1558-1565.

⁴¹⁵ <https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/the-lancet-alcohol-associated-2-8-million-deaths-annually-worldwide/>

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The connection between alcoholism and crime is also undeniable, with a substantial percentage of criminals being habitual drinkers. It is a factor in around 39% of all violent crimes in England and 49% in Wales, as well as contributing to public disorder and anti-social behaviour in communities across the country. Furthermore, there is an enormous amount of hidden harm associated with alcohol – through its role in exacerbating domestic and intimate partner violence, child neglect and the abuse of vulnerable individuals.⁴¹⁶

200,000 children in the UK are estimated to live with an alcohol-dependent parent, making them five times more likely to develop eating disorders and three times as likely to consider suicide. Some children are harmed even before they are born. Exposure to alcohol in the womb can cause foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, a lifelong developmental condition found in up to 17% of UK children.⁴¹⁷

The destruction wrought by alcohol stems primarily from its effects on the nervous system. While initial consumption may bring about a false sense of well-being and lower inhibitions, increased consumption leads to sensory

⁴¹⁶ <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-crime-and-disorder>

⁴¹⁷ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-04-22/debates/DC307679-EA51-43C7-B981-0B5F741427D2/AlcoholHarmCommissionReport2020>

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impairment and a loss of control over both body and mind. In advanced stages of intoxication, alcohol paralyzes the higher faculties of judgment and morality, paving the way for impulsive and often harmful actions. This erosion of moral and intellectual faculties inevitably results in ethical breaches and unlawful behaviour, as individuals lose their capacity for responsible conduct.

Islamic Guidance:

Muslims are guided to evaluate matters with a clear and objective lens, making choices where the benefits surpass the potential harms. The wisdom behind Islam's prohibition of alcohol is rooted in these sound principles of discernment and the careful weighing of harm against benefit. Islam, in its profound understanding, acknowledges that even in what is forbidden, there may exist some beneficial properties. It teaches us to harness these positives, no matter how small, for the greater good. Thus, while Islam strictly forbids the consumption of alcohol as a social drink, it permits its use in other contexts, such as in pharmaceuticals where its properties as a solvent can be of value. In this way, Islam encourages the mindful and purposeful use of all things, aligning choices with the overarching aim of minimizing harm and maximizing benefit.

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Islamic teachings hold that if a substance proves harmful in large doses, it should be entirely avoided. Thus, the Holy Prophet (sas) is reported to have said, ‘Every intoxicant is unlawful and whatever causes intoxication in large amounts, a small amount of it is (also) unlawful.’⁴¹⁸ The followers of the Prophet Muhammad (sas) are forbidden from brewing, serving, selling or storing alcohol.⁴¹⁹

Recognizing the destructive consequences of alcohol consumption, Islam sought to protect society from its devastating effects. Evaluating the numerous destructive consequences of alcohol consumption, the Promised Messiah (as) explains:

‘The Shari’ah (Islamic law) has clearly settled that those things which are harmful to health are also harmful to faith – and the chief (of all such harmful things) is alcohol.’⁴²⁰

As our understanding deepens, it becomes increasingly clear that the harms of alcohol far surpass any perceived benefits. The words of the reformer of our age, the Promised Messiah (as) are particularly relevant here:

⁴¹⁸ Sunan Ibn Majah, Kitab-ul-Ashribah, Book 30, No. 3392

⁴¹⁹ Sunan Abi Dawud, Kitab-ul-Ashribah, Book 27, No. 6

⁴²⁰ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Malfuzat Vol. 3, p. 292, 1984, The Gresham Press

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‘Many times, it happens that if a certain thing is not widespread enough, then its effects cannot be known. Take for instance the prevalence of alcohol nowadays in places like Europe – if this prevalence did not occur, then how could its negative effects become manifest, from which the world today seeks refuge? And by its prevalence, the beauty of Islam and the Messenger (sas) of Islam is revealed, who stopped this vice and deemed it unlawful.’⁴²¹

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) is reported to have stated, “Wine (alcohol) is the mother of all sins, and whosoever drinks it, Allah will not accept his prayers for a period of forty days; and if such a one dies while there is alcohol in his stomach, he dies a death of ignorance.”⁴²²

Today, the pervasive unrest caused by alcohol consumption and its detrimental effects on society reflects a deep yearning for reform. Amidst this turbulence, Islam offers a solution to this crisis, standing as a beacon of how society can effectively liberate itself from the chains of alcoholism once and for all. The Promised Messiah (as) reminds us that:

‘Unlike the Gospel, the Qur’an does not permit its followers to drink alcohol, so long as they are not intoxicated by it.

⁴²¹ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Malfuzat Vol. 3, (London, 1984), 405

⁴²² Hadith ‘an shuyukh abi Muhammad ba’labaki, Hadith No. 43

Rather, it forbids its consumption completely. Otherwise, you would be lost from the path that leads to God and His converse, nor would God cleanse such a person of their impurities. The Qur'an says that such things are the invention of Satan, and you should guard yourself against them.⁴²³

Recreational drug use, he explains, affects not only the individual but also undermines the fabric of society as a whole. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

‘All those wealthy persons who consume alcohol also carry the sins of the people who intoxicate themselves under their influence. You who claim to possess understanding! Know that this world is not eternal, so take hold of yourselves. Eschew all immoderation and abstain from every type of intoxicant. It is not alcohol alone that ruins a person. Opium, ganja, charas, bhang, tarhi and all other addictions are similarly destructive. They ruin the mind and destroy lives. So, shun all such substances. I cannot understand why one would choose to indulge in these intoxicants when, year on year, they claim the lives of thousands of addicts – not to mention the torment of the hereafter.’⁴²⁴

⁴²³ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *Noah's Ark*, p. 47, 2016, Islam International Publications Ltd

⁴²⁴ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *Noah's Ark*, p. 114-115, 2016, Islam International Publications Ltd

Gambling:

The harm of gambling lies in its fundamental premise: acquiring wealth without labour, violating the moral principle of equivalent exchange. It is, in essence, a form of robbery by mutual consent, driven by disguised covetousness. This appeal to chance over merit subverts the moral order and undermines the stability of life, diverting attention from worthier pursuits. The anti-social nature of gambling is evident in its outcomes—suicides, thefts, and bankruptcies—all stark reminders of its destructive potential.

His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) explains in this regard:

“It is prohibited because it is a means of recklessly wasting a person’s fairly earned and honest income or wealth... Rather, than seeking dishonest ‘easy money’ through gambling, you should seek to earn a living in a fair and honest fashion. Remember, that a true *Khadim* is he who works hard, with honesty and integrity at all times.”⁴²⁵

⁴²⁵ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/44905/soccabet-and-the-ghanaian-youth/>

The dangers of gambling:

Research suggests that casino companies exploit the vulnerabilities of their patrons with calculated precision. The design of casinos deliberately excludes all outside light, distorting the sense of time, and no clocks are present to remind players of the hours slipping by. Alcohol is readily available, and the constant sounds of people “winning” create a false sense of easy success.

Highlighting the insidious nature of slot machines, one researcher remarked, “No other form of gambling manipulates the human mind as ‘beautifully’ as these machines.”⁴²⁶

As a result, some pathological gamblers who find themselves bankrupt have taken legal action against casinos, arguing that by extending credit and offering free suites and alcohol, these companies knowingly preyed on individuals who had lost control of their habits.⁴²⁷

Gambling addiction:

While addiction is often misunderstood as being limited to substances like drugs or alcohol, the World Health

⁴²⁶ The New York Times Magazine, 9, May 2004

⁴²⁷ “How Casinos Enable Gambling Addicts”, The Atlantic Magazine, December 2016, www.theatlantic.com

Organisation (WHO) now recognises that it extends far beyond. In fact, the WHO has classified gaming and gambling as disorders, acknowledging their profound impact on mental health.⁴²⁸

Online gambling:

Online gambling poses an even greater risk than traditional gambling, with compelling evidence pointing to its heightened dangers. Research indicates that online gamblers exhibit higher rates of addiction compared to their traditional counterparts.⁴²⁹ The ease and anonymity of online platforms often lead to severe consequences, including the complete dismantling of one's lifestyle. Disturbingly, a study has identified a direct link between online sports betting and suicide.⁴³⁰

Alcohol and Gambling:

Qur'an in its profound wisdom addressed gambling and Alcohol simultaneously. Interestingly, both historical texts and modern research link wine and gambling, suggesting a deeper connection. Studies have found that gambling, especially problematic gambling, is more prevalent among individuals with alcohol use disorders.⁴³¹ Furthermore,

⁴²⁸ www.who.int/health-topics/addictive-behaviour#tab=tab_3

⁴²⁹ New Media & Society, 2007

⁴³⁰ Psicologia della Salute, 2020

⁴³¹ Alcohol Health and Research World, Vol. 26 Issue 2

researchers express concern that pathological gambling becomes significantly harder to treat when compounded with alcohol use.⁴³²

Dangers of sports betting:

According to the UK Gambling Commission, online football betting alone generated £1.1 billion in 2022, making it the most lucrative sector in sports betting by a significant margin—and that's just within the UK. Globally, the gambling industry is thriving, with projections estimating its market value will soar to \$876 billion by 2026.⁴³³

Sports betting, while often seen as a thrilling pastime, harbours significant dangers that can have profound effects on individuals and society. Firstly, it is inherently addictive. However, the consequences of this addiction extend beyond the act of betting itself. Those who frequently engage in sports betting often see a decline in productivity at work. Obsessed with tracking games and trends to improve their chances of winning, they divert attention from their professional responsibilities, leading to a decrease in performance and overall productivity.

Moreover, sports betting fosters a mindset of laziness. The ease with which one can potentially earn money through

⁴³² Journal of Substance Use, Vol. 25, Issue 4

⁴³³ Global Gambling Industry, October 2022

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betting—without the need for hard work—can diminish the value of legitimate, law-abiding income. Individuals who experience significant wins may become disinclined to pursue honest labour, relying instead on the unpredictable rewards of betting.

Finally, the emotional rollercoaster of winning and losing in sports betting can lead to depression. The highs of a successful bet are often short-lived, and the inevitable losses that follow can plunge bettors into despair. Repeated failures, especially when significant sums of money are at stake, can push individuals into a deep depression, underscoring the mental health risks associated with this seemingly harmless activity.

Addictions of this era:

In the modern world, addiction wears many faces, ranging from substance dependencies like alcohol, cocaine, and methamphetamine, to behavioural compulsions such as gaming, pornography, gambling, and even excessive mobile phone use. Dr. Andrew Huberman eloquently defines addiction as “a progressive narrowing of the things that bring you pleasure,”⁴³⁴ where one's world shrinks until the addiction becomes the sole source of joy, numbing all else.

⁴³⁴ <https://www.alhakam.org/dopamine-rush-exploring-the-neurobiology-of-addiction/>

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The dangers of addiction lie in its corrosive impact on our brain's dopamine circuits, particularly the reward pathway. This dopaminergic route governs motivation, reward-seeking behaviour, and attention. When we anticipate a pleasurable activity, like savouring a favourite dish, dopamine levels rise, fuelling our desire. As we approach the moment, dopamine dips, creating a craving. Fulfilment—if the experience meets expectations—brings a renewed dopamine surge, bringing joy. However, if the experience disappoints, dopamine levels fall, dampening our mood.

In the early stages of addiction, the dopamine rush is intense, and the pleasure profound. Yet, as the addiction deepens, pleasure becomes narrowly focused on the addictive act. Everyday activities—work, school, hobbies—lose their appeal. Over time, even the addictive act fails to deliver the same dopamine high, leaving the individual trapped in a relentless cycle of pursuit and diminishing returns.

This cycle is deeply rooted in the brain's physiology. The reward pathway learns and memorises the steps to achieving that dopamine spike. If the addiction is to a substance or behaviour that offers a quick dopamine hit, the brain becomes 'hardwired' to seek this shortcut, abandoning the concept of delayed gratification. Activities requiring sustained effort, like studying or exercising, become less

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rewarding, as the brain now craves the immediate satisfaction it has learned to expect.

Gaming offers a stark illustration of this cycle. For a passionate gamer, the act of playing can spike dopamine levels three to fivefold. But with every sharp rise comes a sharp fall—after the thrill, dopamine levels plunge, leaving the gamer feeling empty and unmotivated. This drop triggers a craving for more, leading the gamer back to the screen in search of another spike. Yet, with each return, the highs are lower, and the lows deeper, tightening addiction's grip.

Neurobiology explains that repeated dopamine-seeking from the same source eventually results in diminished returns. The initial euphoria fades, replaced by an ever-deepening sense of dissatisfaction. This is the vicious cycle of addiction—a downward spiral where each attempt to reclaim pleasure only leads to greater despair.

When we inundate our brains with pleasure through seemingly innocent activities—like watching a movie, indulging in something sweet, or endlessly scrolling through social media—we subtly condition our minds to expect this heightened level of gratification. When repeated excessively, these actions can quickly solidify into habits with far-reaching consequences.

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Over time, the brain begins to build a tolerance to these pleasures, demanding more dopamine to achieve the same level of satisfaction. This is how addictions like binge-watching and binge-eating take root. What starts as watching a couple of episodes back-to-back soon escalates into devouring an entire series in a week. Anything less stimulating is dismissed as dull or uninteresting, as the brain now craves the intense dopamine highs it has come to expect.

The Unseen Toll of Our Digital Obsession:

In our fast-paced world, where instant gratification is often within easy reach, many find themselves depleting their dopamine reserves. Without moderation, even the activities that once brought joy lose their lustre, leaving individuals feeling empty and disconnected from the world around them.

A chronic immersion in digital distraction cultivates deeper afflictions within us—heightened anxiety, depression, and sleeplessness—as our minds, untethered and restless, struggle to find solace amid the relentless digital barrage. The pervasive fear of missing out shadows our every move, leading real relationships to wither as genuine human interaction fades. Compounding these troubles is the

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phenomenon of vicarious trauma, intensified by our mobile phones. Constant exposure to global crises and sensationalized news via our devices leaves us burdened with second-hand suffering, a profound psychological strain. This ceaseless digital engagement not only frays our nerves but also erodes our emotional resilience, layering trauma upon the everyday stresses of modern life.

In response to these growing concerns, calls for restricted mobile phone usage are gaining momentum in the UK. In Canada, provinces like New Brunswick and Ontario have begun pushing back against this tide, implementing restrictions on phone use in classrooms to curb distractions and foster healthier learning environments. These initiatives reflect a growing recognition of the need for boundaries, as evidenced by reports of improved focus and engagement in schools that enforce mobile phone bans.

Beyond the toll on individuals, society also bears the weight of this digital addiction through lost productivity and rising healthcare costs linked to digital neglect. Today, as we once grappled with the severe addictions fuelled by Big Tobacco and the gambling industry, we now face a new but equally formidable adversary in the digital age. Smartphones have become the cigarettes of our time—ubiquitous, addictive, and insidiously harmful. Just as quitting smoking was once

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an uphill battle, so too is breaking free from the grip of these digital devices, which have become the nicotine of the 21st century.

This widespread reevaluation of our digital habits may prove pivotal in restoring the human connection that is steadily eroding in our screen-saturated world. For the spiritually inclined, a digital detox, akin to the abstinence observed during Lent or Ramadan, could offer a much-needed reprieve from our devices, allowing us to reconnect with the world and ourselves in a more meaningful and fulfilling way.

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (rh) aptly describes today's society and its mindless pursuit of pleasure:

“The pursuit of pleasure in every sphere of life requires change and novelty to provide a greater kick. Things, which used to satisfy in the past, no longer do now. Smoking and traditional intoxicants fail to provide the kick, which the progressively restless society requires. Drugs of all sorts begin to appear, and no measure whatsoever taken to suppress the menacing trend of drug-addiction is enough. Yet, the drug addict still requires a greater kick. So, a

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stronger, more addictive and lethal drug like crack is invented.”⁴³⁵

It can get to a point where it becomes a life purpose to satiate desires and without it, life becomes empty and meaningless. Huzoor (rh) says:

“To find time for light entertainment is neither bad nor prohibited in Islam. But ... if, instead of providing a genuine outlet for the stresses of life, entertainment becomes an objective in itself, it would be condemned as *laghw* (vain and wasteful) in the Qur’anic terminology. When entertainment begins to interfere in the daily pursuits of life or takes a toll upon one’s time, which could be better spent otherwise, it too would be classified as vain...”⁴³⁶

In essence, the modern world, with its relentless pursuit of pleasure, mirrors the plight of the addict—numbed by excess, unable to find delight in the once simple joys of life, having exhausted every route to happiness.

⁴³⁵ Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), *Islam’s Response to Contemporary Issues*, p. 72-73, 2007, Islam International Publications Ltd

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 111

Guidance in the modern world:

Today, gambling manifests in numerous forms, ranging from the overt to the subtle. Many games also incorporate elements of gambling, either explicitly or through more covert mechanisms.

In this regard, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba), has offered crystal clear guidance. Huzoor (aba) states:

“... Risking money in games in a manner that would incur a loss of one’s money if one loses that game or one would gain some money in case of winning the game, is called gambling which has been categorically declared *haram* [forbidden] by Islam. Whether the game is played in person, or by way of a lottery, or by risking money online through various apps, it is called gambling in all cases which is prohibited.”⁴³⁷

Similarly, some kinds of trades in the stock market today are considered gambling in the eyes of the teachings of Islam. Speaking of how short selling is also a form of gambling, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba)states:

“... Among the various trades in the stock market, the short-selling business is in a sense a form of gambling. Therefore,

⁴³⁷ Al Hakam 14 January 2022, Issue 200, p. 12

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sometimes the short sellers have to suffer huge losses instead of profits, as happened in the case of GameStop's shares some time ago. Thus, in light of the teachings of Islam, it is the duty of a believing trader to ensure that he is neither deceived nor to deceive others but should achieve financial gains by doing honest and transparent business while ensuring that his Lord is pleased with him."⁴³⁸

Regarding cryptocurrency the guidance of Huzoor (aba) is again starkly clear that, in his opinion, the present volatile nature of the entire industry means that pouring money into this new type of currency is gambling.⁴³⁹

Cannabis:

While the medicinal benefits of cannabis are often acknowledged, its primary use remains recreational, sought for the euphoric highs, relaxation, and pleasure it provides rather than for any health-related advantages. The debate over legalizing cannabis for recreational use has intensified in recent times.

In the United Kingdom, cannabis is the most used illegal drug, known by various names such as marijuana, dope,

⁴³⁸ Al Hakam 15 July 2022, Issue 226, p. 8

⁴³⁹ Friday Sermon 6 January 2023; *Al Hakam* 3 February 2023, Issue 255, p. 17

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draw, ganja, grass, hash, herb, pot, choof, and weed. As of 2016, data shows that 118 million Americans—approximately one-third of the population—have used marijuana at some point. Recreational use is now legal in nine states and Washington, D.C.⁴⁴⁰

Canada has also passed a law to permit recreational use of Cannabis. With these global shifts in mind, it's worth considering: What is Islam's stance on the use of cannabis and other drugs, especially as more countries explore their legalization for both medical and recreational use?

Gems of Guidance:

His Holiness Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) gave the following answer to the question on Islam's perspective on drugs such as cannabis and other intoxicants:

'Drugs are forbidden because they are harmful to people. In Islam anything harmful which takes one away from piety is forbidden. In the time of the Holy Prophet (sas) people previously used to drink alcohol but this prevented them from saying their prayers properly as they were intoxicated and hence it was forbidden. Some people say why cigarettes are not banned like other drugs [such as cannabis]. However,

⁴⁴⁰ <https://www.statista.com/topics/3117/recreational-marijuana/>

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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, has said although cigarettes are not forbidden, if they had existed in the time of the Holy Prophet (sas) they would have been forbidden. Now we see with cigarettes people have realised its ill effects and so there are clear warning labels on cigarette packets. Cancer, lung diseases and similar harmful effects linked to smoking cigarettes are all known.

(In the context of legalising drugs) similarly with drugs such as cannabis and ganja etc. their harmful effects will all come to light (as right now some people advocate that they are not harmful to health). Islam says that anything which is a little harmful is forbidden. However, Islam also says where it can provide benefit in terms of specifically aiding in saving a human life, there permission has been given.’

Whilst clearly there are some medical benefits of cannabis, the evidence suggests that when higher amounts of cannabis are consumed, users may experience confusion, hallucinations, anxiety and paranoia, depending on their mood and circumstances. Some users may experience psychotic symptoms with hallucinations and delusions lasting a few hours. Regular use of the drug has appeared to

double the risk of developing a psychotic episode or long-term schizophrenia.⁴⁴¹

Long-term negative side effects of cannabis are traumatising and can have permanent physical and psychological harm. Some researchers also suggest that long-term use can lead to irreversible, but minor cognitive deficit.⁴⁴²

Breaking free from addictions and ingrained habits is a journey fraught with difficulty, yet not beyond reach. It is a path lined with obstacles, where each step forward demands both courage and perseverance. It is a battle not easily won, but one that can be fought and conquered, with each hard-earned victory bringing one closer to freedom.

The Promised Messiah (as) states:

‘When a person becomes addicted to drugs then it becomes difficult for him to stop. What are drugs? On one hand they destroy life and on the other hand they are sustenance for life too. If a drug addict does not get a dose of the drug, then his condition can reach death.’⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsanddisorders/cannabismentalhealthkey.aspx>

⁴⁴² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44531112>

⁴⁴³Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Malfuzat, vol.2, Urdu 1988, p. 423

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If one stops the excessive use of artificial stimulators, the brain is forced to reduce its standards of pleasure, hence the withdrawal symptoms an addict experiences. The Promised Messiah (as) has stated that it is possible to leave addictive habits, albeit with withdrawal symptoms. He(as) says:

“A person can leave a [bad] habit provided that they have faith. And there are many people in the world who have left their [bad] habits completely. It has been observed that some people who had been drinking alcohol over a long period left [this bad habit] without a second thought in their old age, even though leaving a habit [at that age] is akin to becoming sick. After a little sickness, they get better as well.”⁴⁴⁴

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) has also stated that even if habits become concrete, reformation – though difficult – is still possible. Huzoor (aba) said that sometimes, despite all necessary measures, some habits or addictions persist. In such cases, Hazrat Musleh Mauood (ra) has said that some spiritual ailments require a physical doctor. To elaborate, he presented the example of an adulterer. Huzoor (ra) said that in some cases, adultery is not a moral or religious vice, but a

⁴⁴⁴ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Malfuzat, Vol. 5, Urdu 1988, p. 159

mental illness. Some vices are a result of natural weaknesses. So, such a person should seek professional help.⁴⁴⁵

His Holiness (aba) expounded upon a fundamental principle concerning the relationship between those who fall prey to drug use and the duty of morally upright individuals. He emphasised that it is not enough to simply safeguard one's own virtue; one must also extend a hand to those at risk of being ensnared by such vices. A truly righteous person bears a responsibility to guide and protect others, offering support and counsel to prevent them from succumbing to the dangers of addiction:

“The main point is that whilst it is wrong, the purpose is to try and reform. There should not be enmity towards a person consuming it, rather the aim is to save them. The basic principle is something which you consider wrong for yourself, you should consider wrong for others. You should save others from that which you want to save yourself from.”⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (ra), Irfan-e-Ilahi, Anwar-ul- Ulum, Vol. 4, p. 364

⁴⁴⁶ Friday Sermon, 20th December 2013

Islamic Philosophy of Free Will:

Islam teaches that within the very essence of human nature, God has woven the ability to discern right from wrong. Endowed with the faculties of reason and understanding, humans are granted the gift of free will, enabling them to choose their path and bear the weight of the consequences that follow their decisions.

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

And *by* the soul and its perfection —

فَأَلَّهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

And He revealed to it what is wrong for it and what is right for it —

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

He indeed *truly* prospers who purifies it,⁴⁴⁷

The Promised Messiah (as) writes:

‘All the inevitable consequences of our actions that have been appointed by God Almighty under the law of nature are all God’s actions, in as much as He is the Cause of causes. For instance, if a person swallows poison, his action would

⁴⁴⁷ Surah Ash Shams 91:8-11

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be followed by the divine action that he would suffer death.⁴⁴⁸

The Holy Prophet (sas) once said that “The beauty of Islam is also this, that whatever is pointless should be abandoned.”⁴⁴⁹

The Holy Qur’an further explains this concept:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

We have shown him the Way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.⁴⁵⁰

The philosophy of Qur’anic teaching reveals that Islamic commandments are not merely rules but pathways through which individuals may either cultivate or diminish their inherent faculties. Those who embrace these divine directives walk a path of gratitude, nurturing their physical and mental potential, and evolving into their truest and most refined selves. In contrast, those who forsake this guidance, choosing instead a path of ingratitude, invite God’s displeasure, risking the erosion of their mental and physical abilities. Thus, the freedom to follow or abandon these commandments becomes the fulcrum upon which one’s

⁴⁴⁸ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 121, 2010, Islam International Publications Ltd

⁴⁴⁹ Jami’ At-Tirmidhi, *Abwab-u-Zuhd An Rasoolillah S.A*, Book 36 No. 14.

⁴⁵⁰ Surah Ad Dahr 76:4

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destiny balances—whether they become grateful and blessed or ungrateful and forsaken.

Gratefulness:

وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ

And Allah will certainly reward the grateful.⁴⁵¹

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ

Therefore remember Me, and I will remember you; and be thankful to Me and do not be ungrateful to Me.⁴⁵²

The remembrance of God, from the perspective of humankind, encompasses a profound love and devotion, an adherence to His commands, a constant mindfulness of His attributes, and the act of glorifying Him through prayer. Conversely, when God remembers humankind, it signifies His drawing them closer to Himself, showering them with His favours, and providing for their well-being. Thus, this verse assures us that if we seek nearness to God, He will, in turn, draw us nearer to Him.

The expression, "Remember Me, I will remember you," further implies that those who truly love God will inevitably attract His love. Remembrance is born of love and, in many

⁴⁵¹ Surah Aal e Imran 3:145

⁴⁵² Surah Al Baqarah 2:153

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ways, is synonymous with it. Indeed, no one can remember anything more fervently than a lover remembers the beloved.

The final clause, "that you may be grateful," is rich with meaning. God is neither cruel nor unkind; He is mindful of our limitations and does not subject us to unnecessary hardship. Any trial He places upon us is ultimately for our benefit. This benevolent and loving nature of God should inspire within us a deep sense of love and gratitude, compelling us to feel a profound thankfulness for His enduring kindness and compassion.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَكَدُوفٌ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

Surely, Allah is Munificent to men, but most men are not grateful.⁴⁵³

مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Allah desires not that He should place you in a difficulty, but He desires to purify you and to complete His favour upon you, so that you may be grateful.⁴⁵⁴

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

⁴⁵³ Surah Al Baqarah 2:244

⁴⁵⁴ Surah Al Maidah 5:7

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And *remember also the time* when your Lord declared, 'If you are grateful, I will, surely, bestow more *favours* on you; but if you are ungrateful, *then know that* My punishment is severe indeed.'⁴⁵⁵

Gratefulness, or *shukr*, can be expressed in three distinct ways: (1) With the heart, which involves forming a deep and accurate understanding of the benefit received; (2) With the tongue, through the act of praising and extolling the benefactor; and (3) With the limbs, by repaying the benefit in a manner befitting its value. True gratitude is built upon five key elements: (a) humility towards the one being thanked; (b) genuine love for the benefactor; (c) recognition and acknowledgment of the benefit; (d) verbal praise of the benefactor; and (e) ensuring that the benefit is not used in a way that might displease the one who conferred it.

In the divine realm, *shukr* from God involves forgiving, commending, or showing favour and goodwill towards an individual, and thus bestowing rewards or recompense (Lane). To be truly grateful to God, one must utilize His gifts wisely and appropriately.

The verse of Surah Ibrahim articulates a fundamental principle: advancement is intrinsically linked to *shukr*, which

⁴⁵⁵ Surah Ibrahim 14:8

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signifies a recognition of the blessings received. True gratitude to God is realised only through the appropriate and beneficial use of His gifts. God has decreed that the proper use of divine gifts results in their increase. For example, when one applies knowledge—a significant divine gift—wisely, it is bound to grow. Similarly, the effective use of one's physical faculties leads to their enhancement. This divine principle, rooted in God's infinite mercy, applies universally to all mankind. It governs both spiritual and material blessings and operates within the framework of both general divine law and specific divine law.

The Qur'an imparts another profound truth: that gratitude serves the one who offers it, not the Divine. God's majesty and sovereignty remain untouched by human thanks, for He is beyond need. When man expresses gratitude, it is he who reaps the rewards, nourishing his own soul and fostering a deeper connection to the Source of all goodness. In truth, the act of thanksgiving enriches the giver, reflecting a recognition of the blessings bestowed upon him.

قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي ۖ لِيَبْلُوَنِي ؕ أَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ۗ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي
عَنِّي كَرِيمٌ

he said, 'This is by the grace of my Lord, that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful. And whosoever is

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grateful is grateful for the good of his *own* soul; but whosoever is ungrateful, truly my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Generous.⁴⁵⁶

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ ۚ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُم مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

If you are ungrateful, surely Allah is Self-Sufficient *being independent* of you. And He is not pleased with ingratitude in His servants. But if you show gratefulness, He likes it in you. And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return; And He will inform you of what you have been doing. Surely, He knows full well all that is hidden in the breasts.⁴⁵⁷

Shukr as discussed above embodies the proper utilization of Divine blessings in accordance with God's intentions. Conversely, *Kufr* represents the misuse of those blessings. In the Qur'anic context, *Shukr* (thankfulness) and *Kufr* (ingratitude) are defined by how one employs the powers, faculties, and opportunities bestowed by God. True thankfulness involves dedicating our complete devotion to the Divine Being to Whom it rightfully belongs. This proper

⁴⁵⁶ Surah An Naml 27:41

⁴⁵⁷ Surah Az Zumar 39:8

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use of God's gifts reflects a profound acknowledgment and reverence for the source of all blessings.

بَلِ اللّٰهِ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشّٰكِرِيْنَ

Aye, worship Allah and be among the thankful.⁴⁵⁸

قُتِلَ الْاِنْسَانُ مَا اَكْفَرًا

Ruin seize the man! how ungrateful he is!⁴⁵⁹

How astonishing is the ingratitude of those who, despite being offered the profound guidance of the Qur'an—a sacred text revealed to elevate them from the depths of moral degradation to the pinnacles of spiritual enlightenment—choose to reject its message. This Divine Book was sent to lift humanity from their dire state and lead them to unparalleled spiritual glory, yet they remain unyielding in their disbelief.

In an era marked by ingratitude, the *seerat* of the Holy Prophet (sas)- the true *سَكُوْرًا عَبْدًا*—the grateful servant—serves as a radiant example of unwavering thankfulness to Allah, both in times of plenty and scarcity. His life was a testament to contentment, even when material wealth was within reach. He taught that true gratitude lies in recognizing

⁴⁵⁸ Surah Az Zumar 39:67

⁴⁵⁹ Surah Abasa 80:18

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the blessings in our lives, however small, and showing contentment with what we have. The Prophet's (sas) actions—whether in acknowledging the kindness of others, as seen in his interactions with those who aided him, or in his simple lifestyle, despite his growing influence—reflect a deep sense of appreciation and humility.

Even in victory, such as during the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet's (sas) behaviour was marked by profound humility and gratitude. Instead of indulging in grand celebrations, he chose a meal of humble bread and vinegar, praising Allah with every bite. This example underscores the principle that true gratitude is not measured by the abundance of wealth or success but by the contentment and acknowledgment of Allah's blessings.

In every aspect of his life, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) demonstrated that gratitude is not merely a feeling but a way of life, deeply intertwined with faith and servitude to Allah. His example urges us to cultivate a sense of appreciation, not only in our relationship with the Divine but also in our daily interactions with others. By following his footsteps, we can strive to become true 'Abd Shakur'—grateful servants who recognise and cherish the countless blessings bestowed upon us.

A few examples of gratitude from the life of the Holy Prophet (sas):

Despite the fact that his entire day was spent being grateful to Allah, the Holy Prophet (sas) continued to pray, ‘Oh Allah, make me such a person who thanks You immensely, remembers You a great deal and follows the path of Your pleasure.’⁴⁶⁰

Even after his obligatory prayers, he would not forget the remembrance of Allah and continued in the following words. ‘Oh, My Allah grant me the ability to pray that is full of your remembrance, gratitude and beauty.’⁴⁶¹

Hazrat Mughira (ra) narrates, “The Holy Prophet (sas) used to stand in the prayer or pray till both of his feet or legs would swell. He was asked why he offered such an unbearable prayer, to which he replied, ‘Should I not be a thankful servant?’”⁴⁶²

He found reasons for gratitude in the simple moments of everyday life. Whenever it rained after a long dry season, the Holy Prophet(sas) would uncover his head and take the early

⁴⁶⁰ Musnad Ahmad, Hadith 8087, Vol2, p311, published in Cairo

⁴⁶¹ Abu Daud, Book 2, Kitabul- Witr, Bab fil-Istighfar, 1517

⁴⁶² Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab at-tahajjud, Hadith 1130

shower upon his blessed head and would say: ‘This is a fresh blessing from my Lord.’⁴⁶³

Hisham bin Urwa (ra) said that the Holy Prophet(sas) used to pray, ‘Oh Allah! Help me to remember You, to give thanks to You and to worship You well.’⁴⁶⁴

The Holy Prophet(sas) once said: ‘Allah is pleased with his slave, who, when he eats something, thanks Allah for it and when he drinks something, thanks Allah for it.’⁴⁶⁵

Al-Nu'man bin Bashir(ra) narrated that the Holy Prophet(sas) said, ‘Speaking of Allah’s blessing is gratitude and ignoring it is ingratitude. The one who does not give thanks for a small blessing will not give thanks for a great blessing, and the one who does not give thanks to people will not give thanks to Allah.’⁴⁶⁶

The Holy Prophet (sas) said, ‘Wondrous is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything, and it is so for him alone. If he experiences something agreeable, he is grateful to God and that is good for him; and if he

⁴⁶³ Masnad-e-Ahmad, Volume 3, page 267 published in Beirut

⁴⁶⁴ Abu Daud, Kitab-us-Salat, Chapter Istighfar 1301

⁴⁶⁵ Jamia Tirmidhi, Kitab-ul-Dawaat 3379

⁴⁶⁶ Jamia Tirmidhi, Kitabul Birru- was-silah, 1877

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experiences adversity, he is steadfast and that is good for him because he earns merit for his steadfastness.⁴⁶⁷

Today, despite the unprecedented comforts and advancements, society often fails to recognise the blessings we enjoy, taking them for granted. This lack of gratitude, deeply rooted in individualism and a sense of entitlement, contrasts sharply with the teachings of Islam, where gratitude, or ‘shukr,’ is a fundamental moral and spiritual obligation.

Hazrat Noman bin Bashir (ra) related that the Holy Prophet (sas) said from the pulpit, ‘He who is not grateful for small favours cannot be grateful for the bigger ones. He who cannot be thankful to men cannot render thanks for the favours of Allah. To talk about the blessings of Allah the Almighty is thankfulness; to not mention them is ingratitude.’⁴⁶⁸

Look at the less fortunate:

A sense of gratitude to God Almighty also arises in a person when they observe the state of the less fortunate of the society. The Holy Prophet (sas) said:

⁴⁶⁷ Sahih Muslim, Kitab-uz-Zuhdi, Babul Mo’mini Amruhu kulluhu Khair

⁴⁶⁸ Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol 4, pg. 278

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“Look at those who are lower than you [i.e., in health, status, fortune, etc.] and do not look at those who are at a higher level than you, for it is the best way not to disparage the favours Allah the Almighty.”⁴⁶⁹

This is profound wisdom, for when a person recognises that many around him lack the blessings he enjoys, his heart is naturally drawn to God Almighty in humility and gratitude. The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Do not take pride in your resolve and effort, and do not surmise that any achievement is due to any capability in you or effort on your part. On the contrary, you ought to believe that the merciful God, who does not let anyone’s sincere effort go in vain, has given you the fruits of your labour. Do you not observe that everyday hundreds of students fail their examinations? Do all of these students not make an effort, or are they foolish and mindless? Not at all. Some of them are so intelligent and bright that they are sharper than many of the students who have passed.

“Therefore, it is necessary and incumbent on a believer to perform prostrations of gratitude before God Almighty whenever they are blessed with an achievement that God did not let their effort go in vain. The result of this gratitude will

⁴⁶⁹ Sahih Muslim, Kitab az-zuhd wa r-raqa’iq, Hadith 2963c

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be that a person will increase in their love of God Almighty and grow in faith. In fact, this is not all; such people will be graced with even further successes because God Almighty states that if one shows gratitude for His bounties, He shall increase His bounties upon such a one; but if one is ungrateful for His blessings, then remember that such a one shall be seized by a grievous punishment.”⁴⁷⁰

Gratitude through action-key to success:

Islam teaches that gratitude can be practically manifested in our life. Explaining the verse

إِعْمَلُوا لِي دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا

Act gratefully, O House of David.⁴⁷¹

Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih III (rh) said:

“As far as the Supreme Being of Allah the Almighty is concerned, the meaning of gratitude is that for what God has given us, we offer thanks to Him through our actions in the form of self-sacrifice and by serving His people and fulfilling the rights made obligatory upon us by Him. He always gives and does not need anything in return, as everything belongs

⁴⁷⁰ Malfuzat [English], Vol. 1, pp. 152-153, 2022, Islam international publications

⁴⁷¹ Surah Saba 34:14

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to Him, but man offers something to God in the way [of gratitude] that I have just mentioned.

“It is for this very reason that at one place in the Holy Qur’an, Allah the Almighty says:

إِعْمَلُوا الْإِنْدَادُ شُكْرًا

“O house of David! Act with gratitude” (Surah Saba, 34:14). That means God told them to act with gratitude. Filling the heart with feelings of gratitude or praising Him with words is not mentioned here. Moreover, people glorify and exalt Allah the Almighty innumerable times at different times, but this too is not mentioned here; rather, it is said that they should offer thanks with their actions. That’s why in Arabic, the meaning of offering gratitude to Allah the Almighty has also been linked with *javarib*, which means that all the powers that have been given to man should be used in such a way that they are supposed to be thanking God Almighty. Thus, a person cannot truly be successful until they practically offer thanks to Allah the Almighty.

“It is for this very reason that not just reciting *bismillah* before eating food or saying *alhamdulillah* after finishing a meal is a sign of gratitude, but the act of eating food itself is equivalent to being thankful to Allah the Almighty, because starving

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oneself to death is not allowed in Islam. The Holy Prophet (sas) is reported to have said, “O man! You owe a duty to your body as well.”⁴⁷² Therefore, offering gratitude [to Allah] also means that wherever a right is owed to you and the power to fulfil that right is given to you, then the right should be paid in such a way that it is in accordance with the will of the Almighty God and His commandments. Moreover, [the rights should be fulfilled] by utilising all the means provided by Allah the Almighty.

“Thus, unless one does not act with gratitude, success is not obtained. For example, an intelligent child is ungrateful and unsuccessful if he does not use his God-given intelligence properly or if he wastes his time and does not concentrate on studying and acquiring knowledge.

“Hence, ingratitude is the reason for failures. Where you observe ingratitude, you will see failure. On the other hand, success requires one to be grateful in the sense that I have just explained. I pray to Allah the Almighty to grant us with His grace the ability to understand this central and fundamental point.”⁴⁷³

The Promised Messiah (as)said:

⁴⁷² Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab as-Saum, Hadith 1968

⁴⁷³ Khutbat-e-Nasir, Vol. 5, pp. 1-2

“Your true expression of gratitude is by adopting righteousness and purity. To merely respond by saying *Alhamdulillah* (all praise belongs to Allah) when asked if you are a Muslim does not constitute thankfulness and appreciation. If you pay true gratitude, i.e., if you tread the ways of purity and righteousness, I give you glad tidings that when you stand at the frontier, as it were, no one can gain dominance over you.”⁴⁷⁴

He further stated:

“Keeping in mind the blessings and bounties conferred by Allah the Exalted for human development and perfection, man should render thanks to Him. He should ponder as to who has bestowed all these faculties upon him. It is man’s choice to be grateful or not, but if he possesses a rightly inclined nature and ponders over it, he will find that all the faculties – overt and covert – have been granted to him by Allah the Exalted alone, and they are fully under His control. He can amplify them out of gratitude or diminish them in an instant out of ingratitude.”⁴⁷⁵

The promised Messiah (as) taught us a beautiful prayer:

“O Lord of all the worlds! It is beyond me to offer You gratitude for all Your favours. You are most Merciful and

⁴⁷⁴ Malfuzat [English], Vol. 1, p. 75, 2018, Islam international publications

⁴⁷⁵ Malfuzat [English], Vol. 10, p. 495, 2022, Islam international publications

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Compassionate, and the bounties that You have conferred upon me are countless. Forgive me my sins, lest I am ruined. Fill my heart with sincere love for You, so that I may receive life. Cover my faults and allow me to perform such deeds that become the source of Your pleasure. I seek refuge in Your noble countenance lest your punishment befalls me. Have mercy and save me from the calamities of this world and the hereafter, for all grace and compassion is in Your hand. *Amin*, and again, *Amin*.⁴⁷⁶

Fostering Love, Kindness and Mercy:

The Promised Messiah (as) states:

“Be merciful to the servants of God and do not be cruel to them with your words, hands, or any other means. Strive for the betterment of creation. Do not show arrogance to others, even though they may be your subordinates. Do not slander anyone, despite them having slandered. Adopt modesty, tolerance, optimism and sympathy for God’s creation so that you find acceptance. There are many who show tolerance, yet they are beasts from within. Similarly, there are many who seem pure on the surface, yet inside they are conniving. You will not find acceptance in the court of God unless your inner and outer selves are aligned. As an

⁴⁷⁶ Malfuzat [English], Vol. 1, p. 241, 2018, Islam international publications

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elder, show mercy to the young, and as a scholar, impart your knowledge instead of belittling others by boasting. As someone who is wealthy, help and serve the poor instead of showing arrogance to them with conceit. Shed your human weaknesses, let go of your mutual differences and whilst being truthful, show humility like that of a liar so that you are forgiven. Discard the gluttony of the human self, for the path you have been called to cannot be traversed by one who is heavy. How unfortunate is he who does not except the words of God that I have conveyed. If you desire for God to be pleased with you in the heavens, then you must adopt mutual harmony to the extent that you become like two brothers from a single womb. The one saintlier amongst you is he who forgives the sins of his brother. Conversely, ill-fated is he who is stubborn and does not forgive. Such a person has no affiliation to me. Fear the curse of God, for He is Sovereign and Exalted. A sinner can never attain nearness to God. One who is arrogant cannot attain the love of God. One who is cruel cannot attain His nearness, and nor can the unfaithful. Show mercy to your subordinates, your wives and the poor so that you are shown mercy in the heavens.”⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁷ Address Jalsa Salana Qadian 2022 by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V, The Nine Evils to Avoid to Achieve Moral and Spiritual Excellence

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Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) emphasised, “Islam teaches that it is essential to care for the sentiments and feelings of one another with sensitivity and consideration.”⁴⁷⁸

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) in his address on the 1st of March 2024 guided us towards kindness and mercy to all. Huzoor (aba) said:

“The Promised Messiah (as) has taught that we must not harm or cause distress to Allah’s creation, and we must have a particular regard and love for our fellow Muslims. Hence it must never be that due to our pride or passions, we cause grief or pain to others, whether from our mouth, hand or in any other way. The Promised Messiah (as) said that we should always show compassion by forgiving and avoiding disputes and quarrels. He instructed us to remove all traces of malice and ill will from our hearts and forsake enmities.

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (sas) has stated that we should not harbour jealousy or envy towards others. In terms of business, trade or other financial dealings, we

moral-and-spiritual-excellence/https://www.reviewofreligions.org/41332/the-nine-evils-to-avoid-to-achieve-moral-and-spiritual-excellence/

⁴⁷⁸ Only in Islam do we find standards of absolute justice: Huzur’s address to external guests at Jalsa Salana Germany <https://www.alhakam.org/external-guests-jalsa-salana-germany-2023/>

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should be honest and fair. For example, we should not intervene to undercut a deal previously agreed by two parties.

Moreover, the Holy Prophet (sas) said, “O servants of Allah, be brothers to one another. A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim; he cannot harm his brother, nor can he humiliate him, and nor can he think lowly of him.” After that, as he indicated towards his chest, the Holy Prophet (sas) said three times, “Righteousness lies here. It is evil for a man to think lowly of his brother. The blood, property and honour of every Muslim are unlawful for another Muslim.”⁴⁷⁹

The essence of a thriving society lies in the cultivation of positivity, a deliberate effort to create an environment where the spirit of community, brotherhood, forgiveness, and love flourishes. In such a society, individuals work hand in hand for the collective betterment, united in their pursuit of the greater good. Negativity, which gnaws at the fabric of communal life, must be expunged, for it is a toxin that erodes the very core of society.

Islam, in its wisdom, calls upon believers to be harbingers of peace, builders of bridges, and healers of broken

⁴⁷⁹ Address by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba)
<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/45005/a-new-century-of-islam-ahmadiyyat-in-ghana-becoming-beacons-of-justice-truth-and-morality-in-the-world/>

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relationships. It teaches the art of managing one's anger, the virtue of forgiveness, and the importance of removing vain, idle, and obscene talk from daily interactions. In fostering a healthy environment, Islam advocates for the elimination of harmful habits such as gambling, drinking, and drug use—vices that poison the wellspring of communal harmony.

At its heart, Islam nurtures individuals who are courageous, principled, and steadfast in their integrity. It shuns all forms of ingratitude and negativity, urging each person to cultivate a deep sense of gratitude—toward both the Divine and their fellow human beings. Through these teachings, Islam seeks to build a society composed of moral and positive individuals, each with a productive and progressive outlook, working collectively to forge a brighter future for all.

Chapter 9-An Altruistic Society:

Islam advocates for the establishment of an altruistic society, where compassion, selflessness, and care for others are central to the community's values. The teachings of Islam encourage individuals to prioritize the well-being of others, fostering a culture where acts of kindness and generosity are fundamental. By emphasising the importance of helping the less fortunate, showing empathy, and supporting one another without expecting anything in return, Islam promotes a society where the collective good is paramount, and the success of the community is measured by the strength of its compassion and unity.

For the Qur'anic ideal, the welfare of others is not a mere afterthought but a guiding principle that shapes every action and decision. Individuals find their greatest fulfilment not in

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personal gain, but in the quiet joy of lifting others, in the shared triumphs of collective well-being. In such a society, the boundaries of self are porous, allowing the pains and joys of others to resonate deeply within each heart. Acts of kindness flow freely, unburdened by expectation or the need for recognition, for the true reward is found in the harmonious unity that blossoms when every member of the community is cherished and supported. Altruism becomes the silent, yet powerful, force that binds people together, creating a world where the measure of success is not wealth or power, but the depth of one's generosity and the breadth of one's love for humanity.

The Holy Qur'an repeatedly calls upon believers to serve humanity, emphasising the need to care for those who are suffering or deprived. It instructs believers to act with selflessness, driven by a profound love for others, and to be ever ready to make sacrifices for the peace and well-being of their fellow beings. In Chapter 3, verse 111, Allah the Almighty declares:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you enjoin what is good and forbid evil and believe in Allah.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁸⁰ Surah Aal e Imran 3:111

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This verse captures the essence of Islamic teaching, urging Muslims to embody and promote goodness, to avoid injustice, and to inspire others to pursue righteous deeds. Such a commitment to the welfare of others can only arise from a heart that is pure, free from malice, and untainted by selfishness. Qur'an declares that the believers' purpose is rooted in the service of humanity, and it is this very act of devotion that distinguishes them as the finest among people. In their selfless dedication to the welfare of others, they discover their true greatness. The Qur'an further enjoins believers to adopt a kind and gentle demeanour.

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

and speak to men kindly⁴⁸¹

Qur'an instructs Muslims to speak kindly, to be mindful of others' feelings, and to show compassion and protection toward the vulnerable—especially orphaned children and those living in poverty. Qur'an highlights that a true Muslim's character is marked by a deep concern for all of God's creation.

وَقِيَامَ أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقًّا لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

⁴⁸¹ Surah Baqarah 2:84

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And in their wealth was a share for one who asked for help and *for* one who could not.⁴⁸²

Muslims are urged not to wait for others to ask for help but to be vigilant in recognizing suffering and to make whatever sacrifices are necessary to alleviate the hardships of others. It is this proactive and empathetic spirit that the Qur'an holds as the hallmark of true faith.

Muslims are called to feed the hungry, show love to orphans, and assist anyone in need, particularly those trapped in poverty or left defenceless by society. Muslims are expected to uplift the underprivileged, enabling them to regain their dignity and independence. The Qur'an even extends this guidance to financial conduct, believers are instructed to spend their wealth for the benefit of others, with the warning that miserly behaviour darkens the soul and is displeasing to Allah. The foundation of Islam rests on service to humanity, for it is through serving others that one truly attains the love of Allah the Almighty. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) said, I am with the weak because aiding the weak and poor is the means of reaching Allah the Almighty.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸² Surah Adh-Dhariyat 51:20

⁴⁸³ Address by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba)- the inauguration of the nasir hospital of humanity first in guatemala-Serving Humanity – A Form of Worship of Allah-

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The Promised Messiah (as) states:

“Serving humanity is itself a form of worship (of Allah).”⁴⁸⁴

The Promised Messiah (as) underscored the vital role of kindness in the realm of morality, asserting that it is an essential human trait, so integral that without it, a person cannot truly be called human. He states:

“Sympathy for all mankind is a moral obligation and a duty (Arbaeen)...that religion is no religion which does not inculcate sympathy, nor does that man deserve to be called a man who does not have sympathy in him.”⁴⁸⁵

He further emphasised:

“To fail to help a brother in their time of need or difficulty is utterly immoral and wrong.”⁴⁸⁶

Ihsaan:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِبُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا
وَآمَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

⁴⁸⁴ ibid

⁴⁸⁵ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, A Message of Peace

⁴⁸⁶ Address by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) - the inauguration of the nasir hospital of humanity first in guatemala-Serving Humanity – A Form of Worship of Allah-
<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/14189/-serving-humanity- a-form-of-worship-of-allah/>

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On those who believe and do good works there shall be no sin for what they eat, provided they fear *God* and believe and do good works, *and* again fear *God* and believe, yet again fear *God* and do good. And Allah loves those who do good.⁴⁸⁷

In Qur'anic philosophy, piety and righteous deeds nourish faith, creating a cycle where faith, in turn, fuels even greater piety and moral excellence. As a believer deepens in righteousness, their faith ascends, becoming ever stronger and more profound. This journey is an endless ascent, a continuous striving toward ever greater spiritual heights. This journey of spiritual evolution has three distinct phases. In the initial stage, the faithful are moved by a profound reverence for God, leading them to both believe and perform good deeds. This stage is marked by an earnest striving, where actions are guided by a sense of duty and devotion. As they progress to the second stage, their faith deepens, becoming so entwined with their being that good works flow naturally, as an intrinsic expression of their belief. It is no longer an effort but a manifestation of their inner convictions. Finally, in the third and most elevated stage, their reverence for God transforms into a constant awareness of the Divine presence. Here, they do good not out of obligation or habit, but as if they are in the very

⁴⁸⁷ Surah Al Maidah 5:94

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presence of God, their actions imbued with the clarity and purity that comes from seeing the Divine in all things.

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ ۗ وَأَحْسِنُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And spend for the cause of Allah, and cast not yourselves into ruin with your own hands, and do good; surely, Allah loves those who do good.⁴⁸⁸

The phrase, "and do good, surely Allah loves those who do good," is an exhortation to generosity, urging believers not to hoard their wealth, but to share it with their deserving brethren.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالنَّبِيِّ ۗ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonished you that you may take heed.⁴⁸⁹

The Promised Messiah (as) explains the depth of meaning of this verse:

⁴⁸⁸ Surah Al Baqarah 2:196

⁴⁸⁹ Surah An Nahl 16:91

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“The first is the doing of good in return for good. This is the lowest gradation and even an average person can easily acquire this quality that he should do good to those who do good to him. (Any respectable person can achieve this level of goodness for it is fundamental; it is not a lofty virtue, but stems from mere courtesy.) The second gradation is a little more difficult than the first, and that is to take the initiative in doing good out of pure benevolence. This is the middle grade. (This means to demonstrate benevolence, and to benefit others irrespective of whether they are deserving of it. This is the intermediate level of goodness.) Most people act benevolently towards the poor, but there is a hidden deficiency in benevolence, that the person exercising benevolence is conscious of it and desires gratitude or prayer in return for his benevolence. If on any occasion the other person should turn against him, he considers him ungrateful. On occasion, he reminds him of his benevolence or puts some heavy burden upon him. (One who is benevolent reminds others of their benevolence and how they have been benefitted for a period of time, thereby placing a burden on them that is beyond their strength to bear.) The benevolent ones have been admonished by God Almighty:

لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى

“That is, O those who do good to others – good that should be based on sincerity – do not render it vain by reminding them what favours you have done them or by inflicting injury on them.⁴⁹⁰ (Allah the Almighty has warned such people that their goodness will be of no benefit. If they are charitable, they should know that charity is founded on sincerity. If one is to remind them of their favours, then all of their good deeds shall go in vain.) The Arabic word for alms (*sadaqahh*) is derived from a root (*sidq*) that means sincerity. If the heart is not inspired by sincerity in bestowing alms, the almsgiving ceases to be alms and becomes mere display. That is why those who exercise benevolence have been admonished by God Almighty not to render vain their benevolence by reproaches or injury. The third grade of doing good is graciousness as between kindred. God Almighty directs that in this grade there should be no idea of benevolence or any desire for gratitude, but good should be done out of such eager sympathy as, for instance, a mother does good to her child. This is the highest grade of doing good which cannot be exceeded. But God Almighty has conditioned all these grades of doing good with their appropriate time and place. The verse cited above clearly indicates that if these virtues are not exercised in their proper places, they would become vices. (This is also a warning; if

⁴⁹⁰ Surah Al Baqarah 2:265

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these virtues are not exercised at their appropriate time and place and are a means of chaos in the world, then they become vices.) For instance, if equity exceeds its limits, it would take on an unwholesome aspect and would become indecent. (The next part of the verse, in respect to safeguarding against evils, is also mentioned here.) In the same way, misuse of benevolence would take on a form which would be repelled by reason and conscience; and in the same way graciousness between kindred would become transgression. The Arabic word for transgression is *baghy*, which connotes excessive rain which ruins crops. A deficiency in the discharge of an obligation or an excess in its discharge are both *baghy*. (Whether there is a deficiency in what is due or excess, in both cases it becomes *baghy*.) In short, whichever of these three qualities is exercised out of place becomes tainted. That is why they are all three qualities conditioned by the due observance of place and occasion. It should be remembered that equity or benevolence or graciousness between kindred are not in themselves moral qualities. They are man's natural conditions and faculties that are exhibited even by children before they develop their reason. Reason is a condition of the exercise of a moral quality and there is also a condition that every moral quality should be exercised in its proper place and on its proper occasion. There are several other directions set out in the

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Holy Qur'an concerning benevolence which are all made subject to the condition of place and time.”⁴⁹¹

The Promised Messiah (as) further states:

“I advise you repeatedly to never ever restrict the scope of your compassion. Furthermore, in order to exercise compassion correctly, follow this commandment of Allah the Almighty:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

“That is, be mindful of justice when exercising goodness. Show kindness in return to those who show you kindness. Thereafter, the second stage is to show even greater kindness than you are shown by others. This stage is known as *ihسان* [benevolence]. Although benevolence is a significant virtue and is above the stage of justice, it is possible that a benevolent one flaunts their act of benevolence. However, there is a stage above all in which a person exercises goodness purely out of love. At such a stage, there is no exhibition of benevolence, similar to how a mother raises her child. A mother does not expect a reward or recompense in return for her child's upbringing, rather, a natural love for her child drives her to sacrifice all her peace and comfort and

⁴⁹¹ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p. 62-65, 2010, Islam International Publications Ltd

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its sake. Even if a king were to command her to stop feeding her child, a mother would reproach the king. Thus, goodness should excel to a stage where it becomes natural. When a thing ceases to become artificial and becomes natural, it reaches a state of perfection.”⁴⁹²

The Promised Messiah (as) delineate:

“Allah the Almighty has ordained for you to exercise justice for the whole world. In other words, take what you deserve and treat humankind with justice. Above this, you are ordained to show kindness to humankind. That is, do not simply show kindness out of obligation, but also out of benevolence. Even at the stage of kindness, there lies a hidden fault, for a person who shows kindness may boast of their benevolence in a state of discontent. It is for this reason that at the end of this verse, it states that goodness at its perfection is when it resembles the kindness shown to a child by its mother.”⁴⁹³

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

Take to forgiveness, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹² Malfuzat [1984], Vol. 7, p. 382-383

⁴⁹³ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 23, p. 388

⁴⁹⁴ Surah Al Araf 7:200

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Islam steadfastly upholds its profound principles of tolerance and mercy. The Holy Prophet (sas) is commanded to endure the persecution of his enemies with patience and to ensure that his followers do the same. This instruction serves as a testament to the enduring commitment to compassion and forbearance, even in the face of adversity.

وَأَمَّا تَعْرِضْنَ عَنْهُمْ إِبْتِغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا

And if thou hast to turn away from them while seeking thy Lord's mercy for which thou hopest, *even then* speak to them a gentle word.⁴⁹⁵

If circumstances compel us to turn away from our kinsmen, the poor, or the destitute, it should be with the sincere intention of aiding them at a later time, when, by God's mercy, we are granted the means to do so. Even in such a moment, our words should offer them comfort and encouragement, leaving them with a sense of hope.

Moreover, there may be times when help is withheld from someone who appears to be in need, out of concern that giving might ultimately do more harm than good—such as when the individual is a habitual beggar or is struggling with

⁴⁹⁵ Surah Bani Israil 17:29

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a destructive habit. Even in such circumstances, we should speak to them kindly and offer words of encouragement to provide solace. In such cases, discretion is necessary, always guided by wisdom and compassion.

Doing Good:

Qur'an guides that first and foremost, believers must set a lofty goal for themselves, not merely the pursuit of a single good, but the attainment of all that is good. Indeed, they should aspire to reach for the highest and most excellent virtues. This pursuit should not be approached in a haphazard or casual manner; rather, they should strive with urgency, competing with one another in a spirit of healthy rivalry to reach the goal before others.

وَلِكُلِّ وَّجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيٰهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۗ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

And every one has a goal which dominates him; vie, then, with one another in good works. Wherever you be, Allah will bring you all together. Surely, Allah has the power to do all that He wills.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁶ Surah Al Baqarah 2:149

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The use of the term استبقوا (vie with one another) underscores that in this race for goodness, Muslims must also support those who are weaker, helping them to achieve virtue. A true Muslim is not only one who seeks virtue for himself but also one who encourages others to attain the same level of goodness that he has reached. The spiritual race mentioned in this verse is unique, for in it, the competitors not only strive to outpace one another but also lend a helping hand to those who falter along the way or show signs of laxity.

The phrase, "Wherever you be, Allah will bring you all together," serves as a reminder that a Muslim should not limit his competition to those immediately around him and feel content with surpassing them. He must remain mindful that there may be others, in distant places, who are advancing more rapidly. Since God will judge all together, a Muslim must not lose sight of these unseen competitors but should instead push himself to the utmost, striving to truly top the list.

This clause also bears another interpretation. It is human nature that when one knows their efforts will be publicly judged, they strive even harder to excel. Thus, God calls upon Muslims to remember that there will come a day when they will be gathered with people from all ages, and the results of their deeds will be announced before this vast

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assembly. With this in mind, they should exert themselves with even greater vigor.

The final clause, "Surely, Allah has the power to do all that He wills," serves as a reminder that there are no limits to a person's spiritual growth. A man can ascend to any stage of progress, and yet the All-Powerful God can guide him even further, helping him to achieve even greater heights.

The phrase هو موليتها ("which dominates him") can be understood literally as "which he makes dominant over himself." This suggests that a person first sets an objective and then allows it to become the guiding force in his life. It also means "to which he turns his face," indicating a deep sense of engrossment and devotion in the pursuit of that goal. In both senses, the underlying idea is one of unwavering commitment and dedication. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

'In the Holy Qur'an more emphasis has been laid on virtue and righteousness than on any other commandment.'⁴⁹⁷

Islamic teachings place a profound emphasis on the continuous pursuit of good deeds in every aspect of life. It

⁴⁹⁷ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *Ayyam-us-Sulh*, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 14, p. 342 – *Essence of Islam*, Vol II, p. 347

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calls upon individuals to harness all their God-given talents and abilities in the service of righteousness. This includes a relentless commitment to doing good for others, striving to bring benefit and kindness at every opportunity, and making goodness a guiding principle in all actions.

Kindness:

Kindness is the hallmark of a true believer. It springs from a heart that is soft and compassionate, one that feels the pain and suffering of others and seeks to spread love and harmony. True kindness is offered for the pleasure of Allah, extended to all of humanity without distinction. This form of kindness is not always easy; it often requires personal sacrifice and selflessness. Yet, it is in this sacrifice that the beauty of such kindness is revealed, as it aligns one's actions with the divine will.

In Qur'anic thought, kindness must permeate all human relationships. From parents and family members to friends, teachers, and neighbours, every interaction should be infused with compassion and understanding. This universal kindness nurtures the bonds that hold society together, creating an environment where love and respect flourish.

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A true believer's generosity of spirit knows no bounds. Acts of kindness should extend even to complete strangers, including orphans, the sick, the needy, travellers, and all those who cross our path. Such kindness reflects a deep commitment to the well-being of all, regardless of personal connection.

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and *show* kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbour that is a kinsman and the neighbour that is a stranger, and the companion by *your* side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allah loves not the proud *and* the boastful,⁴⁹⁸

The Qur'an instructs Muslims to extend their kindness so broadly that it encompasses all of humanity, from the closest relatives to the most distant strangers. The Arabic phrase translated as "neighbour that is a kinsman" can be understood in various ways: it may refer to a nearby

⁴⁹⁸ Surah An Nisa 4:37

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neighbour, a neighbour who shares familial ties, or even a neighbour who is kind-hearted. Similarly, the term "neighbour that is a stranger" may signify a neighbour who lives at a distance or one who is less inclined to kindness.

The expression "companion by your side" carries multiple meanings as well, encompassing a spouse, a fellow traveller, a business partner, a coworker, an associate, or even an immediate neighbour. The phrase "those whom your right hands possess" traditionally refers to slaves or bondwomen but can also include servants and subordinates.

A person who neglects the Divine commandments in this verse is described as "proud and boastful" because, rather than showing kindness and goodwill to others—whether they are family, neighbours, or strangers—he views them with contempt and behaves arrogantly. Islam condemns such pride, emphasising that the failure to act with compassion toward others is itself a form of arrogance unworthy of a true believer. Hazrat Mu'az bin Anas (ra) related that the Holy Prophet (sas) said:

“The height of excellence is that you should strengthen the ties of relationship with the one who severs them and be

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generous to the one who is miserly to you and be forgiving to the one who abuses you”⁴⁹⁹

This compassion is not limited to human beings but extends to all of God's creation, encompassing animals, plants, and the natural world. By showing kindness to every creature, a believer honours the sanctity of life in all its forms. This ethos is the cornerstone of a peaceful and serene Islamic society. It is through compassion and mercy that harmony is maintained, ensuring that the community thrives in tranquillity and mutual respect.

Hospitality:

وَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالسَّبِيلَ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا

And give thou to the kinsman his due, and to the poor and the wayfarer, and squander not thy wealth extravagantly.⁵⁰⁰

The verse proclaims that the family of a wealthy individual are entitled to a portion of his estate, as are travellers and those in need. As for the wayfarer, the Holy Prophet (sas) is reported to have said that a wayfarer could claim, as of right, three days' free hospitality from the residents of a place

⁴⁹⁹ Masnad Ahmad, 3/438

⁵⁰⁰ Surah Bani Israil 17:27

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which he might visit, and if it were denied to him, he could demand it even by reasonable force.⁵⁰¹

This directive mandates that residents collectively extend hospitality to travellers. Moreover, this overarching commandment concerning the hospitality of guests and visitors holds significant potential for fostering peace and amity among diverse nations. The primary catalyst for international conflict often stems from mutual animosity and the ‘fear of the unknown’. Thus, widespread adoption of the Islamic principle of hospitality could mitigate much of this hostility. Those who return to their homeland after experiencing the generosity of a foreign people would naturally harbour positive sentiments towards them, thereby reducing the likelihood of hostilities. Consequently, this practice could serve as a valuable instrument for fostering fraternal relations between disparate societies.

The Holy Prophet (sas) has mentioned hospitality as a fundamental Islamic value, saying, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously.”⁵⁰²

⁵⁰¹ Sunan Abu Daud Hadith No. 3804, Book 28, Hadith 69

⁵⁰² Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab ul-Adab. Sunan Ibn-e-Majah

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On other occasions the Holy Prophet (sas) employs powerful language to caution against the grave dangers of inhospitality, saying:

“The worst of people are those who do not entertain a guest.”

“There is no good in one who does not exercise hospitality.”⁵⁰³

Hazrat Musleh Mauood (ra) states in this regard:

“A guest reveals and tests the righteousness of the host.... Hospitality contains a glimpse of the attribute of God because God is also a host. When God sees that his servant hosts others out of their limited resources, God the possessor of unlimited resources also hosts them. Thus, it is a sublime and magnificent trait that draws the benevolence of God and inspires His mercy. ...Hospitality is a means of increasing blessings and mercy from God. It is a means of generating the love of God. It is a means of enhancing faith... Hospitality is amongst the qualities of prophethood.”⁵⁰⁴

Furthermore, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) elucidating on the merits of hospitality said:

⁵⁰³ Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (ra), *Wisdom of the Holy Prophet*, The London Mosque, 1981, p30-31, 1995, Islam International Publications Ltd

⁵⁰⁴ Friday Sermon, 18 December 1925, *Khutbat-e-Mahmud*, Vol. 9, p. 396-397

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“Hospitality is not a trivial practice. It is mentioned in the Qur’an. A worldly person of good morals is also hospitable; however, when one is hospitable purely for the sake of God and not just to look after one’s personal guests or relatives; rather, most selflessly does it to attain the pleasure of God, certainly, such hospitality earns twice as much merit with God.”⁵⁰⁵

Sympathy to All Creatures of This World:

Islam mandates that humanity treats all animals—whether birds, sea creatures, or insects—with the utmost respect and dignity. The Prophet Muhammad (sas) consistently emphasised kindness toward animals, forbidding practices such as cutting the tails and manes of horses, branding animals on sensitive areas, and unnecessarily keeping horses saddled.⁵⁰⁶ When the Prophet (sas) encountered animals that were overburdened or poorly fed, he would gently admonish their owners, saying, “Fear God in your treatment of animals.”⁵⁰⁷

Qur’anic teachings emphasise the responsibility to care for the needs of all living creatures in the world:

⁵⁰⁵ Friday Sermon, 31 August 2012

⁵⁰⁶ Bukhari 5541, Book 72, Hadith 66

⁵⁰⁷ Abu Daud 2549

For one who asks *for help* and *for one* who does not.⁵⁰⁸

The term *Mabrum* refers to those who, due to physical infirmities or a sense of dignity, refrain from soliciting alms. This category encompasses not only individuals who, despite their needs, avoid asking for help, but also extends to animals who, in their own way, exhibit a similar restraint. However, the essence of this teaching transcends the care for animals alone, calling upon believers to harbour goodwill for all people, even those entangled in wrongdoing or excess. Regardless of their actions, they too are creations of the Lord of all Worlds. It is the duty of the faithful to be the well-wishers of all beings, embodying the divine mercy and compassion that Islam so profoundly upholds.

Service of Mankind:

Serving humanity is a core objective for a true Muslim, Islam instructs believers to serve those in need and to show sympathy and compassion for all mankind. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

“It is against basic moral values to fail to support or help a person who is in any kind of difficulty or pain. If you are

⁵⁰⁸ Surah Al Maarij 70:26

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unable to practically assist, then at the very least, you should pray for them. Never mind one's own people, I say that one must demonstrate the highest moral values and manifest great love towards others, be they Hindu or anyone else. One should never be indifferent or apathetic to the needs of others.”⁵⁰⁹

He further emphasised:

“Sincerity towards others and love for humanity is a part of faith. The definition of the ‘highest moral values’ is that sincere kindness and sympathy be professed towards all humanity without any expectation of reward or recompense. This is what is known as true humanity.”⁵¹⁰

In discussing the devotion of one's life to Allah, the Promised Messiah (as) eloquently elaborates on the essential connection between this divine dedication and the service of humanity. He states:

“The second aspect of devoting one's life to the cause of God Almighty is that one's life should be devoted to the service of His creatures and to sympathise with them and to share their burdens and sorrows. One should suffer pain to

⁵⁰⁹ Malfuzat, Vol. 7 pp. 105-106 Edition 1984

⁵¹⁰ Address by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V- Ahmadi Doctors and the Need for True Sacrifice- <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/19336/ahmadi-doctors-and-the-need-for-true-sacrifice/>

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bring them comfort, and one should experience grief to bring them consolation.

This shows that the reality of Islam is a very superior thing and that no one can truly deserve the title of Muslim till he surrenders the whole of his being to God, together with all his faculties, desires, and designs and till he begins to tread along His path withdrawing altogether from his ego and all its attendant qualities. A person will be truly called a Muslim only when his heedless life undergoes a total revolution and his evil-directing self, together with all its passions, is wiped out altogether and he is invested with a new life, which is characterised by his carrying out all his obligations to Allah, which should comprise nothing except obedience to the Creator and sympathy for His creatures.

Obedience to the Creator means that in order to make manifest His Honour, Glory and Unity, one should be ready to endure every dishonour and humiliation, and one should be eager to undergo a thousand deaths in order to uphold His Unity. One hand should be ready to cut off the other with pleasure in obedience to Him, and the love of the grandeur of His commandments and the thirst for seeking His pleasure should make sin so hateful as if it were a consuming fire, or a fatal poison, or an obliterating lightning, from which one must run away with all one's power. For

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seeking His pleasure, one must surrender all the desires of one's ego; and to establish a relationship with Him one should be ready to endure all kinds of injuries; and to prove such a relationship one must break off all other relationships.

The service of one's fellow beings means to strive for their benefit purely for the sake of God in all their needs, and in all the relationships of mutual dependence which God has established out of true and selfless sympathy for them. All in need of help should be helped out of one's God-given capacity and one must do his best for their betterment both in this world and in the hereafter."⁵¹¹

Some Practical Steps:

To truly serve humanity and cultivate a deep-seated passion for service, one must nurture essential virtues: love for humankind, a compassionate heart, a spirit of generosity, humility, honesty, a thirst for knowledge, and an unwavering commitment to share that knowledge with others. This dedication should manifest as a constant striving in the path of Allah through good deeds.

The journey of service begins within the home, where the adage "charity begins at home" finds its truest expression.

⁵¹¹ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), *A'ina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 5, pp. 60- 62 (Eng. Translation in *The Essence of Islam*, Vol. 1. pp. 22-23)

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Caring for parents with love and reverence epitomizes genuine service. As one aspires to serve the broader human family, it is imperative to first reflect on how those closest are treated: Are spouses given due attention? Are children nurtured with tender affection? Is there a sense of sisterhood within the community, and are relations with neighbours harmonious?

In the context of charity, when someone lacks the means to give, the Holy Prophet (sas) was once asked about what such a person should do, “If a person should have nothing? He answered: He should work with his hands to his own benefit and also give alms. If he is not able to work? He should help a needy one. If he lacks that also? He should restrain himself from doing evil. That too is charity.”⁵¹²

Thus, active participation in social service programs and extending support to those in one's immediate surroundings are vital expressions of this commitment. Acts of kindness—visiting the sick, comforting the bereaved, attending funerals—are all forms of service that transcend the material. While financial support holds its place, service manifests in myriad ways: providing educational assistance, offering physical labour, running errands, or simply giving up a seat

⁵¹² Bukhari Vol. 2, book 24, Zakat, Hadith 524

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to someone in need. The scope of service is as vast as it is varied.

Service to humanity entails addressing a wide spectrum of societal challenges—loneliness, isolation, the neglect of elders, substance abuse, child abuse, social discrimination, psychological distress, and moral decay. Even in affluent societies, where such issues often persist beneath the surface, there is an ever-present need for kind words, charitable deeds, wise counsel, and exemplary conduct.

In aiding those in distress, one may support refugees, feed the hungry, care for orphans, or offer companionship to the lonely. Even the smallest gestures—removing obstacles from the path, offering a kind word or smile, or imparting knowledge—are potent forms of service. The Holy Prophet (sas) said:

“The best charity on the part of a Muslim is to acquire knowledge and to impart it to others.”⁵¹³

He taught that the highest form of charity lies in the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, and that even the simplest acts of kindness, coupled with restraint from wrongdoing, constitute charity.

⁵¹³ Sunan ibn Majah Hadith 243

Feeding the hungry

Hunger, a relentless global crisis, continues to plague millions despite our advancements into the 21st century. Defined as the chronic inability to meet basic nutritional needs, hunger's impact is devastating, particularly in developing regions. The struggle is not only about scarcity but also about accessibility, as millions are trapped in a perilous cycle of malnutrition, recurring illnesses, and diminished productivity. The tragic toll is immense, with more than 9 million lives lost every year, including nearly half of all deaths in children under five.⁵¹⁴

The causes of this widespread hunger are complex and multifaceted. Factors such as poor infrastructure, conflict, displacement, and climate change create insurmountable barriers to food security in many regions. Additionally, inefficiencies in food production and distribution result in significant waste, leaving vast quantities of food uneaten while millions go hungry. This paradox highlights the failure of current systems to address the needs of the most vulnerable, despite the earth's capability to produce enough food for its entire population. The world's agricultural

⁵¹⁴ <https://data.unicef.org/resources/levels-and-trends-in-child-mortality-2024/>
<https://www.wfp.org/news/world-wealth-9-million-people-die-every-year-hunger-wfp-chief-tells-food-system-summit>

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potential, when fully realised and efficiently managed, can support far more people than currently projected, yet the lack of equitable distribution continues to be a major hurdle.

Islam offers a holistic approach to addressing the challenges of hunger and food security, emphasising both spiritual and practical measures. It assures humanity of the earth's ability to provide sufficient food and enjoins governments to fulfil their responsibilities by ensuring that every person has access to basic necessities like food, water, and shelter. The Qur'an and Hadith stress the importance of feeding the poor, instituting alms (Zakat) as a means to redistribute wealth and alleviate poverty. Moreover, Islam encourages scientific inquiry and innovation in agriculture to maximize productivity, urging a moral responsibility to seek out and support those in need. These teachings, if applied universally, could offer a pathway to overcoming the global hunger crisis and achieving sustainable food security for all.

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner,⁵¹⁵

Qur'an presents the case of the morally upright individuals that driven by their love for God, they feed the poor and

⁵¹⁵ Ad Dahr 76:9

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captives in pursuit of His pleasure. Their act of feeding is performed solely for the sake of doing good, not in anticipation of reward, praise, or recognition. Moreover, despite their own financial need, they generously spend on others, illustrating that the righteous believers offer not just any food, but wholesome and desirable food—showing their commitment to giving from their own cherished resources. Reflecting the principle that charity should come from what they cherish most. As the Qur'an states:

لَنْ تَسْأَلُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend out of that which you love; and whatever you spend, Allah surely knows it well.⁵¹⁶

The following verses of Surah Al Balad illuminate two essential methods for elevating the moral fibre of a community: firstly, the liberation of slaves, which aims to uplift and integrate the oppressed into equal roles within society. Secondly, assisting orphans and the impoverished to gain independence and become self-sufficient, thus empowering them to contribute positively to the community.

⁵¹⁶ Surah Aal e Imran 3:93

فَكَرَّهَةٌ

It is the freeing of a slave.

أَوْ اطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ رَزِيَ مَسْعَبَةٌ

Or feeding in a day of hunger

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ

An orphan near of kin,

أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ

Or a poor man *lying* in the dust.⁵¹⁷

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner,

إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لِرِجَاءِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

Saying, ‘We feed you for Allah’s pleasure *only*. We desire no reward nor thanks from you.’⁵¹⁸

These morally upright individuals dedicate themselves to acts of philanthropy—feeding the poor, caring for orphans, aiding prisoners, freeing slaves, and uplifting the most

⁵¹⁷ Surah Al Balad 90:14-17

⁵¹⁸ Surah Ad Dahr 76:9-10

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downtrodden, dust-ridden segments of society—driven solely by their love for Allah. No worldly reward or recognition motivates them; their actions are pure, born of devotion without the desire for any return.

Conduct of Borrowing:

Islam encourages the practice of offering loans, but these should be interest-free and given with a spirit of generosity. If a borrower finds themselves in financial difficulty when repayment is due, the lender should grant them an extension until their circumstances improve.

وَأِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ ۗ وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

And if any *debtor* be in straitened circumstances, then *grant him* respite till a time of ease. And that you remit it as charity shall be better for you, if only you knew.⁵¹⁹

The verse calls upon creditors to act with kindness and generosity towards their fellow beings, as a reflection of the kindness they wish to receive from God. They should bear in mind that while they may have extended loans to others, God has granted them countless blessings and favours.

⁵¹⁹ Surah Al Baqarah 2:281

Philanthropy

An Islamic society is defined not only by adherence to Islamic teachings but also by its sensitivity to the suffering of others and its commitment to humanitarian service. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) exemplified this principle by treating humanity as the family of Allah. His life set unparalleled standards for service to humanity, emphasising that such service is the pathway to nearness to Allah. In Islam, charity is classified into two categories: obligatory and optional.

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ
وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ۖ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَالسَّائِلِينَ
وَفِي الرِّقَابِ ۗ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ ۗ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۗ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ
وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but *truly* righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and spends his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask *for charity*, and for *ransoming* the captives; and who observes Prayer and pays the Zakat; and those who

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fulfil their promise when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and afflictions and *the steadfast* in time of war; it is these who have proved truthful and it is these who are the God-fearing.⁵²⁰

This verse elucidates a fundamental principle about the relationship between form and spirit. Every commandment possesses both an outward form and an underlying spirit. What truly matters is the essence—the spirit—behind the commandment, rather than merely the form, which often serves only as a vessel for preserving the core intent. To illustrate, the verse discusses the practice of facing a particular direction during prayers. Islam does not mandate this direction for its intrinsic value; rather, it is a means to ensure uniformity among the faithful. The real significance lies in the purpose behind the act: the pursuit of spiritual perfection and righteous deeds.

This verse is a testament to Qur'an's literary beauty and a perfect example of Qur'anic diction's ability to encapsulate multiple meanings in concise expressions. The pronoun in "حبه" (love of Him) can refer to various antecedents: the word "Allah," the word "money," or the act of spending itself. Each interpretation holds validity: it could mean

⁵²⁰ Surah Al Baqarah 2:178

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spending money for the love of God, despite one's affection for wealth, or for the sake of the act of spending.

The verse also exemplifies the Qur'an's rich linguistic tradition through expressions like "ابن السبيل" (son of the road). This term can encompass several meanings: supporting travellers to foster knowledge and social bonds, aiding those on long journeys, assisting all wayfarers, or helping those stranded. This versatility illustrates the Qur'an's blend of brevity and comprehensive meaning.

Overall, the verse succinctly outlines the core teachings of Islam: belief in God, the Last Day, angels, Divine Scriptures, and Prophets. It progresses from these foundational beliefs to essential actions, prioritizing charity motivated by genuine love and sympathy, followed by prayer, Zakat, the fulfilment of promises, and steadfastness in adversity. This structure underscores the holistic nature of Islamic ethics, blending belief with righteous action and moral integrity.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۗ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالرِّجَالِ
السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

They ask thee what they shall spend. Say: 'Whatever of good and abundant wealth you spend should be for parents and

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near relatives and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer. And whatever good you do, surely Allah knows it well.⁵²¹

In response to the earnest inquiry of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (sas), God's reply also exhibited a sense of readiness, as if He intended to provide comprehensive instructions without further prompting. While their question focused on "what" they should spend, God's answer expanded to include "on whom" the resources should be spent. The answer highlighted that contributions should be from "well-acquired" and "abundant" wealth. In times of great national need, success depends on generous and free-hearted spending. However, to prevent the temptation of acquiring wealth through unfair means, the requirement for the money to be "good" was emphasised.

Regarding the allocation of resources, the Qur'an specifies that money should be spent on five primary categories: parents, close relatives, orphans, the needy, and wayfarers. These categories cover those who are typically in need of support. The first two categories—parents and close relatives—refer to those who are immediately connected to an individual through personal relationships or proximity and thus deserve priority in aid. The subsequent

⁵²¹ Surah Al Baqarah 2:216

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categories—orphans and the needy—are highlighted due to their particular vulnerabilities, with orphans lacking any support network and the needy struggling without means. Finally, wayfarers, who are transient and without immediate support, are also included.

By outlining these five categories, the Qur'an underscores the importance of a unified community effort. For Muslims to present a cohesive front and achieve their objectives, everyone must contribute according to their ability. The well-off must support those in need, including temporary residents or travellers, ensuring that the entire community is prepared for the collective struggle. When a wealthy individual addresses the needs of a poor person, they are not performing a mere act of kindness; instead, they are fulfilling an obligation and returning what is rightfully due.

فَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالسَّبِيلَ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ حَيُّوَاللَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

So give to the kinsman his due, and to the needy, and to the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the favour of Allah, and it is they who will prosper.⁵²²

The phrase "his due" reflects that monetary assistance given by the wealthy to those less fortunate—whether in the form

⁵²² Surah Ar Rum 30:39

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of Zakat, charity, or gifts—is regarded as the rightful entitlement of the poor. This is because their labour and efforts contribute significantly to the wealth accumulated by the affluent. The Qur'an's choice of language ensures that even when the poor receive help, their self-respect is maintained, acknowledging that there is a rightful share in the wealth of the rich for both those who ask for aid and those who do not. This approach exemplifies Islam's dedication to protecting the dignity and honour of those who are in need.

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُلُوبِ وَالْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Those who spend in prosperity and adversity, and those who suppress anger and pardon men; and Allah loves those who do good;⁵²³

In both adversity and prosperity, it is imperative to give from whatever means you possess, without waiting for favourable moments. True generosity demands that one spends freely and wholeheartedly, regardless of the circumstances.

The Qur'an, in its divine wisdom, also illuminates the potential pitfalls that may accompany charitable endeavours,

⁵²³ Surah Aal e Imran 3:135

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offering guidance on the noblest conduct when giving. Charity, while a virtuous act, is not without its dangers—intentions can be tainted, and actions, though outwardly generous, may falter in their sincerity.

One of the Qur'an's subtle warnings concerns the peril of vanity and self-aggrandizement in charity. It cautions against giving with the intent to be seen by others, to garner praise or admiration, for such acts are hollow, stripped of their spiritual essence. Charity, when marred by pride or the desire for recognition, loses its purity and becomes a transaction rather than a true act of kindness. The Qur'an reminds us that charity, to be truly blessed, must be offered with humility, seeking only the pleasure of God and not the applause of the world.

Furthermore, the Qur'an warns against the tendency to remind recipients of one's generosity. To taunt or belittle those who receive charity is to nullify the virtue of the act. Qur'an advises that once charity is given, it should be done so with grace, leaving behind no trace of obligation or superiority. The dignity of the recipient must be preserved, for charity is not just about the giving of wealth, but the giving of respect, compassion, and love.

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعُهَا أَذَىٰ وَاللَّهُ عَنِّي حَلِيمٌ

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A kind word and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Self-Sufficient, Forbearing.⁵²⁴

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذَىٰ ۖ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

They who spend their wealth for the cause of Allah, then follow not up what they have spent with taunt or injury, for them is their reward with their Lord, and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.⁵²⁵

These verses indicate that charity is rendered meaningless if it is tainted by injury or humiliation. In such cases, it is preferable to speak a kind word of sympathy or excuse rather than provide aid that is followed by disparagement. Additionally, *مغفرة* implies that one should keep the recipient's needs confidential, shielding them from public shame. When individuals spend their wealth in Allah's cause, they must avoid making a show of their contributions or boasting about their services. In essence, Islam forbids the use of one's charitable acts as a means of self-promotion or as a bargaining chip for personal advantages. True service to the community or to individuals in need should be carried

⁵²⁴ Surah Al Baqarah 2:264

⁵²⁵ Surah Al Baqarah 2:263

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out with a spirit of selflessness, with no expectation of recognition or reward. This approach ensures that the true spirit of charity is preserved, untainted by ulterior motives or demands, thus maximizing the positive impact of one's actions. Thus, the Qur'an enshrines charity not merely as a deed but as an art of the heart, urging believers to give with sincerity, humility, and empathy. It calls for a charity that uplifts, that honours, and that remains untainted by ego or self-interest. In this way, the giver not only fulfils a moral duty but also elevates their own soul, drawing nearer to the divine, and earning a reward that is eternal.

The Promised Messiah (as) states:

“Deal with others as if they are your close relatives. This is the highest stage, because in the stage of *ihsan*, there is some element of vanity and if a person forgets the favour conferred upon them, the other would instantly remind them that they had conferred such and such a favour upon them. However, the natural love a mother has for her child is completely devoid of any form of vanity. (If a person does a favour for another person, at times they remind them of it, but a mother never reminds the child of her favours.)”⁵²⁶

⁵²⁶ Malfuzat published in Urdu in 1984, Vol. 6, pp. 181-182

Spirit of Sacrifice

Anthropological studies reveal that the essence of human progress is intricately woven with the act of sacrifice.⁵²⁷ Across the tapestry of history, sacrifice has served as a mystical or ritualistic practice, a means to secure power, progeny, or authority. Among ancient communities, it was a sacred gift offered to appease the gods, to court their favour, or to temper their wrath—a gesture of sacred communion with the divine. In the Abrahamic faiths, while sacrifice no longer plays a central role in modern Jewish worship, Christianity holds dear the belief in the ultimate sacrifice: the offering of the Son of God for the atonement of humanity's sins. Islam, too, embraces the concept of sacrifice, though it is imbued with a profound and encompassing philosophy. Qur'an states:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ ۗ فَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ

And to every people We appointed rites of sacrifice, that they might mention the name of Allah over the quadrupeds of *the class* of cattle that He has provided for them. So your

⁵²⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/sacrifice-religion/Theories-of-the-origin-of-sacrifice>

God is One God; therefore submit ye *all* to Him. And give thou glad tidings to the humble,⁵²⁸

This universality of the sacrificial rite across diverse religions, despite their historical and geographical differences, underscores a common divine origin. It reveals that all religions stem from the same Supreme Source and that the God of all nations is One. Sacrifice, in the Islamic context, is not about appeasing a deity or atoning for sins but involves dedicating one's ambitions, ideals, and even life for the sake of God. This concept of sacrifice, deeply ingrained in the teachings of Islam, calls for complete submission to divine commandments and reflects the true humility and devotion of the faithful.

In Islam, the concept of sacrifice is not merely about the act of offering but signifies the profound surrender of the self in pursuit of a higher, more transcendent goal. The ultimate aim of human existence, according to Islamic thought, is to reflect the attributes and qualities of God in one's character and being—a goal both sublime and glorious. To achieve this, one must be prepared to submit entirely to Allah the Exalted, acknowledging that He alone is worthy of ultimate love and the true focus of one's life. The love of wealth,

⁵²⁸ Surah Al Hajj 22:35

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power, position, family, or even oneself must not be allowed to obstruct this noble pursuit. The philosophy of Islamic sacrifice is rooted in the relinquishment of lower forms of gain in favour of a higher, eternal success.

Every act of Islamic worship is, in essence, a practice of sacrifice. *Salat*, the formal prayer, demands the sacrifice of time, focus, and energy to attain spiritual enlightenment. Fasting embodies the readiness to sacrifice even what is lawful, in obedience to God's command. Charity, the giving of one's hard-earned wealth, is a visible act of self-sacrifice. These acts of worship serve to reinforce the vital concept that self-realisation is achieved through self-sacrifice. As the Holy Qur'an declares:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend out of that which you love; and whatever you spend, Allah surely knows it well.⁵²⁹

To attain the essence of true faith, which embodies the pinnacle of righteousness and the highest form of goodness, one must be willing to relinquish everything held dear. True righteousness is not merely about the outward act of giving

⁵²⁹ Surah Aal e Imran 3:93

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but requires the spirit of sacrifice to reach its highest stage. This involves giving away that which is most cherished to oneself, for such a gesture reflects the greatest sacrifice.

The term *birr* denotes a level of moral excellence and righteousness of the highest order. The verse thus implies that while God acknowledges and rewards every act of charity, the most esteemed form of righteousness and moral excellence is achieved through the act of giving from what one holds most dear. This kind of giving, whether material or otherwise, signifies the highest degree of personal sacrifice.

In today's world, which has become a global village, where nations are inter-connected and communication is instantaneous, the responsibility to cultivate a spirit of brotherhood and mutual love among all peoples and beliefs has never been greater. Yet, the unfortunate truth persists instead of raising the standards of love and compassion, humanity seems to be moving in the opposite direction. Selfishness, greed, and a pervasive culture of self-interest are spreading across the world. In stark contrast to the ideals of "self-interest", the Promised Messiah (as) states, "Each day, every person should analyse himself and see to what extent he is concerned for the wellbeing of others and to what extent he shows love and compassion to his brothers." He

further stated, “Sympathy for others is a huge demand and responsibility that weighs heavy on mankind.”⁵³⁰

The Islamic concept of selflessness is rooted in the profound belief that true fulfilment lies not in the pursuit of personal gain, but in the selfless service to others. It teaches that the highest form of worship is found in acts of compassion and charity, where the needs of others are placed above one's own desires. The Promised Messiah (as) states:

“What does God desire from you? that you deal equitably with all people and show kindness even to those who have not done you any good. More importantly, you ought to love God’s creation as if it were your kith and kin, in the same manner, that mothers treat their children. In acts of goodness, there resides a concealed element of vanity. And every so often people tend to boast of their favours to others. But such a person who performs goodness out of spontaneous desire, in the likeness of a mother, can never be concerned for vanity. Thus, the highest level of virtue originates from one’s natural yearning, like that of a mother.”⁵³¹

⁵³⁰ Malfuzat, Vol. 7 p. 280 Edition 1984

⁵³¹ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Noah’s Ark, pp. 49-50, 2018, Islam International Publications Ltd

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In an ideal Islamic society, altruism is not merely an aspiration but a living principle that shapes the fabric of communal life. Each individual is seen as a steward of God's blessings, entrusted with the responsibility to care for the well-being of others. The Qur'an and Hadith echo this call to selflessness, urging believers to give freely and generously, not only of their wealth but of their time, love, and energy. In such a society, the pursuit of personal success is intertwined with the welfare of the community, and every act of kindness is a step towards achieving the collective good. The ideal of an altruistic society in Islam is one where the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood transcend all boundaries, creating a world where the suffering of one is felt by all, and where the joy of one becomes the joy of many. It is a vision of a world where love, empathy, and self-sacrifice are the cornerstones of a life well-lived, and where the ultimate success is not measured by what one has gained, but by what one has given.

Chapter 10-Morality-A Journey Towards Perfection:

In the modern world, the concept of morality is often dismissed as an outdated relic, viewed as an unnecessary restriction on personal freedom and progress. Many believe that to be truly "enlightened" is to shed the constraints of traditional moral codes, embracing a life free from the burdens of ethical boundaries. This modern mindset, which prizes individual autonomy above all else, promotes the idea that liberation from morality is the key to human fulfilment.

However, the practical reality of this so-called enlightenment is starkly different. In the absence of moral principles, what is often celebrated as freedom quickly devolves into the pursuit of base desires and instincts. Without the guiding framework of ethical conduct, human behaviour tends to

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revert to selfishness, cruelty, and a disregard for the well-being of others. At its core, this rejection of morality fosters a society where the strong dominate the weak, where compassion and empathy are overshadowed by greed and self-interest. The unchecked pursuit of individual desires without the counterbalance of ethical responsibility leads to a world of fractured relationships, exploitation, and a disregard for the dignity of others. What may appear as progress is, in reality, a regression into a state of savagery, where human beings become driven by their baser instincts rather than their higher aspirations.

The glorification of material success, unchecked ambition, and personal pleasure leads not to a higher form of living but to a return to more primal, animalistic tendencies. Without morals, a man is reduced to the state of a mere beast, indistinguishable from a herd of animals driven solely by instinct. Allah the Almighty says,

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ ۗ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا ۗ وَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ
بِهَا ۗ وَهُمْ أذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلَّوْهُمُ أَضَلُّ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

Verily, We have created many of the Jinn and men whose end shall be Hell! They have hearts *but* they understand not therewith, and they have eyes *but* they see not therewith, and they have ears *but* they hear not therewith. They are like

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cattle; nay, they are *even* more astray. They are indeed *quite* heedless.⁵³²

This animalistic existence is one of base desires and unbridled impulses, lacking the higher purpose that defines true humanity. True enlightenment, far from being the rejection of morality, is found in the cultivation of virtues that elevate the human soul—compassion, kindness, integrity, and justice. Without these moral anchors, the modern world risks losing its humanity, surrendering itself to a life of selfishness and brutality, where the very essence of what makes us human, is eroded.

The pursuit of morality, therefore, is not just a religious obligation but a journey toward the pinnacle of human potential. It is an aspiration to embody the attributes of Allah, the most exalted, whose perfection sets the standard for all creation. To reach the height of moral existence is to strive toward these divine qualities, to mould one's character in the image of the divine attributes of mercy, justice, wisdom, and compassion.

Throughout the ages, from the dawn of civilization to the modern era, the myriad religions that have shaped human history share a strikingly common thread. Whether they

⁵³² Surah Al Araf 7:180

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sprang from the cradle of ancient traditions or emerged from the more recent stirrings of spiritual thought, these religions, though diverse in their practices and creeds, all bear one profound hallmark: the transmission of moral teachings. Every religion has brought forth moral teachings as a cornerstone of its faith, offering a compass by which humanity can navigate the complexities of life. In the divine wisdom of Allah the Almighty, the ultimate concern lies with the well-being and prosperity of mankind. Allah the Almighty says:

وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَبْقَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ

but as to that which benefits men, it stays on the earth.⁵³³

In this grand design, whatever benefits humanity endures, while that which is harmful or devoid of purpose withers away. The Qur'an conveys a profound truth: the very survival of moral principles across time stands as a testament to their inherent value and necessity for the flourishing of human society.

Moral Transformation-A Continuous Struggle:

The path to nearness with Allah cannot be attained merely through halfhearted prayers, nor can one reach the pinnacle

⁵³³ Surah Ar Rad 13:18

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of virtue by performing a few good deeds. It is a continuous struggle, a perpetual journey upon which, the moment a believer feels they have arrived at their destination, new horizons of spiritual goals unfold before them. The quest for righteousness is not one of complacency, but of constant vigilance, forever seeking ways to advance in piety and moral excellence. This journey encompasses more than just acts of worship or occasional good works; it requires the fulfilment of our duties to humanity with sincerity and a pure heart. There is an expansive range of actions, large and small, that must be undertaken with genuine devotion. To think that a single good deed or two can mark the end of this journey is to misunderstand its nature. The true destination is nothing less than the pursuit of excellence in every aspect of goodness. This goal must guide our every thought and action, pushing us towards greater heights in our devotion to Allah and our service to others.

This moral journey is akin to the meticulous process of transforming a rough, unrefined stone into a dazzling gem. Just as a stone undergoes grinding, sanding, trimming, and polishing to reveal its hidden beauty, so too does the soul of a man undergo a process of spiritual refinement. Through the shedding of vices and the cultivation of virtues, the soul is gradually purified and perfected. This is not merely an external transformation but a deep, internal one, where the

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rough edges of character are smoothed away, revealing the brilliance of a soul aligned with divine will.

The ultimate goal of this process is to prepare the soul to become a polished mirror, reflecting the divine light in all its glory. As the soul sheds its impurities and acquires the shining qualities of moral excellence, it becomes capable of reflecting the divine attributes, illuminating the world with the light of Allah's wisdom and love. In this state of moral and spiritual perfection, man fulfils his true purpose, becoming a living testament to the divine, a beacon of righteousness in a world that so often stumbles in darkness.

Thus, the moral teachings brought by religion are not mere guidelines for proper conduct but are the very essence of what it means to be human. They are the means by which a rough, untamed spirit is refined into a vessel worthy of reflecting the divine. Through this sacred process, mankind is elevated from the depths of animalistic existence to the heights of spiritual enlightenment, where the soul shines with the purity and perfection of a gem, ready to mirror the infinite light of the Creator.

Qur'an- The Perfect Moral Guide:

The Promised Messiah (as) presents that Qur'anic teachings transform the human heart, elevating one from a state of savagery and beastly existence to the dignity of true humanity. Through its influence, a person is refined, reshaped, and raised to their full potential as a being of compassion and grace. He says:

“The effect of the true and perfect Divine law upon man’s heart in this life is that it lifts him from a savage condition and converts him into a human being, and thereafter invests him with high morals, and finally makes him godly. One of the effects of the practical ordinances of the law is that a person who follows the true law progressively recognises the rights of his fellow beings and exercises his faculties of equity, and benevolence, and true sympathy, on their proper occasions. Such a one shares with his fellow beings, according to their respective ranks, the bounties with which God has favoured him, like knowledge, understanding, wealth and means of comfort. He sheds his light like the sun upon the whole of mankind, and like the moon, acquiring light from God, conveys it to others. Being illumined like the day he shows the paths of virtue and goodness to others, and like the night he covers up their weaknesses and provides comfort for those who are weary. Like the sky he provides

shelter under his shade for everyone who is in need and pours down the rain of grace at its proper time. Like the earth, out of utter humility, he becomes like a floor for everyone's comfort and gathers them close to afford them security and offers them diverse types of spiritual fruits. Thus, he who adheres to the perfect law discharges his obligations to God and to his fellow creatures to the utmost. He loses himself in God and becomes a true servant of His creature.⁵³⁴

Elaborating on the profound and intricate beauty woven into the etymology of the Arabic word for morals, *khulq*, and referring to its root word, he reveals the hidden depths of its meaning. He explains:

“It should be kept in mind that “*Kb*” in the word “*Khalq*” followed by *Fatba* denotes physical birth, and “*Kb*” in the word “*Khulq*” followed by *Dammah* denotes the spiritual birth. *Khalq* connotes physical birth and *Khulq* connotes inner birth. As inner birth is perfected through moral development and not merely through the exercise of natural impulses, *Khulq* connotes moral qualities and not natural impulses.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, pg. 170-171, 2010, Islam International Publications Ltd

⁵³⁵ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, pg. 28, 2010, Islam International Publications Ltd

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In his explanation, the richness of the word unveils a deeper understanding of the moral fabric that shapes human character and conduct. He says, "*Kbulq*" (morality) and "*Khalq*" (creation) stand as two contrasting dimensions of human existence. *Khalq* refers to the physical birth—the tangible form we see in ears, nose, and even hair—while *Kbulq* speaks to a deeper, spiritual emergence. It encompasses the moral faculties that set humans apart from other creatures, those inner qualities of thought, wisdom, and discernment.

Morality is the force that elevates the human condition. It is the compass that steers us toward responsibility, for without a sense of accountability, the distinction between human and beast disappears. Without *kbulq*, what remains is but a shell, an outward resemblance to humanity devoid of its true essence. For instance, without rational thought, one may appear human, yet in truth, is no more than a madman—a vessel without substance.

To possess moral values is to seek the pleasure of Allah, a pursuit beautifully exemplified in the life of the Holy Prophet (sas). His actions offer a blueprint, guiding us to shape our lives in alignment with divine ideals. These moral values are the foundation of our being, akin to the cornerstone of a building. Should the foundation be weak,

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the structure cannot stand firm. Morality is like the careful laying of bricks, each one vital to the whole. If even a single brick is misplaced, the wall falters, leaving the entire edifice unsteady.⁵³⁶

Thus, to lead a life rooted in morality is to build with precision and purpose, ensuring each step aligns with the path shown by the Holy Prophet (sas), so that our outward form and inner essence remain in harmonious balance.

The Prophet of Islam-The Perfect Example of Moral Excellence:

The Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, stood as the noblest and most exalted among men, embodying in their highest form all those moral virtues that together shape a person into the perfect reflection of their Creator. His humanity was unmatched in its perfection, a living example of the finest moral qualities a human being can attain. It is to this perfection that his insightful wife, A'ishah (ra), alluded when asked to describe his character. She simply replied, "His character was the Qur'an" (Bukhari), meaning he embodied every moral excellence

⁵³⁶ Paraphrased from Tafseer Surah Al Qalm verse 5 by the Promised Messiah (as), page 46-47

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extolled in the Qur'an as the hallmark of a true believer. Qur'an testifies to this moral excellence, proclaiming,

وَأَنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And thou dost surely possess high moral excellences.⁵³⁷ At another place Allah the Almighty lovingly calls out,

طه

Ta Ha.⁵³⁸

The letters (Taha), often understood as "O perfect man," serve as an eloquent reminder of the Holy Prophet's (sas) divine endowment—he possessed every noble faculty, quality, and attribute necessary to mould a complete and perfected character. In every sense, he was the epitome of what it means to be human, excelling in virtues such as courage, generosity, and beneficence. His loyalty was unwavering, his patience and endurance boundless, and his compassion and mercy extended to all. He exemplified self-sacrifice, honesty, and fraternity, embodying humility, honour, and gratitude. His hospitality was generous, his magnanimity without limit, and his steadfastness firm as a mountain.

⁵³⁷ Surah Al Qalam 68:5

⁵³⁸ Surah TaHa 20:2

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The Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, carried himself with dignity and grace, showing love and sympathy not only toward his kin but also toward all of humanity. His resolve was unshakable, his patience profound, and his capacity for resisting evil unsurpassed. He bore an unquenchable love for the poor, a deep respect for the elderly, and tender kindness for the young. Above all, his love for his Creator knew no bounds—he was utterly devoted to God, trusting Him completely. Every breath of his life reflected simplicity, truthfulness, tireless effort, and a profound devotion to uplifting the downtrodden.

In every facet, he was the ideal human being, a perfect man in the fullest sense of the word. The Qur'an offers humanity an enduring example of moral perfection, a timeless model for all to follow:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

Verily you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model, for him who fears Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much.⁵³⁹

The example of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, stands as a guiding beacon for humanity, illuminating the

⁵³⁹ Surah Al Ahzab 33:22

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path out of its base instincts and urging it toward the moral perfection it is destined to attain. His life serves as a compass, leading mankind away from its lower nature and inspiring the pursuit of higher virtues and spiritual excellence.

The Responsibilities of *Khira Umma*:

The Qur'an proclaims that moral guidance is not merely advantageous for mankind, but so essential to human progress that Allah raised the Muslim community with the distinct purpose of promoting righteousness and preventing wrongdoing. This mission reflects the profound need of humanity for such moral leadership. It is this very calling—to uphold and spread goodness—that elevates Muslims to the status of being the best among people, chosen to fulfil a purpose vital to the flourishing of mankind.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْعُرْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْبُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you enjoin what is good and forbid evil and believe in Allah.⁵⁴⁰

The verse conveys three distinct yet intertwined messages. First, Muslims are chosen to serve as a source of benefit and

⁵⁴⁰ Surah Aal e Imran 3:111

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guidance for others. Second, their purpose transcends the confines of any single nation or land, as they are entrusted with the mission of uplifting all of humanity. Third, they bear the noble responsibility of championing righteousness, opposing wrongdoing, and remaining unwavering in their belief in the One true God.

Qur'anic moral teaching can play and has historically played an extraordinary role in uplifting and advancing other civilizations. The influence of this teaching was so profound that the revival of the West, particularly during its Renaissance, was largely, if not entirely, indebted to the intellectual and cultural contributions of the Muslim world, as noted by Robert Briffault in "The Making of Humanity". He writes:

"It was under the influence of the Arabian and Moorish revival of culture, and not in the fifteenth century, that the real Renaissance took place. Spain, not Italy, was the cradle of the rebirth of Europe."⁵⁴¹

He further elaborates:

"That power which has transformed the material and mental world is the product by direct filiation of the science of the

⁵⁴¹ Robert Briffault, "The Making of Humanity". page 188. Published by London, G. Allen & Unwin ltd 1919

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astrologers, alchemists, and of the medical schools of the later Middle Ages; and those arose directly and solely as a result of Arabian civilization. Down to the fifteenth century whatever scientific activity existed in Europe was engaged in assimilating Arab learning without greatly adding to it."⁵⁴²

As Islam represents the ultimate good, it is incumbent upon Muslims to spread its message across the globe, striving to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. While other communities may also claim to uphold these virtues, they often do so for the benefit of their own tribes or nations. The Qur'an cautions Muslims against such limited motives, urging them to remember that their mission must be solely for the sake of God, the Lord of all worlds. This sacred charge transcends worldly affiliations, calling for a pure, unselfish devotion to the divine purpose. Indeed, the very essence of a Muslim's life is defined by this divine mandate to serve humanity.

Thus, our task today is to reveal to the world the true essence of what it means to be "the best people raised for the good of mankind." If we are to become the catalysts of revolutionary change in the world, we must first ignite that transformation within ourselves. Only by renewing our own

⁵⁴²Ibid page 201-202

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lives with sincerity and purpose can we fulfil the divine mission entrusted to us. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) says, “you are those people who have been raised for the good of other people and for their beneficence. From among the duties of Muslims, one of the biggest responsibilities is that the world should be benefitted by them.”⁵⁴³

Guidance in The Modern Age:

Such a monumental task demands a guiding hand thus the assignment of the task itself implies the continuous appearance of Divine Messengers among Muslims, for it is only through these heavenly envoys that the true significance of this mission can be fully understood and realised. In this era, the Promised Messiah (as) stands as the beacon to lead us on the path of righteousness, illuminating the way for humanity to fulfil its sacred purpose. The Promised Messiah (as) said, “I guide you to the ways of avoiding sin. In religion and spirituality, no one can attain the high standards unless someone chosen by Allah shows you the way.”⁵⁴⁴

The purpose of the Promised Messiah (as) was to guide humanity back to God, restore the moral values that had

⁵⁴³ Friday Sermon 31st Oct 2014- Strive for Goodness and Peace for All- <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/printer-friendly-summary-2014-10-31.html>.

⁵⁴⁴ Friday Sermon 29th April 2005, Vie one another in goodness.

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been forgotten, uphold the rights of all individuals, and foster love and harmony throughout the world. His mission was to rekindle the spirit of righteousness and unity, illuminating the path towards a just and compassionate society. He says:

“The purport of my teaching is: Believe in God as One without associate and have sympathy with God’s creatures and be of good conduct and think no ill. Be such that no disorderliness or mischief should approach your heart. Utter no falsehood, invent no lies and cause no hurt to anyone whether by your tongue or your hands.

Avoid all manner of sin and restrain your passions. Try to become pure hearted, without vice. It should be your principle to have sympathy for all human beings. Safeguard your hands, your tongues and your thoughts against all impure objects and disorderly ways and all kinds of deceit. Fear God and worship Him with pure hearts. Refrain from committing wrong, trespass, embezzlement, taking bribes or unfair partisanship and keep away from evil companions. Safeguard your eyes against treachery and your ears against listening to backbiting.

Entertain no ill designs against the members of any religion or any tribe or group. Be sincere counsellors for everyone.

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Let no mischief-maker or one given to bad behaviour ever be of your company. Shun every vice and try to acquire every virtue. Your hearts should be free from deceit, your hands should be innocent of wrong and your eyes should be free from impurity. Take no part in any evil or transgression.

Put forth your utmost efforts to recognise God, finding Whom is salvation and meeting Whom is deliverance. He manifests Himself to him who seeks Him with love and sincerity of heart, and He reveals Himself to him who becomes truly His. Pure hearts are His thrones, and tongues that are free from falsehood, abuse and vain talk are the places of His revelation. He who loses himself in seeking His pleasure becomes a manifestation of His miraculous power.”⁵⁴⁵

He further explains that “Morals are of two kinds; firstly, there are morals described by those who have been educated in this modern era. They are apologetic and speak with adulation, yet their hearts are full of hypocrisy and malice. Such morals are opposed to the Holy Qur’an. The second kind of morals originate from true compassion and are free of hypocrisy and words of adulation, as God Almighty states:

⁵⁴⁵ Kashf-ul-Ghita’, Ruhani Khaza’in, Vol. 14, pp. 187-188 Eng. Translation in *The Essence of Islam*, Vol. 1, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَائِي ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

This is a complete and perfect method, and every perfect method and guidance is contained in the Word of God. Those who turn away from this cannot find guidance elsewhere.⁵⁴⁶

The Promised Messiah (as) explained that true piety has two essential dimensions: turning away from evil and actively seeking to benefit others through good deeds. Both aspects are integral to a life of righteousness, as one must not only avoid wrongdoing but also strive to bring goodness to the world. He said:

“There are two aspects of good characteristics and high morals, and they constitute the gist and the compendium of the teachings of Islam. One, to worship God so that we can do our duty towards Him, to shun evil and all that God the Almighty has forbidden us to do and to do what He has commanded that we should do, to be ever prepared for doing all that He has commanded us to do. Two, that we should not be slack in doing our duty towards our fellow beings and to do them as much of good as lies in our power. Those who do not do their duties towards the human beings,

⁵⁴⁶ Malfuzat [1984], Vol. 6, p. 200

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even if they are doing their duties towards God, are in a precarious position and they are not secure.”⁵⁴⁷

The Qur'an proclaims that Muslims are a guiding light for humanity, illuminating the path of righteousness. They are called to champion virtue and stand resolute against injustice, embodying a delicate balance of justice and compassion in their actions. By leading through example, they uplift society and inspire moral integrity. Through fervent prayers, steadfast devotion to Qur'anic principles, and a careful emulation of the Holy Prophet's example, believers find the path to their true purpose. It is on this sacred journey, where heart and spirit are aligned, that they rise to fulfil the divine calling that awaits them.

⁵⁴⁷ Malfoozat vol. 10, pg. 290